

Dear Dave,

1/10/89

Whether an oral history on Garrison's book is worthwhile, worth the time and cost if done by phone, depends, I suppose, on the importance of either the book or the fact that he did the book.

Something I did not mention in the notes I made, where there was no room for it, related to the utter insanity of his putting ~~Speis~~ the nutty Speisel on as a witness. I refused even to speak to him before the Shaw trial. At the time of the incident I refer to I had no special reason to remember it and thus my recollections are not as clear on details as they might otherwise have been. I do not recall now whether or not when I heard of him he had already spoken to Garrison or any of his people. I have a vague and unclear, perhaps incorrect belief that he had.

There was a Canadian actor in New York named Trent Cough. He started an assassination group the name of which I do not now recall. I have a file on him, it or both, of what he may have sent me and of what I wrote him. He had asked me to appear at a meeting of some kind he had organized at what I now recall was an off-Broadway theater downtown somewhere. I may have what he sent me on it but that is not important. After I spoke a woman perhaps my age, perhaps a little younger, came up to me briefly and said she had something very important to talk to me about and would I please leave with her when the meeting was over.

We took a cab to her apartment, on a wide street, perhaps with streetcar tracks, just west of Central Park, a rather nice apartment and I am confident not inexpensive. I think she said she was a widow. We had coffee and talked. I got the impression pretty soon that whether or not she was paranoid, as I came to suspect, she wasn't stable. She told me about Speisel and wanted me to meet him. This is what she thought was so important. I do not recall whether I told her I would not or just broke off and had nothing more to do with her after I left.

As I may have told you, I did not learn what Garrison's alleged case was until the Sunday before they began to empanel the Shaw jury. I was then in New Orleans and had spent the afternoon with Oser and the man I recall as Wardell, the two who, contrary to Garrison's representation in the book that does not mention Wardell's name, seem to be the main lawyers on the case. I prepared them then as much as I could, as I had done earlier with ~~them~~ ^{others}, but when I learned what the thrust of the case was I told them they would lose, that they deserved to lose, and that I would have nothing to do with it. I had agreed to be what Garrison called his "Dealey Plaza expert." although the NYTimes said I was at the counsel table, in fact I never entered the courtroom and never laid eyes on Shaw. The next day, Monday, I made reservations for a noon flight home, ^{The coming Thursday} let it be known, and told the Garrison people that in they proceeded on the line laid out to me I would be on the plane. Bud Fensterwald was there and kidded me. He did not believe me. I was on that plane and

until the time I left I worked away at writing the second part of Post Mortem. I used the old electric typewriter Tom Bethell had. This was made more awkward for me than merely using an electric for the first time by the height of the table. But I continued and in fact paid little attention to anything else.

at home I continued writing that part and soon finished it. I also kept up on the Shaw trial as best I could, I think with the New Orleans papers, radio and TV and with WAB, the Jesuit-owned clear-channel station the CIA had used against Castro. It comes in here at night very well.

I was, of course, shocked at the Speisel story and at the judge's expedition with the jury to the place he claimed to have met Shaw. I do not recall the exact nature of the checking on this that was possible for me but somehow, when it was too late for Garrison to use it, I suppose, I learned that in fact there was a connection between Shaw and that property. My present recollection is that Speisel said he was not certain which of two adjacent buildings it was and that Shaw had owned one of the two buildings, ^{with} the correct one in the story or the one next to it.

I may have notes on this,

My point is that if without even seeing or speaking to the guy I would have nothing to do with him, he had to be very, very undependable and farout.

I can't imagine any of Garrison's lawyers making the decision to use him in the trial, under any conditions, and I can't imagine that he let them put on the stand those they alone decided on. I am confident that it is he who made the decisions to use Speisel. This is not what he says in the book in which I've already told you I found him lying about other things.

as I now recall it the place was on Esplanade. Shaw's home was less than a block from Esplanade, which was at right-angles to the street on which Shaw lived. How close to that street I do not now recall but I think it was pretty close.

There was a time before the trial when I was under the impression that they were checking out Shaw's ^{or} property holdings. If they did and missed this one they did not check very well. I am pretty certain that he did not own that building at the time of the trial.

Gandolfo phoned me last week after he'd returned from a couple of weeks in New Orleans with Garrison. He said he'd mail me the book the next day. As of today it did not come. He also told me he'd get Garrison to phone me tomorrow. I do not expect it because I do not believe that Garrison wants to talk to me. I'm merely curious and have no great interest in talking to him. I am inclined to believe that his closeness to Gandolfo comes from the fact that Gandolfo has a mailing list (with which he appears to have sold quite a few copies for Garrison's publisher) and the reasonable certainty that Garrison does not expect much help, if any, from most critics. If any.

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Trent's girl-friend, Carol Jackson, did the L&J with Oswald's body, holding the rifle, picture I have on the porch door.

I have no separate Speisel file. I have about six inches on the Shaw trial but no separate file on him.

These are in the basement and this was about all the standing I was up to. This is why I did not check the Gough file.

If you think an oral history is worthwhile, please let me know.

Best,

Harold