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Route 8
Frederick, Md. 21701

July 24, 1968

Editor, Open City
4369 Melrose
Los Angeles, California

Sir:

It is unfortunate that you have no choice but to trust correspondents and to expect that, when they write of things they pretend to know about, they are truthful or, at least, have that intent. This, however, is not true of Kerry Thornley and his non-stop falsifications in your issue No. 60. It is because he is using this to defame other people and as part of a behind-the-scenes campaign, pretending that, because you printed it, it therefore is true, that I write to straighten out some of his untruths.

He says of me, "He implies that there was something sneaky about picturing me with a beard - and yet his own False Oswald had such a beard." Here is a sketch of "Oswald" with a stubble. To show your readers how honest Thornley is, why not print his words, the picture he gave you and this, side by side? Even one who knows as little of the subject as he knew better. He imposed on you.

I asked why he and David Lifton did not give the details of the charges against him in all those words. Here he pretends to, but it is only pretense, for he alludes only to what he says his "testimony" contained. Now, Garrison charges Thornley (who had a home address) used a post-office box where Oswald did and this was directly across the street from Guy Banister's office. Here some of the prime fascists hung out, the revanchist Cubans regularly; David W. Ferrie, charged as a conspirator. And here a CIA front had an office - an address Oswald used. So, the evasion is nothing more. The questions and points I raised are not in any way addressed by his "sneaky" reference to what he says his testimony "contained".

He purposefully lies in saying I refer to his "book" as a pamphlet "to give the idea it was something I'd run off in my basement on a Ditto machine ..." With all the vomit solidified into type in it, with all the padding, all the contributions by others, it still remains only pamphlet size. It is less than 3/8 of an inch thick. One third of this scant size is the reprint of his testimony. The magazine-article length remainder contains contributions from three others and hunks of his unpublishable "Idle Warriors". That is a book? I say his junk is not a book because it has none of the attributes of a book and not for the crap that, typically and knowing better, he invents and foists off on trusting editors and readers.

It is immaterial that this sickening ego undertakes to edit sworn testimony "in order to protect one innocent person" (a lie, for that testimony was published) or to "make it clearer and smoother reading". He took whole ideas out, and he had the consummate gall to change the wording of the questions asked of him.

"My testimony does not paint a 'new kind of "Communist"' - for I said I'd gotten the impression that Oswald was 'idle in his admiration' of the Soviet system." I leave it to your readers with strong stomachs to read his "testimony" in the official form. Let me, then, give you a few examples of what he wrote after he testified before the Warren Commission - and this is only what springs immediately to mind, for his lies are not worth the time of researching and are so flimsy they do not require it.

"Oswald", page 54: "Were I to sit down now and try to offer an example of Oswald's methods of argument on behalf of Marxism ..."

These are the titles of the four articles he wrote for "Men's Digest": "Oswald - as only a Marine buddy could know him - IN THE MARINES THEY CALLED LEE OSWALD SUBVERSIVE - AND A BORN LOSER"; "MARXISM WAS LEE HARVEY OSWALD'S ONLY RELIGION"; "Oswald - as only a Marine buddy could know him - OSWALD INSANE?"; and "HOW IT FELT TO KILL THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES" (as you will see, this is the same Thornley who said he "had no theories of Oswald's guilt or innocence"). Now, the same "box" was carried about Thornley in each of the four issues. It claimed he "obviously knew Oswald better than anyone outside the slayer's family - and perhaps even better than they".

If there still remains any doubt about Thornley's putting the red finger on Oswald, this is the last line of the first article: "As I think back, he made it even more clear in our next few talks that he was a Marxist." In the second piece, "Marxism and his own place in the future world were not all that Oswald thought about." Also, "And, tragically, his religion was Communist."

That old Greek carrying the bathtub and lantern certainly was not looking for Thornley!

He again lies in saying I "misrepresented" his testimony about the requirements for the work Oswald did, and he offers as proof, "I myself did not have a secret clearance." Now, there are many things Oswald did that Thornley did not, including acting as crew chief. I enclose a photocopy of Thornley's testimony and that of the operations officer. It is explicit in Thornley's testimony that Oswald had a higher clearance than he, did work he did not do, and that his own clearance entitled him only to "operate radar detection devices". Oswald worked in the "security files" (another strange place for a "Communist"), and the secrets he possessed should choke even a loudmouth like Thornley. They are specified in the officer's testimony.

It is an entire misrepresentation for him to say, "I went to the FBI and offered to do whatever I could to assist in the apprehension of whoever had used him as a pawn" (the slop intended as slanders of me that is part of this is, even for Thornley, too cheap to dignify). What he does not say is that he did not go to the government - they came to him. First the Secret Service, then the FBI. And, as I

specified, with the dates, he then went back to the FBI, voluntarily. I think it would have been helpful if you had quoted his own confession about this when you elected to publish his slanders.

He delights in making up things. He will learn more of perjury as times goes on. He writes, "Notice that Earl Warren, for example, is not on trial for perjury ..." Perjury is a false statement under oath by a witness and about a material point. The chairman and the staff were neither witnesses nor under oath. This is another stupid Thornley device that is a red herring garnished with propaganda.

He bleeds for the atrocities in Katanga. I point out merely that he says he bleeds for no others, and I can think of a few he might.

"Assassination has not yet become a disturbing national pastime." Perhaps he is too close to them to judge impartially; I think otherwise, and I rest on something foreign to him: the record.

To say he had never been offered the opportunity to confront me and he did not know I had made a by-phone broadcast to a radio station in his area until he heard the tape three days later is to use a standard Warren-Commission technique to lead you and your readers astray. The station was WLCY, St. Petersburgh, Florida, the program, "Open Mike". He was so anxious to respond to what I had said that, in his opening words, "I didn't show up on time, right." This was February 5, 1968, and there, for once, Thornley spoke the truth! He was given a full opportunity to respond to what I had said that he considered wrong. He raised what really bugs him, calling that printed triviality of his a pamphlet. The best he could get out of the kind and tolerant moderator is "he (meaning me) might consider it a pamphlet by size". Which is precisely what I said. Thornley used that same poor line there, "felt it gave the impression that 'Oswald' was something that I ran off in my cellar and was passing out on Canal St. in New Orleans". He did not even give you original crap. And this was long after he had left New Orleans.

His next complaint was abuut his publisher for an "out of context quote" on the cover. (It said something nice about Oswald!)

Then he went into the same guff about Oswald's security clearance, typically not knowing what he was talking about. Here he acknowledged of what I had said, "I assume he has proof of it"! Of course, I do.

When he was reminded that I had quoted the commander on this also, he replied, "Did he say this? If he said this, I don't, I certainly don't recall it." That, naturally, because he had heard the tape and read the book!

The next few nothings do not relate to me. Then he "assumed", as he always does, preferring flexible assumptions to hard fact, that I had broadcast from New Orleans (the tape contained the fact that I broadcast from my home, which is in Maryland). He told this lie so he could make a crack about my "having been by the District Attorney's office that day". After four apologies for his errors as they were called to his attention, Thornley tried to end that particular series of blunders, having to do with his quoting me as commenting on what had not yet happened, "Okay. Well, then I'm not unhappy about that."

Nor surprisingly, he then went into what has nothing at all to do with me but does validate what I have written, what he described as his "very kooky political philosophy". I will not quibble over the use of the word "philosophy". He winds that up thus: "... people don't know what to make of me but they think I'm some kind of extremist - and I guess I am." Q.E.D.

There then comes a line I think he will have recalled to him some time in the future. I merely note it now because it is such an awful lie, even for this accomplished practitioner: "I'm very much opposed to ... all sorts of violence ..." (He considers a subpena "violence", too. Perhaps in his position ...) His abhorrence of "violence" does not keep him from being for the draft (dig that flower in the mouth!) because the "purpose of the draft is to defend liberty". Recall all that weeping over Katanga?

He calls Taipeh "Free China".

Then a caller asked him about my writing: "Do you find any of his criticisms based on facts or just hypothesis?" Thornley: "I would say that many of Mr. Weisberg's criticisms ... I think are based on fact." Not one complaint of anything I had written of him. No suggestion I had merely given a hypothesis, even when he was asked.

Then, told by a caller, "There are a couple of us that have been very conscientiously checking on Mr. Weisberg and his references to the 26 volumes. And there are only a couple of places where we would have any fault to find. One of those, he didn't go as far as he could have. The other place, it's a matter of interpretation." Again, no claim of error. Thornley went off into something else. This included, "I have no theories as to Oswald's guilt or innocence" - from the man the fourth of whose magazine series is his own romantization of how Oswald did it and what was in his mind when he did.

It is here that he says Tony Shemroski "fingered" him the day after the assassination, whereas he knew it was false, as my letters citing the suppressed evidence proves.

Stripped of much immaturity and nonsense, this is Kerry Thornley when given a chance to confront what he considered my "errors" on the radio station, of which he wrote you, "I have never been offered the opportunity to confront Weisberg ..." I have the tape, if you would like his voice, and the transcript, if you can stand his words.

The rest is, even by his low standards, trash, and there is no purpose in wasting more time to comment.

There is, however, one more than usually malignant lie about which I think a comment is required:

"The way I learned of the comment of my former girl friend about me - 'If Oswald hadn't killed President Kennedy, he would have done it himself' - was through Mr. Jenner, Warren Commission counsel. Weisberg knows this and there is no excuse whatever for his laying the blame to me if my notion of when that comment was made is inaccurate." Beginning at the end, what Thronley said is that he was <u>first fingered to the feds</u>

by the artist who quoted his former girl friend as saying he had said he would have killed the President if Oswald had not. Thornley here lies. He had been interviewed by both the FBI and the Secret Service and then had sneaked back to the FBI again, all well before they interviewed the artist. If you want to print it, I will send you a copy of the FBI report that proves this. He has reason for lying, or, if he is capable of shame, he should have. It is a deliberate lie to say I knew this from Jenner for one of the incredible things is that Thornley was never asked if he had threatened he would have killed the President. The FBI report was suppressed from the evidence and I had to dig it up from the suppressed files. And even in the generous space you have allotted him, he has not seen fit to deny having said such a horrible thing (with flower, if not foot, in mouth).

May I suggest that this should teach the editor that he should be more careful about the kind of creeps he permits use of his paper for personal defamations and the broadcasting of self-serving lies?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

P.S. Please return the picture.

Enclosures: 1 pic
4 pp Testimony