

9 November 1968

Mr. Gary Richard Schoener  
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Dear Mr. Schoener,

I have read your letter of 4 November 1968 with great care and interest. Please feel sure that I appreciate the trouble you took in writing with such thoughtfulness and detail, as I also appreciate your kindness to Accessories. (Unfortunately there is no prospect of a paperback edition.)

Contrary to your impression, I am quite familiar with your name—through Vince Salandria, some time ago, and more recently through your co-authorship of the article being serialized in the Midlothian Mirror. Indeed, I had heard with shock and regret of your fearful experience last summer and the injuries you sustained.

About two years ago Vince called me in some excitement about the T. H. White book and the reference to the "lone assassin" message to Air Force One. I offered to see what I could find in the Hearings and Exhibits which might be relevant to the hypothesis Vince outlined in his call, which later became the basis for your joint article. I sent Vince the results of my search, in the form of excerpts from the testimony and documents or summaries of the material (unhappily not making a carbon copy). It was my impression, as I told Vince at that time, that much of the effort to establish a lone assassin, on the part of Washington officials whom we might now describe as doves, stemmed from anxiety to prevent reckless attempts by Dallas extremists to implicate the Soviet Union and/or Cuba in the assassination and thus precipitate a dangerous military situation.

I hope that this possibility is discussed, even if only to be rejected, someplace in the article, perhaps in an installment still to be published or in one that I may have missed, since all legitimate hypotheses should be assessed.

Not to digress further from the main purpose of your letter, let me assure you that I will be happy to see you when you come East. I am always ready to discuss the assassination and related matters, although I do admit to some weariness with the subject of Garrison. I have received many letters from persons known and unknown, asking me to explain my views on Garrison or to convert me to his cause. I am always astonished by the premise underlying the second type of letter—that I have not thought through or understood the implications of my position on Garrison, and that it needs only a dose of homilies, unsupported assurances about his merits or the merits of his "evidence," or appeals for unity to make me see the error of my ways. I should have thought that Accessories, whatever else may be said of it, at least shows that I do not reach conclusions capriciously, or weigh evidence lightly, or subordinate my convictions in the cause of self-ingratiation or advantage.

Griscom Morgan, whom I have not met either, wrote me not long ago on the same lines

as your letter, and after an exchange of letters seemed to find merit in my position. I have to say, without intending offense to anyone, that none of the letters urging me to enter into an entente with Garrison and/or his supporters and colleagues have been characterized by integrity of logic or moral validity. (It is true that my own letters are often pointed, even cutting, but I hope never malicious.)

Let me recapitulate your own arguments, if I may. You acknowledge that Garrison's public statements alarm and disturb you; that he breaks agreements and stabs people in the back; that his "code" is ridiculous; that his epileptic seizure victim and storm drain hypotheses are utter nonsense; that he has been taken in by planted information and trusted untrustworthy persons; and that his character traits are here to stay. Although these comments are somewhat milder than my own charges against Garrison, they are still enough to lead to a conclusion that good conscience, self-respect, and the credibility of the critics' attack on the fraudulent Warren Report—to mention only a few considerations—demand disassociation from and denunciation of the fraudulent Garrison "case" (of, if you prefer, the ridiculous and nonsensical Garrison "case").

Instead, you suggest that I should join the new assassination investigation committee of which Garrison is a founding father (and whose by-laws achieve an audacious new height of anti-democratic, non-democratic, and undemocratic offensiveness). You also argue that Garrison has or may have some good evidence, just as the Warren Commission also had some evidence that was good.

But I do not see what logic I could claim if I repudiated and denounced the Warren Commission, as I did and do, for its false and tainted conclusions and evidence (and regardless of the validity of some evidence), but failed to repudiate and denounce Garrison, which I did and still do, for his false and tainted (or ridiculous and nonsensical) evidence and conclusions (and regardless of the supposed "good evidence" which he has or may acquire, none of which I can confirm personally nor extrapolate with any confidence).

I am afraid that I have already declined membership in the new committee and my decision is not subject to reconsideration. And, to be quite explicit, I do not agree with your view that there is "no reason to attack" Garrison—there is a compelling and imperative reason, and exactly the same one that motivated the attack on the Warren Commission. I do agree with you that Warren Report critics are vulnerable every time Garrison is attacked—but only those critics who actively support or silently condone his flagrant abuse of fact, logic, and justice. The solution to that problem is for those critics to stop serving as apologists and handmaidens to this hysterical charlatan, and stop compromising the credibility of their work and the moral basis for contesting the deceitful and false Warren Report. I refuse absolutely and categorically to accept any responsibility whatsoever for any disrepute suffered by the critics by reason of their link to Garrison—we must all answer for our own acts, to our consciences if to no other authority, and my conscience is entirely serene on the issue of Garrison.

Again, to be quite clear, my estrangement from Salandria, Weisberg, and others has nothing to do with their personal idiosyncracies as such, nor am I free of personality traits which may be vastly irritating to others. My warm friendship with these colleagues rested on the assumption that we had a common commitment

to the truth and nothing but the truth about the assassination and against the falsehoods of the Warren Commission or any other authority or spokesman on the subject. As and when that assumption proved to be unwarranted, the basis for friendship and cooperation ceased to exist. Some of the critics seem to be genuinely deluded about Garrison and unable to exercise against his "evidence" that same impartial, razor-edge intelligence that they applied to the Warren Report; but others are frank in their cynacism, entirely ready to agree that he is a fatuous mountebank, but willing to use any instrumentality against the WR including those equally corrupt and contemptible. I give them at least credit for their candour.

But I must reiterate, in response to your postscript, that personality clashes do not enter into my alienation from Vince or Harold or others --only a profound and irreconcilable difference on basic questions of principle, values, and morals.

All this being said, I will be only too glad to meet you, even to go over this exhausted terrain still again, if need be, or to discuss other matters related to the WR. I would have been glad to accept your suggestion of a short reply but I felt reluctant to delay at least this much comment on the essentials.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher  
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