

Dear Joan,

8/29/01

I have a very clear recollection of the stinker you ask about in your 8/27. He was and to the best of ~~ka~~ my knowledge still is a bastard. Also ^{with Gordon} literally. His mother was the famous actress of her period and his father was a famous Broadway producer of that same period, Jed Harris, as I remember the name. He offered to marry Gordon when she discovered she was pregnant but even then she refused to marry him. So, their bastard son, Jones Harris, is literally a bastard as too late I discovered he also was in other ways.

I remember the incident you ask about very well, where it took place, why Harris was then in New Orleans, at least what he told me, even the location of his motel room. To which he had invited me. It was about half-way up in the wing of the Fountainbleau that is parallel with Tulane Ave. If he had any special purpose in inviting me, I now do not recall what he said that was. He told me he had an interest in a boxer who had had a fight there that weekend.

I also remember that for a man no larger than Jones he had one helluvan appetite for the breakfast he was packing away in his room.

I'd eaten and did not eat with him.

My recollection is that it was in early April. I'd left home not to have to answer any questions about the King assassination. I went to New Orleans to work there until the interest in the assassination eased off. I did not want to answer questions about what I knew nothing about. As of then.

Your quotations are what I remember. They are unexaggerated, true. = But the date seems to be a bit late because of something else I remember. Bud Fensterwald had organized a fifth-anniversary commemoration at Georgetown Univ., on Wash. I was reluctant to be there and I did not accept for some time. I opposed all the phony "theorizing" which is not that at all and that was a gathering of the assassination nuts. I think Jim Lesar persuaded me to make an appearance and I did and used my speaking time to chastize all those who believed they were Perry Mason and were instead assassination nuts. After I spoke, the morning of the first of three days, I sat around near the entrance to that building and spoke to those I did not regard as nuts. I am confident that Lesar was with me when Harris came out. He came right up to me and boasted that he had conned me. He then said he was never a Kennedy man, that he did not like him, but he did not withdraw the story he told me and you have correctly.

with ones the roadwayite and with his famous parents he could have been truthful in both the contradictory things he said.

That was the last time I saw him. I also recall the time before that. I was caught in New York and with him having a large apartment and with me having done work for him for which he never paid me, I'd hope he would invite me to stay with him. But that was not to be. He was staying with a Rockefeller girl much younger than he. I recall she had a large apartment on a southeast ^{west} corner in the high fifties and Fifth Ave. Later I saw in the papers that he and she got married. Instead of inviting me to stay with him Jones made a hotel appointment and when I got to that dive it was a very noisy unclean bag of a worn-out hotel that was hardly worth the \$5 they charged for a room.

I have a fairly clear recollection of the Lane cribbing of that story- and presenting it as his own - of all things on a TV show I'd shared with him before I read his second book but after it was out and his publisher could not develop any interest on any Wash. TV station for Mark and his book.

When he did that, stole my story to my face on my TV program I was sharing with him, on live camera I told the story of his stealing my story on my program. I think that was the night that King was killed but that seems wrong. I seem to remember that with King killed I did not want to be questioned and that it was then that I left to disappear in N.O.

Anyway, when they broke for a commercial, Lane, angry, said he had a notion to punch me in the face. My reply, on the dead air of commercial time, was that although he was considerably younger than I he did not have to wait until the end of the show. He could just walk across the stage and do it. If he had balls enough. I've not heard a word from him since.

I never printed Coup D'Etat. But that early I was thinking in those terms.

Thinking back over that period and especially on all the work Harris was doing on the assassination, I am inclined to believe the story he told me in N.O., the one that interests you. But today I have no way of knowing. It makes no sense for Harris to have done all the assassination work he did if he was anti-Kennedy.

It is true that later that morning I took Harris into Garrison's office and he there repeated the story he'd told me, no changes at all. I have a clear recollection of that because it seemed to me that if we spent more time together he might tell me a bit more. So, I told him I needed the exercise and asked him to walk there with me. That was a fair distance and as is often true in N.O., it was hot and we worked up sweats. And I was carrying an attache case that was full. Full, it weighed 35 pounds.

Sorry I have no definitive answer to which story is correct but the ones I got to ^{know} ~~know~~ was capable of denying the truthful story, which I do not recall that he did, just to be perverse. Particularly if he knew it had been ^{found} ~~sued~~. As Lane did extensively and as ~~he~~ ^{she} may have known that I did.

Good luck with your book.

Harold

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August 27, 2001

Dear Harold,

You must forgive me for not having gotten down to Maryland. I've run out of money, completely, but also of time. I will reappear as soon as I can.

I want to give you acknowledgment in my text of an interview which you write about in your book Coup d'Etat, Part II. It's on p. 19, and it is about your breakfast (it was your birthday) with a friend of Bobby Kennedy's. You ask him how Kennedy could have said he had "seen everything." The man, whom you describe as also having known Garrison, says "Bobby wants to live."

You ask for "amplification" and the man adds that famous line, "here are already too many guns between Bobby and the White House."

"Whose guns?" you ask.

"He inferred those of CIA," you write.

Harold, I need the NAME of your source. It's too late now for anything but the open and undisguised truth, where we have it. We don't always have it, of course. This story loses its power without that name.

WHO WAS IT? You write that later that morning you took the person into Garrison's office and he told Garrison the same story. The date appears to be April 1968. It's the week after the RFK campaign speech when he endorsed the Warren Report. (March 25, 1968).

Without the name of this person, the story is lost, Harold.

So: much, much obliged. I've enclosed an envelope. If it's easier, call me collect. It will be brief.

Warmest regards,


Joan Mellen

*p.s. I know that Mark Lane has stolen this quote and re-wrote it as a RFK statement:
"there are guns between me and the White House."*