

Dear Dick,

9/26/91

When I saw the headline on this story I was immediately interested because since I first saw him play last year I believed he had a good future ahead. It was not only because of his impressive returns this year. It is because I think he has a future that I wonder if Jonathan will want to know more about him or keep an eye on him.

The Redskins had no interest in him as a quarterback when they drafted him last year. They saw him as a running back. The few times he was used that way as I recall he averaged about 10 yards per carry. ^{briefly} Once they also used him as a quarterback and he was OK only.

When I saw Blaquemine Parish I highlighted it for several reasons, as a reminder because I knew Lil would not be able to read the paper promptly. All the reasons relate to one man who, among other things, got dishonorable mention in Steinbeck's "Travels with Charlie," the late Leander Perez. An authentic racist, dictatorial monster who was kicked out of the Catholic Church over his virulent racism and his activism in it.

Aside from his excommunication he was really even more than the unquestioned dictator of Plaquemine Parish, which is the swampland of the delta below New Orleans. ^{Had} With what amounted to his own army!

And with it he actually fought a shooting war with the governor's State police!

I'm sure there has been some mention of this in books and I'm also sure that there is enough readily available that could make a book today that I think could also be a movie.

I have long had another interest in Perez. There is a New Orleans connection with the King assassination, at least one, and I've always believed that it was people from that area, including possibly if not probably the Baton Rouge area, that may have been the assassins. In the Baton Rouge area, there was Whitey Martin, who ran Teamsters District 5, the man who was used by the DJ to get Jimmy Hoffa, in return for which he had 26 crimes forgiven. Two were capital offenses, as I recall a kidnapping and a murder. It was general belief that Partin had his own gang. I had a hunch that if Perez wanted to offing those to whom he might turn had to have Partin as his No. 1 choice. No proof.

I saw Perez once, by accident, when he was playing Playboy pool with a New Orleans Bunnie whose breasts threatened to emerge from her scanty costume when she bent over the special Playboy pool table.

There was a time when Orest Pena, a Warren Commission witness, and I were close, coming from his having read the Dell edition of Whitewash. He'd phoned one day when I was at the archives, Lil told him to phone that night and suggested a time, and he actually phoned me earlier. He told me he had only a few minutes, that he was at the hospital awaiting the reading of X-rays of his head just taken, and that when I returned to New Orleans he'd give me another ~~war~~ book. (He didn't.) He said he'd been leadpiped and he suspected it was because he had phoned me. I told him I'd look him up when I returned and

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I did. He wanted to spend as much time with me as he could and he did every night that week, the week ~~ing~~ was killed, rather the week after he was killed.

I was surprised to see that he had the purpl~~ist~~ of fancy Cadillacs, with all the extras. He explained this to me by saying that "they" had tried to kill him by staging an auto accident. His car was totalled. So he decided that if they were going to kill hi, "Fuck it! I live it up."

Yes, he was a bit paranoid. But that week something happened that gave his fear some support.

He decided, and I pretty much agreed, that we'd spend each night together, beginning with supper. However, he had to make regular visits to his bars, I think he then owned four, one of which, the Habana Bar and Grill, figured in the Warren investigation because Oswald allegedly threw a conspicuous frunk there. (He and witnesses he got to talk to me agreed it was not Oswald.) So, we drove to each about each hour save when supper took longer. He collected the money to be sure it was not in the bars to be robbed.

One of those suppers was at that Playboy Club. He appeared to be well known there. and our table was closest to the pool table.

One night that week, I think Wednesday, I'd arranged with Barbara Reid, a sort of Mme. LaFarge of the French Quarter, to have a young woman there for us to meet. She wanted to size me up, this chick of 20, to see if she would talk to me. No, that was the night before, after which she did decide to talk to me, at Barbara's St. Phillip Street home. Andrew "Noo" Scimabra, the assistant DA closest to Garrison then, was to meet me there. Only his business with his mistress delayed him and he got there late. By that time I'd questioned this young woman until ^{she} ~~she~~, in her words, "zonked out." I taped it. It was impressive. She knew about all those Garrison had questioned. and I never knew her to read a newspaper. I've never been able to dope out the basis for her detailed knowledge. I could have come from careful reading newspapers I never ever saw here with. And I saw much of her over a period of time. *(Among her stories: having seen Oswald at Cuban camp)*

She had hardly fallen asleep when Scimabra arrived. Not long after that I got a phone call from a friend, Matt Herron, a fine professional photographer, the ^{working} for Black Star on assignment to Memphis on the King assassination, he'd phoned my home, learned I was in New Orleans, phoned the motel at which he knew I stayed (and after that trip I stayed with him) and when I was not there figured I might be at Barbara's that late at night. He asked me to get to a clear phone, there being ample reason to believe that because of closeness to Garrison hers could ~~be~~ ^{and} be tapped, so to phone him at the number he gave me.

Hearing this I decided that I ought tape our conversation. I took this young woman's boyfriend, Jack Werking, with me to the bar on the corner of Decatur, so he could block sight on my using the tape recorder in the phone booth, and phoned Matt. I did tape and used some of what he told me in Frame-Up.

Her friend, Jack Werking, an Indiana mathematician, has moved to New Orleans, as not a few young people then did, more or less to quit the world and have an easy life of doing just about nothing. He clerked in a book store. With so little concern for comforts that when his electricity was cut off by mistake, he having paid his bills, he did nothing for about three months until his girlfriend tired of candlelight and got him to go and get the current reconnected. Her name is Dione Turner.

When I returned from the phone call and we were talking, with Sciambra there, this very, very slim and extraordinarily flat-chested young woman, pretending to be tough, suddenly demonstrated how she was prepared to defend herself. She was wearing shorts and a loose blouse. With a rapid motion she reached into the back of her blouse from over her shoulder and brought forth a real stilleto, fairly long blade, 8-10 inches. And from the front, between her small breasts, she produced a two-shot derringer, an over-and-under barrel, one shot in each chamber, no cylinder.

It must have been about 2 a.m. when we broke up, Orest went to his car first, + think to drive it around the block of one-way streets, and soon returned, apoplectic in rage.

All four tires had been slashed. and that was the only car, with parking bumper-to-bumper on both sides of the street, with slashed tires. (He got new ones the next day and we continued spending evenings together, although he was then even more paranoid.)

When we broke up either that night or the next one, Dione feigned some sort of anger at me and flounced out. She had a Honda 90, a motor scooter. So, Orest drove me to the Fountainbleau if it was the next night or I took a cab if it was not, and was soon asleep. Not much after 4 the phone rang. It was Dione. For all the world as thought she had not been angry with me only a short time earlier, she said, "Get decent, Hal. I'll be there soon. I showed, shaved and was dressed only a few minutes before I heard the noise of her scooter. The Fountainbleau was a rather large motel, built with four sides, a square, with a large mostly paved area in the center, large enough for two swimming pools plus places with tables and sun umbrellas, etc. She actually drove it into this enclosed area and parked it against the wall of my room. I have a picture of her standing next to it, it leaning against the wall. She must have awakened most of the people then sleeping when she made her noisy entry.

She developed a thing on Lil who she never met, and me, almost like surrogate parents. I developed an interest in this strange girl and how she at her age knew what she knew. Including such odd things as a Catholic able to write biblical Hebrew, today as a rarity. She'd call at all hours of the night and when she knew I was not how only to talk to Lil. I never did figure out how she knew what she did and had no reason either to believe or not to believe that she was, as she indicated, connected with the CIA. She did know what was not common knowledge, the name of the base chief, Leake.

On this, what may be amusing, on Good Friday of that year because of Garrison's

insistence, one of his assistants, later a judge, Jim Alcock, and his chief investigator, now a state legislator, Louis Lyon joined us at the 'Bleau's coffee shop to chat before taking the trip Garrison wanted taken. At one point, after we'd been talking about the CIA and Bione pretending she did not know the base or perhaps station chief's name, ex-gused herself, saying she had to go to the little-girls' room. She had not gone very far when she returned with a smile to say she'd remembered his name. "It is Leake." True.

Because I could not make up my mind about her I consulted with then dear friends, Jim and Jennifer White, in the ^{San Francisco} Bay area, where he was ending his career with the ^{AP} SF. They called her "Pixie" and I have a fat file under that title, with all our correspondence and I suppose a few other things. I always played her straight, and rarely told her I believed she was lying. As she did more than almost anyone I ever knew.

The day I was to return ^{the Panama-Sitler week} she told me she was a police narcotics informant. So when I went to Garrison's office, where a detective was to pick me up and take me to the airport, I went into the basement, the indoor parking where the narcotics unit had its office. About the time I spotted her ^{the} hand she spotted me. She came out and said, "You didn't believe me, huh?"

The federal narcotics people informally confirmed that she had an informal relationship with the ^{my} belief is that she got her dope this way, as an informant.

She had a remarkable gift of gab and an even more remarkable lingo, a rare expressiveness, and I think there can be an interesting book (to which I'll return when - have time) with her language as she wrote and spoke to me. I have the tapes. ...

The morning she drove her Honda to the wall of my motel room I'd run out of tapes. She wanted to tell me more. I sat at the table typed what she said and then she pulled my right leg over to where she could sit on it and read what I was typing. When she did she asked me, "Hal, how can you be over 50 and not have a gray hair?"

She insisted on not being called Bione but "Datan," claiming a great interest in Moshe, Israel and things both Israeli and Jewish. It was when she'd write something in Hebrew to me and I took it to the local rabbi to translate (I have not been able to read Jewish or Hebrew since I was quite young) that I learned she actually wrote biblical Hebrew. (She draws well with her own style and that was his writing.)

My idea for the novel was that it be a spoof of spy novels, with the man so much older and the woman so young. ... I was lucky in selecting those of her stories I checked. Almost all checked out. She my Marge/Gpdfrey Kirkpatrick and Philip Geraci III files. Maybe all the others were not lie but I think most if not all were. See also my earlier memo on that trip Garrison ordered. I'd transcribed some of the tapes. I kept the others. ... One night she took a gold chain with a gold Star of David from around her neck and put it around mine. She said that her aunt, a nun, had had the star blessed by the pope. Because it was gold I did not want to take it. We finally compromised, I'd not take the chain. A later summer it got detached from the chain I then wore, with that and other such things given me by Catholics, when I was carrying stones to build the lane up, preparatory to paving it. The other things I had on that chain were a St. Christopher, a St. Jude, a Chai, and these I still have. The Catholic medals, from a bedridden woman who listened to talk shows was to protect me in my travels and help me do the impossible. Mary Elizabeth Zimmerman of Indianapolis.