

26 September 1968

Dear Helen:

Your friend Steffen sent us a copy of his letter to Mr. Arnoni, and I'm taking the liberty of sending you a carbon of the reply I've just written. And while Jenifer is getting an upset stomach working on the Epstein article in the New Yorker I might as well make a stab at replying to your note of July 13 which you sent along with the tape of Mrs. Heagher. We do thank you for that, and I trust you have received it back long ago. As I recall, we dubbed a copy and mailed the original back to you within a week. If it didn't arrive, let me know how to send you another copy. Also please specify what you prefer in size of reel, speed for recording, etc. We ought to have that information anyway for future exchanges. Here we can handle any size reel up to 5 inches, and speeds of 1 7/8, 3 3/4, and 7 1/2 ips.

Your decision just to let Garrison sort of float around seems to me to be the only sensible one. I can see no point in taking a position either strongly pro or anti, since none of us possibly can know everything involved. We readily admit being more pro ~~xxx~~ than anti, possibly because the case as he appears to have developed it gives every indication of fulfilling much of our own thinking and theorizing from the beginning, in nearly all important details. We assume, of course, that since he has not yet got his case into court, what he has said publicly is more or less only the top of the iceberg. There has to be a great deal more that he cannot let out before the trial for every normal reason; an example might be the recently leaked information about Shaw's alias of Clay Bertrand on his booking and fingerprint sheets.

Your idea that he may be used is extremely interesting. It certainly cannot be ruled out. Against it, however, is the somewhat circumstantial evidence of plots both in Chicago and Miami, which happened not to have come off, apparently. Even so, this implies a Clay Shaw in each place with the usual crew of helpers. Can one imagine the DA in either city going after them? I think not. I'd say only a Garrison would try it, and only in a southern city like New Orleans.

You know, no doubt, that the federal appellate court in New Orleans turned down Shaw's appeal, including the plea that the Warren Report be made binding on all courts. Now the whole thing is on its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which is not at all unrelated to the desire of the Chief Justice to resign. There is a very precise sequence of developments there, some of them not known until weeks afterward, but they all fall into place.

I cannot visualize the Supreme Court paying any more attention to Shaw's lawyers than did the federal appellate panel in New Orleans. This is only more delay. Garrison has to run for re-election in November, 1969, and this is the target, the real thing Shaw's lawyers are shooting for, if not something sooner and more drastic.

Sorry about this messy letter, which is part of a thus far somewhat messy two-weeks vacation. Odd jobs, things that have been let go, that sort of thing. We await, still, your promised dissertation on important things like cats and unidentified flying objects. Jenifer, Cinnamon Roll and Sootyfoot all join me in sending fond regards.

  
jdw