



DISTRICT ATTORNEY

PARISH OF ORLEANS
STATE OF LOUISIANA
2700 TULANE AVENUE
NEW ORLEANS 70119



JIM GARRISON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

October 4, 1967

Mr. M. S. Arnoni, Editor
The Minority of One
155 West 15th Street
New York, New York 10011

Dear Mr. Arnoni:

I have read the article entitled "Garrison and Warren: Anything in Common?" in the October issue of The Minority of One. It is, of course, a disappointment to find that so much misunderstanding can appear in a magazine which heretofore has shown so much understanding.

I regret that it is not possible for me publicly to present evidence prior to trial even while the Establishment press pounds away at its theme that the Warren Commission was right and that matter is closed. I regret even more that the writer of this article should so uncritically digest the official line and so eagerly assume the role of a disappointed former supporter.

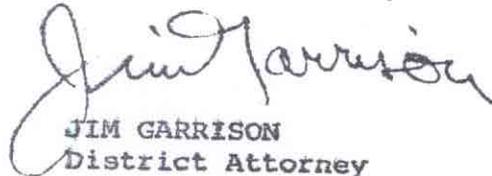
I really do not care greatly whether anybody thinks I am wrong or right about the assassination. Since I happen to be right, the problem is theirs and not mine.

Undoubtedly there are many individuals who expected me to conform to some sort of pre-determined image which suited their needs but their disappointment has nothing to do with the objective validity of the case against the men who killed the President. It merely affects their ability to observe with objectivity.

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At the outset of this case I publicly said that anyone who bet against us on this investigation would lose. I now repeat that statement. It won't even be close.

Sincerely,


JIM GARRISON
District Attorney

P.S. Ordinarily I avoid getting involved with details resulting from misunderstandings because this would engage me full time in writing letters of explanation. However, there are some errors of detail in the article and I feel I must call your attention to several of them.

The code of Ruby's telephone number is really quite valid and has been confirmed to the satisfaction of qualified individuals unconnected with this office. Furthermore, our reference to the code was necessitated by legal pleadings designed to prevent the address book from disappearing forever into the control of the defendant. Even if it were to turn out that in the long run the alleged code had no objective validity, the very fact that there appeared to be such an alteration of numbers made it necessary for us to oppose returning the address book -- and by such opposition it was necessary for us to describe the nature of the particular code. Nevertheless, I have made very little reference to it elsewhere nor have I had occasion to point out that it occurs again and again and again. I suspect that my real problem here is simply that an elected official happened to stumble across it instead of the unhappy critic who complains so bitterly that such a thing could be possible.

As for William Gurvich, it is simply not true that he was my Chief Investigator and there really is no conflict about that point at all. Bill came along and volunteered his services for nothing and he was never a paid member of the staff.

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(Part?)
If my response with regard to him was not satisfying to the writer of the article, I doubt if my response to anything would be satisfying. I simply do not bother to explain things and I could not care less whether the writer of the article understands or does not understand.

In concluding this rather long postscript, I cannot help but wonder what the author of the article expected to occur to the only public official taking a stand against the Warren Commission. Did the writer really expect our flag to survive unstained and unturned? This is only the beginning.

The point is that we are fighting and we are not going to quit and that we have found out what happened. This is all that is important. I really do not believe that a careful inventory of my imperfections -- and I do admit to having a great many -- has any relevance to the matter at all.



JG:lcs

10 October 1967

Mr. M. S. Arnoni, Editor
The Minority of One
155 Pennington Avenue
Passaic, New Jersey 07055

Dear Menahem,

Jim Garrison's letter to you dated October 4, 1967 reveals some uncertainty (at the top of page three), either about the masculinity of William Gurvich or about the identity of the writer of your editorial, "Garrison and Warren: Anything in Common?" If it is the latter that puzzles him, he has apparently overlooked the statement in the masthead of TMO, "Unsigned contributions are written by the editor." And no one who knows you could fail to recognize the absolute independence of your judgments or your invulnerability to influence or persuasion.

Mr. Garrison proclaims that he is "right" but here are some examples of his inaccurate and misleading pronouncements:

(1) In an interview broadcast in Los Angeles on April 3, 1967, Garrison charged that page 47 of Oswald's address book had been suppressed. In fact, it is published in full (Exhibits, Volume XVI, page 54).

(2) In a legal instrument released to the press on May 13, 1967, and on subsequent occasions, Garrison has claimed that the notation "P.O.19106" appears in Oswald's notebook and in Shaw's, and that it is a cryptogram for Ruby's unpublished phone number. The notation in Oswald's notebook is actually DD 19106 (the Cyrillic "D"), as may readily be seen (Exhibit 18, Volume XVI, page 58). This invalidates the so-called cryptogram.

Mr. Garrison, instead of confronting the fact that the "P.O." is a "D D," suspects that "his real problem here is simply that an elected official happened to stumble across it instead of the unhappy critic who complains so bitterly that such a thing could be possible." This is not only petty and malicious but it betrays a preoccupation with kudos and credit. Such innuendo is all the more surprising in light of the fact that it was a critic, and not an elected official, who discovered the so-called cryptogram—a critic who told me personally that he had telephoned his "find" to Garrison's office from a desk at The New York Review of Books.

(3) Garrison claimed on NBC television on July 15, 1967 that Exhibit 948 disclosed that a CIA secret report had been destroyed while being thermofaxed. This is literally true. But Garrison forgot to mention that the reference to the accidental destruction of a particular copy of the report is preceded by the words "copies have been previously furnished to the Commission," and followed by the words "we are enclosing another copy of this message" (XVIII, page 188). A legitimate criticism that Garrison might have made, instead of quoting out of context, was that although the Commission had possession of copies of the CIA secret message, it was not published in the Exhibits but suppressed. There is a difference, in that attempts can still be made to have this document declassified, while the notes burned by Dr. Humes are beyond recovery.

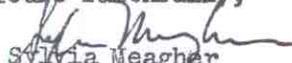
(4) On ABC television on September 24, 1967 Garrison alleged that a Fort Worth telephone number with a "Pe" exchange was written in "Exhibit 38," which he identified as Oswald's notebook; and that an unspecified exhibit disclosed that Ruby had made two calls to the same number on June 6, 1963. Oswald's address book (Exhibit 18, not Exhibit 38) does show the phone number "Pe 8-1951," but Garrison neglected to say that it is identified as the number of television station KUTV (XVI, page 43). Ruby made no calls to that number on June 6; he called for one minute on June 10, and for ten minutes on June 11, but on no subsequent occasion (Exhibit 2308, XXV, page 252). Many persons who are complete strangers to each other may keep a record of or make calls to the phone number of a TV station, for any number of reasons, and the fact that both Oswald and Ruby may have called that "Pe" number in no way justifies a conclusion that it constituted a clandestine link between them.

It seems clear from these examples that Garrison is not a careful student of the published documentation and that he has been less than candid in discussing the contents of the exhibits in some instances. However much he prefers to "avoid getting involved with details," it is self-evident that errors of detail can lead right to appalling miscarriages of justice, and that details are of cardinal importance in any homicide and certainly in a conspiracy that culminated in a Presidential assassination.

Mr. Garrison continues to insist that it is "simply not true" that William Gurvich was his Chief Investigator. Perhaps not; but then I am at a loss to understand why at least six critics and reporters told me clearly and without qualification on their return from New Orleans (before the Gurvich defection) that he was the Chief Investigator. (The six were: William Turner, Raymond Marcus, Robert Richter, Philippe Labro, Harold Weisberg, and Tom Bethell. As a matter of fact, Menahem, you were present when Bill Turner gave this information and praised Gurvich very warmly.)

It is true that Mr. Garrison has said publicly on several occasions that there is no evidence that Oswald shot anyone on November 22nd---which is exactly what critics of the Warren Report, myself included, have been saying, for some three years before it occurred to the New Orleans district attorney. But it is an inescapable fact that Mr. Garrison consistently has tried to incriminate Oswald in the conspiracy that culminated in the assassination of President Kennedy. He has alleged that Oswald had clandestine meetings with Shaw, Ferrie, and Ruby, and that he received money from Shaw on two occasions. He has alleged the presence in Oswald's notebook of incriminating notations which link him covertly with Ruby and with Shaw. But he has sought to substantiate these allegations with evidence that is contrived, taken out of context, or mistaken, and with testimony by two witnesses that is inherently bereft of credibility.

Consequently, I regard the Garrison investigation as a mere sequel to the Warren Report, in which misrepresentation and error serve repeatedly to incriminate Oswald in the conspiracy, even if he is exonerated of firing the shots. As I have said on an earlier occasion, one is not obliged to take sides in a conflict in which both parties (the Warren Commission and the District Attorney) have shown disregard for truth and readiness to accuse Oswald on the flimsiest grounds.

Yours faithfully,

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

cc Jim Garrison, et al

*This is
 my recollection
 of the night you
 dropped in on me
 with a sweet girl
 whose husband
 was in the
 hospital, but
 if I am wrong
 I will
 of course
 withdraw
 the
 statement.*