

9 May 1967

Dear Harold,

Thank you for taking the time to drop me a note after your visit to New Orleans. I was most interested in all your comments, although I was not certain that I understood some of them. For example, you say (referring to Lane) that "there was universal disapproval of what he did," but I am not certain of the action involved. Was it his appearance, as such, before the junior bar association? Or did he disregard the prohibition against commenting on the evidence?

The fact that Garrison has established an entente with Mark Lane is considered by some of our colleagues to be virtual proof of the authenticity of the New Orleans investigation. I remain subject to some misgivings with respect to the use of such witnesses as Russo and Vernon Bundy. It is therefore reassuring to read in your letter of the 3rd that "they have some really exciting information." I hope that Garrison is not compelled to withhold this information from the public for too long a time; and that he uses it judiciously, in the interim. I think you are quite right in your "single serious complaint" about him. Impetuousity and indiscretion can be very dangerous, perhaps fatal. This is borne out by the very damaging articles by Phelan and now Hugh Aynesworth. The latter long ago established his credentials as a vicious hatchet-man against all criticism and critics of the WR, on a level with Schiller or even worse. I feel certain that he as well as Phelan have greatly inflated and distorted their "evidence" against Garrison's investigation. At the same time, it is a pity that they had access to any documents or reports or (presumably) tapes which could be transformed into weapons against G. in the hands of hostile and ruthless "journalists."

Ray phoned this morning from the airport, en route to New Orleans. He will go before the Grand Jury tomorrow. I hope that he receives a very careful hearing, from Garrison as well as from the Jury. I am delighted that you found the members equal to their potentially pivotal role in this case.

Ockene tells me that he has no contacts whatever with Fawcett and no way of getting the information you need. He will of course keep his eyes and ears open.

I read very carefully your reply to Lifton. I don't have it with me at this moment but as I recall you accepted his assurance that he had not entered into any "deal" to discredit Whitewash II, nor said that he had done so. I would hope that Lifton in no way interprets that as signifying concurrence in his wild and vicious charges against Maggie Field. While one might be willing to chalk the whole thing off as a misunderstanding, I recall very clearly Maggie's account of her conversation with Lifton, immediately after it took place, via long distance from Beverly Hills. I don't think she could possibly have related to me the contents of that conversation with Lifton if it had not taken place, or if she was uncertain of his actual meaning. Nor is Maggie (or anyone else among the critics) engaged in a campaign of vilification against Lifton—only a monstrously egocentric and immature person could even conceive of such an absurdity. So far as I am concerned personally, Lifton is a garrulous pest with horrible delusions of persecution. He is the one who always takes the initiative, creates controversy and bitterness, and then launches atrocious charges against those on whom he has imposed and who have treated him or tried to treat him with kindness and the consideration due to anyone whose history is so troubled. But since he turns everything into a parody of itself, I reached the conclusion long ago that I should have no truck with him whatever, so as to protect my own time, energy, and peace of mind. The validity of this policy has certainly proven itself, so far as it has spared me the kind of abuse which Maggie is now experiencing. In any case, I intend to ignore his letter on the subject. All the best,