

**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION**

COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: CARYL CHESSMAN

FILE: 44-7760



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Assistant Attorney General
Warren Olney III

July 1, 1954

Director, FBI

44-7760-1

INDEXED - 20

RECORDED - 20
EX-115
UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
CARYL CHESSMAN - VICTIM
CIVIL RIGHTS

There is attached a copy of a letter dated June 22, 1954, to the President of the United States from Wenzell Brown who identifies himself as Chairman of the American Writers Committee to Save Chessman.

It is requested that following a review of the attached, you advise whether or not any investigation is desired by this Bureau.

MAILED 5
JUL 1 1954
COMM-FBI

Attachment

WMA/ar

NOTE:

The Bureau received only a copy of the letter to the President and for this reason the receipt of the copy is not being acknowledged. Bureau files reflect that an individual possibly identical with Brown wrote a book entitled "Dynamite On Our Doorstep" which deals with the plight of the Puerto Rican people. According to an article in the "Daily Worker" 12-20-45, which was very critical, Brown had taught English in the Puerto Rican schools. He was also the author of a book entitled "Hong Kong Aftermath" and allegedly was an American teacher who was repatriated on the Gripsholm. (100-3-77-A)

ATLANTA On 3-4-47 a person by the same name as Brown appeared at the ~~NY~~ office and stated that he was under contract with the Greenberg Publishing Company of New York City and was writing a book about "The State of Georgia." Brown requested the position of the Bureau relative to the Monroe lynching case and under what jurisdiction the Bureau had entered the case. He was advised at that time no comment could be made. By letter dated 6-5-46 Legal Attache Caracas, Venezuela, advised that Wenzell Brown was known to the Legal Attache (Joseph P. Santorana, Jr., now SAC at Portland). It was recalled that Brown was one of the teachers of English in Puerto Rico and at the time of writing that letter was in Venezuela for the purpose of writing a book on that country. (64-31969)

- Tolson _____
- Boardman _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Glavin _____
- Harbo _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Tracy _____
- Mohr _____
- Winterrowd _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Miss Gandy _____

(NOTE CONT'D PAGE 2)

JUL 21 1954

ENCLOSURE

b7c

In the case entitled "[REDACTED] Gonzalez wrote an article on 5-17-47 criticizing the book "Angry Men - Laughing Men The Caribbean Caldron" a book by Wenzell Brown. (100-326817-5)

In an editorial which appeared in the "Puerto Rican Libre" on 11-17-45 it was stated that one Wenzell Brown had written a book on Puerto Rico. This article was very critical of the book. This paper, however, is an anti-American paper published by alleged members of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico. (62-7721-1458)

- Tolson _____
- Boardman _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Glavin _____
- Harbo _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Tracy _____
- Mohr _____
- Winterrowd _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Miss Gandy _____

June 22, 1954

President Of The United States
The White House.

To The President: Chessman is to be executed in San
son.

Chessman was convicted under the "Little Lindbergh Law"
of California as the "Red Light Bandit" responsible for the
kidnap and rape of Mary Alice Meza.

I do not believe Chessman is guilty of the specific crime
of which he has been convicted. I believe that any person
studying the evidence objectively must feel a reasonable doubt
of his guilt.

Chessman is guilty of other crimes, to wit, robbing
bordellos and gambling dens operating openly in California.
However, justice cannot be served by convicting a man of one
crime because he has committed another.

As chairman of the American Writers Committee to Save
Chessman, I ask that you prevent a miscarriage of justice by
examining certain documentary evidence collected by Mr. William
J. Linhart, a detective of Richmond, California, who was
retained by the Committee to find the real "Red Light Bandit".

The evidence against Chessman is dependent almost solely
upon the testimony of Mary Alice Meza. Miss Meza has spent
some time in institutions.

The following reports on Miss Meza should be studied:

EX-115

SE 38

RECORDED-20

COPIES DESTROYED
07 JAN 19 1962

44-7711
JUN 27 1954

-2-

September 30, 1949
Superior Court of State of California for Los Angeles
Department 54

Hon. William B. Neeley, Judge.

File 108200

MARY ALICE MEZA

Drs.: C. W. Olsen, and G. N. Thompson.

Report of Counselor Mrs. Rose Weisler:

Mary Alice Meza is a 19 year old single girl, who makes her home with her mother. She has been employed for the last 8 months as a messenger, working for the county. The mother states, as a youngster Mary Alice attended convent, and at high school age changed to public schools. THE MOTHER FEELS THAT THIS MIGHT ACCOUNTED FOR SOME CHANGES IN THE GIRL'S PERSONALITY. PREVIOUS SHE WAS AN EXCELLENT STUDENT, BUT IN HIGH SCHOOL HER STUDIES NOT AS GOOD. ALSO SHE SEEMED TO NOT MIX AS WELL WITH THE OTHER STUDENTS, AND BECAUSE OF HER CHANGES IN MOODS, DID NOT RETAIN FRIENDS.

About a year and a half ago, she had a very unfortunate experience was kidnapped and attacked and went through a great deal of Court Action. FOLLOWING THIS, HOWEVER, THE GIRL DID NOT REFER TO THIS. THE MOTHER FEELS THAT SHE HAD ADJUSTED VERY WELL FOLLOWING THIS. However, of late, she has become very fearful and suspicious, was depressed and elated alternately, and just prior to taking this action, she became quite upset, so that the mother felt she should have a mental psychiatric examination. The mother, after discussing the matter with the doctors, received advice that leads her now to feel that the best plan for the girl would be to have care in a State Hospital. She would prefer that she have care in Camarillo.

Statement of Dr. G. N. Thompson:

The patient is quite ill. She has numerous symptoms as have been indicated. She is delusional and hallucinated. THERE IS SOME QUESTION OF THYROID DISTURBANCE HERE, and some studies are in progress; and in regard to this, I think it is incidental to her mental disorder in this case, but it may be well to have that completed. I thought the case should be completed, perhaps to the early part of the week, so that could be done.

Court: Do you have same feeling, Dr. Olsen?

Statement of Dr. C. W. Olsen:

Yes, in this case the reactive features, the circumstances that upset her emotions and also the physical features are a little more prominent than in most cases. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THYROID EXAMINATION, and I recommend a continuance for one week.

The Patient: I want to tell you something.

The Court: All right, go ahead.

The Patient: I don't know whether I could or not. I can't think very well. I may have, of course, delusions, I think I am possessed. Of course I can't be sure because I don't have too great ability to think straight -- when you are nuts, you don't know what it means I think I am possessed. I am wondering if I could have an exorcist. Is it possible because I think I am possessed?

Father not served.

CERT. OF MEDICAL EXAM:

Dr. C. W. Olsen, and Dr. G. H. Thompson:

General physical condition, mental state:

States she thought people could read her mind and were copying her. They repeated everything she did. Would hear people say things as she was walking along street. They would say anything that entered her mind. Was kidnapped about two years ago and there was "attempted rape and sodomy".

Tentative diagnosis of mental health:

Schizophrenic, Paranoid type. Possible Thyrotoxicosis.

Continued to October 9, 1949, for further medical study re thyr

Committed to Camarillo, October 9, 1949.

SUMMARY RE MARY ALICE MEZA

At 1 A M, Jan. 22, 1948, Miss Meza was molested by a man she described as being just a little taller than herself, who is 5'4" or 5'5" tall, being shorter than the usual man, brown hair, light brown skin, brown eyes, a large hooked nose, fine linear scar near right eye, who, Miss Meza thought to be Italian and who claimed to be Italian. On September 30, 1948, one year eight months and eight days after Miss Meza was molested, her mother took steps to have her committed. Miss Rose Weisler, in her report of interview with mother, states:

"The mother states, as a youngster, she (Mary Alice Meza) attended convent, and at high school changed to public school. THE MOTHER FEELS THAT THIS MIGHT HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR SOME CHANGE IN THE GIRL'S PERSONALITY. PREVIOUSLY, SHE WAS AN EXCELLENT

(Cont)

STUDENT, BUT IN HIGH SCHOOL, HER STUDIES WERE NOT AS GOOD. SHE SEEMED TO NOT MIX AS WELL WITH THE OTHER STUDENTS, AND BECAUSE OF HER CHANGES IN MOODS, DID NOT RETAIN HER FRIENDS.

"About a year and a half ago she had a very unfortunate experience, was kidnapped and attacked, and went through a great deal of court action. FOLLOWING THIS, HOWEVER, THE GIRL DID NOT REFER TO THIS. THE MOTHER FEELS THAT SHE HAD ADJUSTED VERY WELL FOLLOWING THIS."

After reading these reports, a deep feeling of sympathy may be felt for Miss Meza, but can one give such credence to her contradictory testimony that one can send a man to his death on the weight of it?

During Chessman's trial, the official court reporter died leaving his records in shorthand. Stanley Frazer, the uncle of District Attorney Miller Leavy's wife was called in to transcribe the notes. The accuracy of the transcription, for which Frazer was allegedly paid \$6,000 has been repeatedly questioned.

The following reports on Frazer would appear to challenge his accuracy:

STANLEY FRAZER
FILE NUMBER 1428-956-UNIT 1
LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL
1200 NORTH STATE STREET
LOS ANGELES 33, CALIFORNIA

FRAZER WAS ADMITTED AUGUST 13, 1953, AFTER HAVING BEEN IN A
COMA FOR TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOURS AT 1332 SOUTH CIELA STREET,
EAST LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA. HE WAS REPORTED TO HAVE TAKEN
THIRTY (30) SLEEPING TABLETS. IN THE HOSPITAL RECORDS WERE
THE FOLLOWING NOTATIONS.

HEAVY DRINKER
THOUGHT MEMBERS OF MAPTA WERE AFTER HIM
WIRED HIS ROOM, TAPED UP HIS WIFE AND HIMSELF
HE ISN'T SURE HOW HE GOT LOOSE
CHRONIC ALCOHOLISM

HE WAS RELEASED AUGUST 19, 1953.
NO RECORD IN REPORT OF POLICE BEING NOTIFIED OF ATTEMPTED
SUICIDE.

C II 559845
F B I 4146311
STANLEY FRAZER, BORN S. DAKOTA, 1894

DATE	CHARGE	CITY
1-14-1940	502V C	GLENDALE
1941	PROB. LIC. ISSUED	
5-3-1941	505B LIC. SUSP. 90 DAYS	GLENDALE
9-29-1944	1208 DRUNK	GARDENA
4-24-1945	DRUNK	LOS ANGELES
9-15-1945	TERMINATED BY STATUTE	
10-19-1945	DRUNK	LOS ANGELES
10-21-1950	DRUNK	LOS ANGELES
3-17-1951	DRUNK	SAN DIEGO
3-25-1951	502 V C	WHITTIER
12-21-1951	502 V C	LOS ANGELES

(Cont)

15 to 18, page 766, are seemingly garbled and while appearing to be otherwise a reasonably accurate transcript of the testimony it appears condensed rather than entire.

S/ Pat H. Dailey

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 22nd day of June, 1949.
S/ Linclon Holland, Jr.
Notary Public in and for the County
of Los Angeles, State of California
(seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES)

WILLMAN GREEN, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That affiant testified as a defense witness in the case of
People v. Chessman.

That he has read the reporter's transcript, pages 786 to
792, inclusive, and that while it is rather accurate it appears
abridged and not entire.

That the attitude and conduct of the deputy district
attorney to the affiant was sarcastic, exaggeratedly disbelieving
and belligerent and that the questions and comments of the deputy
attorney have lost their extremely sarcastic character in the
transcription. Witness further states that the correct spelling
of his name is WILLMAN GREEN.

OK
S/L.H. Jr.

S/ Willman Green

(Cont)

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 16th day of June, 1949.
S/ Lincoln Holland, Jr.
Notary Public in and for the County of
Los Angeles, State of California
(Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES)

HAROLD LLOYD DOTY, being first duly sworn, deposes and say

That affiant testified at the trial of the People v. Chess
and that he has carefully read the reporter's transcript of this
testimony, pages 714 to 725, inclusive.

That the testimony on pages 714 to 725 is not entirely
complete or accurate and in some noted instances is glaringly
inaccurate: for example, the question and answer of blood
relationships on page 723, lines 4 to 6, because the question
was not asked and the affiant is in no way related to the
defendent, either by blood or marriage.

That the mistakes shown by defendent in his MOTION TO
CORRECT AND AUGMENT RECORD are true.

S/ Harold Lloyd Doty
Affiant

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 18th day of June, 1949.
S/Lincoln Holland, Jr.
Notary Public in and for the County of
Los Angeles, State of California
(Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES)

MRS. HALLIE L. CHESSMAN, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That affiant has read the entire portion of the reporter's transcript, People v. Chessman, wherein her testimony was given pages 648 to 657, inclusive, and that this is an inaccurate and incomplete report of her testimony.

That both those general and specific mistakes, omissions and errors claimed by the defendant in his MOTION TO CORRECT A VERDICT RECORD are accurate, to the personal knowledge of the affiant.

That while, in every instance, affiant is not able to repeat because of the elapsed time her verbatim testimony she is able to recognize those specific errors shown and to state her testimony has been abridged; that she clearly testified the defendant was, in her presence, at her home, all day and evening of January 3, 1948, in the evening of January 17, 1948, and all the evening and part of the early morning of January 21 and 22, 1948:

S/ Mrs. Hallie L. Chessman

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 16th day of June, 1949.
S/Lincoln Holland, Jr.
Notary Public in and for the County of
Los Angeles, State of California
(Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

LUCILLE RUTH GREENE, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That she appeared and testified as a defense witness at the People v. Chessman trial.

That she has read the reporter's transcript of this testimony, pages 767 to 785A, inclusive.

That in its entirety this is not a true transcript of the testimony.

That she agrees with the inaccuracies claimed in the defendant's MOTION TO CORRECT AND AUGMENT RECORD. Witness further states that the correct spelling of her name is Lucile Ruth Gre

S/ Lucile Ruth Green

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 16th day of June, 1949.
S/Lincoln Holland, Jr.
Notary Public in and for the County of
Los Angeles, State of California
(Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES)

WHITTIER S. CHESSMAN, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That affiant testified as a voir dire witness for the defense.

That affiant has read the reporter's transcript of this testimony, pages 1060 to 1064 inclusive.

That the cross examination testimony is incomplete and grossly inaccurate.

(Cont)

That while the affiant cannot recall the word for word questions and answers, he remembers clearly the text.

That on cross examination the affiant testified clearly to bruises on the chest and abdomen, that he did not answer affirmatively the defendant stated he "got hurt in a running gun fight other than to reply in the affirmative the defendant stated he had been creased in the head by a bullet.

That this testimony, by its transcription, now conveys a different apparent meaning than was originally intended by affiant answers from the way the questions were originally framed.

S/ Whittier S. Chessman

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 16th day of June, 1949.
S/Lincoln Holland, Jr.
Notary Public in and for the County of
Los Angeles, State of California
(Seal)

There are many strange facets to the case and seemingly powerful influences are at work to silence Chessman permanently.

Can any innocent individual be harmed by a full re-examination of the case? The Committee is at work trying to find the real "Red Light Bandit" who, we believe, will tally with the original description of his victims. It should be noted that Chessman is six feet tall, weighs 190lbs and is of American stock. He is completely different in appearance from the descriptions of Miss Meza and other victims of "The Red Light Bandit".

Meanwhile we seek your aid in establishing with truth and accuracy the full details of the case, no matter who may be hurt by the disclosures which may result.

Respectfully submitted

WB:k

37 Madison Avenue,
New York 10, New York

Wenzel Green
...
...

Office Memorandum

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT

TO : Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

DATE:

FROM : Warren Olney III, Assistant Attorney General,
Criminal Division

SUBJECT: Unknown Subjects;
Caryl Chessman - Victim
Civil Rights

Mr. Boardman	_____
Mr. Nichols	_____
Mr. Belmont	_____
Mr. Harbo	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. Casper	_____
Mr. Callahan	_____
Mr. Conrad	_____
Mr. DeLoach	_____
Mr. Evans	_____
Mr. Gale	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Sullivan	_____
Mr. Tavel	_____
Mr. Trotter	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Miss Holmes	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

Reference is made to your memorandum of July 1, 1954, on the captioned subject. Since the events complained of occurred sometime before June 1949, and the three-year statute of limitations would bar any prosecutive action by the Department, no investigation is desired.

RECORDED - 162 44-7760-2

*no dissemination
necess. are
7/14/54
wmt*

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

COPIES DESTROYED
R207 JAN 13 1962

68 JUL 20 1954

Las Vegas, Nevada
Jan 17, 1955

Bureau of Investigation
Washington D.C.

Att Mr. Hoover

Dear Sir:

Enclosed newspaper clipping needs no comment except to say "that what is wrong with our courts" - too lenient.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]

b7c

Las Vegas,
Nevada

44-7760-3

RECORDED - 53
EX-103

JAN 20 1955

ENCL.

2/1-21-55
[Handwritten initials]

ORIGINAL REC

January 21, 1955

[Redacted]

67C

Las Vegas, Nevada

Dear Mr. Willey:

Your letter of January 12, 1955, with enclosure, has been received.

I appreciate the interest which prompted you to make your observation concerning this matter available to me.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

NOTE: Correspondent enclosed a newspaper clipping reporting the fact that a Caryl Chessman, Sex Terrorist, had been granted a fifth stay of Execution from the courts.

- Tolson _____
- Boardman _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Harbo _____
- Mohr _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Sizoo _____
- Winterrowd _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____

ELT:djg
(3)

MAILED 4
 JAN 21 1955
 COMM - FBI

JAN 28 1955

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

Natchez, Miss.
July 7, 1955

33

Dear Mr. Hoover,

I am a girl 18 years of age
and I am writing in behalf of a man.

I've heard about the book; "Cell 2455 Death Row" and its author
Caryl Chessman and that he has had
a stay of execution.

I think a person who could
write a book such as the one he has
written should be given a prison term,
for his punishment instead of death so
that he could write more books and
maybe some teenage or man or woman
would read them and benefit by the books.

a person who could
surely must be sorry for the wrong

INDEXED-71
RECORDED-71

44-7760-5

CRIME REC.

he has done.

I'm writing to you because I am thinking you could help him get a prison term instead of death.

Don't get me wrong. I believe in doing what is right and I mean right. And that the one who breaks a Commandment and breaks the law as well should be punished. I've never broken the law and don't intend to because I was brought up in a better way and I am going to continue to stay in the right. But I think a man with his talent should be allowed to use it and maybe help some other people to keep out of trouble.

With God's help, the Doctors help and yours this may ~~us~~ can and will be an asset to the country instead of a burden.

So Mr. Hoover see what can be done and give him my blessings and may God bless you also in your

work.

I am very much interested in the law myself and would like it very much if I could work with the F B I and try to show other boys and girls my age that you can get along just as well if you stay at home and go to church instead of on jay rides, beer joints and numbers and numbers of other places where kids my age get into so much trouble.

I could stay up all night and talk to you about these different things that our teenagers need to waken up to and see the ~~wrong~~ wrong they are doing but my eyes say it is bed time. But maybe someday (who knows) I may get to talk to you in person and discuss the different things our world of today has to offer to get people into trouble. So I will sign off for now with apologies for the messy writing and say may God bless you and our great Country of America that it might awaken to the fact of what they are doing to our men.

Generation of today -
At one time the writing of the book list
run out of paper.

a friend

67C

%

Bank /
Notch, Mississippi

RECORDED - 71

INDEXED - 71

1760-5

July 13, 1955

[Redacted address line]

67C

c/o [Redacted]
Route 1
Natchez, Mississippi

Dear Miss Perryhill:

Your letter of July 7, 1955, has been received. I would like to inform you that it is not my policy to interfere in matters such as you mentioned.

In view of your expressed interest in juvenile delinquency, I am taking the liberty of sending material which you may find interesting.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

COMM - FBI
JUL 13 1955
MAILED 30

Enclosures (4)

- How Safe Is Your Youngster?
- You Can Help Stop Juvenile Crime
- The Story of the FBI
- Juvenile Delinquency (Syracuse)

NOTE: Correspondent requests Director to intercede on behalf of a stay of execution for Caryl Chessman, author of, "Cell 2455 Death Row", who has been sentenced to death in the State of California.

- Tolson _____
- Boardman _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Harbo _____
- Mohr _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Nease _____
- Winterrowd _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

RGE:kkd

(3)

[Handwritten signatures and initials]

OFFICE MEMORANDUM * UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Tolson
FROM : L. B. Nichols
SUBJECT:

DATE: June 21, 1957

Irving Kaufman told me he had run across two exceedingly good quotations which might be used effectively some place along the line. The quotations are as follows.

We are admonished from time to time not to adjudicate on the basis of fear of foreign totalitarianism. Equally so should we not be guided in the exercise of our reviewing power over legislation by fear of totalitarianism in our own country." (Concurring Opinion of Mr. Justice Frankfurter In the Matter of the Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus for Harry A. Groban and Nathan Groban, Appellants - IN RE GROBAN - Supreme Court of the United States - Feb. 25, 1957)

"We meddle mischievously with the law when we issue the writ today. We do not act to remedy any injustice that has been demonstrated. When the whole history of the case is considered we seize upon a technicality to undo what has been repeatedly sustained both by the California Supreme Court and by this Court. I would guard the ancient writ jealously, using it only to prevent a gross miscarriage of justice." (Dissenting Opinion of Justice Douglas in Caryl Chessman v. Harley O. Teets, Warden - Decided June 10, 1957)

cc - Mr. Tamm
cc - Mr. Jones

LBN:rm
(4)

NOT RECORDED
126 JUN 26 1957

152 JUN 28 1957

Mr. Tolson _____
 Mr. Nichols _____
 Mr. Boardman _____
 Mr. Belmont _____
 Mr. Mohr _____
 Mr. Parsons _____
 Mr. Rosen _____
 Mr. Tamm _____
 Mr. Trotter _____
 Mr. Nease _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Mr. Holloman _____
 Miss Gandy _____

Sub
5/17/57
5/17/57

UP80
 (CHESSMAN)

THE SUPREME COURT ORDERED NEW STATE COURT HEARINGS ON THE CLAIM OF CONVICT-AUTHOR CARYL CHESSMAN THAT THE COURT RECORD OF HIS TRIAL WAS FRAUDULENTLY PREPARED.

JUSTICE HARLAN WROTE THE OPINION FOR THE COURT, WHICH SPLIT 5 TO 3 ON THE CASE. CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN DID NOT PARTICIPATE. CHESSMAN, ONCE KNOWN AS THE "RED LIGHT BANDIT" OF LOS ANGELES, WAS CONVICTED IN 1948 ON 17 COUNTS OF KIDNAPING, ROBBERY AND SEXUAL ASSAULT. HE DREW TWO DEATH SENTENCES AND 15 PRISON SENTENCES. WHILE HOLDING OFF EXECUTION IN CALIFORNIA'S GAS CHAMBER BY VARIOUS LEGAL MANEUVERS, CHESSMAN WON FAME BY WRITING THE BEST-SELLING NOVELS "CELL 2455 DEATH ROW" AND "TRIAL BY ORDEAL." HE IS NOW 36.

6/10-P1225P

UNRECORDED COPY FILED IN

*What a travesty upon
 "blind justice" of the
 U. S. S. C. has become!*

51 JUN 14 1957

RECORDED-46 44 - 771-6

EX-117 14 JUN 12 1957

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Boardman _____
Mr. Belmont _____
Mr. Mohr _____
Mr. Parsons _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tamm _____
Mr. Trotter _____
Mr. Nease _____
Tele. Room _____
Mr. Holloman _____
Miss Gandy _____

UP34

ADD 1 CHESSMAN

CHESSMAN IS IN THE DEATH HOUSE AT SAN QUENTIN PRISON IN CALIFORNIA.
THE SUPREME COURT ACTION CAME ON CHESSMAN'S NINTH PETITION TO THE
HIGH TRIBUNAL.

"ALL WE HOLD," HARLAN SAID, "IS THAT, CONSISTENT WITH PROCEDURAL
DUE PROCESS, CALIFORNIA'S AFFIRMANCE OF (CHESSMAN'S CONVICTION UPON A
SERIOUSLY DISPUTED RECORD, WHOSE ACCURACY (CHESSMAN) HAS HAD NO VOICE IN
DETERMINING, CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO STAND.

"WITHOUT BLINKING THE FACT THAT THE HISTORY OF THIS CASE PRESENTS
A SORRY CHAPTER IN THE ANNALS OF DELAYS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE, WE CANNOT ALLOW THAT CIRCUMSTANCE TO DETER US FROM
WITHHOLDING RELIEF SO CLEARLY CALLED FOR."

6/10-P1235P

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Boardman _____
Mr. Belmont _____
Mr. Mohr _____
Mr. Parsons _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tamm _____
Mr. Trotter _____
Mr. Nease _____
Tele. Room _____
Mr. Holloman _____
Miss Gandy _____

UP91

ADD 2 CHESSMAN

THE HIGH COURT ORDERED THE NEW HEARING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE WERE ANY INACCURACIES IN THE TRIAL COURT REPORTER'S RECORD OF THE TRIAL.

6/10--JE1249P

[Redacted]

b7c

Town of Hampstead
Montreal 29, Quebec
Canada

December 11, 1957

AIR MAIL

Mr. John Edgar Hoover
4936 - 30th Place
Washington 8, District of Columbia

102-1

My dear Mr. Hoover:

Quite some time ago I believe Author Wenzell Brown, Chairman of the Writer's Committee, organized to save the life of Caryl W. Chessman just two days before he was scheduled to be executed on July 30th 1954 in San Quentin's ugly gas chamber. Copies of documents relating to the case had been forwarded to the President of the United States, yourself and a number of other high government officials. The Committee believed that certain facets of the case were strange enough to warrant a new trial. In fact, out of New York had come a news release that "political consideration may have played an important role in the conviction and sentencing to death Caryl Chessman as Californ's notorious red-light bandit."

I wonder if you would be kind enough to furnish the undersigned with additional information regarding this highly controversial and much publicized case, ^{ANS. PLEASE} what you did at that time in respect to the foregoing.

A prompt reply would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

b7c

RECORDED - 15
SEARCHED

44-771A-7
23
DEC 20 1957

(mail)
ack: 12-19-57
JK

(H)

44-7760-7

December 18, 1957

b7C

~~file~~ 2-1

RECORDED - 75

Montreal 29, Quebec, Canada

INDEXED - 75

Dear Mr. Todres:

I have received your letter of December 11, 1957, requesting information concerning Caryl Chessman and the action taken by the FBI.

Chessman was indicted and tried in the courts of the State of California for offenses not within the investigative jurisdiction of this Bureau. For your further information, data in the files of the FBI is confidential and available for official use only.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director

3 50 PM '57
RECEIVED
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 9
DEC 19 1957
COMM-FBI

Handwritten signatures and initials

NOTE: Correspondent is not identifiable in Bufiles. Chessman is known as the "red light bandit" of Los Angeles and was convicted on 17 counts of kidnaping, robbery and sexual assault in 1948. While awaiting execution, he came to public attention by writing best-selling novels entitled "Cell 2455 Death Row" and "Trial by Ordeal." In July, 1954, one Wenzell Brown, who identified himself as Chairman of the American Writers Committee to Save Chessman, sent the Director a copy of information addressed to the President of the U. S. alleging that there is doubt that Chessman was guilty of the crimes of which he had been convicted. This letter was not acknowledged but was referred to the Department as a possible Civil Rights violation on 7-1-54; and the Department advised that no investigation was desired. The U. S. Supreme Court ordered new State (Calif.) Court hearings concerning Chessman in July, 1957, on the basis that the court record of his original trial was fraudulently prepared. To this the Director noted, "What a travesty upon 'blind justice' the U.S.S.C. has become! H:" (44-7760)

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K:mlw
(3)

[Redacted]

b7c

Town of Hampstead
Montreal 29, Quebec
Canada

Miss Gano

December 30, 1957

Mr. John Edgar Hoover, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington 25, District of Columbia

Dear Mr. Hoover:

This will acknowledge your kind letter under date of December 18th 1957, concerning Caryl Chessman and advising that this case is not within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI.

The basic reason and contents of my letter to you of December 11th 1957 was simply to know if Author Wenzell Brown contacted you with various documents relative to the above controversial cause, and what your reaction was at that time in regard to this most unusual move for a most unusual case. Would you clarify this specific point.

With kindest regards, and every best wish to you and yours throughout the year ahead, I am,

Sincerely yours,

[Redacted Signature]

b7c
B

RECORDED - 77

INDEXED - 77

14-1112-8
10 JAN 2 1958

EX-135

GREEN

65 JAN 13 1958

100

[Redacted]

b7c

Mr. Tolson
Mr. Boardman
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Belmont
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Harbo
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Egan
Mr. Gurnea
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

Town of Hampstead
Montreal 29, Quebec
Canada

February 13, 1958

JDM

Mr. John Edgar Hoover
4936 Thirtieth Place
Washington 8, District of Columbia

Dear Mr. Hoover:

On December 30th 1957 I wrote to you in furtherance to your communication under date of December 18th 1957, but to date I have not heard from you. It is quite possible that this letter could have gone lost in the heavy Christmas mail. I am, therefore, enclosing a carbon copy of it for your information.

Although this is not of the greatest urgency I would, however, appreciate a personal reply at your earliest possible convenience.

With kindest regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

[Redacted Signature]

b7c

Enclosure

Handwritten notes and scribbles in the bottom left corner.

ENCLOSURE
76 FEB 28 1958

EX-110

REC-73

44-770-9

12 FEB 25 1958

10012

December 30, 1957

Mr. John Edgar Hoover, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington 25, District of Columbia

Dear Mr. Hoover:

This will acknowledge your kind letter under date of December 18th 1957, concerning Caryl Chessman and advising that this case is not within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI.

The basic reason and contents of my letter to you of December 11th 1957 was simply to know if Author Wenzell Brown contacted you with various documents relative to the above controversial cause, and what your reaction was at that time in regard to this most unusual move for a most unusual case. Would you clarify this specific point.

With kindest regards, and every best wish to you and yours throughout the year ahead, I am,

Sincerely yours,

57C

[REDACTED]

44-776-119
ENCLOSURE

Pics 10

Office Memorandum • UNITEL • GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Nease

DATE: February 19, 1958

FROM : M. A. Jones

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
MONTREAL 29, QUEBEC, CANADA

- Tolson _____
- Nichols _____
- Boardman _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Trotter _____
- Nease _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

67C
file
2/19

A letter from captioned individual dated 2-13-58 has been received with a copy of a communication which [REDACTED] sent to the Director dated 12-30-57. It is noted that [REDACTED] is seeking information from the Director concerning Caryl Chessman, the "red light bandit" of Los Angeles who was convicted on 17 counts of kidnaping, robbery and sexual assault in 1948, and who has been sentenced to be executed, but the United States Supreme Court ordered new State (California) Court hearings in the case in July, 1957, on the basis that the court record of his original trial was fraudulently prepared.

[REDACTED] first wrote the Director on December 11, 1957, and requested information concerning the case and desired to know what the Director's reactions were to various documents which had been supplied by one Wenzell Brown, an author, who is Chairman of the Writer's Committee which was organized for the sole purpose of preventing Chessman's execution. It is noted that in July, 1954, the afore-mentioned Brown sent the Bureau a copy of information alleging that there was doubt that Chessman was guilty of the crime for which he had been convicted. No acknowledgment was made of the receipt of this information from Brown. His letter was referred to the Department in July, 1954, and the Department advised that no investigation was desired. By letter of December 18, 1957, the Director advised [REDACTED] that inasmuch as Chessman was indicted and tried in the courts of the State of California for offenses not within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI, the Director could offer him no assistance. It was also pointed out that data in the files of this Bureau is confidential and available for official use only.

In his letter of December 30, 1957, [REDACTED] reiterated his request for the Director's reaction to the documents presented by Brown. His communication was afforded no acknowledgment since it was obvious that his intentions were to draw the Director and the FBI into the Chessman case and into the controversy which has been instigated by Brown and his associates. Likewise, it appears that [REDACTED] is continuing his efforts in this regard through his letter of 2-13-58, and since he has already been advised of the lack of FBI jurisdiction and our inability to assist him, it is not believed this letter should be dignified with a reply.

44-7760-10

RECOMMENDATION: That no acknowledgment be made of [REDACTED] letter of 1958 February 13, 1958.

61 APR 10 1958

FEB 23 1958

CBF:ijj (2)

EX-110
CRIM. REC.

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

March 17, 1958

The attached clippings which appeared in the 'Daily Trojan', Los Angeles, concerning the Caryl Chessman case were sent the Director from the University of Southern California, Daily Trojan Editorial Office, Los Angeles, California.

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. Boardman _____
Mr. Belmont _____
Mr. Mohr _____
Mr. Nease _____
Mr. Parsons _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tamm _____
Mr. Trotter _____
Mr. Jones _____
Mr. Clayton _____
Tele. Room _____
Mr. Holloman _____
Miss Holmes _____
Miss Gandy _____

J. Edgar Hoover

REC-50

44-17760-11

20 MAR 18 1958

MURKIN

CRIMINAL

25 MAR 24 1958

Tolson _____
 Boardman _____
 Belmont _____
 Mohr _____
 Nease _____
 Parsons _____
 Rosen _____
 Tamm _____
 Trotter _____
 Clayton _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Holloman _____
 Gandy _____

'VIRTUES OF STUDY'

Editors Interview Caryl Chessman, Death Row's Ten-Year Resident

"Did you have the opportunity to go to college when you were younger?"
 "I have had a semester of junior college, and a semester of university work. I did fairly well."
 "I'd like you to elaborate on your work load, and how you achieve these results that you have. Do you plan ahead, or do you go step by step?"
 "Well, much like a soldier on a battlefield, I think that you simply plod through from day to day. I think that you have to have an overall objective, of course, which was supplied for me with the return of the death penalty, and the other judgment of conviction. It was difficult to anticipate the problems that would arise, or the next step that would necessarily have to be made in the litigation. I have had to meet so many emergencies and many deadlines, and I didn't know exactly what a particular court or judge might rule, so consequently when I had to come up against a new problem, I had to meet it as such rather than taking it arbitrarily, or trying to anticipate exactly what each court would do, or read its mind."
 "Well, it's been suggested to us that your cell lights are on until the early hours of the morning, and that you expand your efforts in many extra-curricular activities, and it's also been suggested to us how you approach these things. You don't allow yourself to get too far involved, so you can get through each project."
 "Well, of course I've done a great amount of work in addition to legal work, I mean authorship as such, perhaps, and other things that I've had to fit, in effect,

Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
 Wash. News _____
 Wash. Star _____
 N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
 N. Y. Journal-American _____
 N. Y. Mirror _____
 N. Y. Daily News _____
 N. Y. Times _____
 Daily Worker _____
 The Worker _____
 New Leader _____
 Daily Worker _____
 Los Angeles Daily _____
 Date 2-11-58

ENCLOSURE

speaking figuratively, I've had to have a forty-eight hour day to get all of the work done, and on the Death Row of course it's true that the lights are left on all night, and you turn them off when you're ready to go to sleep, or to bed, so the choice is yours of how much you want to work, or how long you want to work, or the conditions under which you want to work. I've been willing to do a lot of work, and where the drive came from as you suggested of course, is supplied initially by the fact that I was facing an ultimate, and constantly confronted with it, and often right at the door, almost literally, of the gas chamber. But beyond that, I felt pretty strongly about some of the subjects connected with my own problem, and so there were some things I wanted to say, and I felt that they simply had to be said, and I didn't know how much time I had left, and that too was quite an incentive which probably normally wouldn't be encountered in a more normal situation."

"I almost had to learn empirically by the trial and error process whether I could handle my own case. I didn't know in advance whether I could or not, for there were a great many handicaps being locked in a death cell—securing books, doing research, getting materials that were needed, transporting or having this matter mailed to the court, and dozens of attendant or related problems, so I had to just feel my way, as it were."

"Did you just wake up one morning and say that you were going to try to do it yourself, or did you feel that even before you went in that you were going to fight it yourself as much as you could?"

"I believe that my decision was probably made at the time of the jury's return of the 'guilty' verdict. I was very much angered by it, and I decided almost at that point, although the decision was almost emotional rather than intellectual, I would put in colloquial terms 'really get in and dig on this myself'. I was determined if possible to give these death sentences back to the State of California unused, and consequently, it was almost at that point that it was an emotional dedication you might say to the project."

"Have you ever started your own law library, as an attorney would?"

"Oh, I have many books of my own that I felt were particularly needed, and in addition to that I had to prepare a book in manuscript form of my own with regard to federal practice and procedure that related to state court convictions in criminal cases, because I could find nothing already in relation to certiorari, what constituted a federal question, how the questions had to be presented, interpretation and court rules, and things of that nature."

"Have you ever thought about becoming an attorney?"

"This is probably the trauma of this experience. I doubt if I'd ever want to see a law book again."

"Would you say that your confinement in a cell provided the impetus for studying law books, writing novels and best sellers?"

"If you'll look at my background, unfortunately, I apparently have exerted that same drive to that same degree in fields that were not considered socially acceptable, so consequently this forced upon me the necessity of channeling these drives into something that was more socially accepted, but I feel that this seems to be an almost compulsive need, although I use that word very gingerly, to be active, to do something, and I've had the opportunity here or course to channel it into more creative fields, and rather than simply having it explode out like a shotgun, and really not be directed to any definite, or extent."

"Would you continue to be a professional writer if given your freedom?"

"I am determined to become a novelist worth his salt and I think given another ten years I may make the grade."

"Do you feel that your books have had the social impact that you wanted them to have?"

"I believe that the books, coupled with the case, have had a very healthy social impact in the sense that in very nature—the controversial nature—of this case, the fact that the other side of the picture could be presented by a man behind bars, has had a very salutary effect, in my opinion, on public opinion, and it could place this problem right in perspective and right in the foreground of the public mind, which I think is a very healthy thing and something that is very critically needed."

"I've been accused and probably with considerable justification of being a pamphleteer, and I don't mind the designation a bit."

"This problem you referred to, is it the problem of your case, or of capital punishment?"

"Well, not capital punishment per se, let's just say the theory of retribution or retributive justice is the logically or socially valid approach to the problem of criminality."

"Well, going on that, from the sociological angle, how do you feel that society should take care of those who offend or continually break society's laws?"

"Well, all I can answer is to give a personal example. I, of course, have been diagnosed psychiatrically and the word has also been used epithetically as a constitution: psychopath or a sociopath or by whatever term you are pleased to employ to designate one who apparently is at odds with himself or his fellows and is a hopeless sort—a being or person and I feel that I've demonstrated rather conclusively, without beating my own drum here, that it is possible to help these people or to help themselves fit themselves and they are capable of doing something constructive as well as something negative or destructive or at odds with the social system."

"And what about those who can't be rehabilitated?"

"That begins with the premise that there are those who cannot be rehabilitated. I would say there are unquestionably those who cannot learn to adapt themselves to the rules of social living under the present methods of approaches that is being used in this problem, but I don't feel that, as a consequence, we should say that it is impossible completely to reach those men, or to give them an opportunity to make some sort of satisfactory adjustment that is acceptable to themselves and to society."

"The problem is convincing the public by some educational means that it is essential to jettison this concept of retributive justice and the concept that good citizenship can be coerced. I think I have demonstrated conclusively in my own case that it wasn't possible to coerce me, it wasn't possible to punish me and it wasn't possible to say that 'we're going to force you to be good,' and use that word 'good' advisedly, in the common social way it's accepted. You have to have some more affirmative and creative approach, I believe."

(Continued Tomorrow)



H-M-M-M—Giving thoughtful attention to the question of Joe Nevens (left), Caryl Chessman prepares to answer as Jerry A. Burns (right) readies his next line of questioning. The scene is the jury room of the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles.

(Daily Trojan Photo by Martin S. Rubin)

DAILY TROJAN

Special Events

Joe Nevens, Special Events Editor

Caryl Chessman: The Face Across the Table

By JERRY A. BURNS
Daily Trojan Editor-in-Chief

This face across the table from you—with its clear eyes staring right at you and its seemingly over-sized nose and mouth—it might belong to an older war veteran attending night school or to a social studies teacher at the junior high school or to the attendant at the Union Station on the corner.

But it doesn't. It belongs to Caryl Chessman (pronounced Carol) Chessman. You don't notice whether his wrists still bear the marks of the handcuffs just removed by the two burly sheriff's officers in the corner of the room; you don't search for physical marks imprinted by 10 years in San Quentin. You just pinch yourself subconsciously and tell yourself that, yes, you are really here in Los Angeles County Superior Court chatting amiably with one of the most controversial criminal figures of modern time.

But Chessman's first words send fears flying. He is friendly, well-spoken with a firm and modulated voice, and willing to help out inexperienced interviewers. The offhand manner with which he casually answers your questions are good proof that this isn't the first time he's been put on the spot in an interview.

You sit down, switch on the tape recorder and spend thirty minutes tossing back ideas between yourself and this condemned man fighting for his life daily in the courtroom. When the session is over you bid Chessman, his investigators and the officers goodbye, promising to see them again at 9 the next morning.

Today's interview goes much better than yesterday's. Both you and Chessman are more relaxed, more sure of yourselves. When the questions and answers end and the tape slows to a stop, Chessman rises to go back to the courtroom where he will resume his debates with J. Miller Leavy, the assistant district attorney who prosecuted him in 1948.

But before he goes he pauses to laugh with you when you tell him that Dr. Baxter used the word "chessmanisms" in class yesterday to refer to an delaying, beating-around-the-bush, legalistic putting-off action.

When he's gone you snap the cover on the ~~tap~~ recorder, thank the officers and the investigators for their kind cooperation and leave the jury room and the Superior Court's Department 67 behind. But somehow you don't leave Caryl Chessman behind. Not only do you have him captured on tape, but you just don't forget the man who has been called every name printable and some not so nice . . . the man about whom an anonymous author once wrote: "Let Chessman get his justice in Hell."

That's not the Chessman you remember. You remember that he was neatly dressed, that he was warm and friendly to you, that he seemed honest, sincere and willing to help. And especially you remember that his vocabulary, his speech, his intelligence were as good as that of any middle-class intellectual. Why, this man no more fits the stereotype of a rapist-robber-convict than does your university adviser.

But as you finally get off the elevator and leave the court building one question still remains unanswered: Is Caryl Chessman—that friendly man fighting upstairs—the "Red Light Bandit" who left a bloody path of rape and robbery around Los Angeles in 1948. You'll probably never know.

- Tolson _____
- Boardman _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Nease _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Trotter _____
- Clayton _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

- Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
- Wash. News _____
- Wash. Star _____
- N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
- N. Y. Journal-American _____
- N. Y. Mirror _____
- N. Y. Daily News _____
- N. Y. Times _____
- Daily Worker _____
- The Worker _____
- New Leader _____
- Daily Trojan _____
- Los Angeles Cal. _____
- Date 2-11-58 _____

44-7210-1
ENCLOSURE

Crime:

By JOE NEVENS

Daily Trojan, Special Events Editor

There probably is no more violent example of the "virtues of study" than Caryl Chessman, who has delayed a date with death in the San Quentin gas chamber for ten years by expediently "cracking the books."

Breaking all precedents, the Chessman case gained widespread notoriety due to the incongruous industry of a man condemned to death. These efforts included three best-selling autobiographical books, one novel (soon to be published) plus an extensive self-instruction of the law.

Prison Lawyer

This study of the law by Chessman, though confined in Death Row and actually being sentenced for the gas chamber on six separate occasions, produced an unusual legal background. Chessman wrote legal briefs, reviewed cases from an ever-increasing law library in his cell and actually conducted his own defense from his cell and in the courtroom.

Crimes committed by Chessman, and to which he has confessed and the eventual judgment of the man is not the province of this report. His judgment and ultimate fate will be decided in the court downtown, following the presentation of arguments by the prosecution and defense. The Chessman case has further ironic twists in that 14 people connected with the case have since died, including the judge, Charles W. Fricke, who first sentenced Chessman to death.

Diet of Crime

Crime has many faces. It is a growing and major problem in an apparently progressive civilization. In the southern California area alone, crime is almost a staple diet in the daily newspaper accounts.

Los Angeles Police Chief William Parker, just a few weeks ago, stated that the local crime rate is alarmingly on the increase and pointed to the fabled San Fernando Valley area as a hotbed of criminal activity.

Local Crimes

Recently one of the biggest local car dealers and several of his salesmen were convicted of defrauding and cheating many of their customers. A suburban high school principal's teen-age son committed murder, apparently unexplained, a short time ago.

Four of the first string of a local junior college basketball team are making little ones out of big ones for acts of vandalism. Last year an SC grid potential was jailed on robbery charges. And also last year, two UCLA footballers were arrested for stealing property from a Westwood apartment.

School Crimes

Crime has many faces and many facets. It operates on the high school level and the college level, covering subjects of vandalism, theft, violence, attack, narcotics and a profound disrespect for law and reason.

In Brooklyn recently, a junior high school principal, who probably dedicated his life to education and the proper cultivation of youth, committed suicide. The suicide was attributed to pressures brought about by acts of rape committed in his junior high school by youths, who in reality committed the

murder of this principal. Or was this the act that reflected the apathy of a reclining society?

Various Strata Also

Crime has many faces. Varying degrees of criminal acts have been committed by members of the various social and monied strata. The high-brow, the low-brow and medium-brow have all had their day before the bench and behind the bars.

Where then is the issue of crime? Where and when can it be stopped or prevented? What is the cost of crime? How then does the rising crime rate affect the citizen, if not in his pocketbook, then as a potential victim of a violent criminal act?

Incongruous Example

Perhaps exemplifying crime in all its incongruities is Caryl Chessman. This man has gone the route from a series of criminal acts to imprisonment, to release, to crime again and now is facing the ultimate. The background of Chessman is then intensified by noting his intellectual ability, yet previously his ability was exercised in criminal acts.

Considering this entire picture, the Daily Trojan decided to secure an interview with Chessman. Upon being granted the necessary consent from all parties and cooperation from the court and the county jail, the interview was set up.

Preliminary Research

Just before finals of last semester, we took the tape recorder to the Los Angeles County Superior Court Building. Preliminary background research was obtained by conversations with lawyers, reporters, police, close friends of Chessman and his private investigators.

Chessman is brought to court each morning at 9:30 a.m. in handcuffs under armed guard of two sheriff's deputies. Once in court, the handcuffs are removed. Dressed in a plain suit, Chessman conducts his own defense and pleads his case to the court. He retained in his defense are A. Wirin and Paul Posner, Los Angeles attorneys.

- Tolson _____
- Boardman _____
- Belmont _____
- Nease _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Trotter _____
- Clayton _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

Special Interview

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, presiding Judge Walter R. Evans arranged to have Chessman brought over from the Los Angeles County Jail at 9 a.m. for this special interview. Judge Evans assigned the jury room adjoining the courtroom, where Chessman was pleading his case for the half hour interview. The court was courteous in granting us the similar facilities for another interview on Thursday morning.

Present in the jury room during the interview were Chessman, two of his private investigators, the two sheriff's deputies and your two Daily Trojan editors.

The following are the salient parts of the questions and answers of the tape-recorded Chessman interview with space being the only limitations.

- Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
- Wash. News _____
- Wash. Star _____
- N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
- N. Y. Journal-American _____
- N. Y. Mirror _____
- N. Y. Daily News _____
- N. Y. Times _____
- Daily Worker _____
- The Worker _____
- New Leader _____
- Daily Trojan _____
- Los Angeles Calif. _____
- Date 2-11-58

4-110-11

ENCLOSURE

who have to obey at all times all the rules, whether good or bad. Or would you rather have a person with some individuality, who might perhaps create something of lasting worth for society, but at the same be a problem to society. Because I believe that, of course this is the old business of the castration theory, but at the same time I think that most people realize that there are those who do have problems, and who say that our goal is simply to make everybody a law abiding citizen without thought of what that might do to research, what it might do to letters, or arts, or artists, or anything of that nature, why I don't believe that you'd have a very useful or very productive, or a very creative society. There are inevitably going to be certain conflicts between the individual and the masses at all times, so when you say that you want to prevent this, I'd have to ask you in turn, do you mean that your objective would be at all costs merely people who obey the law, independent of any consideration whether or not that this obeying or submission to the law would essentially mean that, and nothing more."

"When I refer to law or rule, I mean plain common sense or good conduct, which most of the laws are usually based on. The acts that I am referring to, are armed robbery, armed violence, and molestation, and even stealing guns. These things I have known about, and these people are personally intelligent, and they have done these things, and have realized what they have done. Now you are referring to the individual's respect to the community, or to retain his entity, which I certainly feel is a most important thing. But the law itself, in reference to the whole community should be applied to them, so this productivity can continue, because these same people may impede the progress of another productive person by the actions that they commit."

"Well, that's true, of course there has to be a line drawn even if it's arbitrary, but at the same time, before his interview began, we mentioned Cellini and Villon, and I think that they would have a terrible time in today's society, and yet look what they have left for posterity. Villon is said to have written some of the finest literature and poetry that France has had, and of course . . ."

"Is that the price to be paid then?"

"Well, in some instances, it seems to be the story at least. Now perhaps with the advancement in psychiatry, you'll be able to find ways to channel those drives, and socialize these people to an extent more than we have done in the past. It seems to be, in some instances, in creative fields, the inevitable price that must be paid both by the individual, and the community. And, of course the final answer to that, I'm unable to give you. I'm merely able to say that historically, it seems to be the case."

"While I was in the service, I saw how police in other countries have handled suspects, and I even saw that some of the common courtesies were not even considered. As the severity of the case was greater, the consideration grew proportionately less. And I have also learned while talking with people in other countries, and reading, how practices similar to this occur by law enforcement agencies in these countries. For instances the deputies who are guarding you now. They probably never have gotten a salary commensurate with the work that they perform. To protect the average hard-working individual who is providing for his family, raising children, and trying to progress in his own way, and probably all he expects is to enjoy the peaceful pursuits of their individual endeavor without fear of molestation. Well, the laws in our country are often based on precedent, and lots of cases have been decided on that, we've studied that

in school. In view of the background of this case, would you feel that the decision by the court if it were to go in your favor and you were set free, what effect do you think this would have on these people who are agencies that you have admitted to. This would deter them, or would it not, or would this make them think

The opposite would be true. If what you're getting that they might interpret it as a license. They would be more violent. I feel that anyone who is familiar with this case at all, and certainly there are many people who that includes mostly those who have had difficulties with the law, have been aware how close I've been to execution so long, and have commented on the nature of this ordeal, and how they don't feel that they would like to go through it. I don't believe that they ultimately would reach the point where they would rationalize this thing and say 'well, even though he did ten years in the death row, that is still all right because he got out. So I can do this, and safely feel that I can get out in the first place, if I do get out, it's only going to be because ultimately there is going to be a decision that I wasn't guilty to begin with on the charges. So that certainly I don't feel that the potential criminality of someone else can be equated with what might be done with me if the decision is in my favor. On the contrary, I think that it would be an experience where they would feel, 'well, I better watch out for this, or I might wind up, as a consequence of having been on this side of the fence, in a Death Row, in a prison for a long time, because it's easier once you have been in trouble, to be suspected a second time and a third time whether rightly or wrongly."

"Well, how about the notoriety of your case, do you feel that like the books you have written, the press, stories written about you, radio, television, and press. Do you think that this has aided your case, or detracted from it, or would you like to say anything about that?"

"Yes, I definitely feel that it has impaired my ability to get back into court. I feel that there has been so much controversy and such a great atmosphere of hostility and prejudice in view of the nature of the offenses, that it's extremely difficult for the thing to be weighed strictly as a matter of law, and here we run into perhaps one of the greatest problems of all, and that is, at what point is the judiciary completely free to decide a case on its merits, irrespective of whether it is a popular or an unpopular case, and how much public opinion should influence the decision of the judiciary, and there again the independence of the judiciary is extremely important I believe."

"I have one fast mathematical question for you. You once said that you were a gambler, and it's obvious that you still are a gambler. Do you think that your odds are getting better?"

"I think that I am in a better position than I ever have been. Once I've had this day in court, and I would like to say right now without going into the merits of this case at all, that I feel that I have had procedural due process at this hearing without question, so that this case will be decided this time happily on its merits, I'm confident of that, and I feel that it's going to be a fair and equitable decision."

less or friendless. I think that I'm a good example of the reverse side of that coin. If I hadn't been able to litigate this case myself, and hadn't been able to hire attorneys and private detectives to assist me, such as William Lindhart, who I would have been in a hopeless position."

"I think that most people say the value of it is that they think it's a deterrent to people who might be intending to commit crimes that would be punishable by death. Do you think that this ever had any effect on you before your prison term began? Do you think that the fact that California had a capital punishment law ever had any deterring effect on anything you ever did?"

"Well, I think the opposite is true because the tendency of a person on my side of the fence, and I'm putting aside the question of guilt or innocence of any particular crime now, is to react with a sort of defiant attitude toward the possibility of execution or the threat that if you keep on, you're going to end up in the gas chamber. That sort of thing I've developed in my first book. In subsequent books also, I have elaborated on this, and I think that rather than deterring, it has an opposite effect."

"Do you think that most people in the criminal world would prefer life or capital punishment?"

"Well, are you referring to life imprisonment without possibility of parole?"

"That's right."

"Well, I can only answer for myself, and not for most people. I think that the question of course is merely an academic one, and is difficult or impossible for anyone to answer. Personally, no, I would not want to spend the rest of my life in prison. No, that's why I am litigating this case as I am now, either trying to be ultimately vindicated, or of course, be executed. I'm not looking for any compromise whatever. For that reason, I can see no future in spending my life behind bars."

"Before me I have an article in a national magazine written by you, referring to authorship in the death house, and in it, you refer to another man who is condemned to death who wrote a book, and eventually walked out of prison, and as you put it, 'made a lasting contribution to American literature.' Now viewing that, and your comparison, I was just thinking, is it possible that an attitude might be taken from this, that a person of literary potential or intellectual ability can be acquitted by supposed justice and be set apart from someone who does not have these inward potentials?"

"On the contrary, I think it should definitely not, but of course you have to realize there's a price tag in effect on just this, and I say that without being cynical, and of course if someone is more intellectually capable, the odds are in his favor of surviving, the merits of the case aside merely because of his ability. But as far as just being opposed, or the view that should be taken, I would say certainly not. In fact I would feel that the person who might be less capable mentally, or an illiterate, or someone who is not qualified to protect himself, the law should be more diligent in looking out for him."

"In view of your background and experience in prison and out, and your litigation procedures, would you feel that stricter laws enacted could curb the rising crime rate and juvenile delinquency? Should schools have more control, or be high class 'baby-sitters' or would you suggest that the home and the parents should take certain measures to keep their children out of trouble, or offending the code of society?"

"I don't think that more laws will solve anything. I think that the laws at present are certainly adequate enough to cope with the problem, except perhaps that some special new circumstance may arise, but that would be an isolated thing. On the other hand, I think that the effort to cope with a particular problem has to be dealt with on every level, and there has to be unquestionably in my mind, a unified effort to do it. I think that in time they will all have to get together and decide what the approach is going to be, and put it together as it were, rather than doing something of an isolated job."

"Well, to try to pin it down in reference to school and the home, do you suggest that a stricter code be exercised by the teachers in the examining of homework or extra-curricular activities, or should the parents assign certain curfew hours for their children and be responsible for them?"

"Well, there is always a danger in that, but I would say that strictness alone is no solution to anything, because you have of course youngsters who are in trouble perhaps as a result of too much strictness. On the other hand, you have teenagers in trouble as a result of deficiency in strictness. So I think that the thing that I should emphasize is that this approach has to be on an individual basis, and has to be met on that level, rather than generally."

"How much responsibility, if any, should a parent have for the misbehavior of his youngsters?"

"Well, are you talking about morally, legally, or what?"

"Well, let's try legally."

"Of course there are certain applicable laws which put a certain limited responsibility in this respect to certain offenses; however, I don't believe that the parent can be said to be responsible legally. If a teenager seems to be maturing much more rapidly, the parent has considerably a greater problem making a living for the most part. I don't think that we should make the parent more responsible legally, because I don't think we would be contributing anything ultimately to solving the problem."

"I've met people that I would say have rather high intelligence, and some of these same people have gotten into trouble with the law, in prison and out; and some have been on the verge of this same difficulty, and yet they have terrific mental ability, I would assume, in school and out. Some of them who have been in trouble have been able to rehabilitate themselves through their own initiative and with outside help. And yet, these potentially loaded people will some day erupt while someone is peacefully walking the streets; and yet they have the intellectual or intelligence ability to reason, and to stop these things. How can you cope with something like that?"

"Well, what would be your goal?, merely social control?"



INNOCENT? — His creased forehead showing the pressures he has been subject to, Caryl Chessman is caught by the camera as he listens to, answers, and smiles at questions shot at him by Daily Trojan Editors Jerry A. Burns and Joe Nevens. Daily Trojan photos by Martin S. Rubin

Part Two of the Chessman Interview

CRIME & SOCIETY

ANALYZED

Tolson _____
Boardman _____
Belmont _____
Mohr _____
Nease _____
Parsons _____
Rosen _____
Tamm _____
Trotter _____
Clayton _____
Tele. Room _____
Holloman _____
Gandy _____

DAILY TROJAN

Special Events

Joe Nevens, Special Events Editor

(Ed. Note: Today the Daily Trojan completes the running of the special tape-recorded interview with convict-author and self-taught lawyer Cary Chessman. Interviewing Chessman are Daily Trojan Editor-in-Chief Jerry A. Burns and Joe Nevens, Daily Trojan Special Events Editor. The interview, was held in the jury room adjoining the courtroom where the Chessman case is being tried, in the Los Angeles County Superior Court Building, on Jan. 15 and 16.)

"We spoke to those associated with your case, and they stated emphatically that there are those who cannot be rehabilitated. With your background and experience what about this individual, the one who cannot be rehabilitated?"

"You are putting me on the spot with a loaded question because you are obliging me to answer first that there are those, and I don't feel that that's necessarily true. There may be those who through brain damage or something are not able to control their own acts, but I think that that's a medical problem, as distinguished from a penological or a criminological one. Now if you mean simply that there are those who are committed to the proposition philosophically, that the way to exist is to exist violently, or to exist by preying on society, I don't think that's true; because I believe that they have a problem, and even though it may be buried inside themselves, I think with the advance in psychiatric methods and psychiatric tools and techniques, that we will reach the point where we're able to look inside the man, and come certainly with more reasonable explanations for the criminality rather than try to punish, we'll try to approach it with as much as any other mental affliction or aberration, and try to treat it and correct it."

"I just wanted to get that clear. Through your experience, would you say that everyone under these conditions could be approached and rehabilitated, given the proper conditions?"

Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
Wash. News _____
Wash. Star _____
N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
N. Y. Journal-American _____
N. Y. Mirror _____
N. Y. Daily News _____
N. Y. Times _____
Daily Worker _____
The Worker _____
New Leader _____
Daily Trojan
Los Angeles, Calif.
Date 21 12-58

ENCLOSURE

*Town of Hampstead
Montreal 29, Quebec
Canada*

67C

Mr. Tolson
Mr. Mohr
Mr. Nease
Mr. Parsons
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tamm
Mr. Trotter
Mr. Glavin
Tele. Room
Mr. Holloman
Miss Gandy

April 1, 1958

Mr. John Edgar Hoover, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington 25, District of Columbia

Dear Mr. Hoover:

On February 13th 1958 I wrote to you enclosing a carbon copy of my previous unanswered letter dated December 30th 1957, in reply to your communication under date of December 13th 1957, but it appears that to date I have not received a reply nor a mere acknowledgement from you.

To reiterate my original request, although the Chessman case is not, as you previously stated, within the investigative jurisdiction of the FBI, I understand Author Wenzell Brown, Chairman of The American Writer's Committee, contacted you around 1954 relative to this highly controversial case. From a personal standpoint, I would like to know what your reaction was at that time concerning this most unusual move with regard to a most unusual case.

It is obvious that you are an extremely busy person occupied with matters of paramount significance. However, I would deeply appreciate a personal reply from you.

Sincerely yours,

[Redacted signature]

REC-59

44-7760-12

APR 8 1958

LX-136

File

1958

[Redacted]

67C

Town of Hampstead
Montreal 29, Quebec
Canada

May 18, 1959

Federal Bureau of Information
United States Department of Justice
Washington 25, District of Columbia

See 44-7760-10

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to my recent enquiry addressed to Mr. Luther A. Huston, Director of Public Information, United States Department of Justice, Washington 25, District of Columbia, in which I requested a complete up-to-date list of the Special Agents in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Field Offices, I was informed that they do not have any such listing.

I would, therefore, like to know if your Office has this material for general distribution.

I would find it of considerable help as a reference.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Address]

REC-75

W

44-7760-10

23 JUN 1959

COPIE 7

62 JUN 1 1959

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

FROM : Legat, Rio de Janeiro (64-218)

SUBJECT: CARYL CHESSMAN
FOREIGN MISCELLANEOUS
INFORMATION CONCERNING

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DATE: July 15, 1959

6/5/90
CLASSIFIED BY SP2 JPP/Jan/ste
REASON: 1.2.4.1/3.12
DATE OF DECLASSIFICATION: 6-5-90

[REDACTED]

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

[REDACTED]

UACB no further action is being taken in this case. Should any additional pertinent information come to the attention of Legat, the Bureau will be advised.

RUC.

- 4 - Bureau (ENCLS. 6)
- 1 - Rio de Janeiro

WGF:lj
(5)

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23-07-1982

ENCLOSURE

ENCL. ATTACHED

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JUL 25 1959

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

15 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

Deleted under exemption(s) (b)(1) with no segregable material available for release to you.

Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.

Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.

Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

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For your information: _____

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44-7760-14 enclosure

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X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

[Redacted]

67C

Town of Hampstead
Montreal 29, Quebec
Canada

October 13, 1959

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington 25, District of Columbia

Dear Sir:

I do not appear to have received an answer
to my elementary enquiry I had written to the Bureau
way back on May 18th 1959.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

REC-8

44-7162-15

23 OCT 22 1959

no...

68 OCT 27 1959