

Rec'd 6/1/68

726 South 51st St
Tampa 33619
29 May 1968

Dear Sylvia Meagher,

Thank you very much for the check and for the letter of support and sympathy.

While I am not sure there is anything incorrect about the facts of my case as you have them, my own interpretation of them differs slightly from yours.

In the first place I was not only ~~unable~~ unable to identify Heindel, I was unwilling, once it became clear that, far from determining whether or not Heindel had been a near-patsy in the assassination plot, Garrison's interest ~~seemed~~ seemed to point more in the direction of legal harassment of the man. I got this impression through Dave Lifton, who spoke to me on the phone soon after my arrival in Florida. Dave told me that Garrison had ~~offered~~ offered to fly me first-class to New Orleans and "put you up in the best hotels" -- in exchange for which I was to "stand in a secret room and identify John Rene Heindel through a one-way mirror."

I reminded Lifton of my libertarian capitalist social philosophy, which objects to the State on the grounds that it relies upon violence and the threat of violence in order to reach its ends. I believe that each individual has what I call an unalienable right to life, liberty, and property (restricting property to the honestly gained products of his labor). I do not believe that I may rightfully voluntarily take part in any activity which may stimulate the State to do violence to the rights of another.

Simplified and applied to the context, this means that for ~~personal~~ personal ethical reasons I did not want to turn State's evidence on anybody. I did not want any information I gave Mr. Garrison to be used in order to compel any other individual to behave -- under the threat of State punishment -- in a manner contrary to his or her will. My reason for reluctantly assisting via the signed statements on the Heindel incident and ~~other~~ other matters, was that I felt it morally acceptable to provide data which might clarify a situation and thereby prevent innocent individuals from being arrested.

I believe that the concept of retribution is uncivilized and I reject the concept of the penal system which stems from it. But I believe our court system is such that innocent men often wind up in jail. So I was willing to supply information which might result in ~~clearing~~ clearing the innocent, but I would not voluntarily aid and abet anyone's prosecution -- for to do so even as a witness would be to set myself up as a judge.

I felt the way to accomplish this rather complex goal, would be to agree to give information, if I could, but to make it clear that I would not act as a witness for the State, or otherwise knowingly cooperate in anyone's prosecution.

Mr. Lifton was in contact with Mr. Garrison. I asked him to explain to the DA my outlook.

In my next telephone conversation with David, a few days later, he ~~XXXXXXXX~~ spoke to this effect: "Look, Kerry, Garrison says he fully understands your philosophical views -- and that if you want to help him throw a big brick or two through the windows of the Establishment..." Somehow I felt that Garrison did NOT fully understand. But I agreed to meet with him -- as he had agreed to do so on my terms.

I was told that I would be contacted by Garrison in a few days, and that he would be using ~~XXX~~ a name with the initials F.M. I got a telegram from a Frank Marshall asking me to call the number which is also listed with New Orleans information as that of the DA's office, and which suggested I use the name of Winston Smith in calling.

I called under my own name, but out of respect for Garrison/desire to remain incognito, asked for Frank Marshall. I got a run-around. After a few minutes of this, I hung up.

Soon I got a telegram ~~XX~~ signed Jim Garrison District ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Attorney asking again that I call the same number. I do not like Mr. Garrison as an individual. This dislike runs back many years to the times when I learned while in New Orleans that he was, at best, a pompous blow-hard. Now that it had been necessary one day to use assumed names and now, a few days later, that it was not -- this bothered me. ~~My~~ My dislike for Mr. Garrison in those days was intermixed as well with a lot of distrust. I wrote him a note which, briefly, said "to hell with it."

I do not know whether ~~XXXXXX~~ Garrison ever produced Barbara Reid before the Grand Jury or not. On one hand I would be inclined to think he wouldn't dare. On the other, it would seem just about the sort of thing he would try.

Barbara is a known witch and a suspected mad woman. While she comes on in person as a fairly rational and intelligent individual, she has a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ well-deserved reputation for outrageous deception and absolutely fanatic publicity seeking. At the time she "saw" me with Oswald in the Bourbon House, she was going around the Quarter producing out of her purse a Voodoo doll and boasting, seriously, that she had used it to kill a Bourbon Street stripper who had died that summer under ~~XXXX~~ sensational circumstances. I could fill this entire letter with similar Barbara stories.

Before I went to New Orleans to testify, friends told me ~~XXX~~ that Barbara was currently boasting that she was working "in Jim's investigation" ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in a "high-level capacity" at "screening witnesses." I dismissed this as the usual Barbara bull.

When I got there I found out that Garrison and a number of his associates were mingling socially with Barbara, that they had attended a party at her home recently.

Further, I soon learned that Garrison's people ~~XXX~~ had spoken to only one person, as far as I've been able to determine, who knew me well. This man told Garrison's investigators he thought "they didn't have much." He was not called up before the Grand Jury.

Since that time I have learned another interesting thing. Barbara and Mu-mu Sciambra have been very, very close friends for a number of years. Sciambra is the investigator assigned to my case.

Barbara has been insisting, ever since shortly after the assassination, that she saw Oswald and me together in the Bourbon House. Sometimes she says it was in early September, sometimes in late September. Sometimes she says that I ~~XXXXXX~~ introduced her to Oswald, sometimes she says that I did not. Whether or not she has told anyone she overheard us plotting the Kennedy assassination at that time, I don't know. If one ~~XXXXXX~~ element of her entire presentation on this matter has never changed, it is that she has maintained absolute certainty down through the years that it was Oswald. This certainty is convincing.

I do not remember who I was sitting with on that day of which Barbara speaks. I do recall the incident around which her story is built. I have never had any reason, other than Barbara's word, for believing it might have been Oswald, unrecognized my me.

Further, it is my understanding that the person Barbara ~~XXXXXX~~ claims was sitting with her that day does not recall the incident.

But ever since the Kennedy assassination Barbara has been going around the French Quarter spreading malicious gossip about my "clandestine involvement."

Since I was notoriously ~~XXXXXX~~ anti-Kennedy, even obnoxiously so on the day of the assassination, many people have been inclined to agree ~~XXXXXX~~ with Barbara, or at least insure wider circulation of her theories about me. I think a lot of this has ~~to~~ do with and emotional abhorrence to my caustic remarks over Kennedy's death, rather than with any sort of intellectual evaluation of the evidence.

Anyhow, by my return visit to the Quarter in 1964, I could detect a certain amount of paranoia ~~about~~ about me -- which at the time ~~gave~~ gave me no end of amusement.

Again in late 1965 I was through the French Quarter briefly, and by this time it was clear that ~~XXXXXX~~ Barbara was going to make a ~~XXXX~~ life-time ~~XX~~ project of constructing a French Quarter legend around me and the assassination. She told me, "I'll swear till my dying day that I saw you with ~~XXXXXX~~ Oswald in the Bourbon House." I had never confronted Barbara with the information that everyone who knew her had told me she was an infamous liar, or a deluded psychotic, and I did not do so now. I just smiled and changed the subject.

Until recently I've considered Barbara entertaining and harmless. I never dreamed ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ that Garrison or anyone else would take her seriously until I got word to the contrary. I still think it is more Garrison's fault for listening to Barbara than Barbara's fault for lying.

Barbara is very nervous these days. I think she knows she cannot pass a polygraph test. She shouldn't worry, though -- that won't stop Garrison. His infallible intuition has informed him of my guilt.

Harold The Hatchet Weisberg, Lizzie Borden of the critical community, has also played a large and important role in convincing uncommitted French Quarterites of my guilt. In fact, considering that I have never even met the man, his extraordinary efforts on behalf of bringing about my arrest have been astounding. He has spared no energy on this matter, and I can only wonder what motivates him. But that is another long story.

Weisberg spent three solid days talking to Barbara.

When Garrison's office spoke to me, they knew only that I was "some kind of rightwinger" -- to quote Mr. Sciambra. Alcock even thought I might be mixed up with Birchers and Garrison had previously expressed the opinion that I was closely associated with Kent Courtney -- based on the fact that I had worked for him for something like two days, once, THROUGH A TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCY which had ASSIGNED me to the job.

My social philosophy comes from the libertarian capitalist tradition that ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ was most recently ~~XXXXXX~~ nationally known in the days of H.L. Mencken and Robert A. Taft. Since the McCarthyist-imperialist-National Review elements took over the American Right in the 1940s and 50s that tradition has all but entirely dropped out of political involvement. But as an intellectual tradition it ~~XXXXXXXX~~ survives -- and it has evolved for the most part into a nongovernmental philosophy.

Most modern libertarian capitalists advocate in place of isolationism, unilateral disarmament -- in place of ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ limited government, a ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ nongovernmental society which utilizes nonviolent techniques to protect life and property on and individual basis. All libertarian capitalists forswear the use of force except in defense of person or property.

I wondered until recently how Garrison was going to capitalize on the fact that I was "some kind of rightwinger," when the kind of rightwinger I am would so obviously not accept employment from the Post Office -- let alone the CIA; when he ~~XXXX~~ simply would have nothing to do with Minutemen and Birchers and ~~XXXX~~ neo-Nazis and all the other political enemies of Mark Lane and Hal Weisberg who are supposed to have killed the President.

An interview with Loran Hall in the 24 May 1968 L.A. FREE PRESS has put my specualtions to rest. Mr. Hall recently got the Garrison brainwash in New Orleans, which ~~XXXXXX~~ makes Chinese brainwashing look like a light rinse. He now speaks of Mr. Garrison as having a voice of "compassion and intelligence," etc.

He also says the assassination was "precipitated by the Fascists and the rightwing anarchist and that actually they are one and the same." Ocasionally, for the sake of simplicity, I have described myself ~~XX~~ as a rightwing anarchist, since I do not believe that violence -- even the institutionalized violence of governments -- should be initiated to accomplish any ends, however "noble."

Hall also says in the Freep interview: "I firmly believe that the rightist anarchists and the CIA can take over our country right now and it would be a Fascist state except for two things. They would first have to demolish and destroy the conservative movement by the radical right. They would have to destroy organizations such as the John Birch Society and bring discredit upon it.... The other thing that is in their way is a man, a big man, a giant off a man by the name of Jim Garrison... Because as Jim Garrison has said, if a Government can lie, a Government can kill. If a Government can kill then we have an anarchy..."

Now I've ~~I~~ always been under the illusion that when the Government killed, it was called execution or national defense -- not anarchy. And it is precisely that I object to the fact that all governments are all too willing to kill, that I am an anarchist.

But undoubtly Mr. Hall, who says all that stands between us and Fascism is the John Birch Society and Jim Garrison, is more politically sophisticated than I.

Well, that is enough for now.

Beginning with the end of this week I will be running a column in the Los Angeles Underground Newspaper OPEN CITY (4369 Melrose, Los Angeles). Its title is "Second Thoughts" and it is intended to run for ~~the~~ duration of the Garrison thing.

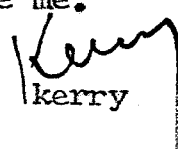
In additon to recounting my own experiences with the Jolly Green Frankenstein Monster, I plan to analyze the social forces behind the movement and review all anti-Garrison books or other literature that comes into my hands. Before this is over, Mr. Garrison is going to realize that he has got the wrong man -- in every possible sense of the term.

OPEN CITY is the ~~XXXX~~ primary competitor to the Los Angeles FREE PRESS. Though I am ~~personally~~ ~~//////~~ ~~XX~~ acquainted with Art Kunkin, its editor and publisher, the Freep has, despite promises, steadfastly failed to contact me for an interview. Moreover Art has refused to even ~~XXXXXX~~ allow himself to be informed of my side of things since I came under Garrison's all-holy suspicion. On top of this he has printed on the Garrison probe only articles which are fawningly adoring of Mr. Garrison -- most of which contain blatant untruths.

John Bryan of OPEN CITY, on the other hand, has been silently suspicious of Garrison since the beginning and -- in view of Kunkin's press blackout ~~XX~~ and his own familiarity with the facts of my case -- has decided to print as many articles ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ exposing the Garrison ~~XXXX~~ fraud as he can get, provided they are responsible and ~~XXXX~~ coherent, of course. Since Southern California is -- due to the one-sided "reporting" of the Freep -- now a hotbed of Garrison support, anything published in OPEN CITY will seriously undercut the political ambitions of the Garrisonites. I hope you will consider writing for it and encourage others to do likewise.

Again thank you very much for the letter and for the check. I hope I will be in a position to pay the money back to you in the future. At the moment it comes in very handy, believe me.

Sincerely,



kerry

PS - I've just noted that the check is unsigned, so I'm enclosing it with this letter for signature. Received \$10 ~~XX~~ from Mr. Arnoni. Again, thank you.