

Third part of 3-part interview with Mort Sahl, filed 7nov69

# MORT SAHL: America - love it or leave it

(THIS IS THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF THE MORT SAHL INTERVIEW, WHICH IS CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

PAUL EBERLE

FP: Many people seriously believe that it's all over here— that the United States is irrevocably on the same trip Germany went on in the thirties, . . . and that the smartest people are getting out while there's still time.

MS: Well, I'd say that they have very good evidence. I don't think that that's pessimistic at all. The number of people that I run into that talk about keeping their passports ready and buying land in Australia! You know, it's interesting, Garrison said to me at one time, he said to me, "Are you ready to ship out? We're going to have to get out of here." So I said "Yes." And he went up to the map on the wall in his office— he has a big office, and he made it big. I asked him "How did you do it," and he said "I have a great device, I threw out the law books"—being a hindrance—and he said, "This is not a case of law, it's guerilla warfare now. It's the people vs. the government." At any rate, he looked up at the map, and he said to me, "Do you think we should go to Cuba?" We decided not to; we thought that Castro would find us to be corrupt because of our habits, you know, social security and discount stores and off-street parking. We're not ready for the revolution. (Laughter.)

FP: You're tainted.  
MS: That's right.

FP: By affluence.  
MS: I don't think we could make it in the Virgin Islands. We're never going to know anyway.

FP: I think maybe we're all corrupted by affluence. We've had it a little too soft.  
MS: Well, we never know unless we have to fight a war.

FP: And live in the woods.  
MS: To perpetrate Fascism they had to desensitize the American people. I think they're desensitized to a point where they not only will not follow me with banners when I say "The President's been murdered," I don't think, by the same token, they'll follow Max Rafferty or John Wayne either. I don't think they'll

follow anybody. I don't think those kids I see will fight for their Mustang, is what I'm saying. I think America is very lucky she's not at war. Really. It's not there.

FP: I think they would find that they could mobilize an army of three million young men and ship them to China but they would find that they would not fight.

MS: That's one of the flies in the ointment in this plan, here, which so far is pretty good, Fascism in America. A couple of things. The Germans really had kids who wanted to go into the army. The Germans really did good though. The Reichstag fire and all I think are very well done. This is very poorly done. I hate to say that about the CIA because I think they're very professional. You know what they always say? They say, "Alongside the FBI, we're very sophisticated." Well, alongside the FBI I would say they are, but alongside the Germans they're not. They're very bad.

Now, we have no one who wants to be in this great army we have. We have a fantastic army and no one wants to be in it. Captain Levy said the other day in a press conference, Howard Levy, he said, "The emphasis has shifted from the universities where people were protesting they don't want to go into the service. It's now on army bases." He says,



"GIs don't want to be in the army." The thing used to be "I don't want to go into the army."

It's now, "I don't want to be in the Army." And, he said, that's a whole different thing. You've got no army in effect.

FP: The fact that guys coming back from Vietnam tell me that as much as seventy and eighty percent of the kids in Vietnam are stoned every day... and the Vietnamese grass is, I understand, about three times more potent than the Mexican stuff they smoke over here.

MS: You know who the number one manufacturer and purveyor of grass is?

FP: The Viet Cong?  
MS: Central Intelligence Agency.

FP: You're kidding.  
MS: No sir! And do you know who used to be a courier flying it for them? Vice President Ky. Marshall Ky. (Laughter) When he was flying for the French against his own people. That was one of his accomplishments. He managed to be fighting against his own people. That's quite a thing to bring off in your own country. I used to have a joke about that.

FP: He bombed his own people in a French plane, flying for the French.

MS: That's right. When they were known as Viet Minh, before.

FP: That was the group that fought against the Japanese during the war. And when the French came in and tried to smother their rebellion, Ky was one of the guys who flew for the French, against his own people.

MS: That's right. And then, later, he was a courier flying narcotics for the Central Intelligence Agency. Which, by the way, has decentralized. They're growing marijuana in North Vietnam as well as South in case any supply dump is cut off. They're very clever.

FP: Which goes to show you that the drug movement is not necessarily the answer because guys who come back from Vietnam tell me that if it wasn't for being stoned, those guys wouldn't be able to even keep it together over there.

MS: The drug movement I think is much the same as cotton in your ears because you can't stand the orchestra. Americans have come to the opinion, young people, that they won't have any choice what the band is. So they're going to put the cotton in their ears. It's almost a kind of youth-

ful cynicism. They've come to know that they're not going to be able to live with this, so they'll take any way out of it. And I can well understand their motivation. It is intolerable. You will go mad if you're exposed to it all day, and I can see where people want to go under.

FP: The only difference is, I suppose, that the older people use downers and barbituates and the young generation uses grass and speed.

MS: Yes, the older people—it wasn't so long ago that guys used to say, "Well, you don't drink enough." Well, I've become very critical of that. Remember the late-night bull session university time? Somebody would say to me, you don't drink enough. There was just a lot of booze. "I'm really going to get drunk tonight. It's Friday night. TGIF." What else do you need, right? Goyish insurance salesmen at the piano bar at Frascati's Friday afternoon, come on, the happy hour. Why was it? It was that the conditions are intolerable.

FP: To numb yourself to the degradation of the style of life that you live in.

MS: Paul, there's a commercial on the air now which perhaps you've seen on television, with the Oldsmobile where the fellow's a waiter and women are very rude to him, impolite to him. And he walks up to the Oldsmobile. And he says, "After every-

body telling you off, you take command," and he shifts gears and takes command of the V-8 engine.

FP: And kills somebody.  
MS: Yes, I remember a couple of years ago a guy couldn't get his money back in Indiana from a phone booth. So he got outside into an Oldsmobile Toronado and put it into low range and rammed the phone booth down. (Laughter) Which I'd say is a positive way

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to show that anger. It's taking a different angle.

FP: Putting it into a constructive channel.

MS: The drug movement... In other words, they act so alienated we know, the Attorney General, John Mitchell, the drugs, Operation Intercept at the border and all these young people are so disoriented and everything. It's just a continuation of before. It's just we're a little bit more sophisticated.

FP: The only difference, I think, between the extreme, spreading prevalence of marijuana and the older generation's use of alcohol and barbituates is that alcohol and barbituates are a mind-numbing thing. They blunt the cutting edge of the mind. Whereas, I think, what marijuana does for the younger generation is a great deal and for some older people is to liberate them somewhat from conditioning. And that, to the established power structure is very threatening, because one thing marijuana tends to do, and LSD to a much greater degree, and probably much more dangerous degree, is it does unstructure people and somewhat liberate them from all this conditioning to obedience and apathy and conformity. And that is a threat, a very real threat.

MS: Oh, so would Dexedrin because it would be a more optimal view at least for the time you're stretched out. Coming off, isn't Dexedrin, stuff like that. But Dexedrin, the continual structure of Dexedrin would make you take a more optimal view and you probably would be more adventurous and less discouraged by the conditions around you.

FP: It'll also rot your brain if you overuse it.

MS: Yes, and of course you'll always overuse it because your tolerance will go up. So you'll always overuse it because it becomes useless as you build up your tolerance. But what role has the medical profession had in all this? Because everybody didn't get sophisticated on Sunset Boulevard. The doctors started writing this. There was a time when I used to go into people's homes when there was just toothpaste in the cabinet. Then the years came where you went and used somebody's bathroom and looked in the chest and there were more and more prescriptions written more and more freely. The doctors really generated business. Because at one time Secomals were not possessed by everybody. And at one time everybody had a prescription.

So there's been a little commerce going on here, too.

FP: Free enterprise.

MS: Complete revelation.

FP: Getting back to Garrison a little bit, what about the allegations made in Look magazine?

MS: Well, you know that's one of those difficult areas again because that article was written



by a man I've know about fifteen years, Warren Rogers. I approached Rogers earlier about this case in Washington and told him about this. Rogers introduced me to Robert Kennedy one time. That's how I met Bob Kennedy—Warren Rogers. Rogers is the head of their Washington bureau, which should be enough right there. But there isn't anything truthful in that article. Garrison lives with rugs thrown over chairs to cover the holes in the fabric, and he's got him down there as, you know, a *Doc of the Midwest*. The article is deliberately aimed as a defense motion for Shaw. And it follows what has come to be the Establishment role, whether it's James Phelan in *Penthouse* mag-

azine or Warren Rogers in *Look*, or *Life* talking about *Cosa Nostra*—these articles are all aimed at destroying Garrison's character so he cannot be re-elected in November so he cannot carry on with the only prosecution of the murder of the President of this country. He's the only one. This will teach him a lesson. This is no different than bombing Ho Chi Minh. It's to bloody his nose in case anybody else has got the idea of following his example.

FP: To make it clear that...  
MS: To make it clear this is what happens to guys who don't obey rules.

FP: This is what they can expect.  
MS: This is what DP's do to guys if they don't shape up. This is exactly what it's supposed to be. And...because those articles were written from one source.

They were written from the Central Intelligence Agency. For instance, Edward Epstein's article in the *New Yorker*. There's twenty-five thousand words in there. He was with Garrison less than forty-eight hours. The only truthful thing in there is when he says "I saw no evidence against Shaw." That's quite true because we didn't show him any because we didn't trust him when he came down.

FP: There's been some rumors floating around that he's a CIA man.

MS: Yes, the office believes that he works for the Company. The evidence is that he works for the Company.

FP: He took in that *New Yorker* article everything bad that's ever been said about Garrison and excluded everything else and simply strung every kind of bad-mouth bad-rap that's ever been said about him...

MS: I have to ask you, I have to ask you why would the Attorney General, Chief Justice of the United States, the head of the FBI, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Joint Chiefs, the three networks, and six leading magazines in this country be taken up, concerned with the municipal election of the district attorney in a city that has a population of less than 700,000 people? These people are king-makers. Why are they concerned with that man? I think that question answers itself. He's the finest man I know. He's the finest friend I have—part of that is due to the fact that we've been under fire together, and that really makes a bond. He's the only public servant I know who has carried out his oath of office. I don't know any others. And the letter of the law. And for that thunder has come down around his head. As he himself said, when I first met him, "They used to say, 'What if your revelations make the government fall? Maybe there's some things we shouldn't know.' And Jim said, 'If the truth can make the government fall, then I think it should fall.'" He said, "And don't worry, you'll always have a government. I promise you. There'll always be a group of parasites. They'll get a tent somewhere out in Colorado and they'll be your government. They'll put a flag up, and they'll be a government, if that makes you feel better. There'll always be a government." He said, "As Virgil said, 'Let justice be done, though the heavens collapse.'"

FP: Yes, It's surprising the people who have—the stands various people have taken on this.

For instance, I.F. Stone, whom I've always thought was one hell of a good journalist, has really stood completely clear of this thing, and said, "The issue is boring to me, I want no part of it." MS: Yes, Well, I'll tell you something very interesting. The best source to sum up this whole area. When Mark Lane was the only one operating in this area, I mean there are two chapters

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we're dealing with here. One is the Warren Report; that's what didn't happen. The other is the Garrison investigation, which is what did happen. During the first stage—Mark Lane's book, which I think was the most authoritative book on the subject, and certainly the most widely circulated, Lane tried to get his work published in periodicals, and you know what happened to him with the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, you know they really shied away from him.

FP: The *Nation* called for his indictment.

MS: I.F. Stone didn't want to have anything to do with them although he theoretically calls himself a radical, not a liberal but a radical. And on top of that, A.L. Wirin of the ACLU here in Los Angeles said to Lane, "We could have a left-wing blood-bath because of what Oswald did. We should be satisfied that they just took him and let everybody else go." He wasn't even concerned with whether or not the man was guilty.

FP: Or with the fact that there's very, very strong evidence that he's a federal agent.

MS: In fact, it's stated in the Warren Report that he was.

FP: That Oswald was a CIA man.  
MS: He was an FBI man definitely. It was stated so by Henry Way. They even give his identification number. He had a notebook with him with the number of the special agent in charge of the Dallas office and in his book, a number he used very often, I might add. In addition to this...but that whole, that whole regulation structured left group in literature wouldn't touch the case. As Jim has said, there are no liberals when it comes to this case. There are no liberals. And he's quite right, I haven't found any. When it comes to this case, strong men grow weak, and sane men grow insane. You can't talk to anybody on this particular subject.

FP: It's a pretty scary one. How many, according to Penn

Jones, how many people have been killed because they knew too much about the shooting of Kennedy?

MS: Oh, the last I saw of him, I was doing a concert at Texas Christian University where I read the Warren Report to the audience in Fort Worth, and Penn was at the concert. At that time he had compiled a list of eighty-something. Something like thirty deaths and the rest were beatings. So. And the list continues to grow. People die mysteriously, and Americans ask less questions each time because they're afraid they'll get an answer. Look at the situation out here with Sirhan. First of all, there are strong indications that there was the same tactic used as in Dealy Plaza. At Dealy Plaza one of the conspirators threw what amounted to an epileptic fit on the sidewalk to distract attention from those behind the fence, the grassy knoll. With Sirhan, a man ran out with a bloody towel to his head and everybody watched him in the hall. That was part of the

confusion. Meaning that more than one man went into that hotel with the death of Kennedy on his mind. I didn't see any reporters.

FP: The girl in the polka-dot dress was found dead in her motel. Very suspicious.

MS: And that was the end of that. Meanwhile your district attorney here, Evelle J. Younger,



makes a speech at Valley College, says student dissent has got to stop because it's just a short step from imprisoning the Chancellor of the University in his office to putting a hole in Bobby Kennedy's head. Now he knew how irresponsible that was.

He's a brigadier general in the Reserve, of course, people know that, Evelle Younger, and in addition to that Paul Zifrin, a noted liberal up until that point, meets with the Kennedy family and the Herald Examiner says, "They discussed what could be released to the public," about what happened. You see, we've developed a certain expertise about this. Then Jess Unruh, the Speaker rams the issue through so that the autopsy is quiet and they have a big funeral and cry for a day and it's over. There was no Bobby Kennedy. And there certainly wasn't. You know, Caesar Chavez told me he couldn't get anybody on the phone forty-eight hours after Bobby Kennedy died. Like it never happened. And what do we have out of it. Then the regulation books come. You see this is an elaborate fabric of lying to the people. Then the books come. "The Odyssey of Bob Kennedy." We start getting those books, David Halberstrom, Jack Newfield. Books that are rich in detail until the day of the man's death, at which time they say, "I can only remember him smiling; I'd rather not go into the gory details of how he died because he wouldn't have wanted it that way."

FP: Sorensen did that.

MS: And Kenny O'Donnell followed him up. What did Kenny O'Donnell say? He said, Jack Kennedy was very fatalistic. Jack Kennedy was always saying, "If a man wanted to shoot me, he could." I knew Jack Kennedy and I don't remember him talking that way. And I am here to assert

that we are being conditioned for a lie. We're being presented a man—we're being presented Jesus once more a raving neurotic looking in vain for the cross to present himself to. It's not true. He was a man who wanted to live and who wanted to effect great positive changes for this society. And that's why he had to die. That's what it's about. The way every one of those books, every one of those guys, Sorensen says in his book, "Well, the President wouldn't want to remember Dallas as a city of hate. He was positive." He wouldn't, eh? Well, I remember the President. I remember the President. I remember what he got mad about. And I remember him as a very vengeful man, as a matter of fact. But the Lord wanted vengeance, too, according to the Scriptures. These people only become kind of benign mystics after they're gone. They're trying to hand you somebody who never was. Bobby Kennedy is supposed to be an idealistic young youth. I say Bobby Kennedy was also an extremely vengeful man. I know that personally. And on top of that I say that both of these

men at least cry from the grave for justice. What would they think if their murderers are walking around the United States and that nobody cares.

FP: The assassins are still walking around free. And eating in the best restaurants.

MS: That's right.

FP: And sitting in the councils of the highest levels of government.

MS: And who are they mad at? A man was elected President of the United States and the scorn in this city in show business which is populated by former communists who were once blacklisted, former alcoholics, homosexuals, people who beat children, everything, but the scorn is reserved for one nightclub comedian who says, "Hey," tapping you on the shoulder, "You said you loved him." 'Cause I never did. I never said I loved him. In fact, I never said he was a saint. And my case is not based on the fact that he was a saint.

It's based on the fact that he was a human being. And he didn't get the rights of a human being. He was killed because he became a little more than a human being. Because he was a traitor to his class. Because he tried to do something with that job rather than follow orders as did his successors. These are terrible things to say. They're painful to say. But they're true.

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FP: I was never a fan of Kennedy's so much myself. But there was a feeling of optimism in the country when he was president. That is dead now.

MS: It's gone.

FP: It's dead.

MS: There's a dismal hopelessness everywhere in this long, dark tunnel that is the United States of America.

FP: And the only glimmer of optimism is among the freaks, and the drug-heads and among the far out extreme left of SDS and the freak movement.

MS: Well, it's funny about the established order, you know, when you look at the new Romans here, you look at Alan Dulles, Richard Nixon, think of Caesar. They're in that role now. They're not having any orgies and they're not throwing a leg of lamb to their hound across the palace floor. They're squeezed into blue tunics with black shoes and 1942 GI haircuts and they're not indulging themselves at all. They look to be the least permissive, the least what are the words I'm looking for here?

FP: Protestant. Uptight, Protestants.

MS: They prevail. Do they look like they prevail? They don't look like they're making it at all!

FP: Nixon, all he can talk about in his speech, one of his first major speeches about the welfare business and the poverty business, all he can talk about is work, work, work. Remember? And work is obsolete. We're rapidly headed towards a, you

know, society so technological that there won't be enough jobs to go around.

MS: There is no work, and there hasn't been any work. That's one of the problems.

FP: The white collar guys don't work. All they do is sit around for eight hours and bullshit.

MS: There is no work. What they did, what the military did in this country the last twenty-five years was to colonize America by not just prospering themselves but building a factory where you would work on war materials. So that everyone is in on the bounty now. In other words, when Garrison says, "Peoplesold America out for a second television set or a Mustang," he can document it. It's true. They really do want the space program. And they really do want Thomas-Ramo-Woolridge and Lynn-Temco. They really do want it. They're part of it. And what it finally comes down to although, you know, this looks like histrionics, is that they stay at that job and the kid is suddenly eighteen and they're saying goodbye to him as he gets on the train to go to boot camp. They're trading the kid off for the prosperity. In other words, got to keep the fire going. "You don't mind if I take your chair,

do you? We're out of firewood. And eventually your clothes and eventually you, and that's where it's at."

FP: Or your son.

MS: They're eating their young.

