

John Paul

6/8/69

Dear Sylvia,

This past Wednesday I was given a set of proofs of "Counterplot". I hadn't bought the book because I felt I couldn't afford to and I had had no revelation of its contents from anyone. Yesterday evening, with a few free moments, I began to glance at it. I was fascinated, so before retiring and this morning I ~~had~~ finished (and annotated) it.

Epstein is a genuinely corrupt man. His dishonesty is as sincere as only honesty can be in decent people. I am satisfied that he intended to exploit you and your good name, that his intention was entirely different than yours in reading the book. He cannot possibly have been concerned with accuracy, in drawing upon your so-inclusive knowledge of the fact. His intent was merely to be able to trade upon his name, to make it seem as though you vouched for the accuracy of what he wrote. This, obviously, you did not and could not do. He is a slimy one.

Unfortunately, you are the only one of Garrison's original critics whose motives are beyond question. You will find, I am certain, as I long ago did, that the others all had special interests or angles and were less than honest or even correct (when there need have been no error).

My purpose in writing is to assure you that as it relates to me I am without bitterness for I do not and cannot believe you were or would be part of an intent to defame or libel me.

I have written Aaron Asher and enclose a copy of that letter.

If others do not understand or believe, you do know that those of us who really seek the truth look at all sides and try to. The incident of the Thornley pictures and the Newcomb memo was not in any sense designed to frame Thornley and it certainly had the opposite result. It was an effort to learn whether it was possible for Thornley to have passed as Oswald. And it was accompanied by an effort to alert Thornley to the position he was in, possibly innocently, and an uninhibited offer to help him.

Reference to the Thornley-Lifton affidavit may not be clear to you. I do not know what that sick man Lifton has told you. But he got Thornley to execute an affidavit that amounts to the framing of Heindell that he and Epstein charge Garrison with and he sent that affidavit to Garrison. If my recollection is not flawed, he wrote the affidavit. If it is no credit to Garrison that he considered acting on this affidavit (the argument can be made, but he didn't), it is less credit to Lifton for being part of this and can Epstein's handling of it be condemned enough?

Unfortunately, you had little or no way of knowing how permeating the New Orleans error is in "Counterplot". In the finest and usually unnecessary (for his purposes) detail, Epstein prefers to be wrong on fact. It is so thorough, I cannot believe it is accidental. More, because of the nature of some of it and because of the numerous instances of what seem to be cases of his being carefully fed, I think this book in itself raises questions about who he is, for whom or with whose help and in whose interest he speaks. A rather large amount of this error cannot originate with him. But he is so lazy! He must really detest work. So much was so unnecessary! Make no mistake about it, however, he is so without conscience that he is an unusually competent propagandist. If, as I suspect, he also finds it profitable, there is no need to assume this is the end of that career. Hurriedly,