

Bethell outline of
his book (never written) on]

THE GARRISON INVESTIGATION

Title: The above is not intended as the title of the book. something a bit more imaginative would be better.

Publication Date: It is difficult for me to predict exactly when I shall finish the book, but I hope to do so in two months, ie. towards the end of August.
November.

Length: Approx 75,000 words.

Appendices: I have some quite important unpublished documents which could usefully be published as appendices, eg a 5 page Secret Service report of an early investigation of David Ferris, some notes by Garrison, and a transcript of an interview with Ferris, (Dec 15, 1966) conducted by an assistant District Attorney. These documents shed considerable light on the investigation.

Foreword: Edward Jay Epstein has volunteered to write a foreword, which I would welcome. On the other hand, I do not want him to see the ms. until his own book has been published, as he will unhesitatingly use any material that interests him.

Other Books in the Same Field: The only serious book being written about the case that I know of is Epstein's forthcoming "Tangled Webs", a large chunk of which will soon come out in the "New Yorker". The book is not based on any inside information, but will consist of an intelligent summary and analysis of available information. Two other books, one by Bill Turner of Ramparts magazine, and one by Eric Norden, who did the 'Playboy' interview of Garrison, are supposed to be coming out soon. Both will be uncritically favourable towards Garrison. * (Turner's is a paperback original)

Summary: The main purpose of the book will be to give a first person account of an Englishman's experiences in working on the case since its inception. I shall set forth the evidence which Garrison gradually acquired, and led to his various statements, charges and arrests. I shall arrive at conclusions as to the validity of his charges. At the same time, it seems to be important - especially in the aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy - to make some comments on political aspects of the case, rather than just confining oneself to evidentiary matters. (For example, comments by Garrison on the assassination of Robert Kennedy shed a great deal of light on his JFK inquiry - a fascinating point which seems to be worth developing. Briefly, the point is: the mind almost refuses to accept that both Kennedys died as martyrs for the wrong cause, or for no cause at all, as seems to be the case if you accept the 'lone Oswald' thesis. Therefore there is a great willingness to believe that they died the victims of a conspiracy. Many people have commented how much more acceptable it would be if JFK had been killed by those who really wanted him dead - the far right wingers, segregationists, the "military industrial complex" etc. This feeling was crystallised after the death of RFK. Thus, Garrison (I believe) "converted" Oswald into the tool of such a conspiracy, without really having sufficient evidence to do so. He is currently looking for evidence which would cast Sirhan in a similar light.

THE GARRISON INVESTIGATION

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION submitted

Chapter 2 INVESTIGATING IN DALLAS submitted

Chapter 3 THE INCEPTION OF THE INVESTIGATION

This chapter will explain the events which led to the opening of the investigation, namely, the unanswered questions about Oswald's activities in New Orleans, (See 3 principal questions: 1. Who was Clay Bertrand? 2. Who was the unidentified man passing out leaflets with Oswald? 3. How did Oswald get "544 Camp St" on his pamphlets?) Other factors:

The climate of opinion in late 1966, the books and magazine articles (in particular one by Life) all of which persuaded Garrison that the case was worth looking into.

Garrison's discussion with Senator Russell Long, in which Long said he did not believe the Warren Report.

Garrison's awareness that he had, in David Ferrie, a promising starting point for his inquiry.

In this chapter I shall go into these points in some detail, and I shall conclude with the beginning of the investigation, when very few people in the office even know that an investigation was in progress, Oswald was referred to as "Smith", and Ferrie as "Lindbergh". Initial meetings in the middle of the night in the old Grand Jury room, going through hundreds of photos of Cuban exiles.

Chapter 4 DID OSWALD KNOW FERRIE?

In order to understand this investigation, it is necessary to elucidate the chronological order in which information about David Ferrie became available to Garrison. It only became available bit by bit, and some of the most important - the results of the Secret Service investigation in New Orleans on Nov 25, 1963, was only sent to Garrison (by me from the National Archives) after he had been committed to the thesis that Ferrie was involved. The Secret Service report indicated he was not. A considerable investigation was conducted by Garrison into Ferrie's friends, and the results of this investigation showed that Ferrie in fact did not know Oswald. I shall present the results of this investigation, as well as a related investigation into Guy Banister, whose office was at 544 Camp, and who did know Ferrie. The conclusion will be that Oswald's connection with 544 Camp St remains unresolved, but that he definitely did not know Oswald.

Chapter 5 WORKING IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The results of the Warren Commission investigation are housed in the National Archives in Washington, and I spent 5 months there reading all the declassified documents, (hundreds of thousands of pages.) I shall refer briefly to their contents, and the way in which they contrast with the material published in the 26 volumes. (Mainly, they are not so relevant as the published reports.) I shall examine the question of the still classified documents, of which there are about 250, and whether there is anything sinister about this. I shall conclude that there is not, with the reservation that some of the still obscure questions about the assassination

*ABE Summary - Supplementals
See Newkirk, Sweatt
LHO #1181
Odie Loren Hall "Exonerated"*

not nec but quite possibly

THE GARRISON INVESTIGATION

~~NICHOLAS WHEEL~~

might will be clarified if the documents were declassified. But I do not believe that the fact that there are still classified reports indicate that the Government is covering anything up.

I shall point out that I was in daily contact with the DA's office during this period, with the odd corollary that academic research in a library might lead to arrests in New Orleans. At this time I met some of the better known critics of the Warren Report, Sylvia Mcagher, Vincent Salandra, Edward Epstein and Mort Sahl, and I shall describe these encounters.

Chapter 6THE CASE OF CLAY SHAW

I returned to New Orleans in June, 1967, and at that time I was shown the evidence as it stood ~~at that~~ then. In this chapter I shall recapitulate the known case against Shaw, ie. the preliminary hearing and the testimony of Perry Russo. I shall then examine the question of why Shaw was suspected in the first place, and on what evidence. This evidence is of two types: 1. Shaw was the only homosexual anyone knew of in New Orleans with the first name 'Clay', and thus he became the only candidate for being "Clay Bertrand". 2. What Garrison calls "the propinquity factor", ie. the fact that he lived next door to someone who was a friend of Forrie. (There were one or two other propinquity factors as well, but none of them can be taken seriously.) I shall then present evidence accumulated after the preliminary hearing, none of which is convincing enough to conclude that Shaw is guilty. I shall go into Russo's story, and shall show why his testimony as to a meeting between Shaw (Clay Bertrand), Oswald (Leon Oswald) and Forrie is extremely unlikely to be true. The evidence on which I base this conclusion was given to me by an associate editor of Life magazine, who was present at some crucial meetings with Garrison, Russo and assistant district attorney Andrew Sciambra. (Unfortunately, Epstein got hold of the same information from the same source, and he will be publishing it in the New Yorker.) Finally, I shall point out that Gene Davis, said by Dean Andrews to be Clay Bertrand, admitted to a member of the DA's staff that he had called Andrews at the Hotel Dieu hospital on the day after the assassination. The conclusion is quite clearly that Clay Shaw is innocent.

In addition, I shall explain why Shaw was so anxious to avoid trial, and fought it with every legal weapon available. The reasons for this are threefold. He was quite likely to be convicted because:

1. The public is looking for a scapegoat to alleviate their frustrations about the assassination, and the Warren Report.
2. Jurors appear to recommend themselves to the prosecution here for their stupidity, (if a potential juror appears to be intelligent he is likely to be objected to by the State, and discarded,) and undoubtedly would not be able to comprehend the considerable complexities of the case.
3. The judge handling the case, (Judge Haggerty) is rather blatantly pro Garrison.

Taken together, these factors indicate that Shaw would be unlikely to get a fair trial. His battle to avoid facing trial is not, therefore, an indication of his guilt, as some seem to think. (At the present writing it is still uncertain whether Shaw will stand trial, or whether Federal Court will block it. Clearly, if the trial does not take place, this chapter will assume much greater importance.)

*We covered up FBI
FBI, SS meant Toje*

Chapter 7 WORKING IN THE D.A.'s OFFICE

I will begin with a brief and general description of the function of the District Attorney's office, and its breakdown into two rough categories of activity: legal and investigative. On my return to the office I was, like everyone else, curious to discover how extensive the investigation was, and I discovered that it consisted of: Garrison working full time on the case; 3 lawyers working full time (Jim Alcock, Richard Burns, and Andrew Scianbra); ~~an~~ 3 specially hired investigators, (Bill Boxley (an ex CIA agent), William Gurvich and myself;) plus Louis Ivon (chief investigator) and any of the other regularly assigned investigators as needed. I will go into this, and describe the defection of Gurvich, which happened soon after I returned in June. I will add to this some details about the financing of the investigation, (although I doubt full details of this will ever be known. I would estimate that the investigation has cost about \$75,000 in excess of what would have been the normal expenditure of the office.

Soon after my return I was given an office - known as the "Archives" - in which the files of the case were kept. I will describe the regularly flow of journalists and assassination "buffs" through the office, and their treatment by Garrison. (In general we had to protect Garrison from his own open-handedness in permitting anyone to see whatever they wanted in the way of evidence. He tended to attach much more significance to the contents of his files than his staff did.) Some of the critics who came through: Jones Harris, Epstein, Richard Popkin, Vince Salandria.

The 'Playboy' interview of Garrison: as he said, it's fine because you can write your own questions as well as answers. Garrison's work habits: often not in the office during the week, but always there at weekends.

Throughout the investigation the Grand Jury was used as a means of interrogating witnesses, without benefit of counsel, under the threat of a perjury indictment. In this chapter I will mention that Garrison has been criticised for this tactic, as well as point out the irony that as Grand Jury testimony is secret, all ~~most~~ of the sworn testimony obtained in the Garrison investigation will not be made public, a state of affairs which has resulted in much criticism being levelled at the Warren Commission.

Another point which needs to be brought out is the evident bias of the courts here. The judges are apparently afraid of Garrison (Possibly because earlier in his career he won a legal battle with them in which he accused them of taking too long vacations.) At any rate, they mostly side with the State rather than maintain an objective viewpoint. The juries also seem to be easily cowed, and appear to feel that they will be on the safe side if they find a defendant guilty.

Chapter 8 EDGAR EUGENE BRADLEY

On December 21, 1967, Bradley became the second man charged with conspiring to assassinate President Kennedy. In this chapter I shall go into the information which led to this charge. (Subject to corrections which may have to be made for reasons of possible libel.) The evidence on Bradley was accumulated by William Turner of Ramparts Magazine, and Bill Boxley, one of our investigators. The investigation was predicated on a letter we received in the

office in April 1967, informing us that Bradley had conspired to kill President Kennedy. Subsequent investigation in California revealed three witnesses who claimed that Bradley had either made plans to kill Kennedy, or had solicited help in doing so. However no evidence existed that Bradley had anything to do with what happened in Dallas, until a photograph was discovered in the files of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram showing two men being led away from Dealey Plaza by two policemen, shortly after the assassination. One of these two men bore a resemblance to Bradley. On the basis of this photo, Garrison concluded that Bradley was therefore involved in the assassination. He was therefore charged with conspiracy.

However, nearly everyone who has seen the photo concludes that the man is not Bradley; Bradley denies he was in Dallas that day, and almost certainly has an alibi. Logally, lawyers in the DA's office pointed out that even if the California witnesses are telling the truth, there was no conspiracy but only solicitation. (ie., if someone approaches you and asks you to assassinate X he can be charged with solicitation but not conspiracy.) Thirdly, we had no jurisdiction over the case anyway. (Later, a witness said he had seen Bradley in New Orleans before the assassination, but he is not credible.)

The conclusion must be, therefore, that Bradley is innocent. So far he has not been extradited by California, (a very hot political potato for the California authorities, which they obviously would rather not have to handle,) and privately the assistant DA's in the office are hoping he will not be extradited.

Bradley nevertheless remains an interesting character, as he belongs to the extreme right wing sector which wanted to do away with Kennedy, and I do not doubt that he did talk about killing him. Garrison's charging Bradley represents, in a sense, an attempt to transfer the blame where he feels it really belongs. As evidence for that, Garrison received quite a lot of support for directing his investigation at the reactionary right, and also a heap of hostile mail from the John Birchers, who concluded that Garrison was a tool of a Communist conspiracy.

Clearly, Reagan is in a quandary about extraditing Bradley. If he does he will alienate the numerous California voters of the same ilk as Bradley. If he does not, he will be accused by another large sector of the population of being in league with the Federal Government to suppress the truth about the assassination, an accusation which he would neither deserve nor enjoy.

Chapter 9:

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

In this chapter I shall set forth the evidence on which Garrison concluded that "elements" within the CIA plotted and carried out the assassination. In fact, the evidence is virtually non-existent, and amounts to no more than a hypothesis. The question of motive in general is important here. Some people seem to think that once you have established that a certain group has a motive for committing a crime, you have all but solved it. Garrison falls into this category, and once he made up his mind, the need to establish hard evidence rapidly disappeared. In fact, all sectors of the political spectrum can (and have) be accused of having a motive for killing Kennedy, but in Garrison's eyes the CIA is involved because Kennedy proposed to terminate the "warfare state", in which the CIA supposedly has a vested interest.

As far as the evidence is concerned, there is some provocative information about Lee Harvey Oswald, and it remains a possibility that he was connected in a minor way with either the FBI or the CIA, but this is not to say that they knew he was going to shoot the President, or helped him do it so. Nor did Garrison help his own hypothesis by alleging that Oswald did not shoot the President, a claim which constantly emasculated his own assistants, since it not only tended to demolish his case against the CIA, but also deprived us of the "overt act" necessary to prove a conspiracy charge.

There is some evidence that one or two of the characters brought to light in the Garrison investigation were connected with the CIA, e.g. Gordon Novel (whose lawyer said Novel had worked for the CIA), but little or no evidence that they had anything to do with the assassination. In Novel's case (which I will briefly mention in this chapter) there is actually no evidence, as Garrison admitted to a lawyer from 'Playboy' in my presence. (Novel is suing 'Playboy' & Garrison for remarks made in the 'Playboy' interview.)

There are also some interesting anti-Castro freedom fighters who figure in the case, and in whom 'Life' magazine took a great deal of interest. There undoubtedly were (as 'Life' knew,) plots in Miami amongst various paramilitary and exile groups to kill Kennedy, but again, no evidence that these plots came to fruition. Many members of these groups were also undoubtedly ex CIA employees. A ring leader of one such group - Gerry Patrick Hemming - walked unannounced into Garrison's office one day, wearing tiger suit fatigues, and told us some extraordinary stories about such plots; in some cases assassination squads had even been paid by "sponsors" to do the job. As Hemming said, "Maybe Oswald got there ahead of them." He also told us that in the aftermath of the recent controversy as to who killed Kennedy, some members of these groups have returned to their original "sponsors" claiming, in essence, "we did it," and then demanding more money to keep their mouths shut. They in turn have been eliminated, according to Hemming, by hired Mafia killers. (Thus there may be a weird kind of truth to the "mysterious deaths" theory.) I will present what details I have on this fascinating story, but Hemming understandably did not provide us with any names.

Garrison's accusations against the CIA began one day after he had hired an ex CIA employee as an investigator. This man is fairly tight lipped about his activities with the Agency - he was in the covert branch - but he did tell Garrison on the day he was hired that the CIA was capable of carrying out assassinations, and occasionally did so. This seems to have been what triggered Garrison. Garrison was then able to progressively expand on his accusations into a general attack on the Federal Government, finally accusing LBJ of being an accessory after the fact. This goes down quite well in Louisiana.

Chapter 10 THE PUBLIC REACTION

As the investigation progressed I became more and more convinced that the substance of the investigation was less interesting than the public reaction to it. For the last year, a part of my work has involved reading much of the mail which Garrison has received, and therefore I am in a good position to make some comments about it. Nearly all of Garrison's mail has been very favourable to him, and betrays almost no knowledge of the case, but rather a desperate willingness to believe

believe that the Government tells nothing but lies. I shall quote from a number of these letters. The NBC 1 hour attack on Garrison provoked support rather than disenchantment with Garrison, and the 4 hour CBS special met with incredulity. (As Epstein remarked, it doesn't matter how many tests you do showing that Oswald could have done it, the reaction is going to be "I don't believe it.")

Garrison also received a great deal of mail entirely unrelated to the case, from distraught citizens, many of them extraordinarily paranoid, (eg on one day we received two letters, one from a man who believed his blood stream was "transistorized" by the FBI, another from a man who claimed the Government had a "radio hookup" to his brain, and could read his thoughts; another occasionally fingerprinted his family, because he believed the CIA was substituting them with doubles, for some reason;) these people saw Garrison as a saviour, and they sought relief with him.

In general, it would take a sociologist to make the most of the wide variety of mail Garrison received, but they do reveal the extent to which the American public is unwilling to believe what it is told, an unwillingness which is, I believe, largely without foundation. The mail was, of course, a source of great encouragement to Garrison, and partly accounts for the way in which he progressively broadened his attack.

*Support for
WR Critics
(also opposition)*

Chapter 11

JIM GARRISON

Most people who came to New Orleans seem to be more interested in Garrison's personality than in his case, and clearly the investigation has been largely dominated by Garrison himself. Therefore in this chapter I shall say something about Garrison, his motivation and his ambitions.

Although the substance of the book will be to the effect that Garrison's case had very little validity, I do not propose to launch an outright attack on him. In the first place, the most important thing to say is that Garrison at all times believed what he said and cannot be accused of cynicism or insincerity. It would be truer to say that he has poor judgement. This evaluation is corroborated by more than one member of his staff, one of whom said recently that he would have quit long ago if he felt that Garrison was insincere.

Other questions have been raised about his sanity, and a carefully timed "leak" of his medical records to the Chicago Tribune - revealing a psychiatric record - lent some credence to these speculations. (The leak occurred two days after Garrison attacked the FBI for the first time. A Senate investigator established that the leak originated with the FBI, and ex-FBI agent Bill Turner pointed out that the Chicago Tribune is frequently used by the FBI as a forum when they need it.) I conclude, however, that there is not really any basis for dismissing Garrison as a "nut" - he just takes too light hearted a view of what constitutes valid evidence.

Another point raised many times is that Garrison is simply motivated by political ambition. Once again, I believe that this an oversimplification. In fact one of the attractive things about him is that his behaviour is the very antithesis of the typical politician's. Garrison is in fact a very complex personality, and there is no simple answer to the question of why he has behaved as he has. (One or two journalists such as Dick Billings of 'Life' who have been very close to Garrison agree with this.)

There is undoubtedly some truth to the charge that he is playing politics; Kennedy had become a national hero by the time Garrison began his investigation, it was popular and fashionable to disagree with the Warren Report, and taking issue with the Federal Government never did any politician any harm in Louisiana. Also, I note Garrison has shown no interest in the Martin Luther King death, despite good reason for doing so; (Ray came to New Orleans in December 1967 and reportedly contacted an "industrialist" at the New Orleans Trade Mart - of which Clay Shaw was managing director - but Garrison seems to have no curiosity as to who the industrialist is.)

Garrison's personality can only really be illuminated by example, and I will quote samples of his conversation and private statements, which will reveal something of the man. He is frequently eminently quotable, as he is intelligent, well read, has an excellent memory and is amusing.

I am in strong agreement with Garrison on one point, and that is his concern that the real threat to this country lies not in the left wing but the right wing direction. He often states that this country more and more comes to resemble Germany in the 1930s. He is also correct in stating that the country is still pre-occupied with an outdated concern about Communism, and points out that the FBI wastes time worrying about Communists while neglecting the far more serious reactionary right. (Garrison once said that Communists in America are "like unicorns - nobody has ever seen one.") However I disagree with Garrison that Fascist elements have already taken over the Government and are dictating foreign policy.

One conclusion I shall make is that Garrison attempted to transfer the blame for the assassination to where he felt it rightfully belonged.

I shall include some biographical data about Garrison.

Chapter 12

EVALUATION OF THE INVESTIGATION

I shall conclude that the Garrison investigation answers hardly any of the unanswered questions about the assassination. With regard to Oswald's activities in New Orleans, the man passing out the leaflets with Oswald remains unidentified to this day. There still is no genuine explanation of how Oswald got "544 Camp St." on his pamphlets. The investigation did not reveal that Oswald had any accomplices in New Orleans not known to the Warren Commission.

The objections to the Warren Commission based on the hard evidence of ballistics, Zapruder film and the autopsy were not touched at all by the investigation, and still stand. I shall briefly examine whether they are solid enough to conclude that the Warren Report is wrong in its central conclusion. In fact there is a dilemma here: on the one hand it seems almost impossible to make the ballistics and photographic evidence consistent with the "Lone Oswald" thesis, and on the other hand it seems almost inconceivable that another assassin could have been firing with Oswald and (a) left no trace of his existence, and (b) not turn up at all in Oswald's background, which was, without question, examined very thoroughly. I conclude that Oswald was at least an assassin, and whether or not there was another remains uncertain, (ie. the same position taken in 'Inquest'.)

Chronology of the Investigation

I believe it would be helpful to include a brief chronological summary of the investigation, as an appendix. (Divided up into months, and including a few highlights for each month,

- I enclose:
1. A copy of the Secret Service investigation of David Ferrie, dated 12-13-68. I feel it is worth publishing as an appendix. If you agree, I can obtain a clearer copy. (It is a declassified document from the National Archives.)
 2. A copy of the first interview of David Ferrie conducted in the Garrison investigation, which is also of considerable interest.

There is a great deal of additional material I could include in the book, but I think it best to concentrate on the most important areas - Ferrie, Shaw, Bradley, CIA, Garrison, Oswald. In the event that the Clay Shaw trial takes place it might be necessary to alter the chapter on Shaw to include the trial. It should be clearer next week, after the Federal Court has handed down its decision on the matter, whether or not the trial will take place. In any event it will not be until August at the earliest.

Thomas Bothell,
638 Royal St.,
New Orleans,
Louisiana, 70130
USA.