

February 5, 1968

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT  
JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY  
NOVEMBER 22, 1963,  
DALLAS, TEXAS

On January 31-February 1, 1968, Johnny Carson had as his guest on his television show New Orleans District Attorney James M. Garrison. During the approximate one-hour Carson show Garrison furnished many of the allegations he has made at press conferences during recent months. He alleged that the President of the United States is suppressing the true evidence involved in the assassination through an Executive Order whereby certain known Garrison documents are retained by the National Archives for 75 years without access to the public. He claimed that the Central Intelligence Agency and the Dallas Police Department are directly involved in the assassination of our late President Kennedy. He also claimed that Lee Harvey Oswald did not fire a shot on November 22, 1963, and that the circumstantial aspects of the assassination are being concealed from the public by the United States Government.

During the program, Garrison also furnished what he inferred was "new evidence" which he has developed in connection with his probe of the assassination of the late President Kennedy. A brief summary of Garrison's allegations in this regard and an analysis of such allegations are set forth below.

Garrison alleged that Mark Lane who has been helping him in his investigation, recently interviewed William S. Walter, a former Security Clerk of the New Orleans office of the FBI, and that Lane and his wife has submitted an affidavit to Garrison setting forth the results of the interview with Walter.

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Garrison alleged that Walter informed Lane that on the morning of November 17, 1963, at which time Walter was on duty as a Security Clerk in the New Orleans FBI Office, the New Orleans Office received a TWA message which was directed to all southern regional offices of the FBI. The message reportedly stated that an attempt to assassinate President Kennedy would be made in Dallas on November 22, 1963. Walter allegedly called the Special Agent in Charge of the New Orleans Office and informed him of the message and received instructions from the Special Agent in Charge to call a number of Agents of the New Orleans Office and tell them to maintain contact with various informants.

Garrison further alleged that Walter told Mark Lane that the FBI had also sent a directive to the New Orleans Office instructing the various Agents who had conducted interviews concerning the assassination of President Kennedy to examine their interview reports to make sure there were no conflicts contained in them; further that the Agents were ordered to resolve any conflicts, prepare new reports and destroy the old reports.

For your information, William S. Walter was employed as a file clerk at our New Orleans Office from June, 1961, until he was separated for military service on December 4, 1961. He was reinstated on August 14, 1962, and in August, 1963, he was designated as a Security Patrol Clerk in the New Orleans Office of the FBI. He voluntarily resigned from the FBI September 7, 1966, to accept other employment.

A thorough check of our files at Seat of Government and at New Orleans disclosed no record of any type of communication to the New Orleans Office or any other office reporting that there would be an attempt to assassinate President Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

Mr. William S. Walter contacted our Jacksonville Office February 1, 1963, and reported that he had seen the Johnny Carson show wherein his name was mentioned. He indicated he desired to be interviewed in order to set the record straight. Walter visited our Jacksonville Office February 1, 1963, and advised he met Mark Lane during the first

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week of December, 1967, when he attended a speech at Tulane University by Mark Lane. Walter stated that during a question and answer period which followed Lane's speech, Lane informed the gathering that he had been under surveillance by the FBI during his investigation of the assassination and during his speeches throughout the country.

According to Walter, a friend who accompanied him to the Lane speech turned to Walter and asked him whether he was the FBI employee who was conducting a surveillance of Lane on this particular meeting. Walter informed his associate that he had previously severed his connections with the FBI. Walter added that Mrs. Lane who was standing nearby, obviously overheard this conversation and approached Walter and questioned him concerning his former FBI employment. She invited Walter to talk with Mark Lane and told him it was his patriotic duty to disclose any information to Lane which he might have. Walter stated he declined Mrs. Lane's invitation. Walter further advised that he was absent from New Orleans most of the time thereafter until January 16, 1968, when he returned to his apartment in New Orleans and learned that a member of the New Orleans District Attorney's staff was endeavoring to contact him. Walter stated he contacted the District Attorney's representative and shortly thereafter was approached by three investigators of the District Attorney's Office and Mr. and Mrs. Lane. He stated that these persons endeavored to persuade him that he had knowledge of a teletype message from Bureau Headquarters to all southern regional offices of the FBI advising that President Kennedy would be assassinated in Dallas. Walter claimed that he denied knowledge of such a message and that he informed the group that even if he had such knowledge, he would be unable to divulge it to them.

Walter emphatically denied that he gave an affidavit or signed statement to Lane or the District Attorney's investigators or to anyone else stating he had received such a message while employed by the FBI. He further denied telling anyone of an FBI directive instructing Agents who investigated the assassination of President Kennedy to examine interview reports and to destroy old reports where conflicts were located.

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Walter claims that the District Attorney's investigators and Mr. and Mrs. Lane persistently urged him to furnish such information. He also claimed that they offered him inducements such as expenses, lump sum payments and employment with District Attorney James C. Garrison if he furnished the information they desired but that he refused their offers.

Mark Lane is the author of the book "Rush to Judgment." He has been extremely critical of the Warren Commission Report, the FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency and other Government agencies in connection with their investigation of the assassination. This Bureau has previously furnished to you a memorandum dated November 7, 1967, entitled "Mark Lane" which sets forth the long history of Lane's affiliation with ~~the Central Intelligence Agency~~ in this country.

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During his appearance on the Johnny Carson show, James C. Garrison also alleged that the FBI had interviewed a Julia Ann Mercer immediately following the assassination and that Mercer claimed to have seen a man approximately an hour or so before the assassination who carried a rifle from a truck. Garrison alleged that November 23, 1963, the day following the assassination of President Kennedy, the FBI contacted Mercer and exhibited to her several photographs, one of which was a photograph of Jack Ruby. Garrison claimed that Mercer identified the photograph of Jack Ruby to the FBI as the driver of the truck from which the man with the rifle emerged approximately one hour before the assassination.

The facts of the matter are that our Dallas Office did interview Mercer November 22, 1963, when she volunteered information that she had seen a truck with an "Air Conditioning" sign parked near the assassination site at approximately 10:50 a.m. that day. Mercer claimed a man left the truck carrying what appeared to her to be a gun case. She described this gun case as being approximately three and one-half to four feet long and about eight inches wide at the widest point and about three to five inches wide at the

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narrowest point. She indicated the case was brown in color and had a handle. She further claimed that at that time there were three policemen conversing nearby. She further advised that she could identify the man who left the truck carrying the gun case if she saw him again.

Mercer was again interviewed by our Dallas Office November 25, 1963, at which time she was shown a group of photographs of various individuals, including a photograph of Lee Harvey Oswald. After examining the photographs, Mercer stated it did not appear to her that any of the persons depicted in the photographs had been the person she had seen take what appeared to be a gun case from the truck at approximately 10:50 a.m., November 22, 1963, near the Texas School Book Depository building.

Mercer was again interviewed by our Dallas Office November 27, 1963, (five days after the assassination of President Kennedy and three days after Jack Ruby killed Lee Harvey Oswald) at which time she was shown a group of photographs, including a photograph of Jack Ruby. Mercer could not identify any of the photographs as being that of the individual who drove the truck in question on November 22, 1963. She stated that the driver of the truck she had observed on November 22, 1963, had a rather large round face similar to that depicted in Jack Ruby's photograph but she stated she could not identify Ruby as the driver of the truck. She was again shown a photograph of Lee Harvey Oswald and stated that she could not identify Oswald as being the one who took the package from the truck.

Results of our interviews with Mercer were furnished to the Warren Commission.

During our investigation of the assassination, we determined Jack Ruby was in the offices of the "Dallas Morning News" placing advertisements for his two night clubs at approximately 11 a.m., November 22, 1963. Ruby's presence in the offices of the "Dallas Morning News" was corroborated by several people who saw and talked with Ruby at that time.