

15 November 1968

Mr. Gary Schoener
Box 392 Mayo Hospital
Minneapolis 55455

Dear Mr. Schoener,

I appreciate your understanding and will not try to reply in full to your letter of the 13th, since we will have an opportunity to discuss all these questions before too long. However, I should like to deal with one point before the sun goes down this day—the allegation that Garrison "came to New York to see me" and that I "did not even meet with him" (the clear implication being that I refused a specific invitation or request to meet Garrison).

This allegation is false.

It is true that Vince repeatedly urged me to join him on a trip to New Orleans, or to make such a trip independently, to meet Garrison and see his "case." It is equally true that Vince urged me on several occasions to act as devil's advocate, since I would not act as a supporter or endorser of Garrison's "investigation." Let me add also that Vince urged me to withhold public criticism (his words, as I recall them, were that I should "make no vicious attacks on Garrison") of the New Orleans district attorney—an appeal I found astonishing, in view of the fact that no one had ever tried to silence me on the Warren Report and in view of the reaction all the WR critics would surely have had to any attempt from any source to silence any of us or suppress our attacks on the Warren Commission.

I believe it is accurate to say that Harold Weisberg offered the same advice as Vince did, although I happen to have a specific recollection of my conversations with Vince but no specific recall where Harold is concerned.

Neither Vince or Harold, however, ever suggested or tried to arrange a meeting between Garrison and me in New York. The suggestion that Garrison ever came to New York for the express purpose of seeing me, or that it was one of several purposes, is absolutely false. Garrison never contacted me while in New York and never suggested by letter or telephone that we should meet.

Ray Marcus, whom you did not mention in your letter, did—on his own initiative—suggest that I ought to meet Garrison during his visit to New York in April 1967 (I believe that was the month). This was after the Russo/Bundy testimony but before the proclamation of the "code" and although I had developed doubts and uneasiness, I was ready at that time to meet Garrison. Ray was to see him at his hotel on a Sunday morning and I agreed that I would come to the hotel anytime that day if Garrison was willing to have me do so. However, on Sunday morning Garrison cancelled Ray's appointment with him, telling Ray that he had become involved in seeing some reporters or TV people, and putting Ray off until the next day, Monday, when I was at work and could not have made myself available. Consequently, Ray did not open the subject with Garrison. This is my firm recollection of the circumstances. I may well have a record somewhere in my correspondence but I will not take the time to search for it, unless my account is challenged.

Some time after the "code" was unveiled, Garrison visited New York again. I am not certain of the date or the month—it may have been in June, to do his "equal time" telecast on NBC. I believe that Ray was also in New York at about the same time and that he again suggested that I should arrange to meet Garrison while he was here. By then, I had concluded on the basis of the code and Garrison's failure to discuss precise objections which I had raised to his thesis, in a letter I sent him and in a subsequent telephone conversation, that he was a clumsy charlatan who could not be trusted, intellectually or morally. I told Ray, when he advised me to try to meet Garrison personally while he was in New York, that there was no reason for me to meet him at that point in time because I had now made up my mind about him. (In April, I was disquieted and apprehensive but willing to meet him, as already mentioned.)

I am really startled and angered to learn from your letter that a slanted and incomplete selection of the facts, tantamount to falsification as well as false on certain points of fact, has become a "story (that) is widely known." I realize, of course, how difficult it must be for Garrison's loyal supporters to account for the contempt with which some uncompromising critics of the WR (Sauvage, Lifton, and I, among others) dismiss Garrison. We cannot be classified as agents of the Establishment, nor apologists for the WR, nor tainted by affiliation with NBC or Newsweek. But, difficult as it may be to explain my position in terms which protect and condone Garrison, his supporters have no license to misrepresent my views or my actions.

No less false than this "widely known story" are other attempts which have been made to "explain" my denunciation of Garrison, reports of which have found their way to me: One was that I cannot bear to have anyone other than myself "solve" this case—an "explanation" all the more grotesque because its author was present in my living room in February 1967 to hear the news broadcast of Garrison's statement that Oswald had killed no one on 11/22/63 and joined me in a wild ecstatic dance of sheer joy that a public official at last had come forward to relieve the terrible burden and frustration which the critics had borne alone up to that time.

Another "explanation" was that I was fearful that Garrison's investigation would hurt the sale of my book. Need I add that the author of this ingenious theory, betraying his own preoccupations, was Mark Lane?

My original comments on Garrison in the galley proofs of Accessories were an expression of hope that with his advent, justice at last would be done. They were inserted in February 1967. By July, when I received the page proofs, I could no longer entertain such a hope but only the fear of the harm that Garrison would do, to innocent victims as well as to the credibility of authentic criticism of the WR. I rewrote the passage in question, under the constraint of keeping within the same number of words and under pressure of a deadline as well as the pressure of work I had undertaken to do on Six Seconds for Tink. I would have preferred to elaborate my views then, as I did subsequently in letters to editors and in broadcasts as well as in correspondence. Certainly, those who have originated the specious explanations and theories were fully informed, as readers of Accessories were unfortunately not, of the exact reasons for my position, documented with the same precise citations as accompany all or almost all assertions in my book. Their resort to such perjorative fictions only confirms their inability to refute my charges against Garrison.

The rest will wait until we meet.

Sincerely yours,

Ryan Weaver