

CHAPTER 9.

MIGHTY MEN.

Even though Kirkup had such significance in my business life,

I doubt I would have bothered to make mention of ~~him~~ in this book, despite the role he played in my downfall, ~~and~~ had it not been for his elevation by Lord Glenamara who, in 1977, in his evidence before the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Conduct of Members, had been complimentary in his reference to Kirkup. In fact he had called on the name of Kirkup in support of his strenuous denials of some of the suggestions that had been put forward concerning a payment he had received from one of my organisations in 1963.

The money had been paid ~~but~~ both the amount and the manner of the payment are matters on which Lord Glenamara and I disagreed

At the time when I decided to plead Guilty ~~to the charges~~ in Leeds Crown Court in April, 1974, ~~to the charges levelled against me,~~ I also decided to take part in a B.B.C. programme dealing with the Poulson Affair.

I had explored the possibilities of such a programme first of all with Tom Mangold and Tom Bower of "Panorama" who treated the subject with complete objectivity but, at the end of our discussions, I did not feel entirely happy with their approach and they readily withdrew from further discussions.

I discussed the subject with John Mapplebeck the Regional Director of the B.B.C. and was afraid that it may have been frozen within the region and I did not want that. Finally I talked to John Dekker, then producer of the B.B.C.'s 'Money Programme' who put together a team including David Taylor who ~~had introduced me and~~ ~~who~~ I knew as a local journalist and Robin Denselow who I knew by reputation.

David Taylor in his interview asked me a series of questions.

Taylor 'Did you have a M.P. doing this job for you?

Smith Ah - certainly I think two - there may have been more

After all, I would not know all the people that were on my staff - any more than, if you like, I do today. I certainly had one or two. One of them about a year - Ted Short (his name before being elevated to the House of Lords) Now Lord Glenamara.

Taylor: 'In what year did you employ Short?'

Smith : 'You know I have to say within a couple of years, '63 - 64' I have a feeling it was around the time that I was either getting over my heart attack or running into it.'

Taylor: 'And what public relations contracts did you have at that time?'

Smith : 'Well certainly, we were coming up to the Labour Party public relations contract - if we hadn't already got it. We had Peterlee. And of course, obviously that was an important contract to us.'

Taylor: 'You also had Poulson -'

Smith : 'I also had Poulson. And I think some contact then with Bovis.....I remember specifically one with Ted Short when he was going abroad on some foreign trip - when I asked him - you know? if there were any interesting housing propositions - would you let me know? And in the event, I think he replied saying there weren't. But that was one example - if you like - of the kind of question that one would ask. And this, I think, was perfectly proper. I think there was nothing improper in it.'

Taylor : 'Edward Short is M.P. for Newcastle Central, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, and Leader of the House of Commons. According to Smith's correspondence, he received one payment of £500.'

It was my view at the time I did that programme, and it remains my view that Ted Short was a scrupulously honest man. ^{I thought} that he would reply to my disclosures by justifying his action, ^{saying there was nothing corrupt in it (and there wasn't)} and putting some semblance of sanity into a situation which through successive actions the shelving of the "Dossier." ^{we had become almost hysterical.} Maudlings acceptance of the post of Home Secretary, in 1970, his resignation in 1972, Heath's Parliamentary intervention involving the Poulson Bankruptcy hearings and the creation of special investigatory powers for the Board of Trade and the police ^{and} the setting up of Lord Redcliffe's Maude's Committee of Enquiry ^{constituted} a series of actions bordering on ^{sophisticated uncharacteristic establishment hysteria.}

But despite his positions as Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, positions of supreme power and great influence, Ted Short by his strange reaction to the disclosures became a victim of the same hysteria ^{that} had affected every one in ^{the Poulson Affair.}

Headlines screamed

'I was unwise, Short agrees.'

'I won't be hounded - we all do indiscreet things.'

'No votes, no credit in dirt' - Short.

'Short - 'Must Quit'

'Unthinkable for Short to keep job.'

'Short shrift.'

Short to answer '£500 from Smith's claim.'

Short blows his top.

'The B.B.C. paid Smith £250 to accuse me.'

'B.B.C. denies Short's 'Judas money' charge.'

It was at this point, probably, that the hysteria which had characterised the Poulson Affair reached yet another crescendo. For several days emotion was whipped up by the media to the point where one could sense that the effect was to create an ugly mood, as though of a mob demanding heads.

Before I go on to explain my attitude to the payment made to Ted Short, and my explanation of it before the Special Parliamentary Committee, let me set out the relationship we had shared for over thirty years.

We met before the war at meetings of the Newcastle Branch of the International Friendship League and we were both interested in the international political issues of those days. Regular meetings and debates were held at the I.F.L. headquarters and I was always impressed by his debating skill *and* his ability to almost casually dismiss the arguments of his opponents without even answering the substance of their submissions.

He had a naturally stern appearance, a natural air of authority which stamped him out way beyond the ~~S~~chool ~~M~~aster he became. His political views ^{were} by my standards, right wing, and certainly in the pre-war days I do not remember him being active in party politics.

After the war, I heard him at debates and meetings and when he became a City Councillor in 1948, it was no surprise to me.

I renewed my acquaintance with him when I was elected as a Labour Councillor in May 1950 and it was at my first Council meeting that he was elected ~~the~~ the Leader of the minority Labour Group. I served under his leadership until he was elected as Labour M.P. for Newcastle Central a seat made vacant by the resignation of the sitting Labour Candidate Lyall Wilkes (now Judge Wilkes). He retained his membership of the Council for some time after his election as an M.P. until, in 1954, he resigned his seat.

His leadership of the Council Labour Group displayed the same qualities as had been evidenced in the pre-war I.F.L. He compelled attention whenever he spoke or simply intervened in a debate.

People would listen to him although his interventions were normally procedural and, if he was discussing matters of policy, he would state his arguments in the firmest yet non-controversial manner. As a result, he gained all the respect of complete competence and confidence, without any corresponding hostility arising from the policies he was advocating. When he eventually resigned from the Council it was with genuine regret that the Tory Lord Mayor and everyone on the Council paid him their respects.

Ted Short's reply to the Lord Mayor outlined his political outlook when he spoke to the Tory majority on the Council, "the things that unite us are very much greater than those which divide us."

He was always scrupulously fair and honest, essentially kindly and highly respected by his constituents who lived in some of the most derelict working class areas of the City, including some of the worst of the Scotswood Road slums. His early years in Parliament were unfruitful, so much so, that he took a law degree, and it was not until the political controversies between Mr. Gaitskell and Nye Bevan in the mid and late fifties, that he began to be talked about among a number of my mainly left wing Parliamentary friends, as a centre-to-right-wing M.P. but always a 'nice guy'.

Hugh Gaitskell valued his support, and his middle of the road position made him an invaluable ally to Gaitskell. When Gaitskell suddenly and tragically died and was replaced by Harold Wilson, Ted Short was able to support Harold as though nothing had changed politically.

I travelled down with him to London on the plane the morning after the 1964 election victory, when no one knew if there was going to be a working majority for Harold Wilson. Meanwhile my political fortunes were in the hands of George Brown who I knew was going to be head of the new Department of Economic Affairs, and it was him I was scheduled to meet.

During the following years, as Ted Short moved up to the top of the Parliamentary Party, nothing I asked was a trouble for him and every reasonable request was assiduously followed up. As 99% of the requests were designed to help the North East, he became a willing and enthusiastic supporter of the policies I was developing in the City and the Region.

When I was under bitter and unfair attack at the time of the Cruden Affair it was left to him, Ernest Popplewell, M.P. for Newcastle West, and Bob Brown who was then a city councillor and who later succeeded Ernest Popplewell as M.P. for the same constituency, to defend me and I was wholly grateful to them.

Even after I was charged in Wandsworth, it was to Ted Short I turned when I was faced with a possibility of having to create a defence fund to pay for my Wandsworth Trial. Although he had some doubts as to my claim to be without funds he nevertheless undertook to help me with that task and did so.

After my acquittal in Wandsworth, and with Ted Short on the back benches following Ted Heath's 1970 election victory, I had further discussions with him about the possibilities of him joining a group as an advisor which had employed me to work on a North Seal Oil Project. Nothing developed for me in that project as a result of Poulson going bankrupt, and the devastating consequences.

Imagine my torment, having decided for many reasons to plead Guilty in April, 1974, and I had to decide how best to play the cards still left to play. I was certain that the Crown's decision not to open up the Poulson Affair in 1970 had been a political decision taken at a time when Labour was still in power, this decision was endorsed for me when Reggie Maudling became Home Secretary and it was confirmed when Ted Heath became Prime Minister in 1970 and when he accepted Maudling's resignation in 1972.

I had successfully fought the Wandsworth Charge in 1971 in which it was alleged I had corruptly paid Alderman Sporle in order to secure a **Public Relations Contract** in Wandsworth. I certainly knew Sporle had been paid and I was found **NOT GUILTY** by a Jury and in my view rightly so. I was also certain that the Poulson Affair should have begun in Wandsworth. **I** If it had done so, I am sure my association with Poulson could have been put into its true perspective had I fought one defence rather than having to fight the continued hysteria which followed me for five years after being charged in Wandsworth.

I had seen Bill Kirkup left out of every press and bankruptcy attack and yet if I was *indictable* he was equally *indictable*. I had seen the prosecution select one argument in one circumstance and, for no justifiable reason, apply it differently in identical circumstances.

I had been clearly selected as the 'fall guy' to be held responsible for every evil the Crown wished to pin on me by fair means or foul.

I decided that as I *had* certainly paid Ted Short through one of my **Public Relations Companies**, and as the payment was a perfectly legitimate payment, and knowing that Ted Short was so scrupulously honest and accepted by everyone to be so, that by my publicising my company payment to the world,

I was strengthening my hand if and when I decided to appeal

It would have meant that I could have argued that payments *could be* made to an M.P. which were wholly legitimate. I had already successfully argued that my payment to Sporle in Wandsworth *was honestly made and thus* had been accepted by the Jury.

honestly made.

I decided to mention the Short payment in the B.B.C. film as a prelude to my imprisonment and then await the consequences of my action *taken in prison*

The B.B.C. showed the film in a re-arranged late evening programme on the night I went to prison and as I expected, it made a powerful and immediate impact, even in the close confines of Armley Prison Hospital.

By 10. a.m. on the Monday morning I was called to meet the Scotland Yard Officers who had prepared the main case against me, Deputy Assistant Commissioner James Crane, Detective Superintendent Kenneth Etheridge and Detective Chief Superintendent Westley who were accompanied by my Solicitor Tom Ogle. They had obviously spent the weekend discussing the consequences of my Ted Short revelation. Ted Short had again become a Senior Government Minister at the time of my disclosure. I had no desire to do other than explain my association with Ted Short in terms which were simple and straight forward. If Ted Short was under pressure, I was under much greater pressure and my pressure was the lonely pressure of being only three days in to a six year sentence. There was a further complication, I no longer trusted anyone, I may have been wrong to take that attitude, but I knew that Ted Short's son was a legal partner in the same practice as my own defence solicitor. I could not avoid asking Tom Ogle, "are you promising me that anything I say will not go back to Ted Short...promise me". He gave me the promise and I never again had any such doubts.

But the hysteria whipped up deliberately by the prosecution was a frightening thing, small wonder that the fine line of justice has to be preciously guarded, and when a Deputy Prime Minister is caught up in such a situation it is the essence of a democratic society that the press and media become super sensitive.

In that context my disclosure enabled Ted Short to react in whatever way he chose.

He later explained the experience subsequent to the exposure as 'a week of absolute hell'.

His own reaction to my original disclosure, and to the consequential charges, demands and accusations, had in my view contributed, measurably, to the intense heat which was generated.

He came forward to meet the demands for his resignation, and expressed himself in violent and vituperative terms.

This took me and no doubt everyone else who knew him by surprise, including the members of the Press Corps. Ted Short's image had always been that of the quiet, soft spoken, dignified figure.

The explosions were entirely understandable. In the eyes of the public he had always represented the model of the honest, committed politician, dedicated to the highest ideals of service.

Had he not accepted, quite legitimately, a payment with no strings attached, and which was a reimbursement of expenses which he had incurred while acting honestly and openly, he would never have become involved in what was, for him, an unfortunate, untimely and cruel experience.

There had been nothing sinister in the offer, or in the payment. But, inevitably, in the mood of the time, and in view of the fact that one of the principals was me, just sentenced for my part in the Poulson Affair, so the link with Poulson was made.

That link in the prevailing circumstances created by the prosecutions tactics made any inference possible.

The whole course of the Poulson Affair had been punctuated by unprovable accusations and assertions.

The Guardian had noted,

"Necessarily or otherwise a great deal of mud had been slung since the case started and there may be more to come".

But whatever may have been the degree of sympathy for Short in his 'week of absolute hell' the balance of opinion expressed in the press seemed to be that Short had made a mistake in 1963, and that his actions and outpourings in consequence of the disclosure, were, on each succeeding day compounding that error.

The Sunday Times, on 5th May, 1974, put the case,

"Mr. Edward Short had made an unhappy matter worse. He had given years of excellent public service, but in 1963 he made a mistake-----"

The article goes on to refer to the "mounting concern there must be at Mr. Short's reaction to scrutiny. When a Senior Minister replies to inquiries into his conduct, on matters which are of undoubted public concern, with menacing remarks about the freedom of the Press, public life is indeed reaching a nadir of hysteria... As some Labour M.P.'s., their idealism badly offended by recent signs of personal fallability at the top-know best of all, the investigations of ambiguous conduct is not a malign figment of the enemy Press but a matter of bi-partisan interest.

The £250. which Mr. Short admits receiving from Smith, although worth more in 1963 than now, is a paltry sum. So small a sum, so long ago, for so little purpose, he invites us to believe, raises no public issue."

But sadly the £250. is not the end of the matter. For Mr. Short has not been straightforward in acknowledging his position. He had an association with Smith which went beyond a party alliance, but he never voluntarily reported it in public. He did not do so in 1963 when he was offered £500. - but received £250....connected with people involved in scandal he replied with the threat of writs.

Now, under pressure, he had admitted getting the £250, and further puzzling questions arise...

These questions are neither malicious nor irrelevant. No doubt they could be asked about other public figures if details of their income were made public. Such a detail having emerged about Mr. Short, it invites legitimate and temperate discussion about how he performed his public duties at a controversial time. His subsequent behavior, especially last week, invites further discussion of his respect for the House of Commons. As Leader of the House he holds as he says 'one of the highest offices in under the Crown. So high an office must be above suspicion, especially if he proposes himself as Chairman of the Committee of Privileges to look into business associations of Labour M.P.'s. It cannot be said that Mr. Short would enjoy complete public confidence in that role - not because of any suggestion that he had been dishonest, but because he seems quite insensitive to the need for absolute candour. It is his present refusal to concede that there are any questions he should answer which most disturbs detached observers."

The debate raged on in the press. Short had his champions as well as his detractors. Lord Boothby, writing in the News of the World, "Nor do I like the smear campaign against Mr. Short who, strongly supported by the Prime Minister, is showing characteristic courage.

Vigilance on the part of the Press is essential to the integrity of our public life. But there are limits."

But Short's behavior was attracting its share of outspoken criticism, too. In his statement Ted Short conceded that the offer of a retainer had been made in 1963, but that to the best of his recollection he had only received £250. His interpretation of the payment had been the reimbursement of expenses, rather than a retainer.

The amount that had changed hands, and the method of payment continued to exercise not only my mind from my prison cell, but of Ted Short and, more significantly, of the media and the commentators, and as recently as 1977, the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Conduct of Members. Both parties to the transaction, Short and myself, were examined closely by the Committee of this issue.

It had been my contention that the sum of £500, had been paid in cash, through my office, and that the transaction had been duly recorded. Ted Short had been equally sure that he had not received £500. but almost certainly £250. and that the payment had been effected through the medium of a personal cheque from me.

In reply to a question from the Select Committee's Chairman, Mr. Michael Stewart, I had replied,

"Never at any time did Mr. Short act improperly in accepting I believe £500."

If there is concern in my own mind about that payment and it has arisen because the explanation that I read given by Mr. Short as to the amount of money and the method of payment to him. I believe it was paid quite properly and was properly entered in the cash book as a perfectly straightforward transaction. I read in the Press that he had said he had received a cheque.

To my knowledge that was not the case. That worries me. I recall the matter and the records will prove whether or not I am right about it being a cash transaction. It was carried out through my office and my secretary, I believe. The money was not given for the purpose of carrying out any work for Mr. Poulson."

I gave further evidence later.

"As far as I knew the arrangement was made to pay Mr. Short and the payment automatically would be paid either by the accountant or the secretary. I do not know who paid them now, but I know how everyone was paid and I know that they were all cash book transactions. Therefore, if an agreement was reached by Mr. Short I would simply instruct the accountant and say 'Pay Mr. Short whatever it was?' I would not deal with it myself."

The evidence of Short, by now elevated to the peerage, in the title of Lord Glenamara, was taken by the Committee some eight weeks after I had been questioned by them and given my answers.

It had to be remembered, perhaps, that we were both being asked to recall, in fine detail, events that had taken place over fourteen years earlier. And we both, in different ways and to different degrees, had been the subjects of intense pressure and stress, heightened by the glare of justifiable, and for the most part quite proper media exposure.

Ted Short had come fairly recently on to the stage, in 1974, as a result of my B.B.C. programme. I had held the centre of the stage since the late sixties, but for me there had been a period of comparative solace and tranquility when I had languished in goal, free, for a time, from the headlines, the accusations and the assertions, although not from Scotland Yard investigators who were understandably alerted by the B.B.C. programme.

It is one of the saddest aspects of the sorry spectacle of the Poulson Affair that its attendant hysteria gave rise to base instincts of self preservation when the heat was full on. It seemed that the point had been reached when nothing was sacred.

Short, in the course of his evidence to the Parliamentary Committee, referred on several occasions to Kirkup, my former Managing Director and accountant.

".....when the cheque arrived it was a private cheque; it had no business name on it at all; it was simply signed Dan Smith.

Thirdly, the accountant, Mr. Kirkup knew nothing about this and it is inconceivable that this was paid out of any of Mr. Smith's companies - otherwise he would have known about it. Mr. Kirkup said that Mr. Smith could have made the payment from his own bank account."

The Chairman questioned Mr. Short as to the amount of the payment, - "And what you actually received was £250.?" Short answered, "Again I am on oath and I cannot swear to this but I am 95% certain it was. It was certainly no where near £500. It may have been less than £250, but I think it was £250. I am fairly certain of this and it arrived very much later in the year of course."

Mr. Short was asked by Mr. Hooson M.P.,

"But when Smith says 'there was a discussion and he was happy to work for us on the lines I have outlined'" (this was, apparently, a direct quotation from the transcript of the interview between David Taylor and myself) "can you remember any of the lines outlined?"

"Short answered "He did not outline any to me. His evidence that he and Mr. Kirkup and I discussed it in the train is nonsense, and never in a plane with Mr. Kirkup, who, I believe, never travelled by plane."

Later in the proceedings Mr. Jeffrey Thomas, M.P. asked him "As you know, what he says is that the agreement was that you would be partly retained by Mr. Smith's companies and that agreement was reached with Mr. Short (the questioner must have intended to say 'Mr. Smith' at this point), Mr. Kirkup and yourself?"

"Mr. Short answered 'This is completely untrue. Mr. Kirkup was an honourable man and a good accountant and a Conservative Councillor in Newcastle and, you will notice he said in his evidence that the conversation never took place.'"

The payment was certainly intended to cover expenses incurred by Mr. Short when he had been out of pocket on behalf of things I had asked him to do, and the amount so far as I was concerned was beyond my reference as I was shut away in prison. But was it paid by cash or cheque? I know it was a cash payment.

Mr. Peter Thomas M.P. put another question related to the payment, to which Short replied -

'Certainly not, and as I pointed out earlier, Mr. Kirkup who was Smith's accountant, said that he had never heard of this payment and that it is inconceivable that it would go through any accounts that Mr. Kirkup handled. The police have told me that they have never been able to trace this in any business account at all.'

Mr. Short's replies, and his attempts to provide satisfactory and convincing solutions to those mysteries, had thrown up some new ones.

For example, the answer Short gave to Mr. Jeffrey Thomas, M.P.'s question was, "Mr. Kirkup was an honourable man....and you will notice he said in his evidence....."

What evidence?

Had Kirkup testified before the Select Committee?

If so, his testimony is not included in the minutes of evidence.

Short must have been allowed sight of this evidence of Kirkup,

I certainly never saw it.

The Committee noted in its published report, and there was some reference in the Press, to 'deletions made in the transcript.'

What were the deletions?

Ted Short answered Mr. Peter Thomas's question, "The police have told me that they have never been able to trace this in any business account at all".

My direct query is, when did Lord Glenamara ask the police, which police officer did he ask and by what authority did the police officer disclose such information? Did Lord Glenamara ask the police if they had been able to trace the payment to my personal Bank Account, and if they had what did they tell him.?

I am certain that at no time were the police entitled to inform a questioner, even a Lord President of the Council, on matters which could come before the courts. Such questions and answers must have been constitutionally improper.

But any evidence against me at that time was good enough. If it had the stamp of a police officer on it, then it had even more credence.

The Department of Trade and Industry, the Fraud Squad and the Officers of the Inland Revenue Investigation Branch all had access to all of my personal Bank accounts covering the years between 1960 and 1973. Since they are still available and now in my possession, why was it never disclosed to the Select Committee that there was no such payment paid from my personal account?

Lord Glenamara, Mr. Kirkup and, according to Lord Glenamara, the police, had all stated that the payment was not made through the business accounts. Lord Glenamara admitted to receiving a payment. If it could have been proved and it could, that it was not made through my personal account, then what other explanation could be offered, other than the explanation that I had given from the outset. It was a cash payment and it was a perfectly proper payment. I, the "criminal" witness, WAS telling

My original proposition had gone sadly wrong. Instead of Lord Glenamara simply acknowledging that the payment had been made for a perfectly legitimate reason, and being willing to allow the investigators to check it out through his own Bank Accounts and with the Tax Authority, he created another blurred area of doubt and suspicion which was turned to use against me.

Whatever had been the amount of the payment, and however it had been paid, the widespread belief was that Short had, in no sense, been guilty of corrupt conduct. The concensus had been expressed by journalist Keith Waterhouse. There was no question that Short was corrupt, or ever had been corrupt.

But Short critics had not hesitated to employ such phrases as, 'not straightforward', 'indiscreet', 'less than candid'. These descriptions applied not only to the fact of the payment, and the reservations which Short had expressed in accepting, but to the intemperate reaction to the disclosures, and the resistance to inquiry.

This indiscretion and lack of candour, it was felt by many, both inside and outside Parliament, would make it impossible for him to retain his position as Leader of the House.

It was this dimension which presented the anomaly. The difficulty was given expression by Aitken, in the Guardian, "Virtually no one at Westminster is prepared to say that they believe Mr. Short's 11-year-old dealings with the now imprisoned Mr. Smith mean that he is in any way guilty of corrupt conduct.

But yesterday's revelations in the Daily Express of the text of a letter in which Mr. Short accepted an offer of payment from Mr. Smith in 1963, in which he insists on the matter being kept confidential, is regarded as a moral barrier to his continuing in the role of principal sponsor of the Government's proposals for a new register of members' interests'

It was the publication of this letter, together with other correspondence between Mr. Short and Mr. Smith, which appears to have turned opinion among M.P.'s. Before the Daily Express disclosed the exact terms of the correspondence, most M.P.'s were prepared to take the view that Mr. Short's public statement on his dealings with Mr. Smith, issued in the early hours of yesterday morning dealt adequately with the affair.

The timing of the exposure was doubly unfortunate as far as Short was concerned. Not only would he, as Leader of the House, have a key part to play in piloting through Parliament the proposed legislation with the registration of interests of its members, but also, he would be face, almost immediately, with the embarrassing task of chairing the Committee of Privileges, in its investigations into a charge that certain back bench M.P.'s were known to be 'for hire'. By tradition the Leader of the House is Chairman of the Committee of Privileges."

The matter was aired in a Guardian article editorial headlined, "Short tempers all round", "These may seem small matters but Mr. Short in his own phrase is 'the holder of one of the highest offices under the Crown.'" Not only that, but he is in the exceptionally sensitive position of Leader of the House; and, as such, he is both responsible for Government policy on the future declaration of M.P.'s interests and the man who will preside over the Committee of Privileges when it investigates Mr. Joe Ashton's allegations that M.P.'s are 'for hire'. That Mr. Short should continue as a Minister is not questioned.

What is questioned - and was even questioned by a number of Labour Members last week, notwithstanding Mr. Wilson's words on Thursday - is whether or not Mr. Short should step aside from the post of Lord President. He is quite right to say that he will not be 'hounded out of public life'; there is no cause for him to leave the Government. He ought, however, to see why there may be reservations about his retention of his present post."

Short's protests, intemperate and hysterical almost to the thresholds of persecution mania, when contrasted with his normally placid and stable behavior patterns, give a clear indicator of the levels of anxiety and hysteria which had been generated.

Everyone, it seemed, was desperately anxious to get away from damning 'guilt by association' with any of the 'star players' or even the 'tiny ones' in the Poulson Affair. The unhealthy atmosphere, and the frightened reaction to it, was beginning to call up memories of the panic that had existed in the United States in the fifties, at the height of the McCarthy witch-hunts, albeit ours were on a smaller scale.

Short's state of mind can be gauged from two examples of his reaction,

"I have never seen such an evil and malevolent campaign waged against an innocent person. The newspapers which are waging this campaign are destroying democracy."

Destroying Democracy for £250?

Or even £500?

A Daily Express leader took a less emotional view of the role of the Press in a free society,

"A vigourously free Press cannot be beholden to any Government. Nor to the smears and sneers of politicians."

How much I endorsed the attitudes of the press in their reactions to the Short issue. I was locked away in prison, with a history of 'strange happenings' already behind me. I was ever more convinced that even the travail of Mr. Short was not to be laid solely at my door but at the doors of those in the establishment, of whom he was more aware than I, for having shelved the "Dossier" in 1970.

My only regret was that the press campaign was not successful, and, as a result, there were many more ordeals ahead of me. Trials, The Salmon Royal Commission and the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Conduct of Members, none of which would have been necessary had the Dossier been activated in 1970.

Short's next target was the B.B.C.,

"I have discovered that the payment by the B.B.C. was the reason for Smith's amazing and despicable conduct. The B.B.C. insisted that he exposed somebody and I was the unfortunate person. The rate for this job used to be 30 pieces of silver. Now is is £250." I could almost see and hear him saying this.

Short went on,

"This public corporation, out of public money, pays someone who says he is going to plead guilty to a very serious crime to assassinate the character of an important public figure....."

Immediately the B.B.C. issued a strong denial,

"There is no truth whatsoever in Mr. Short's allegation that the B.B.C. made it a condition that Mr. T. Dan Smith should 'expose somebody' in a T.V. interview.

The fee paid to Mr. T. Dan Smith which had not yet been even agreed when the filming took place, was assessed by normal B.B.C. standards on the time and effort expended."

A B.B.C. spokesman refused to say whether my fee was in fact £250. "We never disclose the amount of fees" he said.

I add two comments in my belated reply to Mr. Short's 'Judas money' accusation. I was offered £11,000. for those Short letters, not by the Daily Express, who got the vital correspondence from me for nothing, but from another newspaper. I turned the offer down.

My fee from the B.B.C. was £250. Judas sold to the highest bidder?

Let me return to the worrying decision taken when I was at a very low physical ebb, but certain that what was being covered up in the Poulson Affair was more important than many of the 'fictions' that I knew were being exposed.

Even though I had, by any normal standards, a battering from the press for reasons way beyond their control but as a result of the Crown's handling of the case, I was certain that their constant hammerings would, in the end, bring a full exposure of the 'Dossier' cover up.

No matter what was ever said or written about the 'Poulson Affair', it was Ropergate Services Limited which was the main instrument of corruption and Poulson was the force behind it.

Ted Short's payment did not come from that source.

Against such a charged background I was right to expose the payment made by one of my companies to Lord Glenamara. After all, the Poulson Affair was about people being paid. The matters at issue were simply. When was such a payment legal and when illegal. I know that my payment to Lord Glenamara was legal so why not disclose it.