

SHADOW OF A HAPPY ENDING - AN EPILOGUE

When this manuscript was completed, I mailed it to my agent in New York. Forewarned by the experience of the past, when properly addressed letters were never delivered or returned, although they had correct return addresses, where mailed manuscripts were never delivered, delivered belatedly or only in part, were opened and examined without the effort to hide the intrusion in the rights and privacy of writers, I insured it and sent it by "special handling". I can drive to New York in five hours. Nine days later, John Starr phoned to ask where it was. I gave him the insurance identification.

That night he called back to say he had checked with the New York post office and its investigation, which he was assured was intensive, established that the manuscript was not in New York; the various substations had been searched and it was not, by accident, in any one of them.

The next morning, on my way to New Orleans, I mailed John the copy Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the Italian publisher of WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT had asked to see. Thus was publication of this book delayed, both here and abroad, and its revelations denied the citizens who can function in a democratic society only when they are informed.

The carbon copy was "registered". This requires the post office to keep it under lock and key at all times. It its sweep

through New York, it magically scooped up the ribbon copy and John received the two at one time. Such interferences, the post office assures me, are only the manifestation of the consummate inefficiency it has attained over the generations of its operation, the now normal worst possible service it renders. Nothing unusual, it says; certainly no interference with my writing.

My own investigations in New Orleans were fruitful, thanks entirely to the wonderful and friendly people I found there, people who were not afraid. Not that all or even most of the potential witnesses in Jim Garrison's investigation do not live in fear - they do. Perhaps his major problem with witnesses is this and the unwillingness of so many to risk involvement. That is still universal in our country. Oswald's former marine mate who phoned me in San Francisco has since been mute. Many who took pictures at the time of the assassination and whose pictures were of no interest to the FBI are not heard from. Pictures taken immediately before or after the firing may be of greatest value. Any number of men and women in New Orleans who have important information are also silent.

What I learned in my own investigation ranges upward from the trivial but interesting. My stepbrother, Dr. Jack Kety, of Covington, Louisiana, just a little past the training-camp site of the Lacombe-Mandeville road from New Orleans, had treated David Ferrie sevenⁿ years earlier. Another Eastern Airlines pilot, one of Jack's patients, persuaded Ferrie to consult a doctor about his hair loss. Ferrie considered himself expert on everything, including medicine. But he saw Jack before his mania took total possession of him. It is not the romantic but never described accident, that

"explosion" that caused the loss of his hair, nor the dripping of battery acids in a plane, what he told Garrison. It was an unromantic disease.

When the sex charges were entered against Ferrie, he stopped going to Jack. Until then he was suffering from alopecia areata. It was responding to Jack's science, and fuzz had started to grow back in the bald spots. Without proper attention, it degenerated into alopecia totalis and rendered him hairless.

Then there was Orest Pena, who does not like his neighbor Carlos Bringuier. Bill Martin, an assistant district attorney who is fluent in Spanish, accompanied me when I interviewed Orest. Rightly or wrongly, as only the future can attest, we were both impressed by this new American's dedication to his new country. In discussing his attitude to his neighbor, who is the darling of the Hargis wing of the radical right, it seemed to Pena that the most insulting thing he could say of Bringuier is that, were there a change of government in Cuba, Bringuier would go back there. To Orest, it is inconceivable that anyone, even a native Cuban, would voluntarily leave the United States. Others may be afraid, but not Orest. With Bill Martin's fluency in Spanish to overcome my unfamiliarity with Orest's accent, we learned more from this new citizen, who does not fear getting involved and I think thereby shows a concept of citizenship that should be the standard of those born to it. When we talked about FBI Agent Warren deBrueys, Pena added the charge that, after he testified before Liebler, deBrueys visited him at the Habana Bar. When Pena entered his place of business, he saw deBrueys sitting, nervous, tense and quivering. The FBI man,

he says, threatened him. Although Pena is a slight man, neither tall nor heavy, he says he invited deBrueys outside. His invitation was not accepted.

"Take me before the grand jury!" Pena demanded. "I will tell them everything I know. Bring the whole New Orleans press in!"

He was baffled when we sought to explain to him that the grand jury proceeding is and must be secret. I think he began to suspect us when we told him about the need for grand jury secrecy, and I think he did not really believe us when we tried to explain that the integrity of the law and the rights of the individual require this. Our discussion began in his modest apartment above the bar, continued at it, and ended in the street in front of it. He was still, from his expression, dubious at our assurance there was a proper time for the press to be present, and that was in open court.

Less than a week after my departure, a few newspapers noted that Garrison had subpoenaed deBrueys and Regis Kennedy to appear before the grand jury. He will call more FBI agents.

There are other witnesses now available and willing. I was only the catalyst. There are people in every society who cannot establish a rapport with public authority and vice versa. Often a writer can communicate with those free souls who are uncomfortable with official investigators.

The charm, beauty and individuality of the French Quarter, the ancient part of the city, is as the travel brochures assure. The decibel level is augmented electronically. Hard-faced and soft-bodied almost naked girls - less naked than when Jim Garrison became

district attorney - undulate slowly from couches in the windows of Bourbon Street flesh, music and liquor emporia. The come-ons at other establishments are male. The cafe-au-lait at the other end of the Vieux Carre, at the French Market, where the street level is below that of the Mississippi and the ships from afar tower over the patios, is made as it was a century ago. It is served with the traditional square doughnuts, popover-like beignets, hollow but calorie-laden (at the Modern Call, modern only in its neon sign, one shakes the powdered sugar on these delicacies to his own taste from the now rare canisters that once were in every kitchen and on the counters of all the now vanished neighborhood bakeries).

In the early morning, late Spring sun, with tourists, merchants from the wholesale fruit and vegetable stalls, sailors from afar and local stevedores a cosmopolitan mixture with those who just live in the Quarter and all sharing the delight of the at once delicate and lusty morning brew, gracefully and formally served by aging waiters who have spent their lives learning to handle shining, large, narrow-spouted pots of hot black coffee and hot milk simultaneously poured in just the blend each patron prefers, it is inconceivable to the stranger that this same picturesque relic of the past, still painted with the pastels so pleasing to the eye, can at night be a sink of iniquity to the "square" and a haven of freedom for the indulgences of the modern hippies, the jive set and those whose tastes in sex are nonconforming.

Even at night, with the narrow sidewalks unable to accommodate the perforce slow-moving throng of short-skirted women and neatly dressed men as peacefully they walk and talk, there is no

overt suggestion that this is a nest of crime and vice. The stranger goes alone and safe during the hours of heavy traffic, dropping occasionally into the narrow streets clogged with one-way traffic when he has no choice, and is unaware of the darkness of the deeds in the small, low buildings that are denied him.

A few short blocks from the river, thanks to Richard Townley of WDSU-TV, the station of Oswald's "pro-Castro" appearances, I found the unofficial historian of the Quarter who had just completed what may be the definitive writing on voodoo. She is slim, trim, soft-spoken and knowledgeable Barbara Reid, whose alert and individual mind stores more than Madame Lafarge worked into her knitting. The detail of the past and knowledge of the present incredibly retained in this pretty little head may be of great value, for the Quarter is part of the story of the assassination. And Barbara is as unafraid as she is hospitable.

If I avoid enlarging this book with the added detail of this personal investigation, it is not alone to speed its appearance. What has been most lacking since the first bullet splat into the late President is the working of American law, the functioning of organized society. That, today, is represented by District Attorney Jim Garrison, "The Jolly Green Giant" to Dean Andrews, a six-foot-sixer with heart and mind to match. It is time for him to have his chance, uninhibited by the special needs and longings of writers as he takes to court and before a jury that part of the story of the assassination he as the proper representative of organized society believes he must.

Garrison is an intense and outgoing man with a dedication

to his responsibilities as towering as his frame. If only one incorruptible public official has assumed public responsibilities with the assassination, I believe he is that one. On successive nights, I worked with him until one o'clock and left him still working. His office refrigerator held nothing but assorted brands and flavors of canned liquid dietary preparations, the only food he seems to take during the long days in his office.

From the rest of the world and the ends of our country reporters flooded into New Orleans in late February and found him accessible. He was flailed with his own frankness and widely ridiculed. The local newspapers, the Times-Picayune and the States-Item, according to local gossip, were out to "get" him. I found their reporters the embodiment of the theoretical concept of American journalists and a refreshing restorative after long acquaintance with the professional sycophants self-appointed as spokesmen for the "establishment" and apologists for government. While hawking over Garrison with the questioning eye and mind that would have delighted Jefferson, who believed a free press more essential than organized government, they conducted their own incredibly professional investigations. There is not a Merriman Smith among them. Unlike this White House lickspittle, more famous for his "Thank you, Mr. President" than his exposures, they work together. Where Smith violated the traditions and standards of the journalistic pool, denying his colleagues in the assassination-day motorcade their sole link with the rest of the world until he broke it and won the Pulitzer Prize for it, these men organized a voluntary "pool" to better discharge their reportorial obligations in a democratic society.

= Before seven o'clock the morning I decided to check out the strange address notations in Oswald's address book, the only man I found in the courthouse building aside from police was Reporter Jack Dempsey, credited in New Orleans with beginning the digging into Garrison's investigation.

After I testified before the grand jury, the first writer and "private investigator" to do so, and the New Orleans press decided that I considered the sanctity of its proceedings and the proper working of the law more important than selling books, they trusted me and revealed to me what Jim Garrison and all his competent assistant district attorneys and skilled investigators did not know, that they had organized a cooperative investigation of their own. That in those limited aspects duplicating my own it confirmed me was gratifying, but that they did it at all, after my earlier experience with the high-salaried literary finks, was an inspiration.

Theirs is the true Pulitzer-Prize journalism, not alone of this caliber in New Orleans, if secret (as it should have been) and independent. I found two parallel but separate reportorial investigations about neither of which Garrison knew. Richard Townley has one with its own direction, not duplicating that of his competitors. On his own he found much that also interested Garrison and he investigated it in his own way. He also learned what an official investigation could not. Sam DePina of WVUE and Ross Yockey and Hoke May of the States-Item and Times Picayune did what no big-city, big-name writers attempted. They proved and published the involvement of the CIA with the characters of Garrison's probe. In

this they were joined by fellow reporters Rosemary James and David Snyder and by R. T. Endicott, political reporter in Columbus, Ohio, of the Dayton Daily News. How they succeeded in their secret which I preserve for them, for it is also a literary property they should not be denied.

The banner headline across the top of the States-Item of April 25, 1967, reads, "Evidence Links CIA to DA Probe". A subordinate streamer reads, "Novel Says Munitions Theft 'Set Up' by Agency".

Indications are that federal influence helped deny Garrison his witnesses and their testimony as obstacle after obstacle was placed in his way in what I believe is a prostitution of the law, not a preservation of individual rights and liberties. Ohio officials found evasions and mechanisms they expressed in what amounted to a prior demand that the fugitive Novel be guaranteed immunity from not only ~~sanctioning~~ ^{prosecution} but even questioning about his role. Sandra Moffett McMaines, an unpleasant secret of whose past I also preserve, moved from Nebraska into Iowa, a state which does not honor the interstate criminal-witness compact. Is it merely accidental that in his flight Novel found sanctuary in Ohio and Sandra in Iowa, or is the long federal hand reaching out and moving Garrison's witnesses like pawns in an intelligence chess game?

The first sentence of this news story asks a similar question and the second answers it:

Do the long tentacles of the Central Intelligence Agency reach deep into Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's Kennedy death plot investigation?

There is mounting evidence they do, and at least one Garrison probe figure intends to use CIA connections as part of his defense.

"Still others linked to the Garrison investigation," the story continues, "have been named as acting for the super secret espionage organization - as informers, as couriers and munitions carriers."

Novel is quoted as having "told a number of friends and intimates he was a CIA operative and will use this role to battle Garrison's charges". Thus, from his own earlier quoted claims it can be inferred, if Novel did not lie, that the CIA at one point had penetrated Garrison's office!

What one of the lawyers against Garrison has done without seeming to realize it is to acknowledge that the CIA is paying him. Novel, meanwhile, is quoted as claiming an even longer CIA association, going back to pre-Bay of Pigs days when he operated the Evergreen Advertising Agency as a CIA front. He claims to have spread cryptographic messages ~~through~~ ^{through} coded radio commercials "used on 300 stations" in the United States and abroad. In late 1960 alone he placed \$72,000 worth of such radio time.

His CIA contact told him to join the group making the munitions heist, and the key to the bunker was provided. Novel used his own car, a Lincoln, to supplement the capacity of the laundry truck that was also used. Back in New Orleans, the ordnance was stored in Ferrie's home and Novel's and Banister's offices. In addition to explosives, there were land mines, rifle grenades and a kind of small missile.

The New Orleans reporters are working on another angle of this operation that involves the intelligence organization of a large European power. I preserve their confidence and will say nothing about it other than that its motivation was fascist.

When the entire story is disclosed, we may find one intelligence agency burglarizing another and more than one munitions theft.

Typically, Nowel named Arcacha among his still-living associates and for the first time Arcacha had nothing to say, still secure in Dallas where public officials, having sheltered him from the first, were still not assisting Louisiana authorities.

To me, these reporters, unknown outside their immediate areas, have picked up the torch dropped (if, indeed, ever held) by the relatively wealthy and famous by-line writers of international and unwarranted reputation. With no predictable reward aside from the comfort and satisfaction of knowing they have assumed and discharged the traditional obligation of the press in a democratic society, these writers went about their work with such undeviating integrity that the rumor I found in some New Orleans circles is that Hoke May and Richard Townley had been assigned to axe Garrison.

This is as it should be, for they should be independent of public authority and the public's watchdog over it while with equal independence and freedom they do their own investigating and discharge the informative responsibilities of all writers and reporters.

If only nationally unknown reporters like these could have covered the proceedings of the Warren Commission instead of the famous men so willing to be corrupted by the bribery of favored "leaks"! How different and more honorable our subsequent history might have been!

And so, after finishing my third book on this most unpleasant subject in which an American writer can immerse himself, I can

for the first time, ^{report} that, if belatedly, our society is beginning to function, for the first time since the accused assassin was murdered while in the hands of public authority and only because public authority made it possible. For the first time those previously unknown of the few of us who wrote books and articles from our own researches, investigations and analyses are joined by equally unknown reporters given voice by their newspapers and radio and TV stations.

More important, the courts and the law are again working, through indefatigable, fearless and, I am confident, incorruptible New Orleans Parish District Attorney Jim Garrison and his staff of lawyers and investigators who work with the selflessness and dedication I find in him, without regard to hours or personal risk (all I saw carry pistols and know how to use them).

What we have lacked from the split-second of the first assassination bullet in Dallas on November 22, 1963, we may now get - a judicial determination of fact by an American jury, in a proceeding conducted in conformity with American law, presided over by an American judge. Garrison's path has not the roses of the Commission's; it has only the thorns. As he faces a critical press, which the Commission never did, so also he must live and work in conformity with the law and its regulations. Unlike the Commission, he cannot adapt these essential controls to meet his needs as he conceives them. He cannot improvise rules for each special occasion, each succeeding ~~on~~ new problem and emergency. As he is the representative of the law, so is he its servant, and within its strictures and protections of the accused he will be inhibited.

He will confront the other great lack of the federal inquiry, legal adversaries who are competent, imaginative and better armed than he, for our law is designed to protect the innocent and was fashioned with the concept that it is better for a hundred guilty to go free than for a single innocent to be wrongly convicted.

Shaw, Arcacha, Novel and all the others are presumed innocent by a law fashioned to make the establishment of innocence possible and that demands not that their lawyers prove them innocent but that Garrison prove them guilty, and beyond reasonable doubt. Garrison carries a burden no federal authority ever assumed. The legal and statistical odds are as stacked against him and his success, as is the might and influence of the federal power that is the invisible defendant in the New Orleans courtroom.

Even if he fails, as I believe he will not, he will have succeeded, for he has already taken the first official step down the road that can lead to the recapture of our national honor and the integrity of our institutions. In his victory if he wins in court will be more than a conviction of the guilty, more than the indictment of the federal government for what it did and did not do when and after the President was murdered.

We do not have the right to demand or expect infallibility of public servants, from the President down. Our courts presuppose fallibility and error and provide the mechanism for its correction. As Jesus could trust Judas, so also can American presidents and attorney generals and the myriads of bureau chiefs and more common mortals under them err.

When our children do wrong, as parents we must explain to

them wherein they are wrong and why and charge them with thereafter doing right. If we did not get this from the mature men of the federal government when John Kennedy was murdered and they pretended an investigation of the murder they never really made, and if since then they avoided spontaneous examination of their own failings and transgressions, we can now, at last, take comfort that, even if unwillingly, government may have to face its shameful record and with it have the chance to recapture its honor and the respect of man that is not, as it insists, its automatic due.

Through the long days of national shame and dishonor, the days of abdication and disgrace, when all those in whom our national integrity is vested were silent or worse, there were fewer than a corporal's guard of us seeking its recapture, so lonely and abused that only we who lived through it can expect each other to understand and feel its pain. Willingly or unwillingly, the day can now be seen when the government may say, "We did wrong. To the degree that we now can ^we will rectify that wrong."

Then it will have earned the respect of men, here and abroad, and it will have begun to face the crisis in credibility that it made for itself. Then, perhaps more than would otherwise be possible, it will be worthy of respect and belief.

As the author of the first book on this most disagreeable subject and of the most extensive writing on it in scope and volume, I rejoice in the prospect.

In this, my third completed book on it, I may for the first time see the shadow of a happy ending.