

So here you are, Clay Shaw, twenty months and thousands of dollars after being charged with conspiracy in the worst crime of the century. What are you doing about it?

Surviving
by James Kirkwood

Now I sit in my hotel room in the French Quarter of New Orleans, trying, and nowhere near succeeding, to ignore the insistent laser-beam razmatazz of an army of Dixieland combos blasting out from Bourbon Street. I sit practically on top of the wheezing, gently vibrating air conditioner because it's hot and muggy and my eyes are giving me hell for making them read, in one day, all 491 pages of the Preliminary Hearing of the State of Louisiana against Clay L. Shaw. Shaw had been charged with criminal conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy, a felony under Louisiana law carrying a penalty of one to twenty years in prison.

Without too much of a stretch, the transcript brings to mind the Spanish Inquisition. Hearsay was freely allowed, dead men spoke, objections by the defense were mostly overruled, those of the prosecution were mostly sustained, and even the state's star witness, Perry Russo, it turned out, had been placed under hypnosis three times at District Attorney Jim Garrison's bidding to "refresh his mind" and was, in fact, testifying in court under posthypnotic suggestion.

It's a scarifying document in itself, regardless of one's opinion of the guilt or innocence of the accused. I'm probably feeling the heat and eyestrain all the more because, from the smell of things in this charming, colorful, quaint, maddening, funny-farm of a city, I'm afraid I've come to the conclusion that, yes—it could happen to me. Or to you.

So—to get to why I'm sitting here in New Orleans in this far from peaceful state, both of mind and of the Union. Last November I was holed up in my East Hampton cottage, having made a resolution to myself and friends that I now had a stranglehold on the final chapter of a new novel and that nothing, repeat nothing, was going to lure me away from my writing machine and into New York City. Not *Bonnie and Clyde*, nor *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. I'd even said to a weekend guest and old friend, author James Leo Herlihy, that I wouldn't come into town if Marlene Dietrich asked me to an intimate supper for G. Garbo—with de Gaulle serving. That was on a Sunday evening as I drove Jim to the train.

Monday noon the phone rang and it was Jim Herlihy saying in a loud voice: "Guess who's coming to dinner?" I could hear the smile on his face and I knew he had more than fair bait. I swore generously at him before asking who.

"Clay Shaw," says Jim, knowing I'm an archfiend when it comes to real-life trials of any kind and their participants. Celebrities to me are not necessarily Liz and Dick, they are just as likely to be Perry and Dick or Dr. Sam Sheppard or Candy and Mel. Jim went on to say that a friend of his was a friend of Clay Shaw's and had suggested Shaw call Jim when he was in New York. Jim had invited him to dinner. I swore a bit more and said I'd be there.

I'd seen pictures of Clay Shaw in the newspapers, briefly glimpsed him on television, but I had no idea what kind of a man to expect. Mostly I'd seen New Orleans D.A. Jim Garrison who for a while had turned up almost nightly on the six o'clock news. I'd read slews of articles about the case and heard all sorts of people sound off about it. The only person who hadn't really sounded off in detail was the accused himself, outside of a quiet but firm "Not guilty."

So, in meeting Clay Shaw, accused of participation in the "Case

of the Century," as Garrison has called it, you kind of had the feeling you were being introduced in person to a brand-new movie star who'd had a blockbuster publicity campaign but whose first big film hadn't been released yet.

What do you do? You shake hands—mine got lost in his, he's a barrel-chested, six-foot-four, two-hundred-twelve pound giant of a man with close-cropped white hair, striking blue eyes and, at first sighting, almost handsomely fierce of face—and sit down opposite him while you're served your first drink, all the time trying hard not to stare through him, inside him, to see if you can possibly detect the answer to the bald question that can't help rattle around in your head: Say, listen, you didn't really conspire to assassinate the *President* of the United States—did you? I mean, did you really hang out with Lee Harvey and all that bunch?

But you don't, you get your drink, hoist it, and say something bland like, "Here's to your stay in New York." Then there's more light talk: Yes, I've been to New Orleans once, fascinating city; No, I've never been to Mardi Gras but I hear it's wild, etc.

And finally, because I sensed a leveling *something* in the man, I couldn't help but put my glass down and ask: "Would you mind, or does it bore you, to talk about your [oh-oh, watch the word] predicament?"

"No," he said with a smile, adding he'd be a liar if he said his "predicament" wasn't the most ever-present, thought-consuming experience of his lifetime.

He spoke with a combination of wisdom and wonderment and a sort of Somerset Maugham knack for storytelling and also humor—but certainly not flippancy—of this most traumatic event from beginning to middle, which is smack where he is, between the indictment of a preliminary hearing and jury trial. By three in the morning we were still listening to his account. You spend eight hours with a man and though it's only eight hours, you get a definite feeling about whether you'd trust him with his word, your money, wife, life, or even whether he'd be on time for a luncheon appointment. Call it the scratch test, the intuition test, whatever it is, Clay Shaw passed it, at least for me.

Back to work in East Hampton where I finally finished the novel. In the meantime there were news flashes from New Orleans, dates set for the trial, appeals by the defendant's lawyers, appeals denied, the trial rescheduled, and all the time I was thinking about this man down in Louisiana and wondering what his life was like during all this, wondering if my hunch about him had been one-hundred-percent on the nose. Articles were appearing in almost every national magazine and all those authors who have stumbled upon a second livelihood challenging the Warren Commission were courting hemorrhoids, applying seat of pants to seat of chair, pounding out their theories in staggering quantity that, if nothing else does, should certainly bring on a paper shortage.

I finally wrote Clay Shaw a brief note, months later, telling him I had enjoyed meeting him and wishing him luck. He replied soon, thanking me and saying the evening in New York had been a welcome respite from the situation in New Orleans and that his trial was tentatively set for April.

There was no further correspondence and I started, haltingly

8 ay?
Jim
Herlihy?



on little cat feet, into another novel. One morning I suddenly found myself reaching for the phone and dialing my agent: "Say, do you suppose you could get me a magazine assignment to cover the Clay Shaw-Garrison trial?" She was surprised. First, I'd never written a magazine article; second, as far as a trial was concerned, a magazine would be scooped by the daily papers; and third, how had it even occurred to me? I told her of meeting Clay Shaw and of my impressions, which time had strengthened. She said to jot them down, send them to her, and she'd get them off to a magazine. But not to hold my breath.

I didn't, but oddly enough in about ten days I found myself on the Terrifying Silver Bird for New Orleans with a strong suggestion to stick to Clay Shaw's impressions and go light on the actual evidence in the case which had been presented at length all the way from *Playboy* to *The New Yorker*.

Having forewarned Clay Shaw of my arrival, I rang from my hotel and was invited for drinks and dinner. Toward the end of the conversation, it was dropped that his lawyer, one of four, would also be stopping by for a drink.

After cleaning up, I strolled the twelve blocks through the Vieux Carré, gawking at the undisturbed architecture of those hardy yet delicate buildings with their shutters and balconies and iron grill-work, until I came to a white brick wall on Dauphine Street with a red door splashed in the middle.

Clay Shaw greeted me and again I realized what an impressive figure of a man he is as he showed me into the high-walled patio bordered on two sides by ferns, with an oblong glass table at the far end for outdoor dining. Then inside for a look at the immaculate kitchen and good-sized living room which comprise the ground floor of the small, charming carriage house he had restored with loving care. The furnishings are French, grouped comfortably around a low coffee table, the floors are polished cork topped by several fine oriental rugs, there is a small desk and a splendid large gold-leaf mirror. At the top of an angled, red-carpeted flight of stairs, there is a large sparsely furnished bedroom and a bathroom. To city dwellers, the house would be comparable to a duplex apartment. Though it might be described as elegant, good taste and simplicity of choice are manifest.

His lawyer of twenty years, Edward F. Wegmann, soon arrived and it is difficult to describe him physically. His height, weight, age, face and eyes melt into one word—concern. As he sat opposite me I felt I was being looked into the same way I had looked into Clay Shaw that evening in New York. I was being X-rayed, enough to induce a twinge or two of stage fright. He was curious to know how my interest in Mr. Shaw had come about and what my angle would be. I did what I could to allay his concern. Later, when we'd relaxed somewhat, I could still read the tacit message printed across his face and imbedded in his eyes: *Don't hurt this man; I'm not only his lawyer, I'm his friend; he's been made a target and I'm intercepting all possible potshots.* If you've ever seen a lioness guarding her cubs, you'll know the look.

After Mr. Wegmann had gone, dinner was served in the patio by Willie Mae, who keeps a quieter but nonetheless carefully concerned eye upon her employer. During dinner the talk was easy and I asked Clay Shaw about his political background. "I suppose I'd describe myself as a Wilsonian-F.D.R.-Kennedy liberal. By that I mean I agree with those men who have seen that the capitalist system had to be adapted to give a better life to more people. These days a man has some kind of income when he's finished working, what with Social Security, and now there's even Medicare, so that the fundamental needs for a basis of decent living have been assured. I thought John Kennedy was in the same tradition, a man who looked hard at the foundations of things and would move to further adapt the system to provide a better life for the most people, which is what any political system should be about. Most of my friends consider me very liberal indeed. I remember when Kennedy was running against Nixon. I went to visit friends of mine at their farm and when the hostess asked me who I was going to vote for and I told her Kennedy, she was extremely chagrined. If she hadn't been a well-brought-up Southern girl I don't think she'd have given me any lunch."

After dinner, on the way back to the hotel, I stopped by a Bourbon Street bar for a nightcap. The shapely barmaid, who'd blown at least one full can of hair spray to concretize her teased soufflé of blonde hair, turned out to be Shirely. When Shirely asked me with

misty eyes and a baby-whisper voice if I'd care to feed the jukebox, I figured I could ask Shirely a favor in return. "What do you think of this whole Clay Shaw thing?"

"Clay Shaw?" she mused. "Oh, yes, Clay Shaw . . . oh, well, I wouldn't know anything about him. You mean the whole thing?" she purred.

"Yes—well, then, what do you think of the District Attorney?"

The eyes sharpened into baby-blue bullets, the voice unfurled, and she boomed: "Garrison! Garrison!" She leaned close in over the bar, threatening my Vodka and Tonic and, giving each word equal time, drummed out the following message: "Baby, Jim Garrison is on a bad trip." This brought Louisiana State University drama student Buddy Cambell up out of his glass of beer and into it. "Man, I'll tell you something else. Shaw's on a bum rap."

The following morning I arrived at the red door on Dauphine Street with yellow legal pad and pencils, anxious to start at the beginning. One day Clay Shaw was all of this: a respected business and social leader of New Orleans, possessed of a fine war record ending with an honorable discharge as a major in 1946, having served as a Secretary to the General Staff and having been decorated by the United States with the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star and by France with the Croix de Guerre; a man who besides being Managing Director of the International Trade Mart from its inception in 1946 until his retirement in 1965, is widely known as one of the pioneers who began the rehabilitation and restoration of New Orleans' famous French Quarter; a man who believes firmly that hopes for world peace and understanding might well be enhanced by increased and closer trade between nations and who worked to bring this about, at the same time drawing added revenues into the Port of New Orleans; a man who was present at and supported most of the artistic and cultural events in the city from theatre to symphony to opera; the author of several published plays, one of which, a one-acter called *Submerged*, has had thousands of performances and is still widely played by amateur groups around the country.

One day he was all of this, the next day his credentials were irrevocably smeared, squirted upon by inky stains charging him with conspiracy to assassinate the President. How did this happen? How does a nightmare begin? Very easily.

First off, why the retirement at such a comparatively early age? Clay Shaw smiles. "Well, I'd worked hard from the age of fifteen and upon the realization of the new I.T.M. building, designed by Edward Durrell Stone, I felt I'd achieved what I'd set out to accomplish in that area of my life. Although I wasn't a millionaire, I had enough put aside to carry me along until the time at which I reasonably expect to shuffle off. I wanted, from here on in, to devote my life to writing. I also wanted to travel and I thought it might be more pleasant to do this while I could still get up a gang-plank unaided. So, in 1965, I retired and on October 1 there was a testimonial luncheon, all of that, and the Mayor presented me with the International Order of Merit medal." Shaw smiled, took a deep breath and smacked his hands together. "And I was free. Right away I took a couple of months off and went to Mexico. Then in the Summer of 1966 I boarded a freighter, spent a month in Barcelona and a month in London, getting back here in the early fall. I probably would have continued traveling if it hadn't been for my father's death in November of 1966. This held me here, keeping an eye on my mother who lives in Hammond, a small town very near New Orleans. Then, when this period of transition for her was over, I had every intention of—" Clay Shaw broke off, smiled and held his hands out, palms up. "But the best-laid plans of mice and men . . ."

"When did you first have an inkling there was a diversion being planned for you in New Orleans?"

"On December 23, 1966, I had a call early in the morning from a Detective Otilio in the District Attorney's office; would I be good enough to come down and answer some questions? I was curious and asked what about. 'Well,' he said, 'we'll talk about that when we see you.' I said all right and he came by and drove me to the D.A.'s office where I was questioned by an Assistant D.A. named Sciambra, who told me they'd come across the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald had known someone named Clay Bertrand when he was in New Orleans. They'd gone over a list of Clays, thought about me, and wanted to know if I'd known Oswald. I said no, that I'd almost met him when he'd come to distribute Fair Play for Cuba leaflets

in front of the Trade Mart, but that my assistant had dealt with him. I added, with what in retrospect seems irony, that I guess I missed my tiny footnote in history by not meeting the bird. They wanted to know more about the Cuban consulate—it was the presence of the consulate in the building that drew Oswald to that point to distribute the leaflets—and most of their questions concerned that. I was asked if I knew a man by the name of Dave Ferrie. No, I hadn't. Then Jim Garrison came in and we rehashed what I'd already told Sciambra. It was all very friendly and then they thanked me profusely for being a good citizen, for being cooperative and coming in and talking to them, and I left. Went on to a Christmas party at City Hall."

I asked Clay Shaw how he felt about this and he smiled and waved a hand in the air. "I felt it was interesting dinner conversation. You know, being called down to the D.A.'s office and grilled. I thought it was kind of entertaining, I didn't take it seriously at all. After that I read in the papers about Garrison's probe, read about Dave Ferrie's death and about someone named Russo writing a letter to the District Attorney saying he'd known Ferrie. But I had no more than a cursory interest in what was going on."

"Then on Sunday evening, February 26, a Walter Sheridan from the NBC Washington Bureau got in touch with me, wanted to know if he could come over and talk with me. I said yes, and he arrived soon after." Clay Shaw hesitated and lifted a hand in the air, one finger pointed up. "You know, it's funny but a faint alarm sounded when I asked him if he'd like a drink and he hesitated perceptibly. I thought this was strange, but he recovered and said he'd have one. I wondered why this man wouldn't want to take a drink with me, but then I thought—oh, well, I'm imagining things. I fixed our drinks and he said there were rumors in town I was the mysterious Clay Bertrand that a man named Dean A. Andrews Jr. had talked about in connection with Oswald. I pointed out to him that it would be ridiculous for me to try to use an alias of any kind, that I was well-known in the city, I'd been on television, given speeches, my picture had been in the papers over a period of years and, because of my size alone, I couldn't very well get away with running around using a fictitious name. I told him I had no idea what was going on, but I did know that I was not now, nor have I ever been, Clay Bertrand. We talked in general about Garrison's probe, then he thanked me and left. I still thought the whole thing was silly," Clay Shaw added, sloughing it off with a shrug that belongs back in time more than a year.

"Two days after Mr. Sheridan's visit, on Tuesday, February 28, a friend of mine came over to see me and mentioned that there were two men sitting outside in a car and that they looked like detectives. I glanced out of an upstairs window and there were two men in a car, but I thought if they were detectives they must be watching someone else. Later on, after an hour or so, I answered the doorbell and found two youngish men standing there, one dark, one fair. The dark one presented me with a card, saying he was from, I believe, Mutual of Omaha, that they were making a survey of people's insurance needs and would I talk to them. I said it was a bad time, I had company, and I also told him that I was, if anything, overinsured and was not a good prospect. The dark man—I'd never seen him before, but he turned out to be Perry Russo at the Preliminary Hearing—anyway, he asked if he might phone and speak with me further sometime. I said yes, but again reiterated that my insurance needs were well taken care of, and they left."

"The following morning, March 1, I went to the office of a friend of mine and a woman, a mutual friend, phoned about ten-thirty to say that she'd heard on local television that the District Attorney had issued a subpoena for me. I said, 'Well, that's nutty, I'll find out about it.' I called the D.A.'s office, asked to speak to Mr. Garrison and was told he wasn't there. I got a Mr. Ivon and said, 'Do you people want to talk to me?' Well, yes, they did. 'You don't have to issue a subpoena, just call me up,' I told him. 'What time would you like to see me?' Ivon said about one o'clock and I said fine, a friend of mine would drive me out. I stopped by my house to pick up my mail and there were two or three sheriff's deputies in the patio—I don't know how they got in—and Detective Otilio, my old friend of December 23. They had the subpoena and asked me to sign it. I thought it was ridiculous and told them I'd just talked to Ivon and had arranged to go out there at one, to check with him. They did and then Otilio said, well, it was getting on toward noon and that I could either come out at one or drive out with him then."

I interrupted Clay Shaw. "Did you call your lawyer or—" He waved a hand in the air. "No, I didn't even think about it. Who needs a lawyer?" he asked rhetorically. "I rode out to the D.A.'s and was kept waiting until about two-thirty in various offices talking to Otilio, who incidentally told me the story of his life." Shaw grins but the grin soon disappears. "I began to get a little annoyed. I was being cooperative but by this time I'd been there two-and-a-half hours. I hadn't had any lunch and I was hungry and I began to be a little sharp about the whole thing. Finally I was told that Sciambra and Ivon wanted to talk to me, so I was taken into a room where they were. They got me a sandwich and a Coke—on the State, I didn't have to pay for it; however, the price turned out to be rather severe. I asked them what they wanted and they began to question me. Did I know David Ferrie, had I ever been to David Ferrie's apartment? The answer was no. And on and on. They showed me pictures of Ferrie and others. Did I know Lee Harvey Oswald? No. 'You've never been to Dave Ferrie's apartment? No. Then finally: 'What would you say if we said we have three witnesses who would testify that you'd been to David Ferrie's apartment?' I told them I'd say that either the three witnesses were mistaken or lying—that I'd never been there, period. This went on for the better part of an hour or so. Finally I was asked if I'd take a lie-detector test. 'No,' I said. 'I've come down here, I've been cooperative, I've told you the truth.' They told me that if I wouldn't take a lie-detector test they were going to arrest me and charge me with conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy."

Clay Shaw's eyes, even now, widen in disbelief and he flings his arms out to the side of his chair. "'You've got to be kidding,' I said, 'you've got to be kidding!' No, they said, that's the way it is. 'In that case I want a lawyer and I want one now.'

He called his lawyer, Eddie Wegmann, who was out of town; called his brother, William J. Wegmann, who was also unavailable; finally contacted an associate of the latter, Salvatore Panzeca, who said, "Sit tight, don't say anything, I'll be right down." Shaw was left alone, locked in a room until Panzeca arrived, took out a pad on which he wrote that the room was bugged, the mirror was two-way, and they'd best communicate in writing. He asked Shaw what this was all about and Clay, now completely stunned, could only scrawl: "I don't know." Panzeca then left to speak to the D.A., telling Garrison that his client would not object to taking a lie-detector test but that he, Panzeca, would like him to have a good night's sleep first and they wanted the right to look at the questions; anything pertaining to the President's assassination was fine, but the questions should be limited to that.

Garrison, however, smarting from a baying press, from the world, in fact, shouting for him to come up with something or someone solid after days of dropping tantalizing hints that he had solved the riddle of the assassination, swung into high gear and said: "No deals, he's got to do it right now or we'll arrest him."

Panzeca immediately set about arranging bail and, with the Wegmann brothers now contacted and on their way and approximately a hundred fifty members of the press and TV swarming all over the building, Shaw was formally arrested. The statement was read by William Gurvich, a chief investigator on Garrison's staff who later defected, even going so far as to appeal to Robert Kennedy to aid in calling a halt, and later appearing before the Grand Jury under oath. After that Grand Jury hearing, he repeated publicly that Garrison's probe had no basis in fact and that there were absolutely no legitimate grounds for the charges against Shaw. At the time of the arrest, however, on behalf of the District Attorney, Gurvich read the formal statement which avoided any specific link of evidence, bluntly saying: "Mr. Shaw is under arrest and will be charged with participation in a conspiracy to murder President Kennedy."

The nightmare was entered into. On the part of Clay Shaw, what was it like? "I could feel the ferment building around me." Kaleidoscopic memories of detectives and flashbulbs, of handcuffs clamped on, of being led through mobs of shouting reporters, buttressed by his equally stunned attorneys, taken to Central Lockup, mugged, fingerprinted, told a search warrant had been issued for his house and he might as well give them his keys, they'd only break in if he didn't, and finally, by about nine-thirty in the evening, released on \$10,000 bail.

There is still disbelief in Clay Shaw's eyes as he says, "I drove with Eddie Wegmann, neither of us knew (Continued on page 254)."

He is lying flat on his back. Now, having looked at her, he turns his head and looks up at the ceiling, smiles happily, contentedly, his arms above the blankets and flat at his sides. Eleanor follows suit, but she is ready to have him all over her any second now.

"Comfortable?" she asks.

"Mrs hmh."

"Me too." She looks over at him. He stirs, adjusting his body—this is shot from above—feinting first to the right—her side. As she quickly reacts, rolling on her side to meet him, he turns to the left, his back to her. She has put her arms out to embrace him, is surprised as they founder empty to the bed.

He has escaped. She looks at his back. "Paul," she says after a while, "are you asleep?"

"Shh," he says.

She stares at him angrily for a moment, then puts her hand on his arm, strokes it. He twitches, shaking his arm loose as if a fly were walking on it. She touches his neck. He bolts around to face her.

"Will you please stop fooling around, Eleanor?"

She is stunned.

"Go to sleep," he commands angrily.

Frightened, and thus acting under orders, she lies still. He turns on his back. Following his movements now only with her eyes she nervously waits for him to act. He sleeps. She doesn't know what to do. She doesn't get out of bed and leave him, for the situation is too ludicrous, and, too, she still entertains the possibility that he will yet make love to her. When he doesn't, she begins to mutter to herself softly.

"Is that it? Is this what it's all about? Big deal." She looks at him mockingly. "Big jet-setter! Somersault-turner! Can't cut the mustard, that's what. He can't cut the mustard. I've seen religious, but this guy is something. He play with she toys, she play with he toys. What am I talking about? What the hell am I talking about?"

"Don't say h-e-l-l," Paul says spelling it out, half asleep. "It's nasty."

"An English teacher," she says, jerking her head in Paul's direction. She shakes her head unbelievably, but, despite herself, starts to smile, acknowledging some sort of grotesque joke played on herself. Half-resigned now, she closes her eyes and tries to sleep. The camera moves higher, is directly above them. It studies the two of them for several seconds. Then her eyes open abruptly. She lies there staring.

The tramp finds his way back to Paul's hotel. Waving a gun he has stolen, he attempts to arrest the uncomprehending Paul, but in the excitement has a heart attack and dies. Paul behaves even more strangely than ever, and Eleanor concludes that Paul is the madman escaped earlier that night from Death Row. She tells him he must go back and Paul, thinking she means he should return home, agrees. He sets out on

his bike. Outside his house two policemen are staked out in a squad car—the police sketch between them. They spot him, get silently out of the car and raise their rifles, training him in their rifle sights. Paul lays the bike down gently on the lawn. Afraid of his impending spanking, he tries to make himself more presentable. He smooths his torn pants, and then he straightens his tie. He wets his fingers and rubs vigorously at his beard.

Paul's back appears on the screen with, superimposed on it, the grids and gradients that appear on the policemen's sights. Paul moves forward. The superimposed sight lines disappear. He rings the bell. He buffs

his shoes on his trouser legs. He knocks. The policemen come from around their car. They move in on him from behind as he waits for someone to answer the door.

The film ends. #

The question: How can Christmas shopping—or any other kind of shopping be made easier and thus happier?

The answer: This issue is filled with happy ideas. And "I-R-I-S" will be an aid to easier shopping through the year. See page 79.

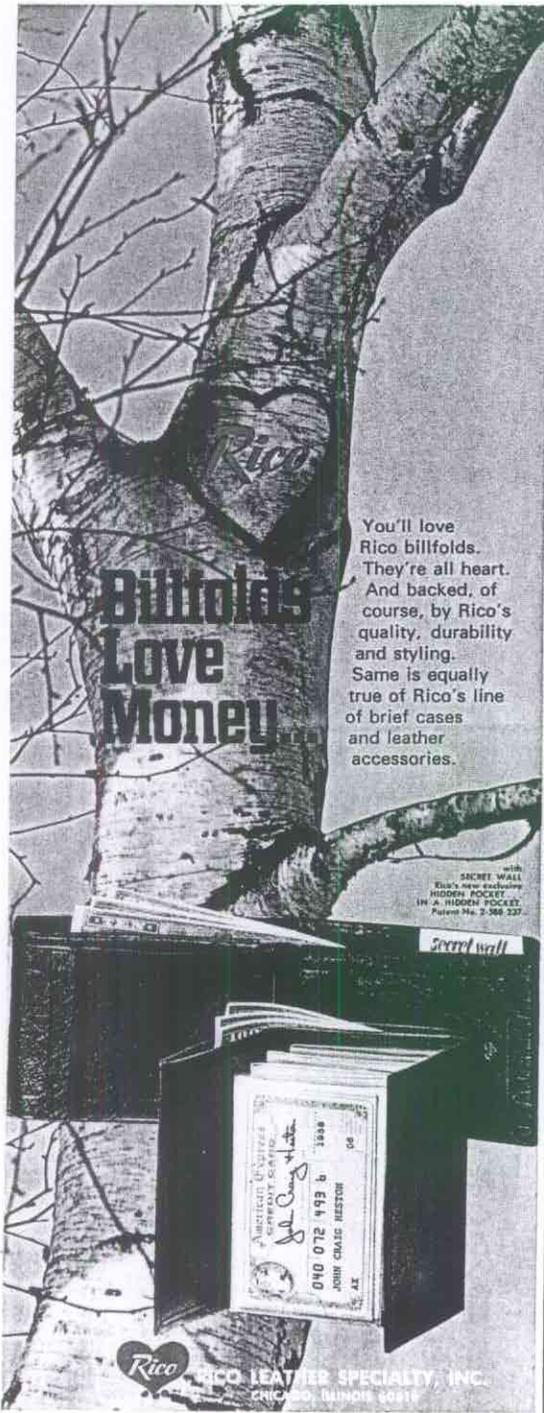


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SO HERE YOU ARE, CLAY SHAW, TWENTY MONTHS AND THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS AFTER BEING CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY IN THE WORST CRIME OF THE CENTURY. WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?

(Continued from page 221) what to say, until we parked near his office. There was a bar, we went in and I had two tremendous bourbons," Clay Shaw adds, nodding his head, and a flicker of an appreciative smile crosses his face. "You know, I had my first small bit of encouragement then. The barmaid told us she'd heard it on television, said she'd known me for years, knew I never could have been involved in anything like that and absolutely refused to take payment for the drinks."

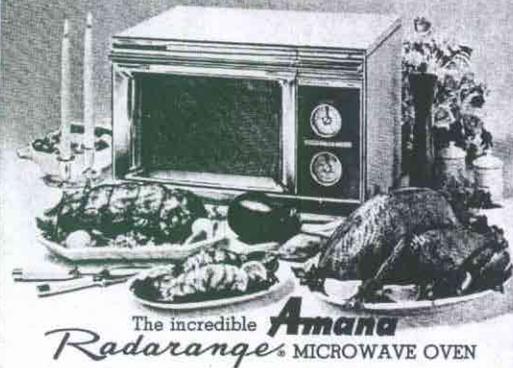
Shaw and Edward Wegmann repaired to the latter's office where they talked for a while in tones of pure incredulity, phoned a few close friends from whom they learned the astonishing news that Shaw's house was a fortress besieged by policemen luging off cartons of his belongings with a battery of newsmen and cameras set up to record the indignity of the proceedings.

It was difficult for Shaw to accept this. He did not go home that night, nor did he enter his house for the following six weeks. He went to stay instead at the home of an old friend, a woman he'd been associated with in business and socially, who insisted he accept her hospitality at this time. At this point in our interview we broke off and went to pick up this very same lady for lunch. Although there's no doubt that the District Attorney's office knew of his whereabouts every second, he asked me not to use her name, for fear of harassment, and I will respect his wishes.



What's it like to step out in public with Clay Shaw, who twenty months later is still out on \$10,000 bail, still accused of this heinous crime? It's about like standing at Hollywood and Vine with Paul Newman. It does not cover one in a cloak of anonymity. A teeny-bopper in

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faded blue denim jeans and work shirt topped by a contradictory floppy yellow wide-brimmed hat of the Thirties gyrated gently in a sunny noontday frug on the porch of an old unrestored cottage across the street. "A nest of hippies," Clay Shaw whispered to me. Still frugging, she waved and called out a happy, "Hiya, Mr. Shaw!" The walk covered five or six blocks; no one failed to react; people either looked, waved a hand, or shot a friendly, "Hi, there, Mr. Shaw, how are you?", to which he invariably replies with a brief, smiling: "Fine, what have I got to be worried about?"

Clay Shaw's friend, a charming widow, when questioned about the time he spent at her house, laughs and waves a fanless hand in front of her face. "Yes," she says, "dear Clay 'shacked up'—I guess that's what they call it nowadays—with me, but then I'm an aging matron type, so I suppose that's all right." (Aging matron type is an attractive blonde with striking, thin, rich-lady legs.) Over lunch there was talk of his arrest, his life, and later on I had a private chat with her.

"Here I was," she says, perched in her comfortably furnished living room, "sitting right here watching Huntley-Brinkley and—my God, there's Clay in handcuffs and they're announcing that Jim Garrison's arrested him for conspiracy to assassinate the President!" she repeats, still unable to comprehend it. "I was stunned, shocked, this man has never done an unkind thing to anyone in his life. Well, of course, all of Clay's friends, and he has many, were on the phone and we were all trying to find out what the almighty devil was going on. It was a madhouse. Later on that evening, when he was out on bail, I told his lawyer to bring him right on down here. That poor man, he was in a complete daze." I asked her what he did upon arriving. "He didn't do a thing," she says, slamming a hand to her chest. "I did, I fixed him a Beef-eater Martini that was the strongest thing you ever ate." She laughs. "We call that the thousand-dollar Martini. You know, out on \$10,000 bail and the bondsman gets ten percent. Then I fixed him some eggs and bacon and put him to bed. The worst day of my life, absolutely the worst.

"Clay was in a state of shock for a week or so, everyone was in New Orleans, nobody could believe it. But Garrison wouldn't let go and then along came the preliminary hearing and, of course, what can you do? Then, after the hearing, Clay hadn't been out in public since his arrest and one night he said, 'All right, I'm taking you out to dinner tonight.' I got all dolled up and we went to the Royal Orleans, and don't you know we're sitting at our table and who comes walking right by—?" Her voice rises several decibels and once again her hand flies to her chest. "O/ all people, the Jolly Green Giant,

Garrison himself, and his guru, Mark Lane. Ohhh!" she expels. "But we just sat there staring straight ahead until they'd gone by, then we finished our dinner and left. You know," she leans in toward me, "I think Garrison's always been jealous of Clay. People in this town adore Clay, wherever he goes people are always swarming all over him, pumping his hand, you can feel the warmth go out to him. I don't know about no conspiracy but I know

Clay Shaw didn't have any part of it. Why, he voted for Kennedy, he adored him. Kennedy was a builder, just like Clay was, why would he want to harm him?"

Later that afternoon, a reporter on *The Times-Picayune* said: "The whole case has taken a turn hinging on the personalities instead of the facts. Look at Garrison and Shaw, both tall, both middle-aged, both handsome imposing figures, both extremely bright and both possessed

of charm. The similarity between the two of them is so apparent it would take a blind person not to see it."

William Gurvich, whose defection from the D.A.'s staff has been mentioned, sat in the inside office of his private detective agency. He explained that he could no longer go along with Garrison and his methods. Like Clay Shaw, Gurvich speaks not emotionally, nor ranting about Garrison, but he speaks with firm con-

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viction and concern of the office of District Attorney, of the pitiful state of politics in New Orleans, of the fact that Garrison is convinced of a conspiracy, although he should know Clay Shaw had nothing to do with it, but that he is hanging onto anyone and anything to keep the case open, believing, as many reckless men in history have, that the means, no mat-

ter the cost to others, will most certainly justify the end. When asked if he would testify for Shaw if and when his case comes to trial, Gurvich said: "Only one thing would keep me from it—death." His parting sentence to me was a quiet and, in a way, sad one: "I feel sorry for Jim Garrison, but I believe he's an extremely dangerous man."

If this is a viable opinion, and it seems to be among many good citizens of New Orleans, why hasn't there been more of an outcry? Maybe they take their lead from the Governor of the State of Louisiana, John McKeithen, who, when asked if he had any criticism of Garrison and his probe, stated publicly to the press that he did not but added, just

as publicly: "And even if I did I wouldn't voice it. I have learned that most of Garrison's enemies are buried—politically speaking—and I don't propose to join the list of the deceased."

(Interesting note: Although major newspapers all over the United States have featured editorials highly critical of the methods of Jim Garrison, neither one of the New Orleans papers, The States-Item and The Times-Picayune, has so much as uttered an editorial peep.)

So here is Clay Shaw, twenty months, a battery of lawyers, and many thousands of retirement dollars later, still in the talons of the persistent District Attorney with the nasty shadow of conspiracy to murder the President hanging over him. One has to ask even if these charges eventually dwindle and die, if the accused will ever be completely free of the original smear.

The press, for instance, has frequently hinted at a duality in Clay Shaw's personal life and when his house was searched and his personal possessions were seized not so much was made of "One Underwood typewriter and case" or "One calorie counter" or "Three manuscripts" but there was a flurry of chopp-licking over "One chain . . . One black hood and cape . . . Two pieces of leather . . . Three pieces of rope . . ." etc. It is also fascinating to note that while the dossier contained "Four paperback books and twelve hardcover books . . ." it listed separately "One book entitled *A Holiday for Murder*."

I interviewed a longtime friend of Clay Shaw's, Mrs. Lawrence Fischer, who designs many of the floats and costumes for Mardi Gras, or as she puts it, "New Orleans Annual Climactic of Civil Lunacy!" and a snappier woman I've never talked to. A day or so after Shaw's arrest her doorbell rang and an investigator for the D.A. identified himself. "Oh," she said, curled up in her armchair and reenacting the scene with relish, "you come right on in, you're exactly the man I want to talk to." She winked at me. "I think I took him by surprise. Anyhow, this joker wants to spread a mulch of sinister deeds over Clay. Wanted to know how long I'd known him. Since he was seventeen. Wanted to know if we'd ever discussed sex."

Mrs. Fischer slapped her leg. "Well, it would be pretty unusual to go for over thirty-five years with a good friend and never bring the subject up, now, wouldn't it? Of course we had. Then this young man asked, 'Has Mr. Shaw ever told you the intimate details of his sex life?' 'No,' I shot back at him, 'and furthermore I haven't told him the intimate details of my sex life either. Are you here to discuss his political leanings with reference to the Garrison farce, or are you conducting a sort of Kinsey Report?' Then he wanted to get into the black robe and the hood



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and the black hat and finally I just couldn't take it any longer and I said, 'Listen, my good young man, I don't know whether you've ever heard of it, but we have something here in New Orleans every year and it's called *Mardi Gras!* Everybody in town gets dressed up in costumes. My God, you could raid any apartment or house in New Orleans and come up with some pretty far-out ensembles—I can assure you. While you were at it, why didn't you take his Chinese costume or the Western one or the Dutch one?'" Mrs. Fischer chuckled with pleasure. "I think that investigator was damned glad to get out of here." She raised a hand to her forehead and sighed. "Good Lord, since this case began New Orleans—never what you'd call a sane place anyhow, I mean think of Huey Long and all that—has turned into one vast walking lunatic asylum."

Later that afternoon, I spoke with a former business associate of Clay Shaw's. "Clay was so completely stunned and mystified by the charges leveled against him that we were all worried, especially when it dragged on and on, whether he could withstand the strain. After months of trial of preliminary motions by his lawyers, all of them turned down, change of venue, turned down, it was one remark that let us know he was going to come through all right. At a dinner party we were discussing the morass of legal procedure, the endless entanglements of the law, and Clay finally shook his head and said: 'Can you see me for the rest of my life running around with stacks of documents and sheafs of papers tucked under my arm, knocking on every judge's chamber in the land, crying out: "I didn't kill Cock Robin, I didn't!"'"

Further sessions with Clay Shaw gave sound indications of his rationale and the philosophy which has enabled him to keep his balance and remain on course.

On the theory of conspiracy: "I'm no authority to judge and it's difficult to sift through all that's been written about the Warren Commission, the C.I.A., the F.B.I., the Attorney General, the Right and the Left, the Cuban situation and so forth. I only know I had no part in any plot. But I do feel many people believe in a conspiracy because when death comes to the figure of a Prince, as it did to Kennedy, struck down in his prime, it should come under a canopy of great tragedy with all the resulting high court intrigue—almost something out of Shakespeare—not from some poor little psychotic loser crouched with a mail-order rifle behind a stack of cardboard boxes in a warehouse."

On the question of what has sustained him most during this troublesome year and a third, Clay Shaw leans back in his chair, rests his head against the high back for a long time before sighing and leaning forward, hands clasped in front of him. "It's difficult to isolate any one factor in your psychic makeup. To be perfectly

pragmatic, I suppose the knowledge of my innocence has been the great sustaining factor and against that, I believe, nothing in the long run can fail me. I have found religion helpful. Although I'm not a member of any church formally, I think of myself as a religious person. I've found several works supportive, *Confessions of a Guilty Bystander*, a book of meditations by Thomas Merton and—"he picked up a volume from the coffee table—"this, of course, the Bible." He puts the book down and adds with a smile: "I might say that I've particularly been reading the Book of Job."

has rather convinced me of the validity of Christian existentialism as far as philosophy is concerned. In other words, whatever plans you make, you must be prepared, in one moment, that they can be demolished. Of course, man being what he is, he must make some plans for the future." He hoisted a warning hand in the air. "Bear in mind, however, that they might all collapse! Another book I've found interesting, *Religion and Personality*. There's a marvelous line in it: 'Life is not a puzzle to be solved, it's a mystery to be lived minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day.' Oh, and a fine piece of advice given to me by a Jesuit

all that conducive to it." He sighs and then continues: "Well, I'll tell you, soon after this bombshell was dropped on me I had a long talk with myself, told myself I was going to attempt to lead my life, as far as possible, as I did before. This is not one-hundred-percent possible, but within the limitations placed upon me I decided I was going to do the best I could. I've pretty well carried this over. I have to admit that there has never been a twenty-four-hour period when this current situation hasn't occupied some of my mental concentration. Because of this, writing is not as easy as it was before. Incidentally, I'm keeping a journal,"

he chuckles and adds a wink, "in the hopes that one day it might help keep me. I find that when I wake up in the morning, I'm at my lowest—heavy, heavy still hangs over my head—but then as I begin to distract myself with the activities of the day I work out of it. I then try to enjoy each and every minute to the fullest, whatever it is, a book I'm reading, the birds in the patio out there, a sunset, an enjoyable meal, the companionship of friends, a game of bridge. Perhaps, with the Sword of Damocles hanging over me, I've even made more aware of the simpler pleasures of life."

What about the future? "Hard to say," Shaw says, shaking his formidable head. "There's no way of knowing how long this will drag on. My most cherished dream would be to continue what I originally planned, my writing, to combine it with travel. Of course, I might not have any money left to do that, I might have to—as they say—open up the shop again." A rueful smile. "Justice may or may not be blind, but she's the most expensive gal I've ever walked around with! But I'll go on writing, I'll work it out. I'm working now on a play which deals with the age-old problem of the human race. Namely, if we're going to be a society at all, we have to give power to administer things to somebody. But we've never worked out any satisfactory solution as to what happens when this power is abused, when it hardens into a privileged cast of nobles. The dynastic principle doesn't work, because a good king is followed by a weak king.

Democracy has tried to put institutions in the place of the dynasty, but then the institutions must be headed by individuals, either elected or appointed. So we still have the problem of what to do when somebody in high office totally abuses this power, or even becomes mad. Witness Hitler, Mussolini, Joe McCarthy. This is implicit in the theme of the play. If my reach is equal to my grasp, if I have the technical ability to do it as I see it, I think it will be a good play."

Obviously, I ask, the germ of this idea came from his recent experiences with a certain someone in power. He grins. "Let's just say this has been a watershed in my life; anything I write hereafter will have to be influenced directly or indirectly by it."

What about friends, have any of

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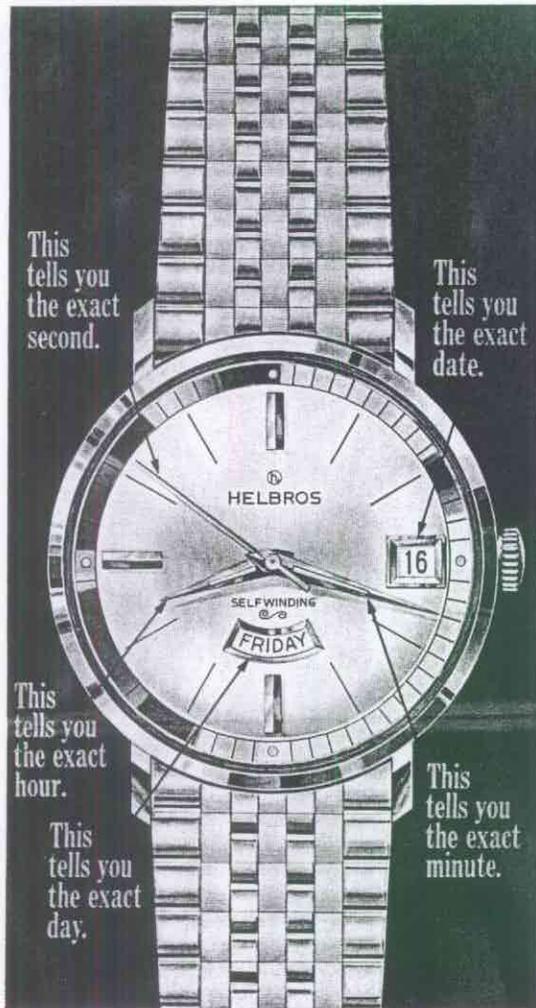
At this point I mention that I would have thought Kafka might have come to mind and he reacts with a hearty burst of laughter and amacks his hands together. "Oh, yes, by all means. Yes, I've often had the feeling that I might just be living in a Kafka novel. Ironically enough, I was always the one who thought that Kafka rather overstated things—now, come on, all right so K. can't communicate with The Castle and man and God are incommensurate, but do you have to go on at such tiresome lengths? Boy, have I changed, what a fellow feeling I have for K. now!"

"Then, too, this entire experience

friend of mine, a quote from Ignatius Loyola: 'Work as though everything depends upon you and pray as though everything depends upon God.' You see, many people say: 'Oh, well, let us do God's will,' and then they relax. It's not quite that simple, it's a matter of finding what God's will is—not easy, granted—and to find it moment to moment and live accordingly."

How does this apply to his daily life? A large smile from Clay Shaw, a long drag on his cigarette followed by a deep cough. "I must give this habit up," he says, holding the offending weed in front of him, "but at this point in my life circumstances are not

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them dropped out of sight during this period? "Not friends, perhaps a few acquaintances have shied away, but not friends, they've been closer than ever. You know," he smiles, "immediately after my arrest, there was something almost every night on the evening news. It was extremely painful to have to sit and hear of the charges against me, but one had to keep in touch with all the developments, it was something that couldn't be ignored. I was speaking about this unpleasant task to a friend who immediately volunteered to come over every evening when I turned the set on—and since for me!"

Has he made any new friends as a result of his trouble? Clay Shaw's face lights up now. "About ten days after my arrest I called a cab to take me to my lawyer's, almost a daily pilgrimage. The cab arrives, I get in, the driver flips the flag and off we go. He could really have been sent by Central Casting; dark, stocky, Italian. I see him looking back at me in the mirror and finally he says, 'Haven't I driven you before?' 'No, I don't think so.' He kept an eye on me. 'You look so familiar, I could swear I know you.' I finally thought, what the heck, and I said, 'Well, you probably recognize me from the papers, I'm Clay Shaw.' 'Oh, Mr. Shaw, of course,' and he flips the flag off. 'No charge for you, everybody knows it's a bum rap.' I insisted on paying when we arrived at my lawyer's but he wouldn't hear of it, wanted to know how I was going to get home. I told him I'd call a cab. 'No,' he said, pointing to the opposite curb, 'you take your time, I'll be parked right over there.' I told him I couldn't impose upon his time, I

wasn't even sure when I'd be leaving, it might be an hour or so. 'Are you kiddin'—I got the whole Daily Racing Form to figure out.' Sure enough, when I came out, there he was. Again he refused to flip the flag. Now I really had to protest, but he wouldn't give in. 'No charge, Mr. Shaw—listen, your lawyers are gonna cost you enough. Now, you know, Mr. Shaw, it's going to be tough for you to get around, everyone knows you. I want you to use my services. I'm either in my cab or at home and my wife knows how to reach me all the time. I want you to take my number and call me anytime. I don't give a damn, three in

morning and you want a carton of cigarettes, a bottle of booze, a magazine—you call me.' Clay Shaw shrugs. "That's the way it's been for almost a year and a half. He's never charged me. Oh, I've given presents, to him, to his wife and kids, sent them to my doctor, no bills, things like that. I go out there for Sunday dinner, they're part of my family. You can't realize what this has meant to me. Here's a man who saw injustice being done and had nothing to offer against it but himself and his cab. It reminds me of the tale of the Juggler of Notre Dame. He had no money to offer, only his talent, but that he gave freely. He juggled in front of the statue of Our Lady and surely enough—the statue smiled." And Clay Shaw does more than smile when he speaks of his cabdriver friend—he beams.

This cabdriver friend, whom Clay Shaw requests I refrain from naming—"After all, he's in business here, he could be caused trouble"—I'll call 'Tony.' It was Tony who drove me

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on the next to last day of my visit to the Criminal Court Building which houses the District Attorney's office. I had been warned, by almost everyone with whom I'd spoken, to make it easy for myself and stay away from Garrison. I might be subpoenaed, harassed, and a few other things. I was also warned that he can charm the birds, when he wants to. But curiosity had me by the throat and I wanted to get a close look at this controversial man. A newspaper reporter asked me what I had in mind to say to him. "I'm just going to say I think Clay Shaw is completely innocent and see what he says."

"You're going to—Jesus—" He shook his head and walked away from me.

Let the reader's hopes rise. I didn't see Jim Garrison. I walked into his most impressive office and found the switchboard operator and several secretaries at the tail end of a Kaffeeklatsch. When they'd scattered, I straightened my tie and approached the least-formidable-looking one. "I'd like to see the District Attorney," I said, unable to come up with anything more original and sounding like a bad actor in a 1940's B-picture. She asked what my business was; I told her I was writing an article and wondered if I could just speak with him for a few minutes. She asked me what publication I represented.

"Esquire," I said.

"Esquire!" the secretary trilled. "Esquire!—Oh, honey, it's a good thing the District Attorney's in California. Don't you know Esquire named him Bigmouth of the Year last year?"

"No," I replied. (And I hadn't

recalled that fact.)

"Well, if you really want to see him, leave your name and number and I'm sure he'll be in touch with you when he gets back next week."

"I'm going to New York tomorrow."

"That's good," she said, pointing toward the door, "have a nice trip."

It was Tony who drove Clay Shaw and me for a last lunch at Antoine's in New Orleans. Megatons of warmth exploded from the employees of this famed eatery as we entered. "Ah, Mr. Shaw, good to see you," the maître d' said, reaching for his hand. "How are you, Mr. Shaw?"

And the familiar, smiling reply: "Fine, what have I got to be worried about?"

Over our meal a few last questions to him. "Has anything particularly humorous happened as a result of all this?"

"Nothing really hysterical," he grins. "Except when I was in New York, I was waiting for a spotlight on Lexington and I noticed a woman eyeing me closely. She finally sidled up to me and said: 'Aren't you the man who's being bothered by that lawyer down in New Orleans?' I had to smile; that's one way of putting it—Department of Understatement. 'Well,' the woman added, 'my family and I saw you on television, we think it's terrible and we're all praying for you.'"

"Has anyone ever done or said anything vicious to you since your arrest?"

"No, I must say they have not," he says without hesitation, then quickly adds: "I must also express my cynicism by saying I'm surprised. Oh, there have been a couple of unpleasant predictions. In the early

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days of my arrest, Mr. Garrison said to a journalist that I'd never come to trial, I'd commit suicide first. That gave me very little worry—not the type. And I've heard it said by those who are aware of such things that I wouldn't come to trial because I'd be assassinated." Clay Shaw shrugs and waves it away. "What can you do? If somebody really wants to kill you, seems they have a good chance, witness Lee Harvey Oswald being killed on television with an entire phalanx of Dallas policemen standing by.

"So, while it's not pleasant to contemplate, since there's nothing one can do outside of taking the reasonable precautions, I just try to put it out of my mind."

"Have you received any mail and, if so, what kind of mail?"

"To date, about three hundred letters have arrived from all over the world. All of them were sympathetic, except for three, which were hostile."

"Did you answer any of them?"

"Yes, I hired a secretary and answered all of them. I figured if people could take the time and the effort, the least they deserved was a reply from me."

"Did you answer the hostile ones, too?"

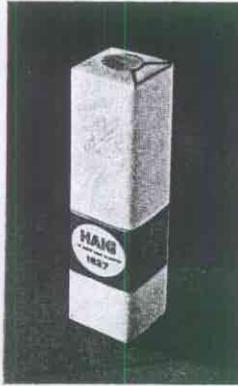
"No, none of the three was signed, as is the way with crank letters, I suppose. Oh, I must tell you about one letter from a retired minister in New Jersey and with it a large photograph of me. He'd gone to the bother of contacting one of the wire services and he'd bought this photograph for five dollars. At the end of the letter he asked if I'd please autograph it and send it back to him. He said he was going to hang it in his study next to a picture of Captain Dreyfus."

When we said our good-byes, I wished Clay Shaw well, and then Tony, refusing to flip the flag, drove off toward the airport. "I sure hope this thing is over for Mr. Shaw soon," Tony said. "I worry about him. I wish he'd be more careful, like maybe even hide out for a while until his trial comes up. But he goes right on living the way he always lived. See, if you never done anybody harm, you don't expect anyone to do you harm. But they're out to convict Mr. Shaw. I tell you, he's dealing with a dangerous man." Tony glanced over at me. "You know what kills me about Mr. Shaw? He doesn't even run down the guys that are running him down. He's got this great outlook on life." Tony grinned and began to thump the steering wheel. "He's really hanging on good!"

As the plane circled New Orleans, gaining altitude, I looked back down at the city with the Mississippi curling around it like a giant python and realized that Clay Shaw is hanging on down there in his own quietly tenacious way. There's no doubt that the District Attorney has dedicated

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HAIG BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY, 86 PROOF
 RENFIELD IMPORTERS LTD., NEW YORK

What did Garrison do this



There are a quarter of a million children in these United States who do not have the simple ability to walk because they were born with cerebral palsy. The greatest thrill in their young lives would be to take a few steps without canes or crutches. Help them to happiness. Give to United Cerebral Palsy. Send a check today in care of your local Postmaster.

Army witness