

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: JIM GARRISON

a candid conversation with the embattled district attorney of new orleans

On February 17, 1967, the New Orleans States-Item broke a story that would electrify the world—and hurl district attorney Jim Garrison into a bitter fight for his political life. An enterprising reporter, checking vouchers filed with the city by the district attorney's office, discovered that Garrison had spent over \$8000 investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. "Has the district attorney discovered valuable additional evidence," the States-Item asked Altonially, "or is he merely saving some interesting new information that will gain for him exposure in a national magazine?" Stung, Garrison counter-attacked, confirming that an inquiry into Kennedy's assassination was under way and charging that the States-Item's "irresponsible" revelation "has now created a problem for us in finding witnesses and getting cooperation from other witnesses and in at least one case has endangered the life of a witness."

On February 18, newsmen from all over the world converged on New Orleans to hear Garrison announce at a press conference: "We have been investigating the role of the city of New Orleans in the assassination of President Kennedy, and we have made some progress—I think substantial progress. . . . What's more, there will be arrests." As reporters flashed news of Garrison's statement across the world, a 49-year-old New Orleans pilot, David Ferrie, told newsmen that the district attorney had

him "pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." Ferrie, a bizarre figure who wore a flaming-red wig, false eyebrows and make-up to conceal burns he had suffered years before, denied any involvement in a conspiracy to kill the President. Garrison, he said, was out to frame him. Four days later, Ferrie was found dead in his shabby three-room apartment in New Orleans, ostensibly of natural causes—though he left behind two suicide notes.

The press had greeted Garrison's initial claims about a conspiracy with a measure of skepticism, but Ferrie's death was front-page news around the world. Garrison broke his self-imposed silence to charge that Ferrie was "a man who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals." According to Garrison, "Mr. Ferrie was one of those individuals I had in mind when I said there would be arrests shortly. We had reached a decision to arrest him early next week. Apparently we waited too long." But Garrison vowed that Ferrie's death would not halt his investigation, and added, "My staff and I solved the assassination weeks ago. I wouldn't say this if we didn't have the evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt. We know the key individuals, the cities involved and how it was done."

On March 1, Garrison eclipsed even the headlines from his previous press conference by announcing the arrest of Clay

Shaw, a wealthy New Orleans businessman and real-estate developer, on charges of conspiring to assassinate John F. Kennedy. One of New Orleans' most prominent citizens, Shaw was a founder and director of the city's prestigious International Trade Mart from 1947 to 1963, when he retired to devote his time to playwriting and restoring historic homes in the old French Quarter. The day after Shaw's arrest, Garrison declared that "Shaw was none other than Clay Bertrand," the shadowy queen bee of the New Orleans homosexual underworld, who, according to attorney Dean Andrews' testimony before the Warren Commission, called him the day after the assassination and asked him to rush to Dallas to defend Oswald. Shaw heatedly denied his guilt: "I never heard of any plot and I never used any alias in my life." But New Orleans society, which had long counted Shaw one of its own, was stunned.

On March 14, a panel of three judges heard Garrison's case in a preliminary hearing to determine if there was enough evidence against Shaw to bring him to trial. Perry Raymond Russo, a 25-year-old life-insurance salesman from Baton Rouge who had once been Ferrie's "roommate," testified that in mid-September of 1963, he had attended a meeting at Ferrie's apartment where Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and Ferrie discussed means of assassinating the President in a



"To read the press accounts of my investigation, I'm a cross between Al Capone and Attila the Hun—bribing, threatening innocent men. Anybody who employs



"A number of the men who killed the President were former employees of the CIA involved in its anti-Castro underground activities in the New Orleans area.



"President Kennedy was killed for one reason: because he was working for a reconciliation with the U.S.S.R. and Castro's Cuba. His assassins were a group of fo-

"triangulation of crow pie." **C**'s second witness, Vernon Bundy, a 29-year-old former narcotics addict, testified that in the summer of 1963, he saw Shaw pay a sum of money to Lee Harvey Oswald on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. On March 17, after a four-day hearing, Judges Malcolm F. O'Hara, Bernard J. Bagert and Matthew S. Biawit ruled there was sufficient evidence to hold Clay Shaw for trial. Garrison's hand was further strengthened on March 22, when a 12-member grand jury of prominent New Orleans citizens, empaneled to hear Garrison's case, also ruled there were sufficient grounds to bring Shaw to court. Pending trial—which is scheduled to begin sometime this month—Shaw was allowed to go free on \$10,000 bail.

The American press remained dubious about Garrison's ability to prove his charges in court, and domestic coverage of and commentary on the district attorney's case thereafter was, at best, low-key—at worst, contemptuous. But as *Newsweek* reported on March 20, "In Europe, where thousands still cling to the conspiracy theory in spite of the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone . . . Garrison and his investigation have been the stuff of page-one headlines." "I'm encouraged by the support Europe is bringing me," he told a *Paris-Match* reporter. "Every day, I receive letters and telegrams from all the capitals. We even had six telephone calls from Moscow." One was from *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, a prestigious Moscow literary magazine, which ran an interview with Garrison concluding that there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy but that Oswald "definitely wasn't the key figure in it."

Garrison also had his supporters in the U. S. Boston's Richard Cardinal Cushing, father-confessor to the Kennedy family, said of the New Orleans probe on March 16: "I think they should follow it through. . . . I never believed that the assassination was the work of one man." And Representative Roman Pucinski, an Illinois Democrat, said: "I'm surprised more attention hasn't been paid to the ruling that Clay Shaw go on trial for participating in a plot to assassinate President Kennedy. These aren't nuts but three judges talking. It's a new ball game." Senator Russell Long of Louisiana also backed up Garrison—an old political ally—contending that he was only doing "what a district attorney should do." And perennial Warren Report critic Mark Lane (himself a PLAYBOY interviewee last February), whose best-selling "Rush to Judgment" helped persuade Garrison to launch his investigation, said after a conference with Garrison in New Orleans that the D.A.'s probe would "break the entire case wide open."

If nothing else, Garrison was certainly

poll of May 29 revealed that 60 per cent of the American public were behind there was a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy, and "a major contributor to this swelling doubt is the investigation into the assassination by New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison." Even with public opinion on his side, Garrison was running into difficulties on several fronts by early summer. Three witnesses he wished to question about their complicity in the assassination had fled Louisiana, and he was unable to obtain their extradition to New Orleans—a seldom-encountered roadblock he credits to the C.I.A., "which knows that some of its former employees were involved in the Kennedy assassination and is doing everything possible to frustrate my investigation in order to preserve the Agency's good name." The C.I.A. refuses to comment on Garrison's charges.

Garrison was also under heavy fire over the improper methods allegedly employed by his staff. The most blistering indictment of his probe was an NBC television special on June 19, charging that Garrison's investigators had tried to bribe three potential witnesses—Alvin Beaubien, Miguel Torres and Fred Lee-man—to testify against Shaw; that Garrison's staff had attempted to induce a burglar, John Canler, to plant false evidence in Clay Shaw's home; and that Garrison had allowed Fory Russo and Vernon Bundy to testify against Shaw even though they had previously failed lie-detector tests. NBC added that its investigators had also unearthed the real "Clay Bertrand"; and though NBC didn't name him, it said that he was not Clay Shaw. Subsequently, NBC might have had second thoughts about its expose. In the interim granted Garrison an unprecedented 30 minutes of prime Saturday-evening time to rebut its own findings, Garrison charged that the three witnesses who claimed his aids had tried to bribe them were perjurers. He also denied that his office had approached John Canler to burglarize Shaw's home, and stated flatly that both Russo and Bundy had passed their polygraph tests. On the key point of the "real" Clay Bertrand, Garrison said that he knew the identity of the individual NBC was talking about and that he was definitely not the man who called attorney Dean Anders to gain legal aid for Lee Harvey Oswald.

Undismayed—and undeterred—by all the charges and countercharges, Garrison still says, "We are going to win this case, and anyone who bets against us is going to lose his money." The embattled district attorney may be overconfident, but he has a history of winning every fight he starts. Born in Denmark, Iowa, on November 20, 1921, Garrison flew an unarmored spotter plane for the artillery in France and Germany during World War Two and then attended Tulane

New Orleans to work as an assistant district attorney until 1961, when he resigned after a scorching attack on Mayor Victor H. Schiro, whom he charged with corruption and failure to rigorously enforce the law.

Garrison entered the race for district attorney as a fiercely uncompromising reform candidate, lambasting the "political machine" of Mayor Schiro and characterizing the incumbent district attorney, Richard Dowling, as "the great emancipator—he let everybody go free." Garrison, six feet, six, and 210 pounds, was quickly dubbed the "Jolly Green Giant." He had no political organization and not much money, but his personal magnetism and refusal to compromise appealed to the New Orleans electorate. He defeated Dowling handily and promptly began convicting men on charges his predecessor had dropped.

Garrison's five years as district attorney have been stormy. He outraged many of his former supporters in the business community by launching a campaign against vice on Bourbon Street, charging that B-girls were mercilessly fleecing naïve tourists. Garrison cleaned up Bourbon Street himself, personally padlocking many honky-tonks and striptease clubs. But his toughest fight—until the current one—came in 1962, when he announced that the refusal of the city's eight criminal-court judges to approve funds for his investigations of organized crime "raised interesting questions about racketeer influences." The judges promptly charged Garrison with defamation of character and criminal libel—and a state court fined him \$10,000. Garrison appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court, and on November 23, 1964, in a landmark decision on the right to criticize public officials, the nation's highest tribunal reversed his conviction, contending that "speech concerning public affairs is more than self-expression; it is the essence of self-government." Never one to turn the other cheek, Garrison subsequently employed his political influence to unseat a number of the judges when they came up for re-election.

The district attorney's independence has at times nettled both left and right in New Orleans. When the police department tried to prosecute a book dealer for selling James Baldwin's "Another Country," Garrison stepped in with a broadside against censorship and won the man's release—promptly bringing down on his head the wrath of the local White Citizens Council. At the other end of the political spectrum, he has been criticized by the liberal American Civil Liberties Union, which once accused him of trying an alleged rapist "in the press rather than in the courtroom." But Negro leaders in the city say Garrison has been a fair and impartial district attorney in

his last bid for re-election, he did as well in the Negro precincts as did in the white.

The years 1965 and 1966 were—by Garrison's standards—relatively quiet. His only major public controversy during this period flared up when he interceded with Louisiana Governor John McKeithen to win a pardon for a local stripper named Linda Bigette, who had been convicted on a charge of lewd dancing. Garrison claimed it was impossible to define obscenity in literature or the arts and argued that jailing Miss Bigette would be a "gross miscarriage of justice." McKeithen acceded to his pleas and, despite cries of protest from local bluesmen, the incident served to increase Garrison's popularity.

The same could hardly be said of his current probe, which has made him both a target for abuse—justified or otherwise—that has tended to obscure rather than clarify the issues involved in the investigation, and a victim of often one-sided press coverage that NBC's half hour of equal time has done little to rectify. In PLAYBOY's opinion, Garrison has not yet had the chance to present his side of the case—in court or out—without expurgation or editorializing. We feel he ought to have that chance. Toward this end, in mid-July, we approached the embattled district attorney with our offer of an impartial, open-ended interview. The 12-hour examination that followed—in the midst of Garrison's round-the-clock investigation—was conducted in the living room of the two-story home he shares with his blonde wife and three young children in a tree-lined residential neighborhood of New Orleans. As the dog-tired district attorney stretched his long legs across a couch, battered briar pipe (a political trademark) in one hand, a vodka martini (his favorite drink) in the other, PLAYBOY interviewer Eric Norden began by asking him to answer the most damaging charges of his critics.

PLAYBOY: You have been accused—by the National Broadcasting Company, *Newsweek*, the New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission and your own former investigative aide William Gurvich—of attempts to intimidate witnesses, of engaging in criminal conspiracy and of inciting to such felonies as perjury, criminal defamation and public bribery. How do you respond to these charges?

GARRISON: I've stopped beating my wife. All the charges you enumerate have been made with one purpose in mind—to place our office on the defensive and make us waste valuable time answering allegations that have no basis in fact. Also involved is a psychological by-product valuable to those who don't want the truth about Kennedy's assassination to become known: The very repetition of a charge lends it a certain

to believe that where there's smoke there's fire—although I find it difficult to believe that the public will put much evidence in most of the dastardly deeds I've been accused of in the past few months. Just recently, for example, the rumor went around that my staff was peddling marijuana to high school students and that one of our major witnesses had just confessed that his testimony was based on a dream induced by an overdose of LSD. We've also been accused of planning an attack on the local FBI office with guns loaded with red pepper, having stolen money from our own investigative files and having threatened to shoot one witness in the derrière with an exotic gun propelling truth-serum darts. I just hope they never find out about my involvement in the Boston Brinks robbery. I must admit, however, that I'm beginning to worry about the cumulative effect of this propaganda blitzkrieg on potential jurors for the trial of Clay Shaw. I don't know how long they can withstand the drumbeat obligation of charges exonerating the defendant and convicting the prosecutor. For months now, the establishment's artillery units have been pounding away at the two themes NBC focused on—that my office uses "improper methods" with regard to witnesses and that we don't really have a case against Mr. Shaw and he should never be brought to trial. I hope you'll give me the chance to answer each of these charges in detail; but first, let me elaborate a bit on the methods we employ in this or any other investigation. My office has been one of the most scrupulous in the country with regard to the protection of individual rights. I've been on record for years in law journals and books as championing the rights of the individual against the oppressive power of the state. My office moved in and prevented police seizure from bookstores of books arbitrarily labeled "obscene." I intervened and managed to persuade the Louisiana legislature to remove a provision from its new code of criminal procedure that would allow judges to reach out from the bench and cite newsmen for contempt if they penned anything embarrassing to the judges. My office has investigated cases where we had already obtained convictions; and on discovering new evidence indicating that the defendant was not guilty, we've obtained a reversal of the verdict. In over five years of office, I have never had a single case reversed because of the use of improper methods—a record I'll match with any other D.A. in the country. In this particular case, I've taken unusual steps to protect the rights of the defendant and assure him a fair trial. Before we introduced the testimony of our witnesses, we made them undergo independent verifying tests, including polygraph examination, truth serum and hypnosis. We

unprecedented step in jurisprudence: instead, the press turned around and hinted that we had drugged our witnesses or given them posthypnotic suggestions to testify falsely. After arresting Mr. Shaw, we filed a motion for a preliminary hearing—a proceeding that essentially operates in the defendant's favor. Such a hearing is generally requested by the defense, and it was virtually unheard of that the motion be filed by the state, which under the law has the right to charge a defendant outright, without any evaluation by a judge of the pending charges. But I felt that because of the enormity of this accusation, we should lean over backward and give the defendant every chance. A three-judge panel heard our evidence against Mr. Shaw and his attorney's rebuttals and ordered him indicted for conspiracy to assassinate the President. And I might add here that it's a matter of record that my relationship with the judiciary of our fair city is not a Damon-Pythias camaraderie. Once the judges had handed down their decision, we could have immediately filed a charge against the defendant just by signing it and depositing it with the city clerk—the customary method of charging a defendant. Nevertheless, out of concern for Mr. Shaw's rights, we voluntarily presented the case to a blue-ribbon grand jury. If this grand jury had failed to indict Mr. Shaw, our case would have been dead as a doornail. But the grand jury, composed of 12 eminent New Orleans citizens, heard our evidence and indicted the defendant for participation in a conspiracy to assassinate John Kennedy. In a further effort to protect the rights of the defendant, and in the face of the endlessly reiterated accusation that we have no case against him—despite the unanimous verdict of the grand jury and the judges at the preliminary hearing—I have studiously refrained from making any public statement critical of the defendant or prejudging his guilt. Of course, this puts me at a considerable disadvantage when the press claims I have no case against him, because the only way I could convince them of the strength of my case is to throw open our files and let them examine the testimony of all our witnesses. Apart from the injustice such an act would do Mr. Shaw, it could get our whole case thrown out of court on the grounds that we had prejudged the defendant's rights by pretrial publicity. So I won't fall into that particular trap, whatever the provocation. I only wish the press would allow our case to stand or fall on its merits in court. It appears that certain elements of the mass media have an active interest in preventing this case from ever coming to trial at all and find it necessary to employ against me every smear device in the book. To read the press accounts of my investigation—

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between Al Capone and Alvin Karpis, ruthlessly hounding innocent men, trampling their legal rights, bribing and threatening witnesses and in general violating every canon of legal ethics. My God, anybody who employs the kind of methods that elements of the news media attribute to me should not only not be a district attorney, he should be disbarred. This case has taught me the difference between image and reality, and the power of the mythmakers. But I know I've done everything possible to conduct this investigation with honesty and integrity and with full respect for the civil rights of the defendant. But a blanket denial of charges against me isn't going to convince anyone, so why don't we consider them one by one?

PLAYBOY: All right. The May 15th issue of *Newsweek* charged that two of your investigators offered David Ferrie's former roommate, Alvin Beauboeuf, \$5,000 and an airline job if he would help substantiate your charges against Clay Shaw. How do you answer this accusation?

GARRISON: Mr. Beauboeuf was one of the two men who accompanied David Ferrie on a mysterious trip from New Orleans to Texas on the day of the assassination, so naturally we were interested in him from the very start of our investigation. At first he showed every willingness to cooperate with our office; but after Ferrie's death, somebody gave him a free trip to Washington. From that moment on, a charge came over Beauboeuf; he refused to cooperate with us any further and he made the charges against my investigators to which you refer. Fortunately, Beauboeuf had signed an affidavit on April 12th—well after the alleged bribe offer was supposed to have been made—affirming that "no representative of the New Orleans Parish district attorney's office has ever asked me to do anything but to tell the truth. Any inference or statement by anyone to the contrary has no basis in fact." As soon as his attorney began broadcasting his charges, we asked the New Orleans police department to thoroughly investigate the matter. And on June 12th, the police department—which is not, believe me, in the pocket of the district attorney's office—released a report concluding that exhaustive investigation by the police intelligence branch had cleared my staff of any attempt to bribe or threaten Beauboeuf into giving untrue testimony. There was no mention of this report, predictably enough, in *Newsweek*. Let me make one thing clear, though: Like every police department and district attorney's office across the country, we have sums set aside to pay informers for valuable information—but we would never suborn perjury. This isn't because we're saints—short cuts like that could be awfully tempting in a frustrating case—but because we're realistic enough to know that

also be bought by the other. So it's rather naive, apart from being ethically objectionable, to assume that our investigators travel around the country with bags of money trying to bribe witnesses to lie on the witness stand. We just don't operate that way.

PLAYBOY: On an NBC television special, "The J.F.K. Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison," a former Turkish-bathhouse operator in New Orleans, Fred Leemans, claimed that one of your aides offered him money to testify that Clay Shaw had frequented his establishment with Lee Harvey Oswald. Do you also deny this charge?

GARRISON: Yes; and it's a perfect illustration of the point I was just making about how easy it is for the other side to buy witnesses and then charge us with its own misconduct. Mr. Leemans came to us in early May, volunteering testimony to the effect that he had often seen a man named Clay Bertrand in his bathhouse, sometimes accompanied by men he described as "Latin." In a sworn affidavit, Leemans said he had also seen a young man called Lee with Bertrand on four or five occasions—a man who fits the description of Lee Harvey Oswald. Leemans also identified the Clay Bertrand who had frequented his establishment as Clay Shaw. Now, this was important testimony, and initially we were favorably impressed with Mr. Leemans. But then we started receiving calls from him demanding money. Well, I've told you our policy on this, and the answer was a flat no. He was quiet for a while and then he called and asked if we would approve if he sold his story to a magazine, since he badly needed money. We refused to give him such approval. Apparently, the National Broadcasting Company was able to establish a warmer relationship with Mr. Leemans. In any case, he now says that he didn't really lie to us; he just "told us what he thought we wanted to hear." I'm sure he was equally cooperative with NBC—although he's beginning to spread his favors around. When a reporter asked him for more information after the broadcast, Leemans refused, explaining that he was saving himself for the Associated Press. "Since I want to make something out of this," I would like to make one personal remark about Mr. Leemans. I don't know if he was lying to us initially or not—though I suspect from other evidence in my possession that his statement as he first gave it was accurate—but anybody, no matter what his financial straits, who tries to make a fast buck off the assassination of John Kennedy is several rungs below the anthropoid ape on the evolutionary scale.

PLAYBOY: On this same NBC show, newsmen Frank McGee claimed that NBC investigators had discovered that your two key witnesses against Clay

—both failed polygraph tests prior to their testimony before the grand jury. In the case of Russo, who claimed to have attended a meeting at David Ferrie's apartment where Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie plotted the assassination, NI said that "Russo's answers to a series of questions indicate, in the language of the polygraph operator, 'deception criteria.' He was asked if he knew Clay Shaw. He was asked if he knew Lee Harvey Oswald. His 'yes' answer to both of these questions indicated 'deception criteria.'" Did Bundy and Russo fail their lie-detector tests?

GARRISON: No, and NBC's allegations in this area are about as credible as other charges. The men who administered both polygraph tests flatly deny that Russo and Bundy failed the tests. I'll offer right now to make Russo's and Bundy's polygraph tests accessible to a reputable investigator or reporter the day Clay Shaw's trial begins; I can't do before that, because I'm restrained from releasing material pertaining to Shaw's guilt or innocence. Just for your information, though, the veracity of Bundy and Russo has been affirmed not only through polygraph tests but through hypnosis and the administration of sodium amytal, truth serum. I want to make a proposition to the president of NBC: If the charge is true, then I will resign as district attorney of New Orleans. If it's untrue, however, then the president of NBC should resign. Just in case he thinks I'm kidding, I'm ready to meet with him at any time to select a mutually acceptable committee to determine once and for all the truth or falsehood of the charge. In all fairness, however, I must add that the fact Bundy and Russo passed their polygraph tests is not, in and of itself, irrefutable proof that they were telling the truth; that's why we administered the other tests. The lie detector isn't foolproof technique. A man well versed and in complete control of himself can master those reactions that would register on the polygraph as deception criteria and get away with blatant lies, while someone who is extremely nervous and anxiety-ridden could tell the truth and have it register as a lie. Much also depends on who administers the test, since it can easily be rigged. For example, Jack Ruby took a lie-detector test for the Warren Commission and to his credit he lied—eventually he could be easily checked—and yet the Warren Commission concluded that he passed the test. So the polygraph is one weapon in the arsenal we use to verify a witness' testimony, and we have never considered it conclusive; we have abundant documentation to corroborate their stories.

and John Candler, told NBC's Vernon Bundy admitted having lied in his testimony linking Clay Shaw to Lee Oswald. Do you dismiss this as just another NBC fabrication?

GARRISON: Messrs. Candler and Torres were both convicted by my office, as were almost half the men in the state penitentiary, and I'm sure the great majority of them have little love for the man who sent them up. I don't know if they fabricated their stories in collusion with NBC or on their own for motives of revenge, but I'm convinced from what I know of Vernon Bundy that his testimony was truthful. NBC manipulated the statements of Candler and Torres to give the impression to the viewer that he was watching a trial on television—my trial—and that these "objective" witnesses were saying exactly what they would say in a court of law. Actually—and NBC scrupulously avoided revealing this to its audience—their "testimony" was not under oath, there was no opportunity for cross-examination or the presentation of rebuttal witnesses, and the statements of Candler, Torres and all the rest of NBC's road company were edited so that the public would hear only those elements of their story that would damage our case. The rules of evidence and adversary procedure, I might add, have been developed over many years precisely to prevent this kind of phony side show. Of course, these two convicts have been used against my office in a variety of respects. Miguel Torres also claims I offered him a full pardon, a vacation in Florida and an ounce of heroin if he would testify that Clay Shaw had made homosexual overtures to him on the street. What on earth that would have established relevant to this case I still don't know, but that's his story. I think it was actually rather cheap of me to offer Torres only an ounce of heroin; that wouldn't have lasted out his vacation. A kilo would be more like it. After all, I'm not stingy. Torres' friend John Candler, a burglar, has also charged that one of my investigators tried to induce him to burglarize Clay Shaw's house and plant false evidence there, but he refused because he would not have such a heinous sin on his conscience. I suppose that's why Candler's prison nickname is "John the Baptist." I can assure you, if we ever wanted to burglarize Shaw's home—which we never did—John the Baptist would be the last man on earth we'd pick for the job. By the way, Mr. Candler was called before the grand jury and asked if he had told the truth to NBC. He replied: "I refuse to answer on the grounds that my answer might incriminate me"—and was promptly sentenced to six months in prison and

PLAYBOY: The NBC special also tried to have discovered that "Clay, or Clem, Bertrand does exist. Clem Bertrand is not his real name. It is a pseudonym used by a homosexual in New Orleans. For his protection, we will not disclose the real name of the man known as Clem Bertrand. His real name has been given to the Department of Justice. He is not Clay Shaw." Doesn't this undermine your entire case against Shaw?

GARRISON: Your faith in NBC's veracity is touching and indicates that the Age of Innocence is not yet over. NBC does not have the real Clay Bertrand; the man whose name NBC so melodramatically turned over to the Justice Department is that of Eugene Davis, a New Orleans bar owner, who has firmly denied under oath that he has ever used the name Clay, or Clem, Bertrand. We know from incontrovertible evidence in our possession who the real Clay Bertrand is—and we will prove it in court. But to make this whole thing a little clearer, let me tell you the genesis of the whole "Clay Bertrand" story. A New Orleans lawyer, Dean Andrews, told the Warren Commission that a few months before the assassination of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald and a group of "gay Mexicans" came to his office and requested Andrews' aid in having Oswald's Marine Corps undesirable discharge changed to an honorable discharge; Oswald subsequently returned alone with other legal problems. Andrews further testified that the day after President Kennedy was assassinated, he received a call from Clay Bertrand, who asked him to rush to Dallas to represent Oswald. Andrews claims he subsequently saw Bertrand in a New Orleans bar, but Bertrand fled when Andrews approached him. This was intriguing testimony, although the Warren Commission dismissed it out of hand; and in 1961, Mark Lane traveled to New Orleans to speak to Andrews. He found him visibly frightened. "I'll take you to dinner," Andrews told Lane, "but I can't talk about the case. I talked Washington and they told me that if I said anything, I might get a bullet in the head." For the same reason, he has refused to cooperate with my office in this investigation. *The New York Times* reported on February 26th that "Mr. Andrews said he had not talked to Mr. Garrison because such talk might be dangerous, but added that he believed he was being 'tailed.'" Andrews told our grand jury that he could not say Clay Shaw was Clay Bertrand and he could not say he wasn't. But the day after NBC's special, Andrews broke his silence and said, yes, Clay Shaw is not Clem Bertrand and identified the real Clay Bertrand as Eugene Davis. The only trouble is, An-

for years and have been seen frequently in each other's company. Andrews lied so often and about so many aspects of this case that the New Orleans Post grand jury has indicted him for perjury. I feel sorry for him, since he's afraid getting a bullet in his head, but he's going to have to go to trial for perjury [Andrews has since been convicted.] PLAYBOY: You expressed your reaction to the NBC show in concrete terms on July seventh, when you formally charged Walter Sheridan, the network's special investigator for the broadcast, with attempting to bribe your witness Perry Russo. You really have a case against Sheridan, or is this just a form of harassment? GARRISON: The reason we haven't lost a major case in over five years in office that we do not charge a man unless we can make it stick in court. And I'm not in the business of harassing anybody. Sheridan was charged because evidence was brought to us indicating that he attempted to bribe Perry Russo by offering him free transportation to California lodgings and a job once there, payment of all legal fees in any extradition proceedings and immunity from police. Mr. Russo has stated that Sheridan asked his help "to wreck the Garrison investigation" and "offered to set me up in California, protect my job as a guarantee that Garrison would never get me extradited." According to Russo, Sheridan added that both NBC and CIA were out to scuttle my case.

I think it's significant that the chief investigator for this ostensibly objective broadcast starts telling people the day he arrives in town that he is going to "destroy Garrison"—this at the same time he is unctuously assuring me that he wanted only the truth and he had an entirely open mind on my case. Let me tell you something about Walter Sheridan's background, and maybe you'll understand his true role in all this. Sheridan was one of the bright, hard young investigators who entered the Justice Department under Bobby Kennedy. He was assigned to nail Jimmy Hoffa. Sheridan employed a wide variety of highly questionable tactics in the Justice Department's relentless drive against Hoffa; he was recently subpoenaed to testify in connection with charges that he wire-tapped the offices of Hoffa's associates and then played back incriminating tapes to them, warning that unless they testified for the Government, they would be destroyed along with Hoffa. A few years ago, Sheridan left the Justice Department—officially, at least—and went to work for NBC. No honest reporter out for a story would have completely prejudged the situation. I think it's likely that in his zeal to destroy my case, he exceeded the author

York. I get the impression that a majority of NBC executives probably thought Sheridan's team came down here in an uncompromising search for the truth. When Sheridan overstepped himself and it became obvious that the broadcast was, to say the least, not objective, NBC realized it was in a touchy position. Cooler heads prevailed and I was allowed to present our case to the American people. For that, at least, I'm singularly grateful to Walter Sheridan.

PLAYBOY: How do you respond to the charge of your critics—including NBC—that you launched this probe for political reasons, hoping the attendant publicity would be a springboard to a Senate seat or to the governorship?

GARRISON: I'd have to be a terribly cynical and corrupt man to place another human being on trial for conspiracy to murder the President of the United States just to gratify my political ambition. But I guess there are a lot of people around the country, especially after NBC's attack, who think that's just the kind of man I am. That rather saddens me. I'm no Albert Schweitzer, but I could never do a thing like that. I derive no pleasure from prosecuting a man, even though I know he's guilty; do you think I could sleep at night or look at myself in the mirror in the morning if I hounded an innocent man? You know, I always received much more satisfaction as a defense attorney in obtaining an acquittal for a client than I ever have as a D.A. in obtaining a conviction. All my interests and sympathies tend to be on the side of the individual as opposed to the state. So this is really the worst charge that anyone could make against me—that in order to get my name in the paper, or to advance politically, I would destroy another human being. This kind of charge reveals a good deal about the personality of the people who make it: to impute such motives to another man is to imply you're harboring them yourself. But to look at a different aspect of your question, I'm inclined to challenge the whole premise that launching an investigation like this holds any political advantages for me. A politically ambitious man would hardly be likely to challenge the massed power of the Federal Government and criticize so many honorable figures and distinguished agencies. Actually, this charge is an argument in favor of my investigation: Would such a slimy type, eager to profiteer on the assassination, jeopardize his political ambitions if he didn't have an ironclad case? If I were really the ambitious monster they paint me, why would I climb out on such a limb and then saw it off? Unless he had the facts, it would be the last thing a politically ambitious man would do. I was perfectly aware that I might have signed my political death warrant the

couldn't care less as long as I could throw some light on John Kennedy's assassination. As a matter of fact, after this last murderous year, I find myself thinking more and more about returning to private life and having time to read again, to get out in the sun and hit a golf ball. But before I do that, I'm going to break this case and let the public know the truth. I won't quit before that day. I wouldn't give the bastards the satisfaction.

PLAYBOY: According to your own former chief investigator, William Gurvich, the truth about the assassination has already been published in the Warren Report. After leaving your staff last June, he announced, "If there is any truth to any of Garrison's charges about there being a conspiracy, I haven't been able to find it." When members of your own staff have no faith in your case, how do you expect the public to be impressed?

GARRISON: First of all, I won't deny for a minute that for at least three months I trusted Bill Gurvich implicitly. He was never my "chief investigator"—that's his own terminology—because there was no such position on my staff while he worked for me. But two days before Christmas 1964, Gurvich, who operates a private detective agency, visited my office and told me he'd heard of my investigation and thought I was doing a wonderful job. He presented me with a beautiful color-TV set and asked if he could be of use in any capacity. Well, right then and there, I should have sat back and asked myself a few searching questions—like how he had heard of my probe in the first place, since only the people we were questioning and a few of my staff, as far as I knew, were aware of what was going on at that time. We had been under way for only five weeks, remember. And I should also have recalled the old adage about Greeks bearing gifts. But I was desperately understaffed—I had only six aides available to work on the assassination inquiry full time—and here comes a trained private investigator offering his services free of charge. It was like a gift from the gods. So I set Gurvich to work; and for the next couple of months, he did an adequate job of talking to witnesses, taking photographs, etc. But then, around March, I learned that he had been seeing Walter Sheridan of NBC. Well, this didn't bother me at first, because I didn't know then the role Sheridan was playing in this whole affair. But after word got back to me from my witnesses about Sheridan's threats and harassment, I began keeping a closer eye on Bill. I still didn't really think he was any kind of a double agent, but I couldn't help wondering why he was rubbing elbows with people like that. Now, don't forget that Gurvich claims he became totally disgusted with our investigation at the time of Clay Shaw's arrest—

continued to wax enthusiastic about every aspect of our case, and I have a dozen witnesses who will testify to that effect. I guess this was something that should have tipped me off about Bill: He's always enthusiastic, never doubtful or cautious, even when I or one of my staff threw out a hypothesis that reflection we realized was wrong. An began to notice how he would pick my mind for every scrap of fact pertaining to the case. So I grew suspicious and took him off the sensitive areas of the investigation and relegated him to chauffeur and routine clerical duties. This seem to really bother him, and every day would come into my office and pump me for information, complaining that wasn't being told enough about the case. I still had nothing concrete against him and I didn't want to be unjust, but I guess my manner must have come across perceptibly, because one day about two months before he surfaced in Washington, Bill just vanished from our sight. And with him, I'm sorry to confess, I shipped a copy of our master file. How you explain such behavior? It's possible that Bill joined us initially for reasons of opportunism, seeing a chance to get in at the beginning of an earth-shaking case, and subsequently chickened out when he saw the implacable determination of some powerful agencies to denigrate our investigation and discredit every person associated with it. But I really don't believe Bill is that much of a coward, also possible that those who want to prevent an investigation learned exactly what we were doing and made a decision to plant somebody on the inside of the investigation. Let me stress that I have secret documents or monitored telephone calls to support this hypothesis; it seems to me the most logical explanation for Bill's behavior. Let me put it away: If you were in charge of the CIA and willing to spend scores of million dollars on such relatively pennywise projects as infiltrating the National Students Association, wouldn't you make effort to infiltrate an investigation that could seriously damage the prestige of your agency?

PLAYBOY: How could your probe damage the prestige of the CIA and cause them to take countermeasures against you?

GARRISON: For the simple reason that the number of the men who killed the President were former employees of the CIA involved in its anti-Castro underground activities in and around New Orleans. The CIA knows their identity. So do we and our investigation has established without the shadow of a doubt. Let me stress one thing, however: We have evidence that any official of the CIA involved with the conspiracy that led to the President's death.

PLAYBOY: Do you lend no credence, if

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J. Garrett Underhill, that was a conspiracy within the CIA to assassinate Kennedy?

GARRISON: I've become familiar with the case of Gary Underhill, and I've been able to ascertain that he was not the type of man to make wild or unsubstantiated charges. Underhill was an intelligence agent in World War Two and an expert on military affairs whom the Pentagon considered one of the country's top authorities on limited warfare. He was on good personal terms with the top brass in the Defense Department and the ranking officials in the CIA. He wasn't a full-time CIA agent, but he occasionally performed "special assignments" for the Agency. Several days after the President's assassination, Underhill appeared at the home of friends in New Jersey, apparently badly shaken, and charged that Kennedy was killed by a small group within the CIA. He told friends he believed his own life was in danger. We can't learn any more from Underhill, I'm afraid, because shortly afterward, he was found shot to death in his Washington apartment. The coroner ruled suicide, but he had been shot behind the left ear and the pistol was found under his left side—and Underhill was right-handed.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe Underhill was murdered to silence him?

GARRISON: I don't believe it and I don't disbelieve it. All I know is that witnesses with vital evidence in this case are certainly had insurance risks. In the absence of further and much more conclusive evidence to the contrary, however, we must assume that the plotters were acting on their own rather than on CIA orders when they killed the President. As far as we have been able to determine, they were not in the pay of the CIA at the time of the assassination—and this is one of the reasons the President was murdered: I'll explain later what I mean by that. But the CIA could not face up to the American people and admit that its former employees had conspired to assassinate the President; so from the moment Kennedy's heart stopped beating, the Agency attempted to sweep the whole conspiracy under the rug. The CIA has spared neither time nor the taxpayers' money in its efforts to hide the truth about the assassination from the American people. In this respect, it has become an accessory after the fact in the assassination.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any conclusive evidence to support these accusations?

GARRISON: I've never revealed this before, but for at least six months, my office and home telephones—and those of every member of my staff—have been monitored. If there is as little substance to this investigation as the press and the Government allege, why would anyone go to all that trouble? I leave it to your judgment

work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union or the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce.

PLAYBOY: That's hardly conclusive evidence.

GARRISON: I'd need a book to list all the indications. But let's start with the fact that most of the attorneys for the hostile witnesses and defendants were hired by the CIA—through one or another of its covers. For example, a New Orleans lawyer representing Alvin Beaubouef, who has charged me with every kind of unethical practice except child molesting—I expect that allegation to come shortly before Shaw's trial—flew with Beaubouef to Washington immediately after my office subpoenaed him, where Beaubouef was questioned by a "retired" intelligence officer in the offices of the Justice Department. This trip was paid for, as are the lawyer's legal fees, by the CIA—in other words, with our tax dollars. Another lawyer, Stephen Plotkin, who represents Gordon Novel [another of Garrison's key witnesses], has admitted he is paid by the CIA—and has also admitted his client is a CIA agent; you may have seen that story on page 96 of *The New York Times*, next to ship departures. Plotkin, incidentally, sued me for \$10,000,000 for defaming his client and sued a group of New Orleans businessmen financing my investigation for \$50,000,000—which meant, in effect, that the CIA was suing us. As if they need the money. But my attorney filed a motion for a deposition to be taken from Novel, which meant that he would have to return to my jurisdiction to file his suit and thus be liable for questioning in the conspiracy case. Rather than come down to New Orleans and face the music, Novel dropped his suit and sacrificed a possible \$60,000,000 judgment. Now, there's a man of principle; he knows there are some things more important than money.

PLAYBOY: Do you also believe Clay Shaw's lawyers are being paid by the CIA?

GARRISON: I can't comment directly on that, since it relates to Shaw's trial. But I think the clincher, as far as Washington's obstruction of our probe goes, is the consistent refusal of the Federal Government to make accessible to us any information about the roles of the CIA, anti-Castro Cuban exiles and the paramilitary right in the assassination. There is, without doubt, a conspiracy by elements of the Federal Government to keep the facts of this case from ever becoming known—a conspiracy that is the logical extension of the initial conspiracy by the CIA to conceal vital evidence from the Warren Commission.

PLAYBOY: What "vital evidence" did the CIA withhold from the Warren Commission?

GARRISON: A good example is Commission Exhibit number 237. This is a photograph of a monkey holding a middle-

aged man published without explanation or identification in the 26 volumes of the Warren Report. There's a significant story behind Exhibit number 237. Throughout the late summer and fall of 1963, Lee Oswald was shepherded in Dallas and New Orleans by a CIA "baby sitter" who watched over Oswald's activities and stayed with him. My office knows who he is and what he looks like.

PLAYBOY: Are you implying that Oswald was working for the CIA?

GARRISON: Let me finish and you can decide for yourself. When Oswald went to Mexico City in an effort to obtain a visa for travel to Cuba, this CIA agent accompanied him. Now, at this particular time, Mexico was the only Latin American nation maintaining diplomatic ties with Cuba, and leftists and Communists from all over the hemisphere traveled to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City for visas to Cuba. The CIA, quite properly had placed a hidden movie camera in a building across the street from the embassy and filmed everyone coming and going. The Warren Commission, knowing this, had an assistant legal counsel ask the FBI for a picture of Oswald and his companion on the steps of the embassy, and the FBI, in turn, filed an affidavit saying they had obtained the photo in question from the CIA. The only trouble is that the CIA supplied the Warren Commission with a phony photograph. The photograph of an "unidentified man" published in the 26 volumes is not the man who was filmed with Oswald on the steps of the Cuban Embassy, as alleged by the CIA. It's perfectly clear that the actual picture of Oswald and his companion was suppressed and a fake photo substituted because the second man in the picture was working for the CIA in 1963, and his identification as a CIA agent would have opened up a whole can of worms about Oswald's ties with the Agency. To prevent this, the CIA presented the Warren Commission with fraudulent evidence—a pattern that repeats itself whenever the CIA submits evidence relating to Oswald's possible connection with any U.S. intelligence agency. The CIA lied to the Commission right down the line; and since the Warren Commission had no investigative staff of its own but had to rely on the FBI, the Secret Service and the CIA for its evidence, it's understandable why the Commission concluded that Oswald had no ties with American intelligence agencies.

PLAYBOY: What was the nature of these ties?

GARRISON: That's not altogether clear, at least insofar as his specific assignments are concerned; but we do have proof that Oswald was recruited by the

CIA in his Marine Corps days when he was mysteriously schooled in Russian and allowed to subscribe to *Pravda*. And shortly before his trip to the Soviet Union, we have learned, Oswald was trained as an intelligence agent at the CIA installation at Japan's Atsugi Air Force Base—which may explain why no disciplinary action was taken against him when he returned to the U.S. from the Soviet Union, even though he had supposedly defected with top-secret information about our radar networks. The money he used to return to the U.S., incidentally, was advanced to him by the State Department.

PLAYBOY: In an article for *Ramparts*, ex-FBI agent William Turner indicated that White Russian refugee George De Mohrenschildt may have been Oswald's CIA "baby sitter" in Dallas. Have you found any links between the CIA and De Mohrenschildt?

GARRISON: I can't comment directly on that, but George De Mohrenschildt is certainly an enigmatic and intriguing character. Here you have a wealthy, cultured White Russian *émigré* who travels in the highest social circles—he was a personal friend of Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss, Jackie Kennedy's mother—suddenly developing an intimate relationship with an impoverished ex-Marine like Lee Oswald. What did they discuss—last year's season at Biarritz, or how to beat the bank at Monte Carlo? And Mr. De Mohrenschildt has a penchant for popping up in the most interesting places at the most interesting times—for example, in Haiti just before a joint Cuban exile-CIA venture to topple Duvalier and use the island as a springboard for an invasion of Cuba; and in Guatemala, another CIA training ground, the day before the Bay of Pigs invasion. We have a good deal more information about Oswald's CIA contacts in Dallas and New Orleans—most of which we discovered by sheer chance—but there are still whole areas of inquiry blocked from us by the CIA's refusal to cooperate with our investigation. For public consumption, the CIA claims not to have been concerned with Oswald prior to the assassination. But one thing is certain: Despite these pious protestations, the CIA was very much aware of Oswald's activities well before the President's murder. In a notarized affidavit, State Department officer James D. Crowley states, "The first time I remember learning of Oswald's existence was when I received copies of a telegraphic message from the Central Intelligence Agency dated October 10, 1963, which contained information pertaining to his current activities." It would certainly be interesting to know what the CIA knew about Oswald six weeks before the assassination, but the contents of this particular message never reached the Warren Commission and remain a complete mystery. There are also 51

CIA documents classified top secret in the National Archives pertaining to Lee Oswald and Jack Ruby. Technically, the members of the Commission had access to them; but in practice, any document the CIA wanted classified was shunted into the Archives without examination by the sleeping beauties on the Commission. Twenty-nine of these files are of particular interest, because their titles alone indicate that the CIA had extensive information on Oswald and Ruby before the assassination. A few of these documents are: CD 347, "Activity of Oswald in Mexico City"; CD 1054, "Information on Jack Ruby and Associates"; CD 692, "Reproduction of Official CIA Dossier on Oswald"; CD 1551, "Conversations Between Cuban President and Ambassador"; CD 698, "Reports of Travel and Activities of Oswald"; CD 913, "Allegations of Pfc. Eugene Dinkin re Assassination Plot"; and CD 971, "Telephone Calls to U.S. Embassy, Canberra, Australia, re Planned Assassination." The titles of these documents are all we have to go on, but they're certainly intriguing. For example, the public has heard nothing about phone calls to the U.S. Embassy in Canberra, warning in advance of the assassination, nor have we been told anything about a Pfc. Dinkin who claims to have knowledge of an assassination plot. One of the top-secret files that most intrigues me is CD 931, which is entitled "Oswald's Access to Information About the U-2." I have 21 years of military experience behind me, on active duty and in the reserves, and I've never had any access to the U-2; in fact, I've never seen one. But apparently this "self-proclaimed Marxist," Lee Harvey Oswald, who we're assured had no ties to any Government agency, had access to information about the nation's most secret high-altitude reconnaissance plane. Of course, it may be that none of these CIA files reveals anything sinister about Lee Harvey Oswald or hints in any way that he was employed by our Government. But then, why are the 51 CIA documents classified top secret in the Archives and inaccessible to the public for 75 years? I'm 45, so there's no hope for me, but I'm already training my eight-year-old son to keep himself physically fit so that on one glorious September morn in 2038 he can walk into the National Archives in Washington and find out what the CIA knew about Lee Harvey Oswald. If there's a further extension of the top-secret classification, this may become a generational affair, with questions passed down from father to son in the manner of the ancient runic bards. But someday, perhaps, we'll find out what Oswald was doing messing around with the U-2. Of course, there are some CIA documents we'll never see. When the Warren Commission asked to see a secret CIA memo on Oswald's activities in Russia that had

been attached to a State Department letter on Oswald's Russian stay, we came back that the Agency was terribly sorry, but the secret memo had been destroyed while being photocopied. The unfortunate accident took place on November 23, 1963, a day on which there must have occurred a great deal of spontaneous combustion around Washington. **PLAYBOY:** John A. McCone, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has said of Oswald: "The Agency never contacted him, interviewed him, talked with him or received or solicited any reports or information from him or communicated with him in any manner. Lee Harvey Oswald was never associated or connected directly or indirectly in any way whatsoever, with the Agency. Why do you refuse to accept McCone's word?"

GARRISON: The head of the CIA, it seems to me, would think long and hard before he admitted that former employees of his had been involved in the murder of the President of the United States—even they weren't acting on behalf of the Agency when they did it. In any case the CIA's past record hardly induces faith in the Agency's veracity. CIA officials lied about their role in the overthrow of the Arbenz Guzman regime in Guatemala; they lied about their role in the overthrow of Mossadegh in Iran; they lied about their role in the abortive military revolt against Sukarno in 1957; they lied about the U-2 incident; and they certainly lied about the Bay of Pigs. If the CIA is ready to lie even about its successes—as in Guatemala and Iran—do you seriously believe its directors would tell the truth in a case as explosive as this? Of course, CIA officials grow used to lying, so steeped in deceit, that after a while I think they really become incapable of distinguishing truth and falsehood. Or, in an Orwellian sense, perhaps they come to believe that truth is what contributes to national security and falsehood is anything detrimental to national security. John McCone would swear he's a Croatian dwarf if I thought it would advance the interests of the CIA—which he automatically equates with the national interest.

PLAYBOY: Let's get down to the facts of the assassination, as you see them. Why—and why—did you begin to doubt the conclusions of the Warren Report?

GARRISON: Until as recently as November of 1966, I had complete faith in the Warren Report. As a matter of fact, I viewed its most vocal critics with the same skepticism that much of the present views me—which is why I can't condemn the mass media too harshly for the cynical approach, except in the handful of cases where newsmen seem to be in active collusion with Washington to torpedo our investigation. Of course, my faith in the Report was grounded in

ignorance, since I had read it: as Mark Lane says, "The only way you can believe the Report is not to have read it." But then, in November, I visited New York City with Senator Russell Long; and when the subject of the assassination came up, he expressed grave doubts about the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin. Now, this disturbed me, because here was the Majority Whip of the U.S. Senate speaking, not some publicity hound with an ideological ax to grind; and if at this late juncture he still entertained serious reservations about the Commission's determinations, maybe there was more to the assassination than met the eye. So I began reading every book and magazine article on the assassination I could get my hands on—my tombstone may be inscribed "CURIOSITY KILLED THE D.A."—and I found my own doubts growing. Finally, I put aside all other business and started to wade through the Warren Commission's own 26 volumes of supportive evidence and testimony. That was the clincher. It's impossible for anyone possessed of reasonable objectivity and a fair degree of intelligence to read those 26 volumes and not reach the conclusion that the Warren Commission was wrong in every one of its major conclusions pertaining to the assassination. For me, that was the end of innocence. **PLAYBOY:** Do you mean to imply that the Warren Commission deliberately concealed or falsified the facts of the assassination?

GARRISON: No, you don't need any explanation more sinister than incompetence to account for the Warren Report. Though I didn't know it at the time, the Commission simply didn't have all the facts, and many of those they had were fraudulent, as I've pointed out—thanks to the evidence withheld and manufactured by the CIA. If you add to this the fact that most of the Commission members had already presumed Oswald's guilt and were merely looking for facts to confirm it—and in the process tranquilize the American public—you'll realize why the Commission was such a dismal failure. But in the final analysis, it doesn't make a damn bit of difference whether the Commission members were sincere patriots or mountbanks; the question is whether Lee Oswald killed the President alone and unaided; if the evidence doesn't support that conclusion—and it doesn't—a thousand honorable men sitting shoulder to shoulder along the banks of the Potomac won't change the facts.

PLAYBOY: So you began your investigation of the President's assassination on nothing stronger than your own doubts and the theories of the Commission's critics?

GARRISON: No, please don't put words in my mouth. The works of the critics—

Weisberg and Mark Lane—qualify my general doubts about the assassination; but more importantly, they led me into specific areas of inquiry. After I realized that something was seriously wrong, I had no alternative but to face the fact that Oswald had arrived in Dallas only a short time before the assassination and that prior to that time he had lived in New Orleans for over six months. I became curious about what this alleged assassin was doing while under my jurisdiction, and my staff began an investigation of Oswald's activities and contacts in the New Orleans area. We interviewed people the Warren Commission had never questioned, and a whole new world began opening up. As I studied Oswald's movements in Dallas, my mind turned back to the aftermath of the assassination in 1963, when my office questioned three men—David Ferrie, Alvin Beaubien and Melvin Colley—on suspicion of being involved in the assassination. I began to wonder if we hadn't dismissed these three men too lightly, and we reopened our investigation into their activities.

PLAYBOY: Why did you become interested in Ferrie and his associates in November 1963?

GARRISON: To explain that, I'll have to tell you something about the operation of our office. I believe we have one of the best district attorney's offices in the country. We have no political appointments and, as a result, there's a tremendous amount of *esprit* among our staff and an enthusiasm for looking into unanswered questions. That's why we got together the day after the assassination and began examining our files and checking out every political extremist, religious fanatic and kook who had ever come to our attention. And one of the names that sprang into prominence was that of David Ferrie. When we checked him out, as we were doing with innumerable other suspicious characters, we discovered that on November 22nd he had traveled to Texas to go "duck hunting" and "ice skating." Well, naturally, this sparked our interest. We staked out his house and we questioned his friends, and when he came back—the first thing he did on his return, incidentally, was to contact a lawyer and then hide out for the night at a friend's room in another town—we pulled him and his two companions in for questioning. The story of Ferrie's activities that emerged was rather curious. He drove nine hours through a furious thunderstorm to Texas, then apparently gave up his plans to go duck hunting and instead went to an ice-skating rink in Houston and stood waiting beside a pay telephone for two hours; he never put the skates on. We felt his movements were suspicious enough to justify his arrest and that of his friends, and we took them into custody. When

terest and asked us to turn the three m over to them for questioning. We do but Ferrie was released soon afterwards and most of its report on him was classified top secret and secreted in the National Archives, where it will remain inaccessible to the public until September 2038 A. D. No one, including me, can see those pages.

PLAYBOY: Why do you believe the FBI report on Ferrie is classified?

GARRISON: For the same reason the President's autopsy X rays and photos and other vital evidence in this case are classified—because they would indicate the existence of a conspiracy, involving former employees of the CIA, to kill the President.

PLAYBOY: When you resumed your investigation of Ferrie three years later, did you discover any new evidence?

GARRISON: We discovered a whole mass of underground activity involving the CIA, elements of the paramilitary right and militant anti-Castro ex-groups. We discovered links between David Ferrie, Lee Oswald and Ja Ruby. We discovered, in short, what I had hoped *not* to find, despite my doubts about the Warren Commission—the existence of a well-organized conspiracy to assassinate John Kennedy, a conspiracy that came to fruition in Dallas on November 22, 1963, and in which David Ferrie played a vital role.

PLAYBOY: Accepting for a moment your contention that there was a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy, have you been able to discover who was involved—in addition to Ferrie—how it was done and why?

GARRISON: Yes, I have. President Kennedy was killed for one reason: because he was working for a reconciliation with the U.S.S.R. and Castro's Cuba. His assassins were a group of fanatic anti-Communists with a fusion of interest in preventing Kennedy from achieving peaceful relations with the Communist world. On the operative level of the conspiracy, you find anti-Castro Cuban exiles who never forgave Kennedy for failing to send in U.S. air cover at the Bay of Pigs and who feared that the thaw following the Missile Crisis in October 1962 augured the total frustration of their plans to liberate Cuba. They believed sincerely that Kennedy had sold them out to the Communists. On a higher, control level, you find a number of people of ultra-right-wing persuasion—not simply conservatives, mind you, but people who could be described as neo-Nazi, including a small clique that had defected from the Minutemen because it considered the group "too liberal." These elements had their canteens ready and their guns loaded; they lacked only a target. After Kennedy's domestic moves toward racial integration and his

PLAYBOY FORUM (continued from page 57)

Missouri Synods, agreed that churches should be taxed. Bishop Pike's own denomination, the Episcopal Church, was closer to the Lutherans, with 40 percent sympathizing with taxation of churches.

Younger clergy tend to have this sympathy more than do older clergy. For example, 70 percent of the Presbyterians under age 35 agreed with the statement of sympathy, as compared with 51 percent of the Presbyterian ministers over 55 who did not. However, such differences are not equally dramatic in all denominations; among the Missouri Synods, for instance, older clergy are somewhat more likely to agree with taxation of churches than are younger clergy.

It should be made clear that sympathy with the position that tax exemption for churches should be eliminated does not necessarily constitute commitment to the position. In fact, if Congress were seriously entertaining tax reform and the full financial implications of such reform were realized, this sympathy might vanish very quickly. On the other hand, if the facts were more widely known, sympathy might be molded into commitment. We know, for example, that open discussion of racial injustice in our culture has had the effect of making the clergy, as a group, the strongest supporters of social justice.

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SUICIDE AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

PLAYBOY's editors and readers have said a great deal in *The Playboy Forum* about the right of the individual to do whatever he wishes as long as he doesn't harm others. You have pointed out how unjust and insane it is to have the police waste their time hounding harmless individuals while the rate of real crimes is continually rising. On all of the issues you have raised, I agree; but I would like to air another, very personal issue: the rights of the potential suicide.

Attempted suicide is a crime in many states. What this means was brought home to me two years ago, when I tried to cop out via a bottle of sleeping pills. My husband came home before I was dead and rushed me to a hospital. As you can imagine, my mental state was not much better when I woke up the following morning than it had been when I swallowed the pills. In fact, it took two psychiatrists, two ministers, my husband's love and the kindness of several friends to bring me back to sanity. Meanwhile, I was being continually harmed, not helped, by the following police actions:

As soon as I was released from the hospital, two policemen very politely requested that I accompany them to the

dent. When we got there, however, they proceeded to book me for the felony of attempted suicide. I spent the night in jail, and my husband was told that he couldn't see me until nine the next morning. He arrived at exactly nine, but the police broke their promise and wouldn't let us talk. My husband went and got a lawyer, who secured my release.

While battling to regain my sanity in the following months, I had the extra burden of incessant suspense, waiting to see what further action the police would take. Things were not helped by the fact that a very private letter had been removed from my purse while I was in custody. My lawyer got the letter back, but warned me that a photostat might have been made. This haunted me and, at times, I still worry about it.

Today I am mentally sound again, but my sanity is certainly not the result of our laws or of the way our police enforce them. I am writing this letter because I know there are many others who will come to the edge of suicide, as I did, and who will encounter there not the sympathy and help that they need but, instead, a harassment that can push them back to the edge again and perhaps drive them over it.

Certainly, the police have the right and the duty to prevent suicides. Once this is done, however, they should be removed from such cases entirely, and only qualified psychiatrists, clergymen or social workers should deal with the shattered human beings who feel so alone and frightened as to want to escape from the world entirely. The police should not be allowed to put further pressure on such a person.

(Name and address withheld by request)

DEATH FOR RAPE

Reading the "Death for Rape" letters in the July *Playboy Forum*, I was surprised that none of the letter writers mentioned a conspicuous aspect of this matter: The death penalty for rape (as well as for kidnaping) not only does not deter the crime but actually encourages the perpetrator to compound it. The rapist (or kidnaper), if he considers the penalty at all, will recognize that he faces death for simple rape (or kidnaping), with the victim surviving to identify him. If he provides an added measure of personal security by killing the victim, the penalty cannot be increased. Why, then, should he hesitate to kill? Fortunately for society, criminals do not usually engage in such contemplation while committing acts of desperation.

The way the criminal normally behaves is illustrated by two men from Rhode Island who are now in death row at New Hampshire State Penitentiary.

They murdered their victim in Nashua, New Hampshire, after kidnaping him in their home state, which has no death penalty. They actually had to cross two state lines in order to qualify themselves for the rope.

Some deterrent.

Edwin A. Bennett
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There are cases similar to that of the Rhode Islanders. Irrational behavior such as this—together with the fact that states without the death penalty have lower homicide rates than states with this "deterrent"—has led psychiatrists to conjecture that many potential murderers have a tendency to suicide. If this theory is correct, then the death penalty, with its assurance of self-destruction, can actually incite to murder.

Recent *Playboy Forum* letters on capital punishment and rape raise an interesting question. The attitude that rape is on the same level with murder is akin to the warped thinking of the rapist himself, in that it abnormally overemphasizes sex. And, of course, it is precisely this attitude that makes rape so traumatic for the victim. Rape, actually, is not at all similar to murder; it is an offense of roughly the same sort as assault and battery. The victim of nonsexual violence endures similar terror and pain, together with emotional aftereffects; if the victim of rape suffers more intensely, it is only in proportion to the degree that shame and fear dominate her attitude toward sex.

Clarence Darrow once commented that it is almost impossible to win an acquittal in a child-rape case. This is because the jury overreacts emotionally to the crime, looks for a scapegoat, finds one set up by the prosecution and refuses to listen to the evidence. This is true to some extent even when the victim is not a child; and, for this reason, the chance of an innocent man's being convicted of rape is much higher than is the case with burglary, grand larceny, battery and other crimes that evoke less emotional reactions.

For these reasons, the death penalty is undesirable in rape cases; but, alas, for the same reasons, it is unlikely to be discontinued in the near future.

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CASTRATION FOR RAPE

I agree with Thomas Rogers (*The Playboy Forum*, April) about one thing: The death penalty is a disproportionately severe punishment for the crime of rape. But other punishments are ineffectual because of their comparative mildness—all, that is, except one: castration.

No other punishment so perfectly fits the crime. For not only will the emasculated rapist never again be able to re-