

James DiEugenio
10734 Jefferson Blvd., #441
Culver City, CA 90230

8/3/95

Dear Jim,

I've read your letter of 7/31, my memo to Garrison of 4/12/68 and I've skimmed part of the transcript of my interview with Crest Pena. I'll read that when I have the time, probably with interest. As you can see from what I wrote Jim, before the advent of all the medical problems, my typing wasn't all that bad. The transcript was done in Garrison's office, with difficulty. The fine writing on it is not mine. Probably the thickest and blackest is Garrison's. I cannot identify the rest of it. I suppose that it the transcript that led the girls in the steno pool to give up and that I did the rest. This is not a close xerox of that and the size was reduced at some point. I cannot make out much of the writing.

I note that I told Garrison, based on what Pena said, that there was IRS interest in him. They filed against him several years after the Shaw cases ended.

The "whole issue" of your letter is several unrelated issues. I think I have some of my participation in the case before Hallick in Post Mortem but that was written so long ago I am not certain. I was asked to be the subject-matter expert and as such I sat at counsel table with the lawyer Garrison sent up, Numa Bertel. I never "left the investigation" no matter what you mean by that. I was independent of Garrison in New Orleans, sometimes I gave him what I developed and most of my time was spent trying to learn more about Oswald. I was never part of Garrison's "investigation" so it was not possible for me to leave it.

If you are ever near here and want to go into whatever you are driving at I'll be glad to talk it but not to take the time to write it now.

As I recall Epsteinker's footnote 26 was less than accurate. The sources you give me explains that. Bethell could very well have known the results of my first interview with Douglas Jones from office talk.

I have the letter but it is in the basement to which I cannot now get, in some file. If I think of a file upstairs in which it might be and is I'll send you a copy.

I did not personally "send" that letter. Here is how it happened.

I had real questions about their, meaning later also Silver's, identification of Oswald, more when I'd interviewed Jones only. I wanted to learn if a makeup man could have made Hornley look like Oswald but I did not trust anyone in Garrison's office not to take liberties with it. I believed that Fred Newcomb, a commercial artists, would be honest in his efforts. I did not then know that he and Liften were so to speak in bed with each other. So when I could not find a typewriter in Garrison office not in use and Ivon could not he took me into the steno's room and asked the senior one there, Lorraine LeBoeuf, if she take a little dictation. It was short, perhaps given the irrationality that ensued too short, two paragraphs. In them I reflect what I say about, no more, and

there was no rational reason to believe that I was trying to frame Thornley. Lifton's instant fact for which he never needs any reason if he likes what he makes up. I assumed Lorraine would type it on a blank piece of paper and have it for me when I returned. When I did return she gave me a xerox on the office letterhead. I told her it was not office and to retype it on plain paper. She said that to help me she'd sent it, without my signature.

If there is no date on it, Lorraine omitted it. No reason for it. It was in Memo form, too.

Unless I see what you have I cannot tell you whether it is a fake. No reason for faking it that I know of.

I do not recall what I've said before about the Lifton-Thornley relationship after Thornley found out in Washington that the Commission had no more use for him than the FBI did when he went to it to become its link and he ^{went to} Los Angeles.

I don't know who gave me the copy I had of the Thornley affidavit saying that "Hidell" was known as Hidell but along with it was proof that Lifton got him to execute that affidavit. It may have been someone in Garrison's office because it was sent to him. The surrounding info made it clear that Lifton had him do it. Lifton was then already on the outs with Garrison. As I believe I told you the crook of a Baltimore cop who works for Livingstone also worked for Lifton. There was much stolen that only Lifton would have any interest in rather than just making copies, which all could do here. Someone checked several basement files for me and that is among what is missing. There is not much space in my office and what was not of current interest to me was moved there to give me file space in my office. Also stolen was the only copy I'd made of my page-by-page analysis and commentary on Best Evidence, which is neither, and the duplication of Lifton's FOIA request I made of the MDW. All the Thornley-Boatwright correspondence, original holographs, are gone. I did give Sciambra a copy for that office. Garrison did not ask for that affidavit and never believed it so far as I know. It was to the best of my knowledge all Lifton.

Your friends Davy and Vea will be welcome and they can as others can examine the files and make copies of anything they want that I got from the government. On other things there may be what I do not want copied, particularly if it involves third persons. It varies.

It was Greg Stone who donated Sylvia's records to Hood. Jerry has bobtailed it a bit. When Stone phoned me in great distress with all those records for which he needed immediate storage I did not have enough room for them in our basement. I spoke to Hood and the librarian gave Greg six months of secure storage, no charge. When we still had no space for them Hood kept them for I think several years, without protest. The librarian is a fine person. I think but I am not sure that Greg asked me at some point what would be the best home for them and I said "I would from my experiences with the ^{my} Jerry and Roger

opposed that. They wanted them in NYC where they could go through them without trouble. But from the point of view of accessibility and of scholars intending serious uses they could have no better home.

My good friend Jerry McKnight spent a summer he wanted to devoted to a book he had in draft, to make revisions, to accessioning those records. In the course of going over them he made I think a list, perhaps more, by each file folder. I do not have a copy. And I've never looked at her records. I suppose you can get whatever Jerry put on paper by asking Charles Kuhn, the librarian, who had a different title, for a xerox. They have xerox machines for student use, 10¢ per sheet. 301/696-3903 is the library's number. If you write the College and Frederick will do. Zip 20701.

I'll read and correct this tomorrow. It is 10 minutes before supper for us and I've been running late. For the most pleasant of reasons. Today was our 53rd wedding anniversary and we took old friends to lunch, a leisurely lunch. I'm also a bit pressed because Saturday I'll lose much if not most of the day because someone is coming then.

I've skimmed the rest of the transcript and saw no notes of particular significance other than their reflection of what to Garrison was important. I presume those pages copied crookedly were that way when you got it. Some content is missing toward the end.

In such things ^{as} this transcript depending on what comes from a single source may lead to inaccuracies ^{and} if used to mislead others. There are, especially with such people, emotional considerations, their likes and dislikes, who they regard as enemies, the possibility that they are confused or just wrong, etc. Ofest was later caught in a sex-commercializing ring. He then was defended by Mark Lane!

Thornley got to know Phil Boatright in New Orleans. Boatright, a poet, they had an unhappy love affair. He and his girl friend both left N.O. It was she who asked him to see me and he did. Aside from what he did for a living he then edited and published a poetry magazine, Steppenwolf. We developed a friendly relationship and corresponded for a while. He sent me copies of the magazine. Last I heard from him he and his ^{then} new wife had gone to the holy land. He was a good person. Thornley's letters to him are not those of a good person.

As I recall it the note added to my 4/12/68 (which I referred to by the date I'd written, 3/21/68, which may have been the date of my Pena interview) is incorrect in identifying the Chandler article as in LOOK. Chandler worked for LIFE.

Sincerely,
Harold

Dear Harold:

Per your request, here is the interview you did with Pena. I think it is quite good, as most of your work for Garrison was. Its a shame, more of it did not get into the record, or at least circulated into the mainstream. I think all of it is interesting, deserves follow-up, and some of it is of real and enduring value.

This whole issue, of why you left the investigation, your actual participation in the Halleck hearing and at the Shaw trial I would like to get some time.

Returning to our original conversation and your letter of 7/20:

- 1.) The footnote that Epstein gives for the on-page footnote you asked about is as follows: 26. Bethell interview, and letter from Harold Weisberg to Fred Newcomb. That's it. I assume that the stuff about using Thornley as the "second Oswald" would come from Bethell. Then the stuff about the photos would be sourced to the letter. Do you have the letter? Did you ever send such a letter? Why is there no date given for the letter? And, as I said, the contents of the letter contradict what you told me on the phone. Is the letter a fabrication?
- 2.) I find it quite interesting that you write; "It was Lifton who got Thornley to execute an affidavit in which Thronley alleged that John Rene Heindell had the nickname and was known as Hidell." Do you recall why he did this and at whose request, if anyone's?
- 3.) I forget to ask you about the Boatwright-Thornley correspondence that you mentioned in our first call. Could you forward that to me with any comments you have, or if it difficult to get, could you give me the gist of it? As I said, you can limit my use of this if you like. I have the utmost respect for a researcher's original work that is not in any public repository.
- 4.) I talked to Matt Herron and told him about th elimited complimentary copies of your book. No problem.
- 5.) I wonder if you would mind talking to two friends of mine, Bill Davy and Peter Veal? They live in the area and I am sure they would like to talk to you and go through some of your files. They are real good guys, not Livingstone, John Davis types at all. And I wonder if you could advise them on how to secure access to Sylvia Meagher's files, which, according to Jerry Policoff you placed at a nearby college. There must be wonderful things in there.

Well that's about it. Again, nice talking to you, thanks for your letter, and take it easy. Hope to hear from you soon about some of these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jim', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jim DiEugenio