

28 December 1970

Dear Hal:

This is a bit late to reply to your good note of the 12th, but the holidays have been a bit frantic for us in some ways, since the AP grinds on as usual regardless of the season. In fact the work gets even sillier at this time of year if that's possible, and certainly there is no let up. The sports burden at night is unimaginable.

I have to forward the enclosed copy of Weisberg's letter to Sen. Erwin, which Weisberg wants you to pass on to Paul Hoch, as you'll note, so will take this opportunity to answer your note.

We recently did a small shopping chore for Weisberg in Chinatown (something for Mrs. W.) and so have been in very irregular touch with him. He seems to have eased off in his fuss with Paul somewhat, or at least eased off talking about it, but I gather he is still very anxious that you actually have a talk with Paul and see what the situation is and then give him your candid impressions. He seems genuinely puzzled that he has not heard from you. I certainly understand how you might not feel like writing under the circumstances, both from the standpoint of your personal situation and from the difficulty involved in trying to find out what gives with Paul, but I certainly think Weisberg would be very grateful and relieved to hear from you.

I've read Garrison's "Heritage of Stone" (Jenfier hasn't; she's got nearly a month of NY Times to work through -- that's how behind we are with everything) and have to disagree with your opinion of it. In the first place he could not possibly discuss the Shaw case extensively since Shaw is still under indictment for perjury along with Kerry Thornley, and, I think, Alvin Beauboeuf. The charge against Layton Martens recently was dropped, dismissed at the request of the DA's office.

In any case, Garrison could not discuss Shaw to any extent without giving Shaw's lawyers an opportunity to charge that he was trying to prejudice the case against him; that being the case, it seems quite understandable why Garrison avoided mentioning Shaw more than in a footnote. As for giving Lane, Weisberg et al no more credit than footnotes, I frankly don't go for that either, but when has anyone recently given anyone else credit for help? I think it's disgusting, but the hard fact seems to be that it's more or less standard practice.

As to the book in general, I agree with you that Garrison's tone is at times somewhat olympian, but that is merely part of an extremely effective and fluent style. In my opinion, he has written the most articulate and fluent ~~xxx~~ summary of the case against the government that has appeared thus far. It is not for critics who know all the background, but for a general readership that is normally overwhelmed by such a mass of detail. Purely through eloquence, it can be very convincing to a large spectrum of readers who have boggled at wading through the detailed arguments which have appeared thus far.

Whether it ever will reach such a large general readership remains, of course, to be seen. Putnam has been handling it in a curiously reserved fashion. It was scheduled for issue sometime in October, but Putnam did not advertise it until Nov. 27 in the NY Times, which said the book was "already in its second large printing." No telling what that means, of course. Meanwhile the only review we have seen has been in the NY Times, shortly before the ad appeared. It was combined with a review of Kirkwood's book, and generally was favorable to Garrison and unfavorable to Kirkwood. If you can remember the date of the LIFE review of the same two books, we would much appreciate your letting us know it. We can always look it up in the library and copy it.

We also have Kaiser's book on RPK, but neither of us has had time to read it. The little dipping into it that I've done makes it look pretty good, however, and I'm looking forward to wading through it when I find the time.

Reverting to Garrison's book, there is just one more item I wanted to mention. Lane was here recently and did a long bit on Jim Eason's show. He said he thought Garrison's book was very good, mentioning that Garrison was a very good writer and made his points very clearly. The other thing he said of interest, we thought, was when Eason asked him who killed JFK and he replied "the Central Intelligence Agency." He may have made such a categorical statement before, but if so we don't remember it. And I am not about to monitor the miles of tape we have of his talks and interviews to find out.

We're most sorry to hear that you haven't found a job yet, but frankly aren't surprised. I see nothing in the daily news that indicates any turn for the better, and little that doesn't indicate things won't get worse, if anything. I know this is not encouraging, but the central fact is that we've been dropping such a sizable proportion of our gross national product for so long on other people in the form of bombs that things are not likely to get better until we stop it and turn our efforts toward something more constructive. The stepping up of the aerial war in Indochina is a very bad sign, and when that doesn't work, the next step, as everyone knows, is to turn to tactical nuclear weapons, at which point China certainly is not going to ~~sit~~ sit still any longer and the fat will be in the fire. Then of course we can convert to an all-out war economy and everyone will have a job, such as it is, until the bombs begin to fall here, and after that I leave you to write the script.

Lane had some very interesting things to say about the revolt of the GIs in Indochina. He probably was overdrawing the picture, but his general picture was of such near-mutinous conditions that the Army is moving heaven and earth to get all the unreliable draftees home so the pros can run the show on the ground and rely largely on the air war. Nobody is fighting, and often not even pretending to fight, and nothing happens to anyone except the officers that get shot or get a fragmentation bomb rolled into ~~the tent~~ their tent.

Must wind this up and get to bed. Jenifer sends her best, and do let us know what's going on with you.

Sincerely,

jdw