

16 January 1969

Dear Kerry,

2883 Marlin
Tampa 33611

I am glad to see from your recent letters that you and Helen Hartmann have made contact and are getting along. Yes, she probably still has an idealized view of Weisberg; but it took me some time to reach a balanced assessment and to realize that more was involved than mere egocentricity and other irritating personality qualities, and to understand Harold's capacity for mischief, malice and error. His original book (Whitewash), though badly written, was a genuine achievement of research and critical analysis, and many of us were resigned to his exasperating vanity, his constant anguished cries of plagiarism, his abusiveness, and his assumption that he was the sun and the other critics were little satellites orbiting around him whose main function was to provide service, protection, and salaams. As you say, he has no sense of humor—certainly not about Himself—and seems never to be aware of how his behavior appears to others. My own patience with Harold ended with his outrageous and prejudicial characterization of Clay Shaw in his last book: and, in fairness to Helen, I have to admit that I was slow to realize that Harold is derailed and dangerous.

I have never met Fensterwald and declined his invitation to become a member of his C.I.A., of which Garrison is a co-founder and co-director. He nevertheless professes great admiration for my work. I am always amused when people like Fensterwald and Salandria suggest that "notwithstanding our differences on Garrison" we should be chums—it is like asking Mrs. Lincoln, but apart from that, what did you think of the performance?

Be of good cheer, things have got to get better.

All the best,

P.S. Like Lifton, you are using "alter" instead of "altar" in re Barbara Reid.

P.P.S. The author of the enclosed ode in anonymous but it may amuse you.