

5/11/68

Dear Fred,

Your letter of 5/8, just arrived, impels me to halt preparations for the trip for which I will in any event not have time to prepare for adequately to respond and to reassure you. Have no fears, either about Thornley's guilt of perjury or about the kind of person he is. He is a very bad one. I have unassailable proofs, and in his own handwriting, not just published. He has interested me much for a year and a half and I've never been able to give him the time he warrants. Little by little, I am accumulating the stuff. I am certain that Garrison, to whom I had given only part, has more than enough without what I have since the indictment developed.

I wish I could tell you exactly how Lifton fits in this. I fear little reasonable argument insaying that the best face he can wear is one of a man almost always wrong. If it is merely a question of his judgment, that is awful. The worst is that he is actively on the other side. The result is the same in either case. I have refused to have anything to do with him, for the least disadvantage is that we will waste an incredible amount of time. He figures in the cancellation of the Liebeler debate at "essda in a way that makes him Liebeler's agent, again at best, and I have this both from him and in writing from the people involved. All of the effort he expends is, clearly, on the wrong side. I will not take time for detail, but I assure you of it.

Now, on the pictures: I have made no use of them because you didn't do them the way I wanted and they cannot be used that way. Further, let me tell you that I now have a newsphoto of Thornley, taken the time of the assassination, that shows him, for the only time I can find, parting his hair on the opposite side, just as in the picture I had printed backward. If this is all I tell you, it is far from what I have.

When you know what Thornley really is, what he has really written, what he genuinely believes, you can wonder about Dave, who claims him for a friend. He is a man who, aside from his neanderthal concepts and writings, believe in beating women up, and I have his handwritten gloating over this, in gouging the eyes of a man who tried to defend that woman, again in his handwriting, whose great desire was, apologies to Marilyn, "to piss on Kennedy's grave", who moved to as close to the Warren Commission as he could get and, with a salary of \$60.00 weekly paid for a \$120.00 month apartment, meanwhile writing that his move that close hed them, same apologies, "Pissing in their pants". He celebrated the assassination, from what I hear in New Orleans, and this is not in my proofs, gloated over it, which is. Do you require more?

Lifton did not arrange for Thornley to testify before the grand-jury. I first tried to avoid this for him, quite openly, last November, in the presence of a friend of his and through his agent and friend, Clint Bolton. Bolton, not that he is, thereupon wrote a column on this in a freaky paper in the Quarter but recommended that Thornley accept my offer. I had given Garrison enough by that time and when Thornley would not, do it the way that was to his interest, he did it the hard way, and by then I had given Garrison more, including transcribed tapes and tapes of his public statements. You realize, there is enough in O IN NO to more than warrant his being called. That Lifton did is to prepare with Thornley a lengthy and deceptive statement that I have read that led Garrison astray with not only Thornley.

Now I have knowledge of Thornley and Marina, but I do not have that picture and would much, very much, like a copy as fast as possible.

If Thornley's attorney does call you, which is unlikely, please tape it. If he does not know who Thornley is, we do. I cannot begin to tell you what I know but

on the basis of what I now know he may be one of the more important characters in the entire story.

I regret that Lifton found out about this and that, with all that he has already done, you people still trust him. Did not Steve Burton tell you about him,

I think it is now vital that you recount the entire interview as carefully as you can. Here, in particular, I refer to ~~what~~ what you describe as "an unusual amount of interest in where I got the picture and what I knew about it."

Recently Lifton has been devoting himself to trying to frustrate what I do. That is not, if he is genuinely on our side, a constructive effort.

Unless Lifton knows the testimony Thornley gave, which is secret, how can he have a valid opinion on whether or not Thornley is innocent. The charge is perjury, not assassination.

If I know Lifton, and if he has any thing to do with it, this will not remain a "tempest in a teapot", and I quote you. This is another reason for making the most complete record possible. You might also understand, for what it is worth, that others out there believe he has serious psychiatric problems. Why not ask Maggie about him, I think you should. Learn what he did to her.

Were it safely possible to tell you more, I would. Please accept my assurances that in addition to what I recount above I have more credible knowledge of Thornley and every reason to credit it and that Garrison not only has the indignation but told me he was aghast that Thornley would so openly perjure himself.

Do you realize that, aside from what is in O IN NO, Thornley is the one who pinned the bum red rap on his "friend", Oswald, knowing full well it was false. Do you think he did this for nothing. Not a single one of Oswald's Marine mates would do this, only he. Want his writings saying the same thing. I've got them. Does this suggest the possibility that a perjury charge was the lesser evil.

He presumably has no income. He said in Tampa that between them, and his wife is a teacher, they have a \$5,000 income. How can he afford to take his lawyer to New Orleans and have a vacation for most of a week on this income, I was there when it happened.

If you want any other kind of assurance that I can give you, ask. And if the lawyer phones you, give him my number!

Hurriedly,

Fred t. Newcomb
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May 8, 1968

Dear Harold,

Something is bothering me. Sometime ago you asked me to retouch a Kerry Thornley photograph. I did a very crude job following your instructions and mailed them down to you.

Subsequently, I never heard from you as to what you needed them for or how you were going to use them. It bothered me a little bit to do this as retouching photographs of a person involved with the law could be a very serious matter. I think I mentioned this to you in a note at the time.

Anyway, a couple of days ago, I was talking to David Lifton, who I had just met for the first time and he spotted one of Kerry Thornley's photographs I had - and expressed an unusual amount of interest in where I got the picture and what I knew about it. So I told him.

He then informed me that he was very interested in Kerry Thornley. That Kerry was a friend, that he (Lifton) had first arranged for Kerry to testify before the grand jury and in fact had many conversations with Garrison about Thornley. Lifton strongly believes Kerry is innocent and is being put to trial unfairly.

Next I told him that I had heard that this photograph was a cropped version and that a full print showed Kerry with Marina Oswald. Lifton was astonished and thereupon produced a complete picture as published in a Tampa newspaper showing Kerry Thornley and his wife. I recognized the picture immediately as the same Kerry Thornley photograph you sent to me, even tho Thornley's face was flopped (or backwards) in the newspaper.

I think a mistake has been made here and I hope Thorney is not being wronged. You can see my concern. The picture I sent back to you was very obviously artwork and I don't see how anyone could mistake it as photographic retouching.

I would, therefore, be very embarrassed if that altered Thornley picture were to be used in any way to convict Thornley.

Because of Lifton's association with Thornley, I would not be a bit surprised if Thornley's attorney called me about this matter. I am as interested in solving this case as the next guy, but I would hate to think that I might have inadvertently hurt an innocent person, as I know you feel the same way.

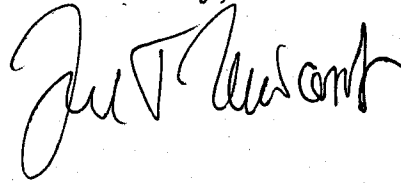
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On Thornley's innocence or guilt, I want to remain agnostic. The court room and the adversary system will in time resolve Thornley's guilt or innocence.

Perhaps the whole thing is a tempest in a teapot, perhaps not - you'd be a better judge of this as my knowledge of Kerry Thornley is limited to his name and a couple of heresay remarks.

Please don't interpret this letter as being anyway hostile, it's just that, at this point, I want to understand as much as I can about this matter without compromising any case that may be developing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. T. Lambert". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

f tnmkn