

5 June 1968

Dear Sylvia,

Let me begin by offering my endorsement to the sentiments you have expressed to Mr. Shaw. I find it distressing that Mr. Shaw and his attorneys should contribute to Garrison's credibility in this manner. Certainly he does not deserve that sort of boost at this point. My attorney has expressed the opinion, by the way, that such a petition seems to him pretty far-out from the legal standpoint, and he does not think it will [REDACTED] be granted.

I explicitly confirm that you are free to use any information I send you in any way you wish, provided I do not specify to the contrary. I would appreciate all copy written on my behalf being sent by me for fact check, but do not insist on it. It is just that I would prefer letting Mr. Garrison's supporters continue to make most of the mistakes. Mr. Lifton's article on my case in the 31 May OPEN CITY contained a number of errors in fact, and Dave is in my opinion an intelligent scholar who is familiar with my case. I made up a correction sheet on the article which is in David's hands.

I also explicitly confirm that we are in basic agreement on the question of remaining silent. As any and all of my friends can tell you, I am just not the sort of person who keeps things to himself. My objection to formally lending my sanction to a State process on a voluntary basis does not mean that I would also ever keep secret any information regarding the commission of any act of violence against anyone, unless perhaps it were a matter of direct or "hot" self-defense, which the Kennedy assassination most certainly was not. I am further quite interested in doing whatever I can to undermine the efforts of the Ministry of Truth to rewrite history, be its headquarters in Washington, Berlin, Moscow, or New Orleans.

As Dave will tell you, I've always been willing to cooperate with Commission critics when so requested, either in providing data or exposing the false nature of the Commission's conclusions in public. I have grave reservations about cooperating with government-sponsored probes, particularly in light of my experience with the Warren Commission, but I have none whatever about assisting noncoercive individuals who are interested in discovering and making known the facts.

I do not presently leave open the possibility that Barbara could have seen me with Oswald. It was just a possibility of which Barbara managed once to convince me, before I knew of her reputation -- about which I immediately thereafter undertook to inform myself. I have denied flatly under polygraph that Barbara ever saw me with Oswald or that I ever saw Oswald as a civilian and it came out very clearly as non-deceptive.

My statement in my grand jury testimony that it "could have been Oswald" was not meant to indicate that I presently leave open this possibility. When I was in New Orleans I did everything possible to

avoid an ego-conflict with Garrison, which included avoiding getting into arguments. Garrison was entirely oblivious, however, to all such gestures on my part. Every attempt to be fair was taken as "an admission" -- every rephrasing of something for greater accuracy after my initial spontaneous reaction had been given as "a contradiction." My frame of mind upon entering the grand jury room was one of making every effort to be as open and spontaneous as possible, as it seemed to me that this sort of approach would be so obviously impossible to fake that I could not be long regarded with suspicion.

But as the sort with which Mr. Garrison surrounds himself will indicate -- such as Pershing Gervais, Louis Ivon, and Barbara Reid -- he is an absolute bust as a judge of character.

Your mention of Mr. Marcus touches on a subject that has been very much on my mind. It seems that Ray came ~~across~~ across a butchered and sensationalistic version of my book, Oswald, in the National Insider in 1965 and -- without bothering to find out anything about how it got there or anything further about me, my thinking, my character or anything else -- has harbored a deep, festering resentment for me ever since. I learned of this in the summer of 1966 when he blew his top at Dave Welsh over the fact that RAMPARTS was considering running a piece by me on how I was "investigated" by the SS, FBI, and Commission. Since I am not the sort who much gives a damn about the opinions of the self-rightously half-informed I made no effort to get in touch with him. I now think that if I had I would not eventually have been arrested.

From what has leaked back to me about his opinion and that of those around him, I gather that he thinks I wrote Oswald in order to make money -- which as the contract I signed will reveal was clearly not the case; he thinks I "jumped on Oswald when he was down," which I think the opinions I expressed in the book will reveal was not the case; he thinks I was a "rightwing Marine," which any careful reading of my book or my testimony will reveal was not at all the case, my having been very much to the left in those days; and his righteous rantings have apparently even convinced Salandria, who was later to admit that he himself had not read my book, that a certain amount of "poetic justice" is involved if I have been falsely arrested.

Now it seems to me that these people are doing to me exactly what they quite erroneously think I did to Oswald.

David Lifton has a copy of my book contract, a Xerox of which I'm sure he'll send you if you are interested. I think it speaks for itself.

I was asked to write Oswald by a publisher I had met socially who was impressed by my analysis of what Oswald's ~~motives~~ motives might have been, if he committed the assassination. He asked that I include a fictionalized chapter in the book placing Oswald at the Depository window and that I make it clear that outside pressures upon a person (which my theory involved) were nevertheless not an excuse for violence -- a point about which he felt very strongly and with which I agreed. I got repeated assurances ~~from~~ from him that Oswald would appear in the format of a "lasting classic." The two or three previous New Classics House books had been sedately presented.

The book was written within a year of the assassination. My main source of news during that year had been the Washington Star.

Now I happen to believe there is very little deliberate evil in the world. I think most violence and suffering spring from excessive moralism. That Oswald was a humanitarian and yet that he apparently (as I then believed) wound up performing an act that was murderous as well as suicidal, seemed to me illustrative of this point -- so I made it the theme of the book, trying to outline how, by a combination of noble intentions and intellectual evasions, Lee Harvey Oswald transformed himself from the alienated but intelligent and gentle person I knew into the killer this apparently responsible Commission had named.

I at no time believed it impossible that Lee would have played the role of an assassin. On the other hand, I was very reluctant to accept the notion that it was very probable. A much more likely explanation seemed to me, at first, that he had just once again managed to invoke the suspicion of Authority, ~~for some reason~~ something for which he seemed to have an unconscious talent. But by the time the Warren Report was released I had been, like most Americans, entirely misled into ~~thinking~~ thinking that simply overwhelming evidence existed for his guilt. NEVERTHELESS, in Oswald I used the word "if" regarding the matter, not wanting to absolutely assert (and in those days I was more of an absolutist) that he was guilty.

"A man feels a pleasurable sensation before he smiles, and smiles before he thinks how he ought to smile," said Chuangtzu. And with him I think this is the way to serve others -- not because you feel it is a duty, but because you simply want to share your own happiness. I therefore reject concepts like "duty" and "humanitarianism" on the grounds that they lead to things like the Garrison probe, and worse.

Now it has always been my perhaps incorrect suspicion that what offends Mr. Marcus most about my book is not that it tentatively accepted the conclusions of the Warren Commission, but that it expresses this philosophy regarding the self-consciously (and self-deceptive) humanitarian who thinks he can help the world by doing violence to this or that person or persons, whether that violence is done by means of a rifle or a court order.

It is my conviction at this time that Lee is not only innocent of the Kennedy assassination, but innocent of being a CIA agent as well -- a possibility which I found even more difficult to entertain ~~than~~ than the lone-assassin theory, and which I now find impossible to entertain since I have seen what ~~kind of~~ kind of ~~evidence~~ "evidence" can lead Mr. Garrison to the conclusion that someone works for the CIA.

I'm probably not objective about Mr. Weisberg. As I'll reveal presently I have adequate reason to consider him an insane maniac, if not a conscious fraud. My only familiarity with his work is through the fantasy, "Oswald in New Orleans" - which by the way is no more "supressed" in New Orleans than is the Holy Koran in Mecca. Of all he has said that I know of, the only thing which I'm sure is true is that he gets admiring phone calls at midnight from insane asylum escapees. I believe that in spite of everything.

I would love to borrow you book and read it.

Peace,


kerry