

813-347-8644

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St. Petersburg, Florida 33713  
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Dear Mrs. Meagher:

Please don't worry for even a minute. Bob Ruark had wanted to phone you during the day and I told him you work during the day, he wanted to know where and I told him that. I doubt he remembers but just to be sure, I have written to him and enclose a copy of the letter. There has been no mention of WHO in anything he has said so far.

It is usual for a guest to be asked about his occupation and background so I assumed this would occur with your appearance. I do not remember where I read that you are with the World Health Organization except that it had to do with your qualifications as a researcher. It was something that had been published so I did not stop to consider the possibility it should not be mentioned over the air.

Thank you for the copy of your letter to Clay Shaw. I can never tell you how grateful I am that you have responded to my letters to you. Had you not done so, I would probably be among those who are following Garrison as if he were a Messiah. I did for a while and have no excuse other than a lack of information for which I can only blame our newspapers. They do not keep us informed.

A few minutes ago Frank Blair reported that someone, whose name I did not catch, had stated in London that James Earl Ray was all alone and all the rest of the garbage that goes with that kind of statement. If I say any more about my feelings on that, this letter will incinerate on its own and never reach you.

I don't know just how much you have heard of the situation here, how close we are to another Memphis. Actually, I don't believe the majority of the residents of St. Petersburg know how critical it is but this is simply because they do not want to know. The garbage men were asked, some time back, for cooperation in a new plan which would be more economical than before. This meant that some men would lose their jobs because the others would be doing more. They were promised by our city manager that if they did make the new plan work, they would be given raises from the funds that were saved. After being put off several times, the men insisted on being given what had been promised. Some, by using trucks to block the rest, were successful in bringing things to a halt. Over 200 were fired.

The city hired replacements and, even with less men, the total outlay for the sanitation department is considerably more than it had been before the economy drive began and more than it would have been had the men been given what they were promised.

Today there is to be a march. They requested a permit to march on City Hall and had taken every possible precaution to keep it under control. The city manager refused, giving them permission to march to the baseball stadium which is out of the center of town and designating a route that will keep them from being seen in the main business district.

Rev. A. D. King is to lead the march and, according to the news, is not to arrive in St. Petersburg until just before the march begins. Last night, however, a friend who is active in the Council for Human Relations here phoned to say he had already come into town. They are very much afraid something unpleasant will take place in spite of all they can do and are most concerned for Rev. King.

My friend said she had been quite surprised to discover she was treated with great courtesy by those who are Southerners; rudeness and disdain came from residents who have moved here from the north and mid-west - a point I have always tried to get across.

Things have just about reached the boiling point although we have been told repeatedly that, "Oh, nothing like that will ever happen here. We have the best of relations with our Negro residents." For a change, the morning newspaper, The St. Petersburg Times, has tried to make the public aware of the issues involved and the gravity of the situation.

Please hope and pray with me that nothing untoward takes place.

I am not the least bit worried that you will disappoint me on the radio program. I am worried that the time will all be taken by those who are so quick to attach the Communist tag to anyone who disagrees with Hoover.

You shall have your tape of the program. I had planned to send you one already. Bob Ruark also usually furnishes a tape if the guest wants it.

I am sending Mr. Sorensen a copy of your letter to Clay Shaw since, like me, he is groping for reason and objectivity.

Do not apologize for short letters or handwritten notes. I love long letters but if you took your valuable time for them you might be neglecting someone else who would benefit by exposure to your cool approach. There are more important things than making Helen happy with a long letter.

Good luck with the radio program. If you reach only one or two people, it will be a success. With best wishes always,

A friend,

*Helen*