

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Discussion of Garrison, Trial Concluded

Editor, States-Item:

I find Evelyn Favre's suggestion that I resign from the district attorney's office (Letters to the Editor, March 11) rather emotional and unfounded. Since I do not consider myself or any other member of the district attorney's office guilty of any unethical conduct whatever, I feel that I need not apologize for my participation in the prosecution of Clay L. Shaw. I would further add that I consider it a privilege to be associated with the only public official in the country who has the courage to conduct a legitimate investigation into the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

In calling for everyone's resignation, except our janitor's, Miss Favre overlooks some rather significant facts of law; namely, that a Grand Jury returned an indictment against the defendant, a three-judge panel ruled that there was probable cause to bind the defendant over for trial.

As our legal system would have it, a jury of 12 men heard the evidence and returned a verdict of not guilty. They did this not because they thought the case was a fraud, but because in their minds the evidence presented by the state did not prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the crime of conspiracy to murder the President.

As an attorney, I accept the jury's verdict, but I hardly think that their decision necessitates my, or anyone else's, resignation from office. On the contrary, I feel that a failure to prosecute under the above circumstances would be tantamount to malfeasance on the district attorney's part.

I might also add that in spite of the fact that some of the news media would have the people believe that Jim Garrison is the reincarnation of Adolf Hitler, the record will show that defendant's rights were never

violated at any time and that even the Supreme Court of the United States could find no reason to prevent Jim Garrison from prosecuting Clay Shaw.

ANDREW J. SCIAMBRA,
Assistant District Attorney.

Editor, States-Item:

I am responding to the many people who have sent in letters taking issue with your criticism of Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

The main issue to these people, seems to be that Mr. Garrison is beyond criticism because he was only performing his duties as a prosecutor, and that it was the Grand Jury that indicted Clay L. Shaw. I would like to point out that the Grand Jury is not made of lawyers or persons with legal background, and that these people have to depend upon the legal advice and urgings of the district attorney for direction. The district attorney is the man who tells them what constitutes a case in the eyes of the law. This is what happened in the Shaw case.

Point No. 2 is, that having convinced the Grand Jury that they had a case, Mr. Garrison then had a clear path to go on with his so-called case against Mr. Shaw. How he ever expected to have the jury bring in a "guilty" verdict, I don't know. It is difficult to explain why he even brought the case to court with his little bit of so-called evidence. I question his motives and reasoning.

Finally, I say to these people who take issue with your editorial for the resignation of Mr. Garrison: What if you, an innocent person, could be brought before the Grand Jury on such scanty information and be charged with this crime? Would you be able to hold up for two years under this persecution? What if you were a person of lesser means, and unable to prove yourself innocent of this charge? There is a right in

America to be termed "innocent until proven guilty", but not in New Orleans, where you are guilty, until proven innocent. How many people of low means have gone to prison because of being unable to prove themselves innocent in New Orleans?

RICHARD D. MANUEL.

Modesto, Calif.

Editor, States-Item:

Why condemn Jim Garrison? He wanted answers to questions which he and the American people have a right to know. Your resentment only makes you seem involved.

It is unfair and un-American to ask for his resignation. Give this man due credit for speaking out.

MRS. E. R. OLSON.

Editor, States-Item:

The recent Shaw trial causes us all to sleep a little uneasy. The shadow of accusation is hovering over us like an evil specter of doom. Every time we see an officer of the law looking our way, we can feel his heavy hand on our shoulder saying we are under arrest for some imagined crime. And these imagined crimes may be many.

Unfeeling, cold, calculating minds of a district attorney and his staff seem to be a very fertile grounds for false charges. Without any curb on such people we are all subject to the ruthlessness of these so-called public servants.

What type of Grand Jury would issue an indictment on the flimsy evidence presented by Jim Garrison...

How do you repay a man for two years of his life? How do you recompense him for the anguish and concern over such a false accusation?...

So citizens, say nothing or do nothing and hope the eyes of the elected "protector" do not fall on you with accusation.

ED HAYNES.