

1 November 1967

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Route 7  
Frederick, Md. 21701

Dear Harold,

During the course of our widening disagreement on Garrison, you have often argued that I should suspend judgment until he has his day in court, until the judicial process has had the opportunity to function, and the charges have been tested by cross-examination and fair trial. I will, if need be, produce exact quotations from your letters, but I trust that you will agree that this is an accurate statement of the position you have taken.

That being so, I was astonished to find in your book, "Oswald in New Orleans," on page 107, the following paragraph:

He attracted the greatest attention to the Trade Mart when he was arrested on March 1, 1967, charged with conspiracy to commit murder in the assassination. He was first publicized in connection with the assassination in Whitewash, where I brought him to light under the alias by which he was known to Dean Adams Andrews.

It is clear that in spite of your stated position on the need to await trial, and in spite of the entitlement of any accused person to the presumption of his innocence, you have already found Clay Shaw guilty of having used the alias Clay Bertrand (or Clem Bertrand) and, implicitly, of participation in the conspiratorial meeting with Ferrie and Oswald to which Perry Russo testified at the preliminary hearing.

Your assertion has no foundation in fact or in law. It is highly prejudicial to the defendant, if and when he comes to trial, and very misleading to the uninformed reader of your book. It is all the more regrettable that the assertion was made by a foremost critic of the Warren Report, who has claimed to speak for justice and truth.

Yours sincerely,

  
Sylvia Meagher

31 October 1967

Mr. Penn Jones, Jr.  
Box 70  
Midlothian, Texas 76065

Dear Penn,

I should like to disabuse you of the notion that I wrote, or influenced Arnoni to write, the editorial on Garrison. In the first place, I do not publish my views behind a protective shield of anonymity. I have said what I have to say, both on the Warren Report and on Garrison, in my own writing, and I stand behind what I have written---in the case of Garrison, on pages 456-457 of my book, written in June 1967 for insertion in the epilogue.


In the second place, you and others who have attributed the editorial to me or to my alleged "influence" overlook or misjudge Arnoni's aggressive and uncompromising resistance to influence or instruction from any source, including those in a position to alleviate the magazine's precarious financial position.

I could not influence Arnoni's view of Garrison earlier this year, when we held differing positions on the district attorney; I did not influence Arnoni's change of position, which was purely and simply a logical response to Garrison's elaboration of his "case;" and I did not influence the substance or the style of the editorial. Had I written it, it would probably have been less charitable and more rude.

I hope and assume that you did not intend to question my integrity in suggesting, as you did, that I was directly or indirectly projecting my views in anonymity, or questioning Arnoni's, in suggesting that he had surrendered his independence of judgment. Nevertheless, I am regretful that you drew inferences from the editorial that are entirely unwarranted. I regret also that the letter-writers who lost no time in scolding Arnoni (and/or paying undeserved tributes to my "influence") continue to maintain silence, if they do not actually condone, demonstrable and blatant lack of scruples on the part of their ally, the district attorney. One or two letter-writers even concede that Garrison's methods are sometimes unfortunate, that his case has troublesome aspects, and that some of his witnesses and evidence "seemingly" are questionable. In a strange manifestation of fairness, they then proceed to reproach Garrison's critics for saying, in print, much the same thing.

You will forgive me, I hope, if I see in this manifestation something of a parallel with, for example, Alexander Bickel's sneers and vituperation against the critics of the Warren Report, which he himself had to admit was shamefully defective.

Yours sincerely,

  
Sylvia Meagher  
302 West 12 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10014

31 October 1967

Dear Ray,

I appreciate your having let me know about Maggie's injury and I have, of course, sent her a note expressing my dismay at this misfortune. I am truly heartsick that she has had to endure so many hard blows in the last two years.

I am also grateful to Letha for what I understand was her spirited defense of me against a suggestion that I was in some kind of cahoots with RFK. Anyone who entertains such a notion might just as well believe George C. Thomson, or the hollowed-out knoll with fake trees. Or (afterthought) the Warren Report.

It seems I have become the villainess of the piece---not Mark Lane, who offers the public stress marks on the back of the Stemmons sign long after conceding privately that the marks are on the film, not the sign; or who attacks me with such righteous scorn for non-mention of a periodical whose name was consciously and carefully excluded from Rush to Judgment; and certainly NOT Garrison, with his codes and his quoting out of context and his campaign to implicate Oswald in the conspiracy and in clandestine sinister relationships with Ruby and Shaw, on the basis of evidence and testimony that threaten to invest the Commission's "facts" with undeserved dignity. I have already indicated, in the enclosed letter to Penn, the parallel that suggests itself. Another parallel is Eisenberg's complaint, when I pointed out a falsehood in the WR, that I was "intolerant."

It is hard to avoid the impression that anything-goes, in the crusade to discourage legitimate criticism of Garrison. I have been accused of lining up with the Establishment, I have been urged to maintain silence for the sake of "solidarity" even against the dictates of conscience, or when an unconscionable and outrageous attack has been made against my ethical standards by a "colleague" whose unscrupulousness is notorious; and I have been accused of some other beauties of delinquency, not to say treachery. ("What right do you have to criticize Garrison? You've never held public office!")

Well, I am resisting the temptation to invoke the well-worn cliché, about not needing enemies. But I did want to thank Letha for rejecting the thesis of my ulterior motivation. By the way, the New Orleans hypothesis about my anti-Garrison position does not link me to RFK but ascribes my views to resentment that the Garrison investigation will make my book "out of date." Which is almost as fanciful and equally malicious. There is really no mystery about my opposition to Garrison--for the benefit of the theorists, it is for exactly the same reasons as my war against the Warren Report. And I make absolutely no apology whatsoever, in either case.

As always,



tion of the Warren Report in the anticipation that it would shed light on this affair had to resign themselves to waiting longer, until the publication of the Hearings and Exhibits, for illumination. It was hard to understand why the rumors generated by Kline and Pugh were not debunked by the Commission in Appendix XII of the Report, as was, for example, the rumor that a detachment of the U.S. Army "began to rehearse for the funeral more than a week before the assassination." (WR 668) The rumor that Oswald was being watched at the request of "an official agency in Washington" seemed no less consequential than the funeral rehearsal.

The impression that the Commission wished to avoid confronting the issue was borne out when the Hearings and Exhibits finally became available. Mr. Kline's affidavit (15H 640) states tersely:

I do not recall being interviewed by Harold Feldman [sic] who I am informed represented the *New York Post*. . . . With respect to Lee Harvey Oswald, I have no personal knowledge whatsoever of any check made on him by the United States Public Health Service, Laredo, Texas, either upon his entry into or exit from Mexico in 1963. I have no personal knowledge whatsoever that any agency of the United States Government maintained a surveillance of Oswald's movements, and I have never indicated to the contrary to any news reporters. (15H 640)

Pugh's affidavit (15H 640-641) follows along the same lines. He "did not recall" being interviewed by the *New York Post*, and "in any event" all information he had given to reporters had been supplied by his assistant, Kline, and did not derive from personal knowledge.

Kline's affidavit was executed on July 31, 1964; Pugh's, on August 26, 1964. If there are any intermediate reports, interviews, or documents, they are not evident in the Exhibits.

The affidavits do not dispose of the matter. They repudiate the story in the *New York Post* (attributing it erroneously to Harold Feldman, who merely referred to the story in the *Post* in an article in *The Nation*),<sup>9</sup> but the reporter who wrote the story was not questioned and we do not know whether, if he were questioned, he would retract, modify, or maintain it. The belated *pro forma* disclaimers from Pugh and Kline, his alleged sources, cannot by themselves resolve the conflict. And what about the story in the *New York Herald-Tribune*? That newspaper is not mentioned in the affidavits. Since the *Herald Tribune* story of November 26, 1963 remains unchallenged, may we regard it as accurate?

The evidence suggests that there may be much more to this affair beneath the surface, but that it may be 75 years before it is excavated. It brings to mind a passage from the testimony of Revilo Oliver, professor of classical philology at the University of Illinois and student of the assassination, in colloquy with Counsel Albert Jenner on September 9, 1964.

*Oliver:* The exact quotation is, "I do not know whether Oswald was paid by the CIA but I hear there was testimony before the Warren Commission that he was."

<sup>9</sup> "Oswald and the FBI," *The Nation*, January 27, 1964, pp. 86-89.