

PREPARED BY GCI - Los Angeles

INTERVIEW BETWEEN MR. BOB GRANT, KLAC RADIO, JULY 25,
1968 AND MR. EDWARD J. EPSTEIN - REGARDING NEW YORKER
STORY ON DISTRICT ATTORNEY JIM GARRISON OF NEW ORLEANS

- GRANT: We have on the line right now Mr. Edward J. Epstein, author of Inquest, currently teaching Urban Policy at Harvard University Summer school, and he is completing a new, uh, new book called Counter-Plot and he is working for his Ph.D. in government. He is a man who is extremely articulate, and uh, a brilliant young man indeed, Mr. Edward J. Epstein, you are on our news-maker line, and this is Bob Grant here in Los Angeles on KLAC.
- EPSTEIN: Well, thank you for that introduction, uh I - I gather it's about the article that was published in the New Yorker which will be part of my book, uh, which will deal with the investigation of Jim Garrison in New Orleans, uh, and in a sense my investigation of Garrison's investigation.
- GRANT: Exactly Mr. Epstein, and I wondered why you, uh, issued such a strong indictment of the activities of Jim Garrison?
- EPSTEIN: Well, it wasn't meant to be, uh, an indictment - what I did was I went down there, uh, since I had written a book which Mr. Garrison had said had helped launch him on his investigation. Uh, questioned the finding of the Warren Commission, I was predisposed to believe Mr. Garrison and, and believe the possibility that he had found something. And I spent, I went down there on several occasions and altogether spent, uh, quite a bit of time there and interviewed his staff...
- GRANT: Uh-huh
- EPSTEIN: And him, and uh, I looked through his evidence, he makes it available to just about anyone - at least anyone who he thinks is on his side and uh, and then I began to get a very odd feeling that perhaps his entire investigation was nothing more than uh, uh, publicity seeking, which of course is, uh, something that is - is uh, uh, unheard of with American District Attorneys, uh...
- GRANT: Alright, now Mr. Epstein, uh, I'd like to ask you some questions about this uh, uh, and I want to make it perfectly clear that I'm definitely not acting as he's uh, that is Jim Garrison's defense lawyer, and anybody who has heard me on this subject knows that I've generally not viewed with favor, quite the contrary, Mr. Garrison's goings on in New Orleans, I want to make that perfectly clear. However, in the interest of an inquiry, a little inquest of my own, on page 40 and 56 of your article, you identify Gordon Novel as a quote, I think you said electronics expert. Now aw...
- EPSTEIN: Yes

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GRANT: Now for the benefit of the audience I want to point out Mr. Epstein, that Novel is a former New Orleans resident, he was subpoenaed as a witness by Garrison in April of last year for questioning in connection with, uh, Garrison's assassination probe, then I believe he went to Ohio to avoid questioning by Garrison, and Governor Rhodes uh, refused to extradite him, now..

EPSTEIN: That isn't true Bob, that's what Garrison, uh, has said in the Playboy interview, in his Playboy interview and what Garrison consistently says to the press.

GRANT: Yeah

EPSTEIN: But the facts of the matter, which are all in the public record is that Garrison had, uh, issued a warrant for Novel...

GRANT: Uh-huh

EPSTEIN: And, uh, he was arrested in Columbus, Ohio, a little town outside of Columbus, Ohio

GRANT: Yes

EPSTEIN: Uh, and after he was arrested, Garrison filed extradition papers. The extradition papers were missing certain details such as the place in which the alleged crime, which was a burglary, took place. And uh, the Governor Rhodes or his, whoever handles these matters for him, returned the papers to, uh, the Governor of Louisiana and to Jim Garrison to fill out these details. And uh, it had to be filled out within 60 days or ah, the uh, warrant would expire.

GRANT: Uh-huh

EPSTEIN: And uh, Garrison never filled out these details, and when a lawyer working for him, Jim Alcock, an assistant D.A., told him that the 60 day deadline was expiring...

GRANT: Yeah

EPSTEIN: In, uh, otherwise to complete the papers, extradition papers, Garrison told him to let them expire, they would never extradite him anyhow.

GRANT: Alright that uh...

EPSTEIN: Uh, there's an interesting matter here, William Gurvich, who was working for Garrison said the reason Garrison wouldn't fill out this information is that it happened in a parish which was outside his jurisdiction, and therefore, the entire warrant would have been, uh, held void.

GRANT: Alright, that's a very interesting answer Mr. Ep....

EPSTEIN: I mean, it's quite interesting that he takes something like this and then he comes up why won't, you know he has these questions..

GRANT: Yeah

EPSTEIN: Why won't the Governor of Ohio extradite a person who I want in my investigation?

GRANT: Alright, let's continue with Mr. Novel, uh Mr. Epstein, and go to something else, uh, right now I'm looking at uh, well actually it's a copy Xerox copy of a front page of the New Orleans States Item of May 25, 1967. Now the headline here says "Novel CIA Agent Attorney Admits" - that's the actual headline. Now, there's a detailed story by a John McMillian and uh, someone else by the name of Hoke May, which includes such information as an admission by uh, Steve Plotkin, Novel's attorney that Novel served as an intermediary between the CIA and anti-Castro Cubans in New Orleans and Miami prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion. Now this story, just for the edification of the audience, because I know you are familiar with it Sir, reveals that Novel had been arrested in Ohio on a charge of conspiring to burglarize an oil service company's munitions bunker in, oh some town in Louisiana, and uh, again Governor Rhodes refused to extradite. And the article tells of a secret...

EPSTEIN: Same incident we just referred to.

GRANT: Yes

EPSTEIN: Now,

GRANT: But why-why-why the contradiction though with uh...

EPSTEIN: Gordon uh, you know, Gordon Novel worked for the CIA or he didn't work, it's irrelevant as far as I'm concerned, but you know Gordon Novel denies this and his lawyers are suing Playboy and Garrison for 10 million dollars for alleging that he was a CIA agent. Now, I don't know the truth whether he was or wasn't, but the point is that Garrison began investigating the Bay of Pigs invasion.

GRANT: Uh-huh

EPSTEIN: Novel had worked for Garrison at no - Garrison's request as an investigator because Novel supposedly knew, knew a lot about the people involved in the Bay of Pigs invasion, which Garrison was interested in, although he never connected them to his case.

GRANT: Alright, let me ask you this...

EPSTEIN: (2-3 words unclear) Novel, well I think, uh, you know you brought this up...

GRANT: Alright, go ahead, I'm sorry.

EPSTEIN: He then turned on his own investigator, which has been a pattern with Garrison, Dean Andrews be...who, who was also working at his, for sometime as an investigator for Garrison, at least aiding him, he indicted him for perjury, and uh, he's quite often turned on people who first worked for him or get involved in the investigation.

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GRANT: Alright

EPSTEIN: Maybe we'll go on to the next question.

GRANT: Yes, uh and I think my next question is this - why, whether it's alleged or not and you do have knowledge of it, but why didn't you reveal some of this information about the connection, the CIA connection in your article, you give no indication of it at all that I could find.

EPSTEIN: Well, I (laugh) Gordon Novel and his lawyer deny that they, they ever said he was a CIA agent.

GRANT: You could have put that in.

EPSTEIN: They are preparing a lawsuit which I do say that Novel denies these charges and uh, it is in the article, uh, that Garrison alleges that he uh, uh was connected with the assassination, and uh, I mean I'm not trying to say that someone is or isn't, it's not a crime to be a CIA agent, and uh, I don't think there is any evidence that Novel was ever a CIA agent, any evidence whatsoever, the evidence was that that Novel supposedly alleged himself, or his lawyer alleged that he was a CIA agent. That was a newspaper report, but Novel denied that and begins suing people, who quoted that report. So the only evidence has been Novel's own statement or his reported statement, which he denies, so how can you report - it's a non-fact, I mean (laugh) no one ever alleged that-that-that Gordon Novel was a CIA agent himself, supposedly, and then he denies it and says that he's not.

GRANT: I think the article would have been stronger if you had put the allegations, stated that it was an allegation and then refuted it, uh, as you are doing now.

EPSTEIN: What has this to do with the assassination with uh, uh former investigator for Garrison did or did not work for the CIA?

GRANT: Well, well he...

EPSTEIN: There are about 80 thousand people in America who work for the CIA...

GRANT: In other words, you think it was, it was irrelevant?

EPSTEIN: I'm asking you, what relevance does it have that a man might have worked for the CIA?

GRANT: Well first of all, I'll tell you, alright, since you put a question to me, I deserve uh, uh you deserve an answer and I'll try to give it to you best I can, because you have to realize you have done a great deal of study with and uh, moreso than many, many people, but I'll try the best I can right after I tell everyone that we are talking, ladies and gentlemen on KLAC, two-way radio, it's 2 o'clock here in Los Angeles and uh, this is Bob Grant talking to Edward J. Epstein, author of Inquest, completing a forth-coming book, Counter-Plot.

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GRANT: And uh, Mr. Epstein has been uh, very critical of Jim Garrison, and that's what we're talking about, his criticism of Jim Garrison. Alright, now you put the question to me about, uh, the relevance of uh, the CIA connection.

EPSTEIN: Well, I do put the allegations in the article.

GRANT: Alright, well...

EPSTEIN: About the burglary, that he received the key from the CIA, and you, and what I want to know from you is why you think that even if you think he was a CIA agent, even if he was, what, uh, is that a crime, what's wrong with being...

GRANT: Oh that in itself is uh, not a crime, and certainly not, I'm glad we have a CIA but I think it's quite relevant because first of all, as you say in your article, Garrison has said that elements of the CIA participated in the assassination of President Kennedy. You, you point that out.

EPSTEIN: But Novel was his investigator.

GRANT: Yeah, but, but in view of that and even assuming that one finds such a charge uh, difficult or even impossible to believe, I don't see how you can use Gordon Novel as a source of counter-charges against Garrison without revealing to your readers Novel's connection with the CIA. A connection his own attorney, I must remind you, has publicly admitted. Now, what I'd like to know...

EPSTEIN: Now...

GRANT: What I'd like to know is how you can keep that information from your readers and how you can really believe such information is irrelevant?

EPSTEIN: I didn't keep the information, it's in the article, it uh, after I say that the allegations I say that Gordon Novel, uh, Garrison says that Gordon Novel told him that he received a key from the CIA to open up, uh, munitions from going to Houma, Louisiana, I mean, that's what it says in the article.

GRANT: You were aware of the States-Item article?

EPSTEIN: It's in the New Yorker article.

GRANT: Alright, alright, that's that's good, we've cleared that up, and uh, let's turn to something else here. We know that Garrison's charged, and once again I think you said this in your article, that the CIA, at least some element in the CIA was behind the assassination of President Kennedy, Ed - Mr. Epstein, isn't it true?...

EPSTEIN: He also tells (?) Minutemen, uh the uh, the Negro militants, he's made about 250 different charges of people being involved, the CIA being one group that he mentions...

GRANT: Yeah

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EPSTEIN: Which, you're right, he mentions them almost every time.

GRANT: Right, he does.

EPSTEIN: The super structure in America.

GRANT: You're right, he does, and yet, uh, you rely on Gordon Novel, Mr. Epstein, is it not true, would it be a fair statement to say that, uh, Edward J. Epstein relies on Gordon Novel as an important source of information against Garrison?

EPSTEIN: (Laugh) I never spoke to Gordon Novel, I uh, didn't rely on him for anything in the article.

GRANT: Um-huh, well you are, I just want to clear this up because some people have written to me and have suggested that you were not aware of Novel's CIA connections.

EPSTEIN: (Laugh) You're saying, you just said that I am not aware of Gordon Novel's CIA connections. That's true, and no one neither is anyone else, seeing that Gordon Novel denies he has any connections with the CIA and no one, and uh, what you're saying is I'm aware, unaware of rumor that he's connected or?

GRANT: Yes, unaware, unaware that his attorney, now let's go back, now let's go back to, uh, the question that I posed to you a little while ago - in which I, where's that States-Item, uh, this newspaper in front of me. Oh yes, Novel CIA Agent Attorney Admits. That's from the New Orleans States-Item of May 25, 1967 - did you, uh, tell me just a moment ago that you were aware of that?

EPSTEIN: I spoke to his attorney and the attorney denied that he ever made that statement.

GRANT: The attorney denies that he ever made that statement.

EPSTEIN: Yes.

GRANT: But you were aware that it did appear in the States-Item the 25th of...

EPSTEIN: Yes, and I have it in my article, I have, I keep telling you that it's in the article.

GRANT: Alright, let's turn...

EPSTEIN: A couple of statement of a, of a statement which he, which a reporter quotes, uh, another reporter.

GRANT: Oh

EPSTEIN: Made the statement that Garrison said that the allegation, whether it's true or not, it's uh, and Gordon Novel isn't a source, I never spoke to him, I never quote him except where he's quoted publicly.

GRANT: Well, I don't want to dwell on Novel, uh, what about the Mc men photograph? Uh, are you aware of the Moorman photograph?

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EPSTEIN: What is the Moorman photograph?

GRANT: You've never heard of the Moorman...

EPSTEIN: Taken by Mary Moorman?

GRANT: Well the, yes, yes, this woman who took this photograph, she was the closest one to President Kennedy at the time of the assassination.

EPSTEIN: Yes, I've seen it hundreds of times.

GRANT: And, uh

EPSTEIN: It showed some bushes in the background, and some people claim there are figures in the bushes...

GRANT: And the Itek Corporation, a leading photo, optics and analysis firm in Massachusetts, right in your state, analyzed that picture -- did they not?

EPSTEIN: Yes, they analyzed it and the conclusions was that it didn't show anything, as far as I know.

GRANT: Ah, but the...

EPSTEIN: They analyzed the Nix photograph, I'm not quite sure if they analyzed the Moorman, but I know whatever finding they had which were published in the New York Times...

GRANT: Was only the shadow?

EPSTEIN: (Unable to understand two words) the photograph.

GRANT: Yeah, it was only the shadow of the tree or bush, I think was their actual words. But you know something, Mr. Epstein, in my opinion, and my eyes could be playing tricks on me, that isn't true. Uh, I checked with Itek, and they did not analyze the Moorman photograph - they analyzed another one taken from the 8mm movie film shot by Nix.

EPSTEIN: Mr. Grant, but I, you said they analyzed that photograph, I said they analyzed the Nix photograph.

GRANT: No, but I'm asking you, were you under the impression they analyzed the Moorman photograph as well. I know you said Moorman

EPSTEIN: You said it. I said I had no knowledge they analyzed the Moorman, they analyzed the Nix photograph.

GRANT: Awww, alright, well okay, than, then it's just as well, I can put the question to you this way, uh, do you think it's significant that, uh, they didn't bother with the Moorman photograph.

EPSTEIN: All I know, is that you can look into photographs of bushes, or look into clouds for that matter, and you can see what ever you want.

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EPSTEIN: There all that are in photographs when you blow them up are dots, and the mind connects these dots and uh, it's a principle of Gestalt psychology to think you see a lion in the clouds, and it looks as much like a lion as a lion in the zoo looks like. You can look into these photographs - people have shown me 12 different people in those bushes, some wearing hats, some not wearing hats, uh, they've shown me people standing on trucks - I agree with you Bob, they look like people, the only question is, I also saw, uh, and this, it looked exactly like Abraham Lincoln, except that he was about 12 feet high in one of the bushes. I mean, you can see almost anything you want to see in the bushes, if you want to look and connect those dots with your eyes. Once someone point out to you, where a pattern of dots are, then you can conclude that it's a pattern of dots.

GRANT: Well

EPSTEIN: I didn't deny that there were people in the bushes, I just simply say that Garrison was shown a picture which reportedly shows people in the bushes and he added four assassins to his plot. I don't say that he shouldn't have added, I don't make any judgements, all I'm trying to do is tell where he got his 16 assassins from.

GRANT: You don't make any judgments, and that probably is a true statement, Mr. Epstein, and I think of all the, uh, so called Warren critics, you probably have been the most responsible, and I have no quarrel with you, however, I think it's interesting that, uh, a moment ago, uh, when I made the mistake of assuming that you had seen the photograph of the Moorman photograph and you did try to tell me that you had seen the Nix photograph, that you are not interested in observing or analysing the Moorman photograph. I think that it is incumbent on you and people like you to get as many photographs as you can and not to write them off. I saw the Moorman photograph, and anybody in this listening area can tell you that I have not made a career out of attacking the Warren Commission. I know a lot of people are doing that, I have not, as a matter of fact, I've tangled horns with Mark Lane several times. However, I do believe that I saw a second and fifth man, particularly the fifth man in the Moorman photograph.

EPSTEIN: Uh-huh

GRANT: Now if you were Joe Ball, you would tell me I should go see a psychiatrist.

EPSTEIN: No, I never did, I just said that it's a major principle of Gestalt psychology that when someone points out to you something in, in some shadows and bushes, and not to you, anyone, and they show you the shape of the head, you will see that head and you'll swear that you see it. It's a major principle, and I, uh, don't deny that you see it, I don't deny that someone is in the bushes, I don't even deny that there's a second or third or fifth man in the bushes...

GRANT: Uh-huh

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EPSTEIN: I'm not denying that, I'm asking what it have to do with the investigation and what it has to do with Garrison's investigation is that he's positive 16 assassins, and I tried to show where he derived, of course, he keeps changing this number, it's now down, the last time it's down to about 7.

GRANT: (Laugh)

EPSTEIN: But they keep going up and down, and I was just trying to show on what type of evidence he posit assassins. Now you might think that it's good evidence, but uh, he states it very authoritative, he doesn't say I think I see a man in the bushes.

GRANT: Yeah

EPSTEIN: Or as you just said a figure that I'm sure is a man, he said that there were four assassins that...

GRANT: Uh-huh

EPSTEIN: Of Latin origin, two were there shooting rifles and two were picking up the cartridges. I'm just reporting the statements, I mean...

GRANT: Well, Mr. Epstein...

EPSTEIN: My personal opinion is that it's ridiculous, but if someone else wants to have a look, they can.

GRANT: Well Mr. Epstein, we have kept you on much longer than, uh, originally planned. I would like to publicly invite you when you are here on the coast to be a in-person guest, I would like to debate this further with you, perhaps we could both do it more justice face to face.

EPSTEIN: I thank you very much, it's been enjoyable speaking to you.

GRANT: Well Mr. Epstein, would you do me one favor and stay on the line because my producer would like to have a word with you, and thank you and continued success to you. Edward J. Epstein, author of Inquest and I'm sorry for taking so long on that newsmaker call, but this type of interview that I wanted to conduct, and I didn't think I did it justice, would have to last a half-hour, hour at least. I hope you found it interesting, and I thank you for listening with us.