

1 November 1971

Dear Cyril,

My blood really boiled when I read Harold Weisberg's letter to you on 8 October 1971. I marvel at the restraint of your reply. Year after year Harold has issued these verbose and abusive indictments of one individual or another but never one so completely unwarranted as his letter to you, in the course of which he manages to complain about numerous other named and unnamed people. I wonder if the time will ever come when Harold will ask himself if it is really true that everyone is out of step except himself.

I know of no one who ever asked Harold to work on this case or any other case, or to work the way he does, and who therefore undertook any financial or other responsibility toward him. Personally I have been completely turned off by his unceasing pleas of poverty and thinly veiled hints or outright pressure for subsidy. The more he insists, the more determined I am not to be "taken". His catalogue of the tight-fisted is not even entirely accurate, for I know of one critic who sent him little checks over a period of time, foolishly, in my opinion, until he let slip on one occasion the value of some land he owns. As a matter of fact, I wonder if on balance Harold has not hurt as much as he has helped. Certainly he has made some brilliant investigative discoveries, only to bury them in turgid unreadable books that had little impact if any. But he has also aided and abetted a man like Garrison, much as he now likes to re-write that chapter in history (I note from his letter to you that he spent more than \$1,000 for Garrison—the sordid windbag who did more damage to the critics' cause than any other nut or jellybrain who intruded into the case) and done other disservices such as diverting time, attention and emotion to artificially-created crises and feuds and allmanner of confusion.

Sooner or later Harold quarrels with everyone. I think he suffers more than those he has accused of it from the ambition to be the one to crack the case, as he puts it. He forgets nothing and he forgives nothing, and I am weary of hearing how the wealthy Maggie Field gave him nothing but a sandwich. She was always more generous with me than I could be comfortable with, over my protest and resistance, and I had to break with her (and others) not for any personal reasons but because she became a fanatic apologist for Garrison—which I did not and do not forgive.

Harold occasionally admits to having faults—faults such as trusting others too readily, which may as easily be deemed virtues—but fundamentally his self-righteousness is stupefying and unmitigated. His insulting denunciations hit the proverbial electric fan and spray indiscriminately over everyone. He has little mercy for the human frailties of his fellow-critics, reserving all his charity for Earl Warren and the Kennedys, whose place in history he wishes to protect. But I will not write any seven-page letter to say what is obvious—that with all the good-will and good-faith in the world, it is difficult to maintain an untroubled rational relationship with Harold, that it is a strain to have to walk on eggshells for fear of triggering him into a major explosion involving streams of long letters or phonecalls, and that one must be saddened as well as apprehensive at the spectacle of his hostility and extreme suspicion of everyone except himself. If he could see himself as others see him, including those who are most "on his side", he would have an immense shock. Maybe the only sensible course is to steer entirely clear of him.

I am really sorry that after your unparalleled help to the critics you should have been inflicted with such an offensive and gratuitous piece of effrontery.

Sincerely,