

May 24, 1967

Mr. Alan S. Helseth, Ex. Dir.  
American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana  
1911 Terpsichore Street,  
New Orleans, La. 70113

Dear Mr. Helseth,

Neither the ACLU nor Clay Shaw's rights to a fair trial need be defended to me but neither is responsive to my previous letter. Over the years, as I could, I have helped the ACLU. Before I issued the private printing of WHITENASH I consulted the DC chapter to see if I could call upon them for help if I ran into problems on which they could properly help (I have, in New Orleans, but I have not sought their help. Bringuiet's suit is frivolous and seems to have the double intent of intimidation of grand-jury witnesses and publishers, if not more). When Shaw's lawyer wrote asking for a copy of WHITENASH, I sent him copies of both books and called to his attention what I thought would interest him.

My own book for which a publisher had contracted, CIA WHITENASH: OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS, has now been declined, following filing of the Bringuiet suit and the remarkably one-sided attacks on the Garrison investigation by major magazines.

I assumed your support of those rights of writers you enumerate, also you'd not be with the ACLU. In passing may I note that without publication *they will matter?*

Your statement did single me out by name, did make false charges against me and at the same time Garrison, is damaging, and is the kind of thing that can crop up again and again to cause more damage and embarrassment. Because, regardless of intent, it is quite opposite to what I did and said, I again call upon you to set the record straight. I again encourage you to question the reporters to whom I refused any comment, no matter how indirect, about what transpired before the grand jury and to whom I would not speak about anything now pending in New Orleans and see for yourself how entirely wrong your statement is.

May I suggest that there are here, as with all things, two sides? Need I tell you the slanders those of us who criticize the government's record in the assassination have to sustain in silence? There is no voice raised in our defense. Need I tell you how prejudicial to the rights of the public when the various cases go to trial in New Orleans the many unrestrained statements from the other side are? How many prospective jurors have been subjected to prejudicial conditioning, by the witnesses like Martens, Novel and others who are quoted without limitation? Or of the effect of such things as NBC and Hearst have done, of the articles in the "Saturday Evening Post" and "Newsweek", which I regard as at best of questionable integrity? Have you considered other purposes these things might have and if, as you clearly do, you feel compelled to comment, why is your comment not impartial? Why do you speak of only one side?

So that there can be no question, Mr. Garrison did not "utilize" me to make any kind of a statement.

With regard to your personal note, perhaps we can discuss this when next I am in New Orleans.

CC Jim Garrison, Sam de Piné,  
Richard Townley, Hoke May

Sincerely,

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# American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana

1911 TERPSICHOIRE ST., NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70113

Telephone 522-5825 • Area Code 504

May 22, 1967

Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Lillian & Harold Weisberg  
Coq d'Or Press  
Hyattstown, Maryland 20734

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thank you for your letter of May 20, which I received today.

We did not intend our news release of May 16 to be critical of you, and we do not think that it was.

We support any author's right to think, analyze, write, and comment on any conceivable topic, including the Garrison investigation.

And, at no time have we objected to Mr. Garrison conducting an investigation of criminal activity and prosecuting those he believes guilty of crimes. After all, that is the duty of his office.

Our objections from February to date have been confined solely to the manner in which Mr. Garrison has conducted his investigation of the alleged assassination plot, and the manner in which he has prosecuted Clay Shaw.

Specifically, we primarily object to Mr. Garrison's numerous comments regarding the soundness of the evidence he has accumulated. We believe the validity of evidence is a matter to be decided in a court room. We also object to Mr. Garrison utilizing third parties to indirectly make statements for him that he cannot legitimately make directly.

We believe that undue comment regarding the alleged perfidy of the Warren Commission tends to lend weight to Mr. Garrison's charges; and he has charged Clay Shaw with conspiracy.

If the soundness or weakness of the Warren Commission's work has anything to do with Mr. Shaw's guilt or innocence, we believe it a matter to be determined by a jury. If it has nothing to do with Mr. Shaw's guilt or innocence, we fail to see why it is a matter to be bandied about in connection with Mr. Shaw's prosecution.

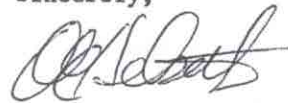
I hope I have made our position on this matter clear.

*National Headquarters—156 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010*  
*Washington Office—1101 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., Lawrence Speiser, Director*  
*Southern Regional Office—5 Forsyth St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga., Charles M. Morgan, Jr., Director*  
With organized affiliates in 35 states and 800 cooperating attorneys in 300 cities of 50 states.

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Weisberg  
May 22, 1967

In regard to your criticism of our silence on the Warren Commission, we have yet to perceive a civil liberties issue in the work of the Commission. If your implication that our silence is due to "partisanship" requires refutation, I believe the record of the American Civil Liberties Union over the past forty-seven years provides an eloquent refutation that need not be elaborated on.

Sincerely,



Alan E. Helseth  
Executive Director

AEH:bjd  
cc: Jim Garrison  
Sam de Pino  
Richard Townley

Mr. Weisberg:

A purely personal observation.

Nothing would please me more than for you to be correct regarding the Warren Commission, the CIA, the FBI, et al.

While, at this point, I am not convinced that you<sup>f</sup> are correct, I hope you are. And I hope you can prove it to me and the world.

My personal views, however, in no way gainsay or conflict with the official position of the organization I work for; and that is that Clay Shaw is entitled to a fair trial, and anything which tends to deny him that right is deserving of criticism.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Edgar Hoover".