

Jim Garrison interview by Alec Gifford, Channel 12 WVUE (ABC New Orleans affiliate.) Thursday, March 13, 1969

Garrison was asked what he thought about the outcome of the Clay Shaw trial, and he said he could ^{not} exactly say he was pleased and that he didn't "turn cartwheels" when he heard about the verdict. However he was gratified that he had been able to bring out a lot of information which had been "suppressed." He said he left the Court room before the verdict came in because he wanted to avoid the news media. He was asked if he planned to resign. Garrison went on to say that he had been in office for 6½ years. "This is the first major public interest case we have lost in 6½ years. Therefore I certainly was surprised to find that within 24 hours the newspapers were calling for my resignation. So my reaction was this: I am really not crazy about public life, and I was looking forward to private life." However after the editorial attacks, which Garrison re-iterated he thought unjustified just because he had lost one case, "then my reaction was: I find myself thinking of public life again." He said he "was not going to give in to authoritarian pressure." On being questioned again about this, he said his ~~mind~~ mind "was not made up" that he will run again.

Garrison was asked what he thought of the allegation that, as a result of his new perjury indictment of Shaw, his prosecution of Shaw had changed to persecution. Garrison said that it was "an eminently fair prosecution from the outset. From the outset I have not mentioned Shaw's name except to say that he is to be presumed innocent until he is proved guilty." He added that there were witnesses at the trial who testified that Shaw knew Ferrie and Oswald and "I would be guilty of malfeasance if I refused to prosecute someone who lied under oath." Gifford asked whether he didn't think that the verdict in the conspiracy trial meant that the jury had repudiated these witnesses, and Garrison said he didn't think so, because it was a "complex case". Would there be new witnesses at the perjury trial? "Oh yes," Garrison replied.

Garrison said he lost the case for two reasons, first because of some bad tactics on his part, he said, and second because of the difficulties of presenting the outcome of "a domestic espionage operation" in an Anglo-Saxon court of law. He said the difficulties were comparable to "trying to carry water in a sieve." He admitted that one of the difficulties was that he didn't have proof of what he claimed, but only indications.

The assassination of John Kennedy, Garrison said was "a coup d'etat, planned in Washington D.C.—not New Orleans—Washington D.C." New Orleans only played a minor role, he said. "We were forced, because of the rules of evidence, to present an espionage operation in ancient terms." Garrison complained about the "19th Century" statutes which prevented him from presenting the case as he would have liked to. Therefore, he admitted, the case didn't look as strong as he would have liked. Does this mean, Gifford asks, he would have had doubts if he had been on the jury himself?

He said he might have said something to himself like: "What is this?—the three stooges—how could these three men have accomplished this?" If he had been on the jury, he admits, "I would have had a great deal to debate about." He also said he would have been concerned about the apparent lack of motive.

Garrison said that one of his bad decisions was "not to use all of our witnesses. So much was made of Vernon Bundy—" whom Garrison described as "a totally honest man"—" that he decided not to use witnesses who had ever been in trouble before."

He said that "there was never any possibility of bringing out the domestic espionage operation in a court in Louisiana, there was no way to begin to introduce it. John Kennedy was killed by a section of the C.I.A., more

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particularly a section of the plans division of the Central Intelligence Agency. "Kennedy, Garrison said, was terminating the cold war "in such a startling way" that it meant a considerable loss of power and money to those with a vested interest in the cold war. He then went in to a lengthy digression about the escalation of the war in Vietnam, citing troop statistics, Kennedy's efforts to reduce the number of troops in Vietnam, and the subsequent reversal of this policy after the assassination.

Gifford asked Garrison if he knew the particular people involved in the assassination. "If you mean the agency involved, the answer is yes," Garrison replied. "But I would have to decline to answer if you mean particular people because I am not free to answer." Garrison then went on to relate the message sent to Air Force One returning from Dallas "from the Communications Center of The Joint Chiefs of Staff" saying that there was no conspiracy, and the simultaneous announcement by Henry Wade in Dallas.

Gifford asked Garrison what started him on Clay Shaw. ~~He~~ Gifford said he had a feeling that he was interested in Shaw before Russo, which Garrison said was correct. "We found that on the evening of the assassination," Garrison said, "a man named David Ferrie—a strange and very brilliant man—had made an all night trip to Texas." Garrison then related that his office became interested in this trip and called him in for questioning. They were dis-satisfied with his answers, specifically that he had said he went duck hunting but didn't take any guns. Nevertheless they turned him over to the F.B.I. who decided "in about 20 minutes" that Ferrie wasn't involved.

Then, in the Fall of 1966 Garrison talked to Senator Russell Long while on a trip to Washington, and Long raised some doubts about the assassination. Garrison said he was surprised to hear a Senator express such doubts, and decided to look into the case further. Naturally, the starting point of his investigation was, once again, David Ferrie. (N.B. Garrison did not once mention Clay Shaw in response to the question.)

Garrison was asked about the breaking of the story by the States-Item, and Gifford suggested that perhaps Garrison had not wanted the publicity he received. Garrison concurred. He said that some reporters for the States found the vouchers from the fines and fees and then went ahead with a front page story. He said that there was nothing he could do to stop it, and would have preferred not to have the publicity.

Gifford asked Garrison if there was any truth to the rumours that he was now investigating the Martin Luther King assassination. ~~From~~ Garrison replied that he does not investigate anything unless he has jurisdiction within Orleans Parish, and therefore there was no truth to the rumour.

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[N.B. I cannot vouch for word-for-word accuracy on the parts in quotation marks, but they are at least close to being accurate. TB.]