

The Week
In Focus

WHAT IN THE WORLD!

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PLOT: A New Note Clouds Kennedy 'Conspiracy' Probe

It was last Feb. 17, more than three years after the assassination of John F. Kennedy and well after the Warren Commission ruled the deed was the work of one man, Lee Harvey Oswald, that Jim Garrison became publicly involved in the controversy swirling around the murder.

On that day, a New Orleans newspaper ran a story that the big (6-foot-6, 240 pounds) New Orleans district attorney had spent more than \$8,000 of city money on his own investigation of the assassination. The following day, Garrison admitted at a press conference: "We have been investigating the role of the city of New Orleans in the assassination ... and we have made ... I think substantial progress ... There will be arrests."

And there were. Garrison went about his task with incredible drive, hurling charges right and left, implicating businessmen, psychopaths, the CIA, the FBI, the Dallas police department, even indirectly the man he claimed had "the most to gain" from the tragedy: Lyndon B. Johnson.

The world was stunned. Many, especially in Europe where the conspiracy theory of the assassination has continued popular, believed Garrison was onto something really big; others shrugged off his campaign as a publicity stunt.

Newspaper Calls Garrison Ex-Mental Patient

Still others were not surprised last Friday when the Chicago Tribune, in a copyrighted article, broke the news that Garrison's military medical records disclosed he had been under psychiatric care for 4 1/2 years from the fall of 1950 to the spring of 1955, and had been discharged from the army as totally unfit for military duty, suffering from "a severe and disabling psychoneurosis of long duration (which) has interfered with his social and professional adjustment to a marked degree." It called his illness one "that will require long term psychotherapeutic approach."

It was too early yesterday to tell what this disclosure would do to Garrison's investigation, or what effect it would have on those he had implicated in the assassination. But in the 10 months since the world learned of Garrison's activities, here is what has happened:

Almost immediately after the disclosure, an eccentric ex-airline pilot named David Ferrie told newsmen that Garrison had him "pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." Ferrie, 49, a strange man who wore a bright red wig, false eyebrows and makeup to cover a disfigurement, denied involvement in any conspiracy and said Garrison was out to get him. Four days later he was found dead in his shabby New Orleans apartment, two suicide notes left behind. Garrison called Ferrie, in death, "one of history's most important individuals," and said he was one of the men slated for arrest.

Garrison added that "My staff and I

solved the assassination weeks ago. ... We know the key individuals, the cities involved and how it was done."

On March 1, he announced the arrest of Clay Shaw, a wealthy, respected New Orleans businessman and founder of the city's International Trade Mart, charging him with conspiring to assassinate Kennedy. He claimed Shaw was actually Clay Bertrand, a man whose name cropped up in the Warren report as having called a lawyer to defend Oswald the day after the murder.

Shaw and New Orleans were stunned. "I never heard of any plot and I never used any alias in my life," Shaw contended. But on March 14 a panel of three judges held a hearing and ruled there was sufficient evidence to hold him for trial. They based their decision largely on the testimony of two men.

Witness Describes Meeting of 'Conspirators'

One was Perry Raymond Russo, 25, a Baton Rouge insurance salesman and onetime roommate of Ferrie, who said that in mid-September of 1963, two months before the assassination, he had attended a meeting at Ferrie's apartment where Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie discussed killing Kennedy by a "triangulation of cross fire."

Bertrand

ms
Ward
Reppel
5-Suburban
MSB

See p. 2

0 Kennedy assassination

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NOT RECORDED
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- The Washington Post _____
- Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star (Washington) _____
- The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
- Daily News (New York) _____
- Sunday News (New York) 32
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- The Sun (Baltimore) _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- People's World _____

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Bundy, 29, a former narcotics addict, testified that in the summer of 1963 he saw Shaw pass money to Oswald.

On May 29, a public opinion poll revealed that 66% of the American public now believed there was an assassination conspiracy, and that Garrison was a major contributor to that growing belief.

Garrison was riding high. By early summer, however, he had run into some trouble. Three witnesses he wanted to question fled Louisiana and he was unable to obtain their extradition. He blamed the CIA, which he said "knows that some of its former employes were involved . . . and is doing everything possible to frustrate my investigation."

He also was accused of using improper methods in his investigation—bribes, criminal conspiracy, perjury, assault, criminal defamation—and on June 22 the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans called for an investigation.

The DA charged the plot was the work of Cuban nationals angry because of the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion. He also implicated the nation's ultra-right wing and charged at various times that Oswald was working for the CIA and the FBI, and that he was killed by Jack Ruby to keep him quiet.

His inquiry, meanwhile, was becoming an increasing embarrassment to New Orleans.

On Dec. 20, he named Edgar Eugene Bradley, 49, of North Hollywood, Calif., as a conspirator in the plot. Bradley, West Coast representative of New Jersey radio evangelist Dr. Carl McIntire, denied the charge, but surrendered to police who held a fugitive complaint.

Last Tuesday, Garrison charged that Oswald had tipped the FBI five days ahead of time that an attempt would be made on Kennedy's life, saying the telegram went to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who nonetheless allowed Kennedy to ride in an open car.

Among Garrison's many charges was one that President Johnson "actively concealed evidence about the murder of his predecessor." Added the DA: "He can't be allowed to get away with it."

Many people, meanwhile, were asking how long Garrison would be allowed to get away with it. They anxiously awaited all the proof Garrison has claimed to have but has so far failed to disclose.



Accused Kennedy "plotter" Edgar Eugene Bradley (left) surrenders to Los Angeles Sheriff Peter Fitch, vowing to fight extradition to New Orleans.



New Orleans prosecutor Jim Garrison gets tender sendoff to office from wife, Liz, and youngest of their five children. Report that Garrison was long-time mental patient could undermine his probe of Kennedy murder "plot."