

Confidential

11-8-68

Memorandum of conversation with Jesse Core, 1820 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans

This afternoon I stopped off at Jesse's office, where we chatted for a while, after which I drove him to his home, which was on my way. He had found a few things he thought might interest me, like one of the original copies of the Oswald handbill he had obtained outside the old I.M. 8-16-63 (the stock is called "Goldenrod", Douglas Jones told me this a.m., and is of that shade).

Jesse told me some of Clay Shaw's and the I.M.'s history. He is a friend of Shaw, as he makes clear, and would not consciously do anything against his interest, but he also wants the truth to be developed. He thinks Shaw is probably innocent and if he has any kind of involvement, guilty or innocent, it is probably the result of the maneuvering of Mario Bermudez, of whom he has the lowest opinion I recall hearing one man express of another. His lack of regard is expressed without bitterness or passion, in a matter-of-fact way, quietly, with the ring of sincerity.

Jesse is an experienced public-relations man, among whose clients in politics have been Jim Garrison. In 1960 he was for Nixon. He was the public-relations director of the Trade Mart, an employee, until he went into business for himself. He recalls on a number of occasions that Shaw told him not to work so hard. It is his opinion that Shaw followed his own advice, particularly during his last two years, when his annual salary was \$30,000 annually. However, he says Shaw also maintained a sharp separation between his personal and his <sup>business</sup> lives.

He mentioned a wealthy man, Brent, who established the I.M., or was the leader in establishing it. I had earlier heard he was Shaw's mentor, i.e. that is the right word, the predecessor Queen Bee of the homosexual community, the man with whom Shaw lived while a student and his heir. (Jesse said he had heard Shaw say that it was believed he inherited wealth from Brent, but that while he had gotten an inheritance, what wealth he had was of his own earning.) I did not question Jesse on interpretation, but I suggest Shaw may have been elliptical.)

Brent became President of I.M. Shaw was then in New York, with Western Union, where Jesse thinks he was a downtown office manager. He said Shaw could cock the phone on his shoulder and type what was being spoken as fast as it was spoken and he had often seen him do it. He says that Brent created the job for Shaw, that is, the managing directorship of the I.M.

Vice president under Brent was Lloyd J. Cobb, who was close to Mario Bermudez. They still are close, despite Bermudez' record. Jesse tells of many occasions when Bermudez came back from trips and turned in expense accounts for, like, \$10,000, which were paid, with the comment the people of New Orleans had gotten their money's worth, in that the money was well spent for their benefit. He had heard the rumor that on a number of occasions Bermudez got caught in various crookedness

Gere-2

from which he was always protected. One of his specifications is consistent with what I had heard from several official sources, smuggling. His story is that he was caught with a tube of diamonds up his rectum.

The ITM began with International M<sub>u</sub>se, a scant two blocks away. IH was a meeting and talking place. The idea behind ITM was that it would be a place for the display of wares from other lands, where trade could be boosted. At first Bermudez was in open opposition to ITM, favoring IH, until he switched, without either position having any effect on his friendly relations with Shaw. Jesse thinks it possible Shaw was eased out to help Bermudez, by Cobb, after Brent died, when Cobb became (and remains) president.

Cobb, he believes, arranged the location of the new ITM to benefit his own real-estate operations. He now has no titled position like that Shaw held. However, the function, in his belief, is vested in Bermudez. (Bermudez is married but still fruit. Shaw joked about himself, as in saying he had been given the present of a "fruit of the Month" subscription. Jesse thinks that Shaw became a homosexual because of his mulatto features, fearing the woman he might have loved might on this ground reject him, and because he grew so fast and so flabbily, weighing 200 and towering 6 feet at 14, with all fat and no muscle. He appears to have often told Jesse about being punched around by the other boys.)

The ring of homosexuals included the then city publicity director, Deuthit, whose official position was not jeopardized by reporting of his arrest for a "crime against nature". These men, Jesse says, were proteges of DeLesseps (Chep) Morrison, who died in a plane crash when piloted by the former partner of his blood enemy, Hugh Ward, partner of Guy Basister.

Among the names Jesse mentioned is that of Paul Fabry, formerly of the Hungarian parliament and described as a "freedom fighter". He had been brought to this country and employed by duPont. In Wilmington he married Lullie Hitchcock, sister of Tommy, from whom he is now divorced or the action is pending. He here headed a division of International M<sub>u</sub>se. He first joined with Shaw and Bermudez and then broke with them, according to Jesse when he caught onto what Bermudez was up to. He remains a good friend of Shaw.

Jesse told me the story of a young man, he thinks from South Carolina, who lived with Shaw for a while and was an alcoholic. AS HE pronounced the name it was like Formidaball, accent at the end. In this area one can go out Chef Menteur

Highway during duck season and be in the office by 10 a.m., with a bag. One morning, after a successful hunt, he was going down Duaphine Street with a good bag when, on impulse, as one would with a friend, he stopped at Shaw's, to share his delicacies. F answered the knock and would not touch the ducks, which had been eviscerated but not plumed. He asked Jesse to just put them on the ground. Once F went to the Trade Mart and Shaw grabbed him and very rapidly propelled him from the building. He later described F as a poor, unfortunate friend.

It seems to be Jesse's opinion that there is a major scandal at the ITM. He wonders that Marib could just move out with the files of the Cordell Hull Foundation. He thinks there is no longer any real ITM, that it is now merely a Pennaal building. He seems to wonder that no one has looked into it. If a fraction of his suspicions are valid, he would seem to be understating in what he says.

I mentioned the reported marriage between the Sultman woman, whose first name I do not recall, and Shaw, a marriage that fell apart when neither could bear to forgo the domicile to which he (she) had become attached. Jesse says she had had a successful career in public relations in New York, with such clients as Edward Durrell Stone. There had been talk of Stone designing the new ITM. Jesse tried to plant the story with TIME, which wouldn't use it, professing a policy of not printing such stories until ground was broken and steel going up. He says she also was engaged to a fruity full Army Colonel from the finance department, bald and obvious.

Jesse remembers Maude Ellen Farrar as having sought employment with him. He seems not to know Jenn Dedt.

He thinks the Wegmann brothers eased Guy Johnson out of the firm, not that Johnson left over Shaw, rather than handle the case. Once when they discussed Shaw, Johnson told him he didn't know whether he represented Shaw or not. He regards Johnson as a competent lawyer but, seems to not particularly like him personally. If I recall correctly, he may have said Johnson was not in the firm, which is what I recall Bud having told me.

He seems to feel that Shaw was aware of the Bermudex maneuverings against him yet not to have been influenced against Bermudex by them. When he describes Shaw as sensitive and intelligent, this seems inconsistent. His description of Shaw's grandfather is of a gunfighter. And he does explain some of the strange paraphernalia found in Shaw's home. He says he once saw Shaw wearing an Army bullet belt around the waist at Mardi Gras, when garbed as a hunter in India. He told Shaw that, from his experience there, such a belt would soon be the hiding place for ticks, etc. Shaw's response was to show him the use he put the belt to, as for cigarettes, etc. He says one of the other things was given him by a visiting Arab dignitary, perhaps something

else and a bermeose. His seeming belief is that all the strange paraphernalia is subject to such innocent explanation.

He seems to think I should try and see Shaw or his friends, that I should speak to Leon Hubert. I told him of Hubert's deposing of Jean and <sup>(Gripin)</sup> Lieberdorf.

Shaw had told him of being questioned by Garrison in December 1966 and of having the impression this was because his name is Clay and that Garrison was looking for a fag of that name. He seemed to have thought little of this then, to have been surprised by what followed.

From him I learned of photographic records that might exist of the Nashville Street Wharf dedication. I asked Healey's secretary for the picture he recalls from the orange-colored final States-Item edition of that day. Black Star was then represented by Jennie Sipnick, who is still in town and who Matt knows. Sipnick would likely have covered this event, and his film should still be at Black Star. The point in seeking it out would be to see if Shaw or Russe or both are in it. *(He didn't - 1:15 later to him. Got 8-1 picture)*

Jesse also has the T-P of 11/23/63. In reading the local story it carried, I note what he told me yesterday is entirely consistent with what he then told the paper of the Oswald literature distribution.

Jesse is, I think, a reserve Lt. Col in the AF. His wall has several citations to him for public-relations services to the Air Force. He says Garrison has a thing about "Alice in Wonderland", showing me a copy Jim had sent him and saying "This is one thing of his I have", as though there were many of Jesse's Jim had not returned. He showed me a letter he had written Jim on which Jim had scrawled a note to the effect they should get together soon, for lunch, to discuss the point(s) Jesse had made, that he'd phone Jesse, and that it has never happened.

He thinks the turning point in Jim's campaign against Wegmann for DA came when Wegmann was asked if he'd forgo private practice if elected. Wegmann is said to have responded "I cannot live on \$18,000 a year". To which Jim said he could and would. He thinks O'Hara was the Mafia candidate against Jim, and despite his friendship for David Chandler, thinks David wrong (I gave Pat Chandler the promised copies of the FBI report and of the page of Oswald's notebook today).

Jesse also did the PR work for Frank Landridge when he ran, successfully, for Jefferson Parish DA. He still has the rough draft of a full -page Halloween ad he did for Jim, one that they worked on together, about the hidden O'Hara ghosts. It is on his office wall.

He was very friendly, I think trying to be helpful, and as he left to enter his home, said if he came across anything that would help me he'd send it.