



STATE ATTORNEY
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY JUSTICE BUILDING
SIXTH FLOOR
1381 N. W. 12TH STREET
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33138

RICHARD E. GERSTEIN
STATE ATTORNEY

July 22, 1968

PHONE 871-7671

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Press
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 17th, 1968.

I have had extensive contact with militant right-wing organizations in this area, especially a group of self-styled Minutemen who had close ties with the American Nazi Party and the National States Rights Party.

This group was responsible for the bombing of the home of the Editor of the Miami Herald in 1962 and had threatened to assassinate me and other prominent persons of the Jewish faith.

I am not completely familiar with the tape to which you refer. May I suggest that you contact Lieutenant Everett Kay of the Miami Police Department, Intelligence Division, or Assistant Attorney General Seymour Gelber, c/o Attorney General's Office, Tallahassee, Florida. Lieutenant Kay has been active in investigations of extremist organizations and Mr. Gelber was my Administrative Assistant who is totally familiar with this situation. They should be able

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Route 8
Frederick, Maryland


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to supply you with the information you need.

I appreciate your offer of your file
and if we have need of it I will be sure to call
on you.

Sincerely yours,



RICHARD E. GERSTEIN
State Attorney

REG/jan



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ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY JUSTICE BUILDING
SEVENTH FLOOR
1001 N. W. 12TH STREET
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136

RICHARD E. GERSHBERG
STATE ATTORNEY

July 22, 1968

PHONE 571-7071

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Coq d'Or Press
Route 8
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THE PRESS

NEWSPAPERS

There Go De Judge

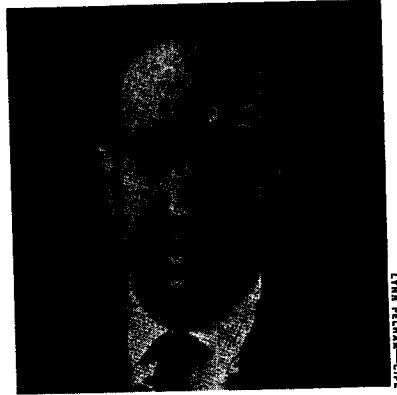
The Miami Herald is not only Florida's largest newspaper (circ. 369,000) but a most outspoken crusader against crime and corruption. Three years ago, its chronic complaints about law enforcement in the Miami area were directed at Dade County State Attorney Richard Gerstein, the powerful and popular (if unsuccessful) prosecutor of Candy Mossler, ex-president of the National District Attorneys' Association and much-decorated B-17 navigator. The Herald often wondered aloud why Gerstein kept turning up at race tracks, gambling casinos in the Bahamas, and the Miami area's less savory bars.

Last month, at the height of Democrat Gerstein's campaign for re-election, the Herald finally found what it billed as evidence against him. His Republican opponent, Shelby Highsmith, accused him of taking a \$1,500 bribe eight years ago to drop bad-check charges against Howard C. Edwards, a former minister of the Christian Church, after Edwards had made the bad check good. As proof, Highsmith offered sworn statements from Edwards and an alleged contact man. Next day the Herald arranged to fly Edwards and his colleague to Chicago for lie-detector tests. Though Edwards' test was inconclusive, the Herald was convinced that the other man's story was true.

No Bribe Needed. The Herald's rival, the Miami News (circ. 94,000), came to a different conclusion. The News' editorial staff has long sought a way out of the shadow of its larger competitor. In a signed editorial title, "Here Come De Judge," News Editor William Baggs accused the Herald of "an arrogant intrusion into the due process of law." Later, the News front-paged the results of a Gerstein lie-detector test (he passed).

The case against Gerstein was shaky for more significant reasons. As one Miami lawyer explained: "Everybody knows that if you make restitution in a bad-check case your case will be dismissed on the first go-round. You wouldn't bribe anyone. It wouldn't be necessary." Moreover, the alleged evidence against Gerstein also implicated three judges—all former members of Gerstein's staff. But at first neither Highsmith nor the Herald publicized the additional charges. Gerstein's explanation was that they were so preposterous that the whole case—including the accusation against him—would have collapsed. The Herald did eventually publish them, explaining that it could not do so earlier for fear of libel suits.

By now the doubts were fast multiplying. The Herald belatedly turned the story over to its Pulitzer-prizewinning crime reporter, Gene Miller, who interviewed ex-minister Edwards and

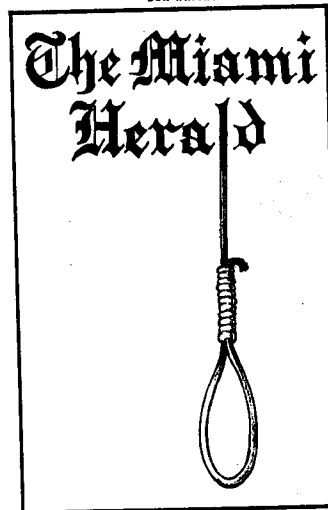


GERSTEIN
Case dismissed.

found him to be totally obscure ("I am a doctor and Gerstein is on the needle," said Edwards). The charges against Gerstein collapsed completely when Edwards, pleading heart disease, refused to come out of exile in Ontario and appear before the grand jury.

Had the Herald exceeded journalistic propriety? The grand jury seemed to think so. Two weeks ago, it not only indicted Edwards and his fellow accuser of perjury, but also rebuked the newspaper for taking it upon itself to put the witnesses under lie-detector examination. "Neither we nor other judicial tribunals," said the jurors, "believe that truth is made by an operator of a polygraph machine." A harsher rebuke came from Baggs in another News editorial: "The Herald assumed the robes of De Judge and, in effect, pointed a long and accusing inky finger at Mr. Gerstein. The grand jury believes that the Herald should stick to newspapering. We agree."

DON WRIGHT—THE MIAMI NEWS



MIAMI NEWS CARTOON:
"Mr. Gerstein, your new necktie is ready."

July 17, 1968

Mr. Richard Gerstein
District Attorney
Miami, Florida

Dear Mr. Gerstein,

I am the author of four published books on the Kennedy assassination. The first and best known (and the first on the subject) is WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT. The fourth is OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS, for which Jim Garrison (who speaks of you as of no other district attorney in the country) wrote the foreword.

My independent research, investigation and writing continues. I have two unpublished, almost completed manuscripts, each specialized.

In OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS I reprinted some of what had appeared in the press (with permission) of the National States' Rights Party tape the Miami police made November 9, 1963. Since then, although I know it was given to the federal government and is required to be in the National Archives, I have been unable to get the tape of a transcript. The Archives says it is not there. Yet I feel confident that I read reference to it in these files two years ago.

My purpose in writing is to ask if you can provide either or both and to ask for any related material you can let me have or refer me to.

If you are unaware of how this was handled in the Warren Report, it was ignored, almost totally. There is no reference to it, but there is that statement that preparatory to his Texas trip, the President's guard examined the Secret Service's file of threats for the period ending November 8, 1963- and for the Dallas-Fort Worth area!

I do not know whether you have any interest in these people (if that is an appropriate word), but if you have, I have a considerable file that is available to you. It consists of everything official not totally suppressed and some informal data collected by friends and associates. Milteer confirmed this tape to an FBI informant November 23, 1963, in Jacksonville. He almost immediately said, "We must now concentrate on the Jews". And I have the name of the man who he said "could do the job" of the assassinations.

Thanks you for any help you can offer. I would like this aspect of my work to be as complete as possible.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg