

20 February 1969

Dear Helen:

As an indication of just how far behind we are with everything except the main Garrison file, am only now filing your "short" (five single-spaced pages is short?!) letter of 29 Jan, and notice we forgot in our reply to tell you we're very grateful for the Tom Raum stories on the Thornley/Oswald photos. We hadn't seen or heard anything about this until you sent the copies.

Also noticed on rereading your letter that you have all copies of the AIC newsletter except the first, so copied and am enclosing it. I'm sorry pages 3 and 4 are so awful but our originals are no better - would that all the pages were as good as page 7. The AIC seems to be doing useful work, especially in including in the newsletters the texts of statements, usually very hard to come by.

According to the news at noon, Garrison has rested his case. At least that was the wording, and if this actually is so and not careless reporting, we CANNOT understand what has been going on, or believe this is the case he had planned to present. If I were on the jury and had to vote now as the case stands today, I would have to say No, the charge against Shaw has not been proved.

We're very unhappy and discouraged. We can't understand the use of Spiesel and the attempt to use Habighorst. They've both been so damaging one can't help suspecting they were plants, and we wouldn't boggle at that - what's difficult to believe is Garrison's use of them without, in Spiesel's case, having checked him out meticulously, and with Habighorst not considering the consequences, since the defense disposed of him so neatly.

We were apprehensive about Spiesel just from the reports of his testimony, even before Dymond's cross-examination. Art Kevin's report on this in the last AIC newsletter mentions the effect on the defense, and somewhere else I've seen (can't take the time to look it up now) that Alcock left the courtroom very hurriedly, visibly upset, refusing to speak to anyone. As for Habighorst, we shuddered just seeing his name on the list of witnesses.

Both instances show at least good homework on the part of the defense, to put the most innocent interpretation on it. Dymond obviously had at hand the information he needed in his cross-examination.

Even if Garrison is gullible, naive, stupid, careless (none of which we believe, in a general sense), that isn't enough of an explanation, because the same would also have to be said of his whole staff. How is it possible that none of them could have foreseen what now has happened? Especially after some of the things that have happened. I can take Garrison's losing the case much more easily than I can take not knowing why it wasn't better. If his case turns out in the end to be better than it has been so far, and he loses, it might perhaps be rationalized on the basis of dirty work at the crossroads; but if the case is lost without anything better yet to come from him, the critics are going to have an even harder time than they've had. How much easier it's going to be to deal with them! I'm thinking of your theory in one of your early letters that Garrison might have been used for this purpose.

I'm sorry to be so dismal. Can't help it.

P.S. - Later newscast says defense - what am I saying? - prosecution has rested its case, Louisiana Supreme Court has denied its appeal for reversal of Judge Haggerty's decision on Habighorst, and Garrison has abandoned his effort to get the autopsy material. Just can't understand it. It all seems so abrupt, too abrupt. I'm sure there must be other witnesses on the prosecution list who haven't been called - Altgens, for one - although one can't always tell until the New Orleans paper comes in.