

13 July 1971

Dear Harold:

On July 10 we sent you a large envelope containing NO clippings in hand as of that date, and now here's another batch.

We find no disagreement with your feeling that something much bigger must be involved. We were conscious of the unusual number of visits by Agnew, but never have seen the slightest hint of what they were about.

One angle does look interesting: the unannounced ~~xxx~~ retirement of the IRS chief in NO and the arrival of another one who refuses to comment on the Garrison case. Perhaps the old one wouldn't go along? We'll watch for anything further.

In Milton Brener's "The Garrison Case," (Potter, 1969) he says on page 6:

"Garrison picked Frank Klein as his first assistant; his top investigator was Pershing Gervais, a controversial figure, previously dismissed from the Police Department for misconduct, and a former witness against fellow policemen during a graft-system scandal of major proportions. The appointment was to cause Garrison embarrassment and complications throughout most of his first four years. But the two men were fast friends and Garrison has always repaid loyalty with intense loyalty of his own."

On page 36, Brener refers to Gervais as "Garrison's ~~xxxx~~ Achilles Heel," and on pages 38-9 describes Gervais' resignation during Garrison's campaign for reelection against O'Hara.

I don't cite Brener as an authority on anything, but this is the only reference I find immediately to the effect that Gervais was dismissed from the police department for misconduct.

Correction: IN Plot or Politics, James and Wardlaw say on page 21: "Gervais had been discharged from the police force some years back and Police Superintendent Joseph I. Giarusso made it clear he didn't like the idea of his men working under a man who had been fired from the force." Again, I don't accept this as authoritative, but the story at least has currency in certain circles, whether true or not. If we spot anything further we'll send it along, although it may be academic now.

Like you, we are unable to explain the sudden swooping down by the feds on a situation just at this time on a situation which is anything but new. Like you, we feel they must have had enough on Gervais to put him away for life, but why use him now? Some time back you made an obscure reference to something cooking in New Orleans. Could it be they wanted to use Gervais before he was used in some way by the DA? Could he have been so used by the DA without all sort of suicidal fireworks? I do suggest that a big factor in this situation parallels the southern dislike for federal interference. The feds seem equally to resent resistance by provincials, and this seems even more apparent in this administration.

More elsewhere,


jdw