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Shooting of JFK-- A Wild Accident?

Jim Garrison, the odd giant district attorney of New Orleans, had his own warped idea of how President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and by whom. His charges, real or accidental, made headlines around the world. Now he has been indicted on a charge of taking dough from petty gamblers.

When Garrison jumped aboard the post-assassination bandwagon it was already crowded with some of the nuttiest nuts of those not-so-fine times. Also aboard were a few shrewd mercenaries riding JFK's shroud for profit. Garrison fitted snugly into both factions.

Every American tragedy brings an assortment of kooks out of the woodwork, drawn to the agony and the excitement like moths to a blowtorch.

Police will tell you that whenever there is an unsolved or incomprehensible murder of any notoriety they are deluged with clues from all sides. Also, dozens of balmy (or maybe just lonely and fanciful) people call in to confess.

The Kennedy assassination in Dallas, which came in the course of an unexpectedly enthusiastic reception, produced more lunatic reaction than any similar event since the kidnapping and murder of the baby of Charles A. Lindbergh in 1932.

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GARRISON'S NAMED conspirators were mostly New Orleans homosexuals who were either dead, vanished or could not defend themselves without exposure of their way of life. His whole leaky case, which in time was thrown out of court, was as preposterous as the venal meanderings of Mark Lane and others who made a buck out of the murder.

One of these fellows even had assassins popping up out of dozens of manholes and mowing down the President, fore and aft. He never explained how the windshield of the Presidential car was not punctured. Or why some of the best reporters in the country — the White House correspondents who were traveling with the President — failed to see or hear all those bullets allegedly zipping about.

President Kennedy was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald. Some uncountable millions of American men, and even women, would willingly have tried to kill Oswald after he was apprehended. The owner of a topless joint in downtown Dallas, a pimp named Jack Ruby, appointed himself as the executioner of the assassin — who was ludicrously "protected" by the Dallas police.

Ruby, a pathetic publicity hound, believed that he would be hailed as a national hero for putting a bullet in Oswald's guts. Instead, after a clownish trial in Dallas, he was sentenced to death. He died of cancer before the state's executioners could have their go at him.

The reason the Garrisons, Lanes and others could feed so successfully on the assassination is rooted in the simple fact that in a tragedy of such magnitude many people, especially overseas, cannot conceive of a major killing without suspecting that deep, dark intrigue was somewhere afoot.

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FOR ALL WE KNOW, it could have been a stupefying accident.

Oswald, who never had much sense and was trying to "prove" his virility to his Russian wife, who wouldn't share her bed with him, was fighting mad at Texas Gov. John Connally, now Treasury secretary.

Connally had just previously rejected Oswald's appeal for help in trying to persuade the Marine Corps to change his dishonorable discharge to some less abrupt separation.

Connally occupied the jump seat directly in front of Kennedy as the open limousine moved slowly through the announced area where Oswald worked.

Oswald, knowing his job in the Texas Schoolbook Depository would give him a bird's eye view of the procession, brought his Italian rifle with its telescope sight to the man who wouldn't help him with the Marine Corps.

He missed, let's say, and hit the other man in the passenger portion of the car, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Oswald always was a lousy shot. Look up his Marine Corps marksmanship rating.