

4 August 1967

Dear Harold,

Thank you for sending me the flying saucer clips from the Washington Post. Time magazine recently had a Time Essay, "A Fresh Look at Flying Saucers," which cautiously treated the subject as a serious one, rather than an excuse for puns. This, juxtaposed with the chapter of Warren's biography in which I learned that the Chief Justice had played Delilah to Liebel's Samson, was irresistible to an ex-versifier like me:

Doth Liebel scoff whilst TIME is serious?
Mock, provincial, wax delirious
Yet flying saucers are less weird
Than thought of Liebel sporting beard.

Beatnik flanking Warren? Hirsute chin is foreign
Each sycophant and craven, henceforth cleanly-shaven!
Snicker, jeer, cavort at UFOs in the skies
Write a new Report to supplement old lies,
Give evidence a barefaced and wide berth—
No Martians or Venusians visit Earth.

Extra-terrestrial theorists may bravely whistle
But the lone-assassin and the single-missile
Of beardless Liebel's predilection
Will take the prize for science fiction.

(As you may have heard, Liebel likes to disparage me as a critic of the WR on the grounds that I read books on flying saucers. How impoverished can he get?)

I read your letter of 8/2/67 with much interest, of course. I can't say that the story about the person who recognized Hall in reading your WW and WW 2 is very clear to me, but I understand of course your reluctance to say too much in a letter. What does trouble me a little is your statement that you and Garrison "both turned to LIFE." True, it did seem for a while at the end of last year that LIFE had reversed its course and intended to pursue and publish the facts. It was during that period that I was invited by Kern to see the Zapruder film; and I had a good impression of Kern. But he was taken off this case, as you know. As for Billings, my only contact with him was the phonecall I made at your request, re: Willis. I have no basis for any opinion but it does seem to me that whatever Billings may feel personally, he too is a victim of policies made at a higher level of LIFE. In the last analysis, it may be risky and self-defeating to cooperate or depend upon media which continue to show an ambiguous attitude or policy on the case.

Turning to your New Orleans book, Harold, I can only say with the frankness that our long association requires that I am very sorry to learn that you have invited Garrison to write the introduction. I have expressed my feelings about him so often, to our other colleagues and to some degree to you personally, that I am reluctant to go over the whole business again. To put it as briefly and succinctly as I can, my feeling is that any critic who allies himself with Garrison is compromising himself and his work, by implicitly "accepting" witnesses like Russo and Bundy while rejecting Markham, Brennan, and other WC perjurers; by implicitly condoning the "P.O. 19106" so-called "code" while denouncing the WC's rifle tests or wound penetration tests, from the results of which the WR pronounced totally unjustifiable conclusions, utilized in turn to make false, vicious, and cynical "findings" that an innocent man was guilty of the heinous crime of assassinating the President. There, I have said what I felt duty-bound to say, and I will not pursue this any further. After your misplaced confidence in Schiller and Townley, and perhaps in Billings, I think you ought to weigh very carefully what you do, lest you jeopardize the value and reputation of the very important body of work which you have and are producing. I know that I am practically alone in my assessment of Garrison, but it is my firm conviction that even if his motives are the highest his methods make him the greatest menace yet to the cause of legitimate research and criticism. As always,