

July 22, 1967

Honorable Robert F. Kennedy  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I presume you have not read the second of my books that I sent you, WHITWASH II: THE FBI-SECRET SERVICE COVER-UP. Had you, on page 230 you would have read this: "The late President had such friends he had no need for enemies."

The Associated Press dispatch that appears in the New Orleans Times-Picayune of July 19, in which you endorse Mr. Walter Sheridan's integrity in this matter reminds me of that line.

I also regret that your course of action is one that, on the basis of what I know, I believe will cause you additional and unnecessary hurt.

Working under Mr. Sheridan on the NBC operation was Mr. Richard Townley, of WDSU-TV. Mr. Townley sought me out while I was there - the very day I appeared before the grand jury. He tried to plant bad, really evil, information in the Garrison investigation through me. By a series of rather odd coincidences, he was able to arrange that when he and I dined, two hours late, he managed to select the one eating-place of all of those in New Orleans in which Mr. Sheridan would see us together.

Now, it happens that I trusted Mr. Townley, as I had Mr. Sheridan before him. When Mr. Townley asked me to get the information he provided to Mr. Garrison, I asked him why he did not do so himself. His response was that Mr. Garrison would not see him. I went with Mr. Townley to the source of his information and was then driven by Mr. Townley to Mr. Garrison's home. Mr. Townley declined my invitation to go in with me. I gave Mr. Garrison the information Mr. Townley wanted him to have.

The next evening, by prearrangement, Mr. Townley and I met at the home of the possessor of the information he wanted Mr. Garrison to have, Mrs. Barbara Reid, 38 St. Philip Street. With her permission, I made a tape recording of what she had to say. I gave that tape recording, again by prearrangement, to Mr. Garrison, whose office I presume has made a copy of it. I asked that a copy be made for Mr. Townley and also made an appointment for him to see Mr. Garrison. He did not keep that appointment, hence did not get his copy of the tape. I now have it. I offered it to Mr. A. Louis Head, president of WDSU. He declined the offer. I also offer it to you. You can hear Mr. Townley's voice on it, and I believe you will understand that this is perhaps the worst "information" yet alleged against Mr. Clay Shaw. Had Mr. Garrison been irresponsible, or had I, I think I need not emphasize to you the consequences. Nor need I emphasize the amount of time, for me and others, it took to check out this "information".

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My public silence on this, I hope you will understand, is not because it will sell more copies of my books. I would much prefer that this entire matter be on a different level. I do not know how long I can remain silent about it, because I also am under attack. When defense of myself coincides with what I consider the national need, I will defend myself.

I think you should also know that when I brought this to the attention of Mr. Read, he did not deny the charge. He did not say he conducted his own investigation and was satisfied that his employee, working under the direction of Mr. Sheridan, had not made this effort to corrupt the investigation, to interfere with the grand-jury proceeding. As the enclosed photocopy of his letter of July 5 shows, he said merely, "I find it hard to believe that Mr. Townley made any false or derogatory statements about Mr. Clay Shaw", which is not what I had said and is also no answer to anything, and that "I cannot in any event understand what bearing this could have on Mr. Garrison's charges ...", which, whether or not in point, is certainly not my point.

Whether or not my letters reach you, I do not know. That is not my responsibility. I believe I discharge the responsibility I feel when I write you. I do, sincerely, regret what I now believe may be inevitable. I did what I could to prevent it.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg