

21 January 1967

Dear Harold,

First, I want to thank you very much for your letters to me, the copies of your letters to other persons, and your telephone calls while you were in New York. I am sorry that still another visit went by without our seeing each other personally but these difficulties seem to be inevitable, given such crowded schedules as we both follow. Harold, your letter to Jones Harris describing the shirt (CE 150) was really a masterpiece in its care and detail. I am quite intrigued by your description of blobs of wax-like substance on the shirt. You remember, I am sure, that a similar bit of waxy material was found inside the paper bag? (See LH 77 and LH 74) Stombaugh testified that he submitted the wax from the shirt for spectrographic analysis but nothing is said about the results thereof. Have you seen any report in the Archives?

I was able to hear part of the Martha Deane discussion on my transistor radio at the office but with many interruptions and then I had to leave for a lunch appointment so that I missed the last hour entirely. I am told that the whole 4 hours will be replayed on Tuesday night the 24th from 11 p.m.

When you called me before setting out for home, the morning before the broadcast, you seemed very pleased and felt that Mizer had been demolished. Harold, please do not take offense if I tell you that several people who listened to the discussion did not agree. Nor did I agree. Mizer actually came through very deceptively as a calm, judicious, authoritative speaker—although as we know he is in reality an arch-faker and ignoramus who should not dare to open his mouth in public on this case. The really sad thing is that you were entirely right on every factual issue, and he was entirely wrong, devious, ignorant, and dishonest—yet it did not come through that way, at least, not to the people who commented on the discussion to me, because your attack was so vigorous that Mizer assumed the aura of a patient, temperate, and virtuous martyr. I think it was a mistake to antagonize the moderator, however arbitrary or unfair her rulings in guiding the discussion.

Please take these comments as they are intended, Harold—in friendship and the hope of being helpful and constructive. I view you as a real powerhouse and titan of factual detail and precision unmatched by any other WR critic. I know how enormously effective you can be on TV and radio. It requires a terrible degree of self-denial, of course, to abjure protest against real misrepresentation and real unfairness—yet the discussion of evidence must not be eclipsed by dispute about the formalities of discussion and the critics, if anything, must present themselves as even more measured, objective, confident, and unemotional than their opponents. I have been told repeatedly that the maintenance of calm and clinical attitude on these radio and TV appearances, as much as the weight of the evidence itself, makes a strong impression on the audience. Sometimes a more aggressive approach is successful, as was the case on the Alan Burke program—but it is risky and in the case of the Mizer/Roberts affair, it was unsuccessful.

Again, my grateful thanks for all the trouble you have taken to keep me in the picture on your activities and correspondence, and especially for your offers of help with my ms. Warm regards, as ever,

Sylvia Meagher