

STERN BROTHERS & COMPANY

DORMAN H. O'LEARY

VICE PRESIDENT

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

May 9, 1939.

My dear Governor:

According to the local newspapers you have asked Attorney General McKittrick to institute ouster proceedings against W. W. Graves, County Prosecutor, David E. Long, Presiding Judge of the County Court, and James Williams, Sheriff of Jackson County, Missouri.

If this action results in the prompt removal from office of Mr. Graves and Mr. Long, I wish to express my hearty approval of your action; but I believe in the case of Sheriff Williams a grave injustice is being done to the only elected official in the court house who has conducted his office in a proper manner.

I was a member of Judge Southern's Grand Jury and as such had an opportunity to observe carefully the conduct of Sheriff Williams and his relations to that Grand Jury; and I have no hesitation in telling you that the evidence which he collected and submitted to that Jury was by far the best and most complete schedule of evidence which the Jury had presented to it.

In fact, in connection with the so-called "Fortune" club raid which was conducted by Sheriff Williams personally, the evidence which he presented to us was so conclusive that even the most inept prosecution of this case can hardly result in an acquittal. You are undoubtedly familiar with the fact that the owner of the Fortune salon was one of the

chief lieutenants of Pendergast's organization, and that the seizure of their records by Sheriff Williams aroused their strong enmity. This same individual, according to newspaper reports, is an alien and upon conviction of a felony charge of maintaining a gambling establishment is improving his chance for deportation.

Of course, I do not know upon what information you agreed to bring these ouster proceedings against the Sheriff; but I think it only fair to tell you that if the evidence against him was collected by some of the investigators who presented evidence to our Grand Jury, you would be perfectly justified in questioning its quality. Information which has

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come in since the adjournment of the Jury leads me to believe that certain of these investigators were not careful in collecting their evidence, and have since refused to back up in court the testimony which they gave to the Grand Jury and upon which indictments were voted.

There are, of course, a great many angles to the local political situation. One which has occasioned a great deal of comment has been the failure so far of any of the members of the so-called Shannon organization to be attached. I understand from the papers that Sheriff Williams is a member of this branch of the Democratic Party. In view of the fact that he has harassed by his raids some of the chief lieutenants of the other branch, there may be an interesting political angle in this situation.

It has never been my policy to write to public officials in respect to the manner in which they care to handle their offices, and I am breaking my own established rule only because I feel that the action taken against Sheriff Williams is apt to result in a serious injustice being done a reputable official of Jackson County.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,  
Dorman H. O'Leary

Hon. Lloyd C. Stark,  
Governor of Missouri,  
Jefferson City, Missouri

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