

March 18, 1960

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Melvin M. Belli - Summary
Attorney
San Francisco, California

The 1959 San Francisco City Directory reflects that Melvin M. (Joy T.) Belli resides at 1228 Montgomery, Apartment 8.

The 1958 San Francisco City Directory listed Belli as a lawyer with office at 240 Stockton Street and his wife was listed as "Joy T." Belli and his residence was given as 1228 Montgomery, Apartment 8.

The current (September, 1959) San Francisco Telephone Directory lists Melvin M. Belli of the law firm of Belli, Ashe and Gerry as having offices at 722 Montgomery Street, San Francisco.

The 1960 Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory lists Melvin M. Belli, attorney, San Francisco, California, born 1907, admitted to Bar 1933, member of the American Bar Association and having graduated from the University of California with B.A. and LL.B. degrees.

The "San Francisco Examiner" newspaper, a newspaper published daily at San Francisco, issue of May 4, 1956, revealed Melvin Belli, attorney and writer, married on May 3, 1956, a former air line hostess, Joey Turner, in San Francisco. Melvin Belli, according to the article, formerly was married to Betty Mallantine and divorced in 1951, having four children. He married Toni Nichols, a former stenographer, and they were divorced in March, 1955.

The "San Francisco Examiner" issue of May 1, 1959, had an item with reference to separate maintenance suits filed by Joy Belli against Melvin Belli and Melvin Belli against his wife, Joy Belli.

The "San Francisco Examiner" had a copy of a press release in its files dated January 9, 1959, at San Francisco issued by "Belli Seminar Foundation, 240 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California," for release January 12, 1959. According to the release, as part of a nation-wide series that has been widely acclaimed, the San Francisco Lawyers Club would sponsor a Belli Seminar Foundation lecture by internationally famed San

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San Francisco attorney Melvin M. Belli on January 17th at the St. Francis Hotel (San Francisco). The release stated Mr. Belli would discuss trial and substantive law, criminal and civil law, trial and tort trends, procedures, voir dire, and opening statements through final argument and appeal. According to the release, Belli would also discuss modern damages, medical problems and would show autopsy film. The release described "The Belli Seminar Foundation" as a charitable organization for the perpetuity of postgraduate legal education lectures and that Belli lectures were free to law students and medical students, doctors, judges, and professors. The release states further as follows:

"Belli, called 'The King of Torts,' was recently elected chairman of the Board of Directors of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers at a meeting held at Coronado. He is past Dean of that organization and past President of the National Association of Claimants Compensation Attorneys.

"Particularly noted for being a pioneer in the use of demonstrative evidence, Belli is equally regarded as an author of numerous books, which includes 'Modern Trials,' 'Ready for the Plaintiff,' 'Modern Damages,' 'The Adequate Award' and 'Trial and Tort Trends.' His latest book, 'Life and Law in Japan,' deals with the Girard case which developed international legal and political interests."

"Time" magazine (published by Time, Inc., 540 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Illinois) issue of January 26, 1959, page 23, has an article about Melvin M. Belli under the caption "The Law" and subtitled "Plaintiff's Counsel." The article described Belli as a recognized, if not the revered, leader in the phenomenal field of U. S. law - personal injury. It is set forth that Belli's most noteworthy contribution to tort trials is the use of "demonstrative evidence." It set forth that Belli would take his skeleton named "Einer" into the court room and show the jury by expert's testimony exactly where the plaintiff broke a bone. A photograph of Belli with the skeleton appeared with the article.

The "Time" article mentioned some of Belli's cases. Among those included were one for victims of the defective polio vaccine distributed by California Cutter Laboratories in 1955 and one for relatives of victims of the nation's worst air crash - the collision of two airplanes over Grand Canyon on June 30, 1956. It also mentioned that Belli had pending in Louisiana a case against two cigarette manufacturers and that it had been filed on behalf of a woman whose husband died of lung cancer. The last subheading of the article is captioned,

"Physician or Savant." The article mentioned under this heading that most legal observers agree that for many years personal injuries were not adequately compensated in the courts. Many of these same observers now believe that Belli has led the trend too far in the opposite direction and, moreover, they shrink from Belli's techniques. The article quoted Belli as stating, "I am regarded as either physician or savant. There is no middle road for me."

Belli was described in the "Time" article as fifty-one years of age, thrice married, twice divorced.

The "San Francisco Examiner" issue of April 1, 1930, had an item listing Melvin Belli as representing the West in a \$50,000 suit against a local night club (San Francisco) performer who billed himself as "the one and only 'Diamond Lil'."

The "Saturday Evening Post" (published by the Curtis Publishing Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) issue of April 11, 1930, contains an article captioned "Medicine's Legal Nightmare" by Milton Silverman, beginning on page 18. In the first part of that article is set forth information about Melvin M. Belli, 31-year-old San Francisco attorney, nationally known for his suits against doctors for medical malpractice.

Wloyd Bell, Under-Sheriff, Clark County, Las Vegas, Nevada, stated on April 23, 1932, that Mickey Cohen and two other individuals arrived in Las Vegas on April 23, 1932, from Los Angeles, California, by automobile. He stated that they were accompanied by an individual giving the name of "Earl" Belli, an attorney from San Francisco. They appeared at the Clark County Sheriff's Office where Cohen was required to register for an ex-feloa. Mr. Belli stated at that time Cohen was in Las Vegas conducting some legal business and also to discuss a golf tournament to be held at Wilbur Clark's Desert Inn hotel and course.

The "San Francisco Examiner" issue of April 23, 1930, sets forth, under the caption "Belli Plans Plot for Stalder in Reno Case," information that San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli announced yesterday he would champion the cause of Las Vegas stripper Cindy Barr, a wealthy girl friend of gambler Mickey Cohen, convicted of possession of marijuana. The item stated that Belli, reached by telephone in Las Vegas, said, "This is a simple case of justice. I have definitely Cohen on my side and we're going to the U. S. Supreme Court with it."

The article stated that Cohen had made the arrangements for Belli to defend Miss Barr. Cohen was quoted, "I made connections for Candy. I am not paying the bill. But I ekayed the credit on it. She'll pay him when she's able."

According to the article, Belli insisted, "This has nothing to do with Cohen. I agreed to take her case after talking with her Friday and Saturday." The news item further set forth that Belli said, "She is caught right in the middle of a political deal. She doesn't use narcotics or sell it and she was deliberately framed by narcotic agents." According to a news article, a jury in Dallas, Texas, convicted Miss Barr of possession of marijuana last year. Her fifteen-year prison sentence was upheld in January by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

The "San Francisco Chronicle," a daily newspaper published at San Francisco, issue of July 6, 1959, captioned "Belli Asked Limit for Lawyers Fees." It stated that Melvin Belli, San Francisco attorney, had recommended to Governor Edmund G. Brown (Governor of California) for regulation of lawyers' fees in personal injury cases rather than creation of a California Automobile Accident Commission. Belli, a specialist in personal injury cases, was quoted, "Lawyers charge too much. Fees in personal injury cases such as automobile accidents should not go over forty per cent. I charge one-third. Some charge as much as fifty per cent."

"San Francisco Examiner" issue of August 24, 1959, contained an article captioned "Mickey Slated for Belli Seminar." The article is dated Miami, August 23rd, and stated that Mickey Cohen arrived in Miami on August 23rd and, after questioning by Miami detectives, he was permitted to go to a Miami Beach hotel where he was scheduled to address a trial seminar. The seminar was to be put on by attorney Melvin Belli, San Francisco trial lawyer, who defended Cohen last week on a charge of assaulting the chief of the Federal Narcotics Bureau in Los Angeles. The news item stated the seminar held in conjunction with the University of Miami Law School attracted attorneys across the nation. A seminar spokesman said the meeting was not connected with the giant American Bar Association convention starting there on Monday.

In the "San Francisco Examiner" issue of August 25, 1959, it was set forth in an article that Melvin Belli, top trial lawyer from San Francisco, had introduced Mickey Cohen as Professor O'Brien at the American Bar Association convention in Miami Beach. The article stated that Cohen, as Professor O'Brien, lectured to the unsuspecting lawyers as a

"professor" on income tax. The article stated the Association did not think it was funny and an Association spokesman said that it was obviously an attempt to use the American Bar Association for a private promotion, according to the news item. The news article quoted Belli as follows: "If they can't appreciate that part of the program, then the whole Bar Association has lost its sense of humor." Belli was further quoted that he was sorry Cohen had appeared before the convention.

The "San Francisco Examiner" on August 25, 1957, had an article captioned "Belli Sees Fair Trial for Girard." The item had a dateline of Tokyo, August 24th, and by-line of "By Melvin Belli, Special to the Examiner." The article was about the trial of the people of Japan against Specialist, Third Class, William S. Girard.

The "San Francisco Examiner" issue of August 26, 1957, had an article by Belli with reference to the Girard trial. This item has a dateline of Maebashi, Japan, August 26th.

Also, the "San Francisco Examiner" of September 10, 1957, had an article by Belli datelined Tokyo, September 9th, with reference to Japan's civil suit customs.

The "San Francisco Examiner" issues of October 20, 21, 22, 27, 28 and 29, 1959, contained items mentioning Melvin Belli as attorney for Beverly Adland, teen-aged protege of the late Errol Flynn, movie actor who died at Vancouver, British Columbia, in October, 1959.

The "San Francisco Examiner" of November 17, 1957, had an article that a Yuba City (California) peach farmer bequeathed a \$300,000 estate to three San Francisco lawyers with a provision that it be used to "educate people in the process of democracy." The article set forth that the estate was bequeathed to attorneys George Anderson, Norman Leonard and Richard Gladstein who had often defended members of the Communist Party. According to the article, attorney Melvin Belli declared he would contest the will on behalf of the dead man's widow, son and daughter.

The "San Francisco Examiner" of December 8, 1957, datelined Marysville (California) contained an article that attorney Melvin Belli had filed action for the son and daughter of a person by the name of Long. The news item set forth that according to the action Anderson induced the father "through fraud and under influence" to will all but \$13,500 of the estate to Anderson and his law partners, Norman Leonard and Richard Gladstein.

The "San Francisco Chronicle" issue of October 9, 1956, had an item that attorney Melvin Belli was charged in the Municipal Court (San Francisco) with failing to pay \$176.00 in overtime wages to two secretaries. The "San Francisco Chronicle" of October 20, 1956, had an article on the same matter. This article stated that a couple of former secretaries had hailed Melvin Belli into court on charges he failed to pay their overtime for the last two weeks they worked for him. The charge was described as a misdemeanor.

San Francisco, California, Police Department arrest record cards Nos. A28055 and A28056 reflect that Melvin Belli of 1228 Montgomery Street was arrested on the morning of September 19, 1956, on warrants issued on complaints of two individuals charging violation of 216(a) of the Labor Code. He was released immediately on \$100.00 bond in each of the two cases. The records of Municipal Court, Department No. 11, San Francisco, reflects that Belli was acquitted of these charges in each case for violation of 216(a) of the Labor Code on December 12, 1956. The action numbers in the Municipal Court are 9327 and 9329.

The "San Francisco Chronicle" issue of March 15, 1958, had an item captioned "Belli Joins Battle to Save Chessman's New Manuscript." The article read that attorney Melvin Belli catapulted himself into the Caryl Chessman case yesterday with charges that confiscation of the condemned convict-author's latest book is an attempt at thought control worse than the treatment of prisoners in the Dark Ages. The article stated that Belli, well-known trial lawyer had offered his services without fee to Chessman's Sacramento (California) counsel, Rosalie Asher, who accepted his association in the case. It was further set forth that attorney Asher was scheduled to appear before Judge Michael J. Roche of the Federal District Court at San Francisco to argue an injunction to prevent the destruction of Chessman's newest manuscript. It further mentioned that this was another phase of Chessman's six-year battle to escape San Quentin's gas chamber.

"San Francisco Examiner" of May 10, 1958, in an item captioned "Chessman's Book Suit" set forth that attorney Melvin Belli, on behalf of Miss Asher, had filed suit in Marin County (California) Superior Court, asking the court to order Warden Harley O. Teets, Director of Correction (California) Richard McGee and others to release Chessman's latest book, "Trial and Ordeal," to attorney Asher.

"Life" magazine (published by Time, Inc., 540 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Illinois) in an issue of October 18, 1954, beginning on Page 71, contains an article by Robert Wallace captioned "The King of Torts." The subheading reads "Melvin Belli's court room props and his protechnical oratory have reaped big rewards for his clients and himself while revolutionizing the practice of personal injury law."

On March 9, 1951, the name of Melvin Belli, San Francisco, appeared along with other names on the letterhead of the Lawyers Against Test Oaths for the Bar, P.O. Box 2225, San Francisco 26, and 1614 North Argyle, Los Angeles 28, which appealed to members of the Bar to oppose California Senate Bill SB 1066, which would impose upon every member of the California Bar and every candidate for admission the requirement that a test or loyalty oath be taken as a condition to practicing law.

The "Daily People's World" newspaper issue of September 22, 1949, contains an article, "Bay Area Notables Protest Communist trial."

"San Francisco, Sept. 21

"A group of prominent Bay Area residents, headed by Attorney Vincent Hallinan, protested the prosecution of the 12 Communist leaders to Alben Barkley during the vice president's visit here.....

"The group wrote Barkley that they wanted to see him 'for the purpose of protesting the actions of the United States government in prosecuting persons for the expressions of opinions.

"We refer particularly to the prosecution of the Communist leaders in New York, and consider the action against them the sad reflection upon the level to which our American concepts of free speech have declined.

"We desire to solicit your aid to combat procedures under which an existing system can employ the coercive forces of the government to preserve itself from criticism or change."

"Members of the group which also sent a strongly worded protest against the trial to Attorney General J. Howard McGrath, included in addition to Hallinan: Marvin Belli, attorney;.....

The "Peoples World, formerly the "Daily People's World", is a West Coast Communist newspaper.

The Communist Party USA, has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

The "Daily People's World" newspaper issue of November 6, 1941, page 1, columns 2, 3 and 4, contained an article entitled: "Bay Area Notables Greet Soviet People on Nov. 7."

"San Francisco, Nov. 5

"Prominent Northern Californians are sending greetings to the people of the Soviet Union on November 7, the Russians' Independence Day, in support of the Red Army's struggle against Nazi Germany, today announced the Russian-American Society to Aid USSR and Great Britain to Defeat Hitler Fascism.

"Religious leaders, city officials, educators, liberals and progressives were circulated with the following message:

"We Americans admire your courage and determination in your fight against Hitlerism.

"On November 7, your Independence Day, we wish to convey to you our message of greetings and deep conviction that your heroic struggle will end in final victory over the dark forces of fascism."

Signing the message of greetings, with modifications in some instances, were: ".....Melvin M. Belli, attorney...."

The Russian American Society, Inc., has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

The "San Francisco Chronicle" issue of October 9, 1939, contained an article captioned "Belli named to U. S. Bar Rights Committee." In this article it is set forth that Melvin Belli, San Francisco attorney, had been appointed to the Committee on the Bill of Rights of the Junior Bar Conference of the American Bar Association. The Committee, according to the article, would concern itself with a comparative survey of the Bill of Rights as appears in the basic law of the states.