

1/11/68

Dear Ray,

I think you will be disappointed with my letter to Tink, copy enclosed. This whole affair shows how people of good will and mutual sympathy can nevertheless be miles apart. But I cannot take seriously the suggestion that Tink is a CIA plant, nor can I in honesty agree that he has committed deliberate or inadvertent plagiarism--in the true sense of that word.

For example: I myself used a section title "Whose Stretcher?" I know there was no plagiarism on my part. Another example: Originally I did not attribute to anyone the switch of frames 314/315 (as detailed in the enclosed). I know that was not an attempt to receive credit for what you discovered. A third example: I too argued against a fast fragment from a slow bullet, in effect (see AAF bottom of page 7). This argument occurred to me independently. I did not plagiarize it from other works in which it appeared. (I wrote that section of my book in September 1965.) Since I know that what I wrote in each case was legitimate and innocent, I cannot attribute sinister motives to someone who did the same or similar things.

I find it hard also to accept your thesis of "academic snobbery." As you say, there is no evidence of such an attitude on Tink's part. It has not affected my relations with him--on the contrary, Tink has promoted AAF far more than Bobbs-Merrill has. Indeed, if he and his book constitute a ploy to divert attention from AAF, he strangely goes out of his way to advertise and recommend it.

One thing that we all have in common is human imperfection. I think you would have had a more understandable position had you restricted yourself to the shoulder dip and the double head-hit. When you make an issue also of "Which Stretcher?" and the like, and also charge Thompson with being a CIA plant, you make yourself really vulnerable. My affection for you makes it painful to say that, Ray, and even more painful to say what follows.

Whatever their shortcomings and errors, both Epstein and Thompson have made a solid, significant, and probably historic impact against the fraudulent Warren Report. It is my belief that the imperfections in each case subside into relative insignificance, in comparison with the positive achievement. Yet both have been the subject of bitter, dogmatic, and even vicious attack by other critics. Garrison, on the other hand, has taken the solid work done by serious researchers, put it through a mixmaster, and spewed the resulting compound of idiotic pronouncements into incessant headlines, which make him (and, by implication, all the critics) seem lurid and lunatic. Assassins in sewers; 45's; assassins on the grassy knoll whose sole function was to pick up shells; a scopeless rifle found in the TSBD before the Carcano; an assortment of "witnesses" to whose degeneracy and corruption only a George Grosz could do justice; alleged codes, library cards, TFX's; and a sophomoric line of pseudo-ideology which, for some, justifies every accompanying absurdity and invention. But Garrison not only threatens to discredit all criticism of the WR: he accuses, subpoenas, and indicts living individuals; and, like the infamous Commission, he too stigmatizes the dead Oswald, as a knowing conspirator in the assassination, on "evidence" that stinks to high heaven. No one seems to me more deserving of 22-page letters of denunciation than Garrison. I could better understand the attacks against Epstein, Thompson, and myself (on the part of some critics) if the authors of those attacks had said one public word against Garrison's outrages. And I am dismayed that Thompson has, in effect, joined the clique of Garrison supporters. (He tells me that he was partially misquoted and that his interview was slanted by the Free Press; be that as it may, the result in the form of direct quotations is compromising.)

I am truly sorrowful that we remain far apart on these issues.