

29 November 1969

Jim Garrison
District Attorney, Orleans Parish
2700 Tulane Ave.,
New Orleans, La. 70119

Dear Mr. Garrison:

Last summer, as indicated by the enclosed correspondence, I inquired of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Santa Barbara about purchasing tape and transcript of your discussion in November, 1967, with Center personnel.

Since November 22, 1963, my wife and I have worked at collecting the broadest possible record of events since that date. We know of no public record of your encounter at Santa Barbara, and were pleased with the Center's reply that "if you will get and forward to us written permission from Mr. Garrison, we shall be happy to make copies for you." It's a pleasure to comply with such a condition.

In requesting your permission, we recognize that you may have considered the occasion to be off the record and by now may have forgotten what was said. We nevertheless feel it is part of an historical record which scarcely can be well served by further omissions.

From other material on hand we generally are aware of what you were saying at the time of your appearance at Santa Barbara. What we don't know is: what kind of questions these particular people put to you and their reactions to your replies.

The record we are keeping is purely our own project. It has nothing to do, certainly, with the Associated Press, which I joined in China in 1936 and for which I still work in San Francisco as editor and writer.

I drag in the AP because, for one thing, you are entitled to some idea of who I am, and for another I need to insinuate somewhere that I have been exposed, at least, to the concept of objectivity, however elusive that indispensable goal may be.

Also, it should be mentioned that if the record ever stops piling up long enough to be dealt with, we might try for a book. But certainly that is remote, and should it ever materialize I can promise only that it would be ours alone. As of now, we'd have to start it by quoting Henry Wade's deathless "I don't have it exact...."

If we are biased, it's that we think assassinations are important. We lived outside this country during the 1930s when a whole series of political murders took place in Japan and Germany and made possible things we're all still paying for. Our response to the John Kennedy assassination, therefore, was on the classic if now unpopular principle that the more important the victim, the less likelihood of random cause.

Thus afflicted, we have done what we could to keep track of what still goes on. Someone must try. We are familiar with the violent opinions about your own part in the record and regard them all as chiefly illuminating its importance. Your visit to Santa Barbara is a small but possibly vital blank spot.

We would like your authorization for both tape and transcript, the tape to determine what was said, the transcript to save time and labor. The transcript would not be used without checking against the tape. Both would be for our files alone. Neither would be used beyond that without further consultation with you if you wish that. We would be pleased to honor any restriction you might set.

We have delayed asking you for access to this material until you could have behind you the pressures of your campaign in the first primary, and now request that you consider releasing it to us.

We congratulate you, we wish you only the best, and we thank you for a very great deal indeed.

Sincerely,



James D. White
35 Castle Rock Drive
Mill Valley, Calif. 94941