

Dear Richard,

2/10/91

After I wrote the enclosed letter to Oliver Stone, without expectation of his paying much if any attention to it but intending, whether or not he did, to have it as a matter of record, I thought about it more before going to bed. My thinking was prompted by a phone call from Dave Wrone, my good friend who is professor of history at the Univ. of Wisconsin at Stevens point. When I told him that the Stone spectacular is going to be based on Garrison's conspiracy theories his ~~xxx~~ reaction was, "My God! We have to do something about it." He suggested that a few historians and I hold a press conference to denounce it. I thought about that later and believe it would not attract much if any media attention. But Dave is correct, something should be done. I wonder if a first-person article in a major magazine could attract enough major-media attention. After he has had time to get and read the letter and then time not to respond to it or to pass it off. Like:

Oliver Stone is an important man in Hollywood. He produces some of the most significant documentaries, with spectacular success. He could not have earned his fame and fortune without faith in his own instincts and judgement. Perhaps this is why he did not respond when I wrote to caution him that in what ^{JANUARY 25} The Hollywood Reporter says is already being referred to as the "Oliver Stone Project for 1991" and describes as a "big-screener about the assassination of ^{FEBRUARY 3} John F. Kennedy;" what the Los Angeles Times reports is "based on Jim Garrison's conspiracy theories" of that "Hot Topic," ^{Q: I told him it} casts him personally ¹ as Mack Sennett in a Pink Panther update of his Keystone Kops.

I was there when and believe me, I know ^{to} know as only a few men close to Garrison when he was ^{the} New Orleans District Attorney who drew the press of the entire world to The Crescent City with the first news that he alone, the six-foot-six Dick Daring ^{of DAs,} had personally solved the Crime of the Century, the ~~xxx~~ November 22, 1963 assassination of ~~xxxx~~ the popular charismatic President.

He had charged as conspirators Clay Shaw, prominent businessman, and successful playwright and a well-known and nonetheless ^{of} respected homosexual; a sick-in-the-head former Eastern Airlines pilot, David Ferrie, who had been charged ^{by} with Garrison's own police department with offenses against minor boys and in real life a ^{softer out he} character who would be hard to accept as a character in a novel, and Lee Harvey Oswald, the only official ^{and the officially ordained lone} candidate for assassin.

When I ¹ knew nothing about his alleged case, having been spending what time I could in New Orleans trying to learn more about Oswald ^{is} ~~is~~, I had agreed to Jim's request that at the Shaw trial (Oswald himself having been killed by Jack Ruby and Ferrie having died under circumstances Garrison regarded as sinister), that I sit at the counsel table and be what he called his "Dealey Plaza expert." ^(A: why to here)

When I learned for the first time what his alleged case was ^{evening} the night before the ~~enpanelling~~ enpanelling of the Shaw-trial jury I refused to appear and ^I did not, although ¹

the New York Times did report that I sat at the counsel table - in the courtroom in which I never set foot.

As I had told Alvin Oser (later a local judge) and Bill Wardell (later United States Attorney on New Orleans-check this) the afternoon before the case began, they would lose and they deserved to lose, ^{it took} ~~it took~~ the jury ^{only} ~~only~~ an hour to agree with me.

Before going to New Orleans, from what I'd learned from the Warren Commission's records and the public domain, I had written the fourth of my seven books, six on this assassination, the other on that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Its publication was delayed by Garrison, who had been asked by the publisher to provide a foreword. Those seven ^{but brilliant} ~~small~~ pages took him three months to deliver.

Later, under the Freedom of Information Act, which the Congress amended in 1974, ~~the~~ over official corruption in one of my earliest lawsuits under that Act ^{and thus made} ~~to make~~ FBI and similar files available to the public, I obtained about a third of a million pages of previously-withheld government records, mostly the FBI's ^{and not infrequently marked 'Sec-1'} ~~and not infrequently marked 'Sec-1'~~ ^{Not used 'Top Secret.'}

So, from my personal investigations and this enormous volume of the government's information, and above all, from my ~~extensive~~ ^{extensive} personal experiences - to say nothing of adventures and extraordinarily difficult and successful efforts to save Garrison's ass from Garrison himself - ^{what} Garrison had staged ^{was} his own Mardi Gras for the media for three ^{three years of Fat Tuesdays for the} ~~years~~ ^{years} and it was ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ nonsense an investigation.

Of Garrison ~~as an investigator~~ I wrote Oliver Stone, "as an investigator he could not find public hair in an overworked and undercleaned whorehouse - at rush hour."

Garrison is, however, an erudite, eloquent, charming, witty and imaginative man, and at the same time, as the perceptive late Sylvia Meagher (author of the brilliant "Accessories after the Fact" exposing the Warren Commission) said of him, he comes from the pages of Ayn Rand. She was much more perceptive than most of the rest of those of us known as "critics" of the official account of that assassination, ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ particular, because I ^{quite wrongly} ~~quite wrongly~~ believed that he had the case he charged ^{with} ~~with~~ and all his excesses ^{was} ~~was~~ his way of fighting fire with fire. ^{no excuse I should have known better.}

Oh, ^{my!} ~~my!~~ what a mess he made of everything as he dreamed up conspiracy theory after conspiracy theory, undeterred when a new one was exactly the opposite of ~~all his~~ ^{all of which he sincerely believed as soon as he birthed them!} earlier theories!

In ~~retrospect~~ ^{retrospect} retrospect, even after more than two decades and the mellowing of my own accumulating years, it is hard to believe that any one man could fabricate so many imaginary wild geese to chase or that he could actually have gone for and ^{to have devised} ~~invented~~ the several disasters from which I, personally, saved him.

The last - which I ^{here} ~~save~~ for last - was when he was going to commemorate the fifth anniversary of that assassination ^{with still another conspiracy} by charging several men of whom he knew the name of ^{one} ~~one~~ the one who had ~~been~~ ^{he} ~~and~~ ^{himself} ~~been~~ ^{had} buried in New Orleans - the year before John Kennedy was ^{assassinated!} ~~buried~~, with still another conspiracy. ^{He} ~~He~~ also had a ring of prominent men who had their

own sado-masochist ring conspiring to kill JFK and he was even so gulled by a fake book produced by the French colleagues of the CIA, SDCCE, that he persuaded the ^{Frenchman} ~~man~~ who used the name "Herve Lamarre" and the pen name James Hepburn, to change the title from "L' Amerique Brule" (American burns) to "Farewell America." ^(Lamarre said he loved Audrey Hepburn, hence "Farewell Hepburn.")

The "Olovet Stone Project for 1991," in ^{January 25} which, as the Hollywood Report ^{by} said hee-o "to show the size of the project, no less than seven casting agents are working between the two coasts to find the right faces for the various roles," will be a genuine "big-screener" of the ridiculous if, as reported, he bases his superduper on Garrison's books, particularly "On the Trail of the Assassins."

It is a work of ^{spook} fiction palmed off as a true account of the world against Jim Garrison, especially the CIA.

It is as dishonest ~~as~~ a book as after almost 78 years I can remember. ^{It also is} and a good read for those who go for all the nutty theories of most of the critics who, although not as much as Garrison, mislead the still-sorrowing people about what happened when the President so many loved and still love was gunned down in broad daylight ^{was} on the streets of a modern American ^{by entrant officialdom} city and consigned to history with the dubious epitaph of the official mythology ^{it continued, their} by which ^{which is refuted by the official records that were suppressed} ~~officialdom~~ in its ^{consigned him to history. until after the report was released and accepted} contrived and impossible "solution"

^{mis} In this these critics have done more to obfuscate than officialdom could, and ^{and} in it they have given credibility to officialdom's lies to the people about the assassination of John F. Kennedy. ^{Extra space}

Oh, Richard, how I wish that "avid had developed his fine interest earlier!"

First it must be understood that Garrison was paranoid -paranoid as hell. He was so paranoid he feared having a hernia ~~corrected~~ surgically corrected in any of the many ^{he really believed he could be killed in any New Orleans hosp. + etc.} fine hospitals in New Orleans. What I do not know of personal knowledge but was told by his staff ^{is} that he persisted in risking the dangers of complications until a small country clinic ^{emptied} could be ^{emptied} of all other patients so that he alone would be there for ⁴ that surgery and the continued hospitalization until it was safe to leave. and what he arranged that he also had a full staff of the police investigators assigned to his office as investigators to guard the hospital and him ^{through out his confinement} for that ~~period~~ of time.

It also must be understood that there was no need -absolutely no need at all - for the federal government to boobytrap him in any way. all the harm that was done to his "probe" he, personally did to it. It simply was not possible for any outside force to undermine his credibility ^{(repeatedly) as} as completely and as effectively as he did. For example, ~~having~~ having charged Oswald in court as one of the conspiring assassins, he laced the country and filled the papers and the electronic media with his proclamations of - Oswald's innocence.

There is no "trail" in Garrison's book. There isn't even a lead as thin as the most gossamer of spider threads.

Nor are there any assassins. *Not that earlier he had not charged dozens of them. (into-use several of his charts to illustrate)*

On the assassination itself, there is less substance than to the clothing of the emperor ⁱⁿ the fable.

The book is an utterly shameless, unabashed self-justification and self-glorification by a ^{pretendably persecuted and} gifted and sometimes highly principled lawyer who ^{is at once mild and witty} can also be kind and yet ascerbic. It is the embodiment of the lawyer's maxim, "penis erectis sciam non habet."

It is also a book of childish vengeance and the pettiest of dishonesties. ^{This is} In part so that he ^{alone is} ~~also~~ can be central ^{to} it except where anything else makes no difference and he ^{still} remains central.

His dislikes are obvious ^{He shows this} with me by lack of mention ^{of} and by attribution to others with profuse thanks ^{they did not do and I did do} to them for what ~~I did~~ - and he knows very well that I did - and what it would have cost him if I had not.

This can have a number of origins.

For one thing, I never sat at his feet and fawned as almost all others did.

For another, at ~~the~~ the very outset of his "probe" both the Washington Post and the Times of London conspicuously attributed the origin of his fiasco to my first book "Whitewash: the ~~report on the Warren Report~~" where, indeed, ^{is} in it and in it alone his ^{this includes but is not limited to} beginning point, ^{(Garrison proclaimed that this was the} the mysterious character "Clay Bertrand" ^{was reported, was Bertrand} was reported.

The Post said, "the investigation is Garrison's, but the script apparently started with Harold Weisberg, former Senate investigator and author of 'Whitewash'..."

The Times said, "One mystery of the rather mystifying investigation of the Kennedy assassination now being conducted by Mr. Jim Garrison, the Attorney General of New Orleans, has been cleared up. The source of much of the information is Mr. Harold Weisberg, the author of Whitewash, Report on the Warren Report."

In fact this is what the offbeat, jive-talking New Orleans lawyer to whose ~~text~~ Warren Commission testimony I gave first attention ^{reilly fully told me that} Garrison told him while publicly claiming that he got the idea during a conversation with Louisiana Senator Russell Long, Hueie's nephew.

If ~~likely~~ ^{also} could come from my denunciation of what his case was and accurate prediction that he would lose it ^{and should & there were some} was at least one factor, ^{all less majestic to Super Sleuth #19} probably among many, ^{Jim}

Garrison is an egocentric man certain of his own wisdom and intelligence and sincere in his belief that he really owned the subject of the JFK assassination. ^{To} With him, as with virtually all the many who "solved" the case with a variety of sometimes imaginative ~~theories~~ theories that in their minds became real and were in no instance proven, in most instances untenable and in some known to be impossible to their authors, fact is not relevant.

In "The Trail of the Assassins" truth also is irrelevant.

For one who knows the fact and knows the truth it is hilarious as it appears in Garrison's rewriting of his own history.

"^{Tout}right," he was fond of pronouncing, "is the first victim." *It certainly was his!*

Nobody ever proved ^{this} ~~it~~ more completely and more completely dishonestly that this truly talented ^{ad} man who was given the ^{lasting} nickname by Dean Andrews, one of his witnesses he charged with perjury before the grand jury, of "The Jolly Green Giant."

If the also talented Oliver Stone ~~can~~ produces anything other than a side-splitting comedy of the tragedy that Garrison was, it will be his own self-indictment and he, too, will go down in history as still another of the major media who failed the nation with still more lies about that awful crime, contemporaneously called "the crime of the century," ^{the} crime that turned the world around, the crime that replaced the President who had turned dove and become a ^{leader} ~~man~~ seeking peace for the troubled war with the ^{hawkish} President of the Viet Nam disaster.

Resume with Garrison stories. Wrote is to xerox the copy of the book I annotated and mail it to me.

You can see where I broke for breakfast after which I stopped, ^{briefly} to read the Sunday paper but I can't get this out of mind. It and the potential I can see in it excite me.

It has been so long I now am not familiar with practise. It used to be lead and summary. I hope the letter to Stone, parts, ^{Can serve as a summary. All after Lyndon one} will indicate that there is very funny content for what could be a very long list of pertinent, tragicomical and documentable stories.

In my excitement I'm reminded of something I dearly hope might be possible. Years ago Ed Epstein wrote a lengthy New Yorker article that then appeared as ^{or was expanded} into a book, "Counterplot." If they are interested, and I hope you have a way of ascertaining, ^{or inducing interest} it can be expanded no end. With pictures, with documentation, including of the SDECE part, with even copies of some of their calling-cards. and, of course, FBI documents of which I attach only a single page. When Helen is here tomorrow I'll tell her where to look ^{for} that very rough report I did on that broken of all things - East German portable typewriter of Matt Herron. Who is his own spectacular story that could be inserted. If it works, with someone, preferably of light touch, because so much of this is so ridiculous while so true, I ~~can~~ can talk the rest in that writer's presence into a recorder and we can also get enough documentation.

Whatever Stone does or does not do, this is a sure-win/no lose story/book because if he does what I regard as extremely unlikely, this is what did it. And if he doesn't, with any attention it will do him in. And at the same time is 100% factual, a serious report on a major incident in history dealing with one of its greatest tragedies and is simultaneously very, very funny.

Hopefully, Harold