

FOLLOWS DEVIIOUS PATH

'Letter' by Novel Adds to Mystery

A letter written by fugitive witness Gordon Novel added a new cloak-and-dagger twist today to the Kennedy assassination probe.

Attorney Steven Plotkin said Novel actually wrote the communication. Further, he said his client was working for the Central Intelligence Agency here in 1961.

But Novel called the letter a "trap" set for Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison, who is attempting to bring Novel back to New Orleans for questioning.

WHATEVER THE authenticity of the document, the circumstances of its discovery read like a chapter in a who-done-it.

The letter came into the hands of States-Item reporter Hoke May. This is how it happened:

The letter turned up when two girls were doing their spring housecleaning. It was well hidden in the fugitive witness's French Quarter apartment.

SO WELL HIDDEN, in fact, that a team of Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents and officers from Garrison's investigative squad missed it when they searched the rooms after Novel left town in March.

The girls, who rented the Novel apartment after his departure, found it during a thorough housecleaning and refurbishing session.

One of them turned it over to her boy friend. He, in turn, showed it to his professor at a New Orleans university.

The professor is a friend of May's.

THE LETTER was addressed to a Mr. Weiss and probably was written in late January or early February of this year, judging by the time sequence it describes.

When a copy was sent to him, Plotkin reviewed its contents, spoke to his client and told the States-Item Novel had drafted the letter.

He said, "Everything in the letter as far as Novel is con-

cerned is actually the truth."

The contents of the missive are compounded of cryptic references, code names and a plea for Weiss to get Novel "out of this mess" by an unspecified date in March of 1967.

THE LETTER appears to be a draft which later might be recopied or typed. There is no indication it was ever mailed, however, and Plotkin said he does not know whether the draft was sent "to the addressee."

Presumably, Weiss is connected with the CIA.

Novel departed New Orleans about mid-March after receiving a subpoena to testify in Garrison's Kennedy death plot investigation. He went to McLean, Va., the headquarters of the CIA.

HE WAS MET there by a former official of the Justice Department who now works for one of the radio-television networks.

The 29-year-old former bar owner took a lie detector test at McLean and ducked under cover for another few days, a time when he was reported to be in Montreal.

His next appearance was at Gahanna, Ohio, a Columbus suburb where he was arrested April 1 on a warrant from Garrison who charged him with conspiracy to burglarize a munitions dump at Houma in 1961.

AN INDEPENDENT handwriting expert says the letter is in Novel's handwriting. The expert, Gilbert Fortier of New Orleans, compared the penciled letter with other samples of Novel's writing and printing.

"It is my conclusion that

the same person who wrote the handwriting specimens also wrote the draft to Mr. Weiss," Fortier asserted.

He said he checked especially for the possibility the letter might be a forgery but concluded it was not probable.

"It was written too easily and too freely to have been forged," Fortier said.

THE LETTER to Weiss begins:

"This letter is to inform you that District (Attorney) Jim Garrison has subpoenaed myself and an associate to testify before his Grand Jury on matters which may be classified TOP SECRET. Actions of individuals connected with DOUBLE-CHEK CORPORATION in Miami in first quarter of 1961."

(The book, "The Invisible Government," identified Double-Chek Corp. of Miami as

a CIA front organization which recruited pilots and other Cuban personnel for the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.)

"**WE HAVE NO** current contact available to inform of this situation," the letter continues. "So I took the liberty of writing you direct and apprising you of current situation . . . expecting you to forward this through appropriate channels.

"Our connection and activity of that period involved individuals presently . . . about to be indicted as conspirators in Mr. Garrison's investigation.

"We have temporarily avoided one subpoena not to reveal Double-Chek activities or associate them with this mess. We want out of this thing before Thursday 3/ /67. Our attorneys have been told to expect another subpoena to appear and testify on this matter. The Fifth Amendment and/or immunity (and) legal tactics will not suffice.

"**MR. GARRISON** is in possession of unsworn portions of this testimony. He is unaware of Double-Chek's involvement in this matter but has strong suspicions. I have been questioned extensively by local FBI recently as to

whether or not I was involved with Double-Chek's parent holding corporation during the time. My reply on five queries was negative.

"Bureau unaware of Double-Chek association in this matter. Our attorneys and others are in possession of complete sealed files containing all information concerning matter.

"In event of our sudden departure, either accidental or otherwise, they are instructed to simultaneously release same for public scrutiny in different areas . . .

"**APPROPRIATE** counter action relative to Garrison's inquisition concerning us may best be handled through military channels vis (a) vis D.I.A. man. Garrison is presently colonel in Louisiana Army National Guard and has ready reserve status. Contact may be had through our attorneys of record, Plotkin, Alvarez, Sapir."

Plotkin confirmed that he has tapes and records held in escrow for Novel to be released in case of his death.

One final footnote of interest relates to D.I.A., which apparently refers to the super-secret Defense Intelligence Agency. It was created by President Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs invasion to shepherd all U.S. intelligence and espionage operations. The man appointed to head it was Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. **END**

Oswald Fired Shots, Dallas Officials Insist

Discount DA Team Theory

By PEGGY SIMPSON

DALLAS (AP) — Key Dallas investigators of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy here in 1963 don't believe

Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's claim that Lee Harvey Oswald never fired a shot.

They also disbelieve the New Orleans prosecutor's theory that a precision team of

guerrilla adventurers fanned out on the crest of a park to kill Kennedy and escape undetected, until now.

"I don't think there's any question but that Oswald did some shooting, and indications

are all of the shooting," said Dist. Atty. Henry Wade.

RETIRED POLICE Chief Jesse Curry, who drove the car preceding the President's in the motorcade, said there was no ruckus on the Dealey Plaza lawn preceding the shooting, as Garrison claims.

He said if guerrilla gunmen had crouched behind a three-foot stone wall in the plaza as Garrison says, Curry and Sheriff Bill Decker and Secret Service men could have seen them from the street as

(Stories on developments in the Garrison investigation and the discovery of a letter draft written by fugitive witness Gordon Novel will be found on Page 6B.)

they drove by. He said his policemen atop the railroad overpass overlooking Dealey Plaza likewise could have spotted any persons behind the stone wall or even behind the five-foot-tall picket fence which is 26 feet in back of

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the stone wall.

"THERE WERE people in the park and by the stone wall but they sure weren't squatted down shooting, I'll tell you that," Curry said. "We just didn't see anything that would indicate that at all."

For eight months, Garrison has independently been scrutinizing the assassination, vowing to prove the Warren Commission wrong in its finding that Oswald alone killed Kennedy and that Jack Ruby also acted independently when he gunned down Oswald during a jail transfer two days later.

Garrison says he has uncovered a conspiracy to kill Kennedy between Oswald; a now-dead pilot, David Ferrie; a New Orleans business magnate, Clay Shaw, and others.

HE SAYS THE Central Intelligence Agency is concealing the whereabouts of the

assassins because they had been CIA employees.

"I never did rule out some encouragement of Oswald," said Wade, "but whether there was a conspiracy or an accomplice before or after the assassination is a matter of speculation. I don't know."

"I don't have any way of knowing about the CIA," Wade said.

But he said he was just as sure now as in 1963 that police had the evidence to send Oswald to the electric chair as the assassin.

"It was his gun, there were three empty shells by the window, he was seen in the window, his prints were found there, and everybody else was down watching the motorcade and he was upstairs," Wade said.

WADE AND CURRY said they looked but found no proof that Oswald and Ruby knew each other.

Wade said eight or 10 persons volunteered information that Ruby and Oswald were together on occasions but he said he could not vouch for the credibility of any of them. A local lawyer failed a lie detector test about such beliefs and some of the other informants were alleged homosexuals or police characters.

Garrison said the assassins apparently used "frangible bullets," which he described as a type forbidden by the Geneva Treaty, that explode into little pieces and leave nothing behind to be traced to the gun. He said these bullets would be favored by forces working for an intelligence agency.

A FIREARMS expert here said a frangible bullet does indeed fragment into tiny pieces—but the shattering is upon impact, before any penetration. The soft, compressed graphite bullets are used for target practice and might barely pierce a tin can at 50 yards. The firearms expert said he knew of no bullet which combines the characteristics Garrison named, since soft-nose bullets which cause a gaping wound and much internal damage leave traceable elements.

The FBI identified a whole

bullet found after the assassination on a stretcher as coming from Oswald's rifle and said fragments of a second bullet came from the same rifle.

Curry said Garrison's probe hasn't refuted any Warren Commission findings, as far as he is concerned.

"It's difficult for me to believe that a group of men sat around and formed a conspiracy and carried it out to assassinate the President. The evidence doesn't show that to me," Curry said. *END*

Ruby Attorney Asks Garrison Be Disbarred

The disbarment of New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison has been asked by an attorney who once represented Jack Ruby.

Attorney Sol Dann of Detroit said yesterday that he has written to the American and Louisiana Bar Associations asking them to consider disbaring Garrison for "unwarranted and reckless attacks on the Warren Commission Report and its members."

Garrison, meanwhile, told newsmen in New Orleans that Dann "is well aware of the total involvement of Jack Ruby with regard to the assassination. He is doing his best to block any successful inquiry."

GARRISON SAID DANN'S action was "very understandable because my objective inquiry into the murder of President Kennedy will necessarily reveal the involvement, not only of individuals associated with the Central Intelligence Agency, but of Jack Ruby himself."

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Truth and Consequences Inc., the private organization of businessmen which is funding the DA's inquiry, said the group "remains solidly behind the investigation."

Willard E. Robertson, a founder of the fund, made the statement in reply to reports that a recent suit filed by fugitive witness Gordon Novel may have resulted in the fund's disintegration.

"I HAVE HEARD this sort of discussion from non-members of Truth and Consequences," Robertson said in reply to newsmen's questions. "But I have not talked with any member who has any idea of withdrawing or discontinuing his support. Everyone is 100 per cent behind the investigation."

Members of the organization told the States-Item the organization's monetary support of the inquiry recently was renewed with additional donations.

As a result of Garrison's probe, New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw has been indicted with conspiracy to commit the murder of Kennedy. Shaw is free on \$10,000 bond.

Dann represented Ruby when he was convicted of killing accused presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas.

"This request is made to put an end to any further exploitation of this horrible tragedy and prevent a repeti-

tion of the carnival proceedings that prevailed before Judge Joe B. Brown in Dallas," Dann said.

HIS THREE-PARAGRAPH letter asked the bar groups not to limit their probe to Garrison, but to include investigation of any attorney involved in any proceeding related to the assassination.

Dann told newsmen this would include judges ruling on court matters stemming from the assassination and any attorneys who have authored books about it.

"This fraud has gone on long enough," Dann told newsmen. "It would very much appear Mr. Garrison has improperly discharged his responsibilities."

"His actions appear irresponsible and not in keeping with his role as prosecutor, which is to protect the innocent as well as convict the guilty," Dann said.

HE SAID HE BASED HIS claim on the fact that Garrison has challenged Warren Commission findings without "coming forward with any new evidence or new information."

Asked about Garrison's claim that Ruby's unlisted Dallas telephone number had been found, in code, in books owned by Shaw and Oswald, Dann dismissed the claim as mathematical trickery. **EW**