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PROGRAM Mike Wallace at Large

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JIM HARRISON INTERVIEW

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MIKE WALLACE: This is 'Mike Wallace at Large.'

Time will either prove Jim Garrison the greatest champion to win out against impossible odds since David took on Goliath, or one of history's biggest fools. The verdict is not yet in on the embattled District Attorney of New Orleans.

Ever since last February 18th when in a hastily assembled press conference announced, 'We have been investigating the role of the City of New Orleans in the assassination of President Kennedy, and we have made progress, I think substantial progress; what's more, there will be arrests,' ever since then Jim Garrison has been a thorn in the side of a nation which had buried its dead President, and placed the blame for the murder on a man named Lee Harvey Oswald.

According to public opinion polls, in the months following Garrison's charges, there were many who believed in the existence of some assassination plot.

Jim Garrison has made good on one aspect of his promise - there have been arrests, most notably that of Clay Shaw, a prominent New Orleans businessman and real estate developer, charged with conspiring to kill the President of the United States. Shaw's trial is now pending, following preliminary hearings by a panel of three judges and a board of twelve New Orleans citizens, both of which found that there was indeed sufficient evidence to warrant a trial.

The national press has, on the other hand, by and large, been skeptical of his claims. CBS News, for example, after months of investigation concluded in a four hour television documentary that the Warren Commission was accurate in finding that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the murder of John Kennedy. But Jim Garrison won't go away, nor will he be quieted. He keeps coming up with expanding charges.

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The most extensive presentation of Jim Garrison's claims to date appears in the current issue of Playboy Magazine. It was in a follow up to that article that we invited Jim Garrison to an interview, in the course of which DA Garrison revealed for the first time that some members of the Dallas police force were involved in the assassination.

CBS News producer, Joe Worschpa (?), who has long followed these developments and who, unlike some observers of this tangled web, does not believe that Jim Garrison is merely a publicity seeker, CBS News producer Joe Worschpa questioned Jim Garrison.

WORSCHPA: Mr. Garrison, I think there is something in the Bible, in Job, which says, 'Oh, that mine enemy had written a book so that I can know what he is, what it is he's pounding me with.' You've written a book. This Playboy Magazine, by all odds, the article, your interview in it, is the most far reaching assessment of your general case as to what happened in Dallas that has appeared anywhere, and I think that your critics are going to hold you to that interview.

I want to ask you a few things before we get into the whole substance of the case.

I would put this to you: suppose your name, or my name, is Bobby Kennedy, and I was the Attorney General of the United States. My brother was assassinated. I had all the facilities of the government to find out why.

Jim Garrison, a reputable District Attorney in New Orleans says there was a conspiracy to murder Kennedy, and that was how it happened. Now, I ask you: why hasn't Bobby Kennedy asked you? Have you offered to show him what you have? And why have all the engines of government, practically, been opposed to you?

GARRISON: Well, actually, Joe, you finished up with several questions, so, if I may, I'll answer them in this order - why the engines of government, as you say, have opposed this? And why Bobby Kennedy has -- at least through Walter Sheridan, and other indirect methods, opposed this?

The government -- elements of government have no alternative, because the United States government is a party to major fraud. The Warren Commission inquiry is, in actuality, a coverup of conspiracy, and a rather apparent conspiracy, which I think elements -- major officials of the US government have to be aware of by now. But the Warren Commission inquiry is a concealment, and nothing more. The United States government is a party to the fraud, has participated in

effect, in the biggest fix in the human race. It apparently is in a position now where it has to -- it's stuck with it, it has to defend the line regardless of what the facts were.

We have had a -- a terrible problem moving forward because of the interference and complications caused by the United States government. But the US government, while it certainly was not a party to the plans of the assassination, is a party, is an accessory after the fact, to the concealment of the real truth from the people. So this is why we have a problem here.

Now, with regard to Kennedy -- Senator Kennedy, I cannot go into his mind, and I cannot say with certitude what motivates this man. I can only say that if my brother were killed, I would be interested in getting the individuals involved, no matter who they were, and I wouldn't be interested in any way in the political aspect. But it may be that probably Kennedy is more interested in politics than I am.

I happen to think that the only thing that's important is finding out the truth. If our government had tremendous complications as a result of it, then let -- let the government have complications. If the Central Intelligence Agency, and its mode of operating under the motto, 'the end justifies the means,' becomes embarrassed as a result of the truth, then let the CIA be embarrassed, let the chips fall where they may.

But this is not the attitude of the government, nor is it the attitude of Senator Kennedy, as far as I can see. But, again, I must say in all fairness with regard to Senator Kennedy, I do not know the man, and I have to speculate there.

WORSCHPA: Marina Oswald is the only witness before the Warren Commission who testified that her husband, Lee Harvey Oswald, tried to kill General Walker, and this was used by the Warren Commission as a sign that Oswald was homicidal, that he could murder.

Do you believe that?

GARRISON: Lee Oswald had about as much connection, Joe, with the so-called attempt to kill General Walker as you did. The role of Marina Oswald, and her testimony, have to be viewed in a different light from the more objective witnesses. Marina Oswald had long since been taken over and controlled, literally, by elements of the white Russian community in Dallas. And there are individuals in the white Russian community in Dallas who are involved in the assassination. a matter of fact, this is the sort of thing that I was not able to see in the Playboy interview because we still had people in Dallas, so I

was really just talking about a corner of the entire conspiracy.

But there are elements of the Dallas establishment that are deeply involved, and some of the members of the white Russian community are part of it. Now, they had total control of Marina. And Marina said, in many cases, what she was supposed to say, and instructed to say.

WORSCHPA: Will you subpoena Marina Oswald?

GARRISON: I can't answer that, Joe.

WORSCHPA: What about the Dallas police?

GARRISON: Elements of the Dallas police are deeply involved in the assassination, and provably involved in the assassination. Again a statement that I could not make at the time because I had a man in Dallas for months and I wanted him to be able to come back to New Orleans with his head still attached to his body.

But when I say that I have to add this, that I don't like -- one of the reasons I dislike being compared to McCarthy, besides the fact that I think that he was a dangerous man, is that he had a tendency to use guilt by association, and to indict an entire group with a sweep of a hand. I'm convinced that the majority of the Dallas police force is made up of honest, capable police officers. But the fact remains that you had a small hard core, which is unlike most police forces in the rest of the country, essentially a Minuteman controlled element. The Minuteman -- Minutemen, as individuals, are involved in the assassination. I might add that the central structure of the control down to the anti-Castro Latins who operated the operation -- worked at the operational level in Dealey Plaza, from the insanely patriotic oil millionaires sponsoring this, the connecting link, real the machinery which is making it work are the Minutemen elements of the Dallas police force.

And Jack Ruby -- Jack Ruby should be regarded as a -- as a functionary of the Dallas police force. Now, I'm not saying a word here that we can't prove. I don't think it'll come up necessarily in the Shaw case, but in time we will prove it, and in some cases it can be proved by the records themselves. But just to make one more point, Jack Ruby -- to appreciate Jack Ruby's role, all you have to do is -- well, let me give you an example.

I don't want to indict the John Birch Society as an entire society, because there are many individuals who are members of the John Birch Society for idealistic reasons, and a few of them have helped us. I don't like the concept of the Minutemen, because I don't like violence. I think it's really -- although it's in the name of

patriotism, I think it is really quite the opposite. But there are Minutemen involved, so I must say so. The fact remains that there are other individuals who were members of the Minutemen that we have persuaded to help us. And some even in Dallas.

Now that I've made that saving point, you might say, I must point out that there are individuals very much involved with the John Birch Society, and the Minutemen of Dallas, who are active in this thing. And the point about -- the point about Ruby is, that if you want to get a picture of Jack Ruby's orientation, all you have to do is get his address book. And if you go through his address book you will find -- among the addresses, you will find the name Tom Hill. And if you look behind Tom Hill you will see an address in Massachusetts, and that address actually is the address of Robert Welsh, the president of the John Birch Society.

Now, again, that doesn't mean that the Society is in any way itself involved, but it gives you an idea of Jack Ruby's orientation.

WORSCHPA: Mr. Garrison, on page 158 of the Playboy interview you say very specifically that not one of the conspirators has confessed their guilt. In other words, what we have here -- we have your simple statement, 'that these are my charges,' but until this moment where the corroborating evidence? None of the people whom you've charged has said, 'Yeah, look at me, I did it.'

GARRISON: Well, the corroborating evidence is in our files, Joe. But I don't quite know what I'm going to do with it before trial. If we can get the Shaw people to trial -- they make periodic announcements they're ready to go to trial, then they file new pleadings. And now they've filed new pleadings. We can't set the case for trial.

WORSCHPA: This is normal, isn't it ...

GARRISON: Oh, yes. Yeah, it's normal.

WORSCHPA: It's also normal to believe and to accept the presumption of innocence ...

GARRISON: Why, of course.

WORSCHPA: ... that Troy Laverne Shaw is innocent until proved guilty?

GARRISON: Shaw has to be presumed innocent until he's proven guilty, and because of that I'm not going to bring anything out regarding Mr. Shaw, and I haven't mentioned his name yet.

WORSCHPA: What happened in Dealy Plaza?

GARRISON: Joe, this is a question I would rather avoid in detail because in the last six weeks we've begun preparing our case in detail and this is now an opening part of our case.

WORSCHPA: What I was referring to, in your Playboy interview you refer to an assassination team of seven. If you can give it to us in summary form.

GARRISON: I don't want to get into anything about precise details about Dealy Plaza, because we've now made a decision that the first week or so of trial is going to go into Dealy Plaza.

WORSCHPA: But you're not retracting what you said in the Playboy about this team of two men behind the picket fence ...

GARRISON: The only thing I have to say about that is, there are actually considerably more than seven men at Dealy Plaza. Seven is an inadequate description.

WORSCHPA: And this will come up in the trial?

GARRISON: Dealy Plaza, yes. Not necessarily everything you have in mind, but the fact that there were a number of men at Dealy Plaza, including radio communications, use of transistor radios, to tell when the parade was coming, at what point it was turning, the -- to signal when the guns were to pick -- be picked up, to indicate that the coast was clear. The Dealy Plaza operation will now be brought into the trial.

WORSCHPA: The Lou Harris Poll, he says that there was a time last May when forty-five percent of the American public thought that your investigation would shed some light on Kennedy's death, but now that's slipped. Only -- only thirty-two percent think that you've got something, and that sixty percent now think that not much will come of it.

What is your re -- finding as you go around the country ...

GARRISON: Well, let me say first that it was not too long ago, Joe, that a great many people would have fought you if you said the world was round, and they were convinced that if you sailed far enough west your boat would fall off the edge of the earth. So, I'm not greatly impressed by opinion as a device for determining the truth. The truth in this case depends on the evidence that objective inquiring individuals develop, and has no logical relation at all to the opinions of individuals at large.

But this poll is a significant thing, nevertheless. What this

poll means is that the establishment press, in their pounding away, in their hammering away at the fictions which have been contrived to try and discredit our investigation, has been successful to some extent. Again, it doesn't bother me, because it will be the establishment press' problem to try and readjust after we have convictions, and after we continue to move forward.

It's interesting --- to show you the impact of the image making machinery once it appreciates how the Washington establishment feels, how the eastern New York establishment feels about something, to appreciate the impact you have to understand that we have not failed to clear a single hurdle in this case.

WORSCHPA: Well, then, it would seem that you have a great difficulty lying in front of you, that many in the press do not believe your story, and this is why they've gone after you, and -- can we put it this way, as Mr. Lincoln used to say, that - 'Now, if I am proved right in what I do, then all the critics who rip into me won't mean a thing, and if I'm proved wrong, then a thousand angels dancing on the head of a pin saying that I was right, that won't mean anything either.'

In other words, you've got to produce.

GARRISON: That's a most accurate observation, and there's no way to improve on Lincoln's words, except to add the phrase - that we will be proved right, and it won't even be close. And I just wonder what they're going to say about it then.

WALLACE: New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison interview by CBS Newsman Joe Worschpa.