

SERIALIZATION OF EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK

The Garrison Case

A Study in Abuse of Power

By Milton E. Brenner

On Feb. 24 Garrison was on stage again:

"My staff and I solved the case weeks ago. I wouldn't say this if I didn't have evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt. We know the key individuals. . . There were several plots. . . Ferrie might not at all be the last suicide in the case. The only way they are going to get away from us is to kill themselves."

Garrison took the occasion to announce the formation of a group consisting of approximately 50 wealthy backers and admirers called "Truth and Consequences." The purpose was to furnish the D.A. with private funds for which there need be no accounting. Three principal members were Joseph Rault, Willard Robertson, and

One of a Series

TO READERS: These installments comprise excerpts from the book to which we are limited by our serialization rights. Through necessity, the description of events and the characterizations are not as full as those in the complete book.

Cecil Shilstone, owner of a chemical firm. The identities of other members of the group were not revealed.

LITTLE noted amidst the press reports of Garrison's pronouncements was an item published on Feb. 25 to the effect that his investigators were questioning a 25-year-old insurance salesman from Baton Rouge, La. His name was Perry Raymond Russo.

Meanwhile, Orleans Parish Coroner Nicholas Chetta, who conducted exhaustive tests in

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conjunction with the autopsy on David Ferrie, concluded that Ferrie had died of natural causes, a cerebral aneurysm. Garrison persisted, Chetta's tests notwithstanding, that Ferrie was a suicide.

AT APPROXIMATELY 5:30 p.m. March 1 Gurvich called newsmen for a press conference. He read from a printed statement bearing Garrison's name:

"The first arrest has been made in the investigation of the New Orleans District Attorney's office into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

"Arrested this evening in the District Attorney's office was Clay Shaw, age 54, of 1313 Dauphine St., New Orleans, La.

"Mr. Shaw will be charged with participating in a conspiracy to murder John F. Kennedy."

About a month before the arrest of Shaw, the First Assistant D.A., Charles Ward, told reporters he doubted that Garrison's investigation would turn up anything new. On Feb. 26, three days before the arrest, Garrison told reporters that arrests were months away. What had happened between Feb. 26 and March 1? What had happened was the appearance on the scene of a dark-haired, dapper, well-spoken 25-year-old man named Perry Raymond Russo.

In 1962 Russo made the acquaintance of David Ferrie. His introduction to Ferrie, like that of many other young men, was through the Civil Air Patrol unit.

IN FEBRUARY, 1967, Russo wrote the Orleans Parish D.A. and said that "I had occasion to meet Ferrie and some of his friends and I am willing to tell you what I know about them."

The following day, Russo was interviewed for approxi-

mately three hours by Anthony Sciambra, one of Garrison's assistants. Sciambra prepared for the District Attorney a 3,500-word summary of the interview.

RUSSO WAS shown a picture of Clay Shaw, whereupon there followed the memorandum's most significant passage:

"He said that he saw this man twice. The first time was when he pulled into Ferrie's service station to get his car fixed. Shaw was the person who was sitting in the compact car talking with Ferrie. He remembers seeing him again at the Nashville Avenue wharf when he went to see J.F.K. speak."

NOWHERE in the entire memorandum is there any material expanding on the passage quoted above, wherein Russo specified that he had seen Shaw twice. Nowhere in the memorandum is there any mention of the name Clay Bertrand or any indication by Russo that he knew Clay Shaw by any name whatever.

Russo also mentioned a roommate of Ferrie whom he had seen at Ferrie's apartment two or three times between May and October, 1963.

The roommate, none other than Lee Harvey Oswald according to Russo, was repeatedly described by Russo as bearded, disheveled, unkempt and dirty.

RUSSO had two suggestions for Sciambra with regard to an Oswald photograph. The first was that if Sciambra were to draw a beard on the picture and show it to certain acquaintances of Ferrie's they would undoubtedly identify the picture as Ferrie's roommate. Weeks later this was done. None could make the identification.

The second suggestion was that if he were to be hypnotized he might have total recall on names, places, and dates.

"OBJECTIFYING" tests began on Feb. 27 at Mercy Hospital in New Orleans. Present with Russo were Sciambra, Al Oser, Dr. Nicholas Chetta, and two other doctors. The group gathered in the operating room,

(CAYUNE, NEW ORLEANS,



—Photo by The Times-Picayune.

MR. AND MRS.
FRANK E. COSSE

of 7249 DeSoto st. are observing their 55th wedding anniversary. They have two children and three grandchildren. Mr. Cosse, 82, is a retired hardware salesman. Mrs. Cosse is 75.

and Russo was administered sodium pentothal, commonly known as truth serum.

Under the influence of the drug, Russo was again questioned by Sciambra, as he had been on Feb. 25 without the benefit of the sodium pentothal.

"I then asked him (wrote Sciambra in a memo) if he

LA., FRIDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 24, 1969

could remember any of the details about Clay Bertrand being up in Ferrie's apartment and he told me he was in Ferrie's apartment with Clay Bertrand and Ferrie and the roommate. He remembers Ferrie telling him that 'we are going to kill John F. Kennedy' and that 'it won't be long.' He said Ferrie again repeated his earlier statement that he could plan the perfect assassination of the President because he could fly anything that had wings on it and the perfect availability of exits out of the country. When I asked him who Ferrie was referring to when he said, 'we,' he said, 'I guess he was referring to the people in the room.'

"Bertrand" had now been placed in Ferrie's presence when the latter spoke of assassination!

It was the following morning, March 1, that the instant subpoena was issued for Clay Shaw. At 5:30 that evening, Shaw was arrested.

Sometime later the night of March 1, Russo was taken to the office of the coroner at Tulane and Broad, where he underwent yet another objectifying process. Dr. Esmond A. Fatter, a private medical practitioner, Dr. Chetta, Sciambra, and a cousin of Russo's were present. Russo was to be hypnotized by Dr. Fatter.

THE USE of suggestion during hypnosis and the phenomenon of posthypnotic suggestion are matters well known to laymen. Less widely understood is the basic nature of the hypnotic state itself as one of dramati-

cally increased suggestibility.

G. H. Estabrooks, a doctor of philosophy in the field of educational psychology, states in his volume "Hypnotism" that "... In fact, suggestion appears to be the key of hypnotism. It is the method by which the hypnotist first gains control and unseats the normal conscious mind. After this, he finds that his only way of controlling the subject is again through suggestion, for the subject, left to himself, will generally do nothing at all. . . ."

Dr. Fatter had been briefed by the District Attorney's office on the "facts" of the conspiracy. He spoke with Russo about his background and asked Russo had he ever been hypnotized before. Russo replied that he had.

According to the doctor, Russo reached a "moderately deep trance-state."

This was not the last time Russo was to be hypnotized before the preliminary hearing in mid-March, nor was it the last objectifying process he was to undergo.

A WEEK later Russo was dispatched with an assistant district attorney and an investigator to the office of a qualified polygraph operator. After being alone with Russo in the polygraph room, the operator emerged and informed the D.A.'s men that the machine indicated evidence of deception, and that in his, the operator's, opinion Russo was not telling the truth.

The operator was instructed to stop the test and the D.A.'s men departed with Russo.