

Dear Mr. Mitchell, how many, by the way

March 12, 1960

Mr. John N. Mitchell  
Attorney General of the United States  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Mitchell,

It has been ten days since I wrote you, months since the promised word from the previous Deputy Attorney General has not arrived. A strange kind of answer has been reported to me.

I have been informed that teams of FBI agents are going around telling people, some of whom I have never met, that I am a dangerous person, in some unspecified way under "Communist" influence. This same alleged "Communist" influence I am alleged to have created on New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, and it is further alleged that without it he would not have engaged in his prosecution of Clay Shaw.

All of this, of course, is quite false. I await your assurance that I have been misinformed, that your FBI agents are engaged in nothing as entirely improper as this.

The coincidence between this report and some of my critical writing about the FBI is so remarkable I cannot ignore it.

If you do not and cannot assure me that the FBI has not done this, is not going around slandering me, then I certainly do want an explanation of why, for what proper purpose, with what legal authority. There once was a First Amendment to the Constitution. It should prohibit any federal interference with the rights and obligations of writers.

Or is it that your department is investigating Garrison and I am incidental to that? Should this be the case, then I am no less interested in explanation of its purpose, its legal authority.

May I add that the recent trial in New Orleans confronts you with a challenge to your integrity and that of your department? In it, Dean Adams Andrews swore that he had perjured himself before the Warren Commission. I submit that if your department tolerates this, with all the observers you had at the trial to take note of it, you have failed in your obligations and have begun a policy that will end with a record you will, at best, find uncomfortable, difficult to live with and at worst will be an intolerable self-defamation.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg