

Ted Gandolfo
960 Holly Court
Franklin Square, N.Y. 11010

7/30/91

Dear Ted,

I've just received two undated clippings from the N.O. Times-Picayune, copies enclosed. One says that Garrison had been hospitalized for about two weeks, beginning July 9. It has a picture of him in which he looks terrible, to be deathly sick. That picture was taken only a few days after you told me he was fine, that you'd been in touch with him and he'd told you that he'd had pneumonia but had gotten over it.

I'd asked you how he is because I'd received an unconfirmed report that he has cancer.

Your misrepresentation brings into question several other things I think you should explain but frankly do not expect you to.

When I'd asked you how Jim is you'd phoned to offer me alleged tapes of Will Fritz's questioning of Oswald. You then told me that only I among critics could use them most effectively. You also claimed not to remember whether or not we'd spoken about those tapes before when in fact beginning when you said you were in Michigan listening to them we'd had a number of conversations about them when you phoned me to discuss them. Among other things this made me wonder whether or not you were up to some kind of trick but remembering also that you'd been seriously ill I did not assume that you had to be up to something. I then wrote you and said that before I'd do anything I'd have to have their genuineness confirmed. When I heard nothing I wrote you again and again you did not respond. This does suggest that either on your own or on behalf of someone else you were trying to booby-trap me. I believe that if you knew those tapes were valid you'd not be sitting on them or offering their use to anyone else.

The last time we spoke I reminded you that you'd told me before Garrison's book appeared that he'd told you he'd send you 20 copies and from them you were to send me one. I then wondered why he did not have the publisher do that, but no matter. You must have told me 20 times that you were about to send me a copy, once that Anite forgot to mail it, and you never sent it. The last time you phoned I reminded you, you said you'd send me one of the four you have, and didn't. Because as Jim knows publishers do send copies for authors I believed Jim in fact did not want me to have a copy and your behavior confirmed that belief. Then I was loaned a copy, read it, and knew very well that Jim did not want me to read it or say anything about it. I was involved in some things about which you know nothing but Jim knows very well. He lies about them in the book. What he was not about to tell you is that I saved him several times from worse disaster than he suffered.

I do not expect you to believe it and I'm not going to take any time to prove it to you but he was going to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the JFK assassination by,

among other things, charging Robert Perrin, who had killed himself in New Orleans in 1962, with being a 1963 Grassy Knoll assassin. This is why he fired Boxley, who had gone out and made up "proof" for Jim. I have copies of the work I did and of some of the investigations made for me by his own staff investigators that he should have had them make and didn't because he knew very well that he'd made the whole thing up.

That time, with the Shaw case before the Supreme Court, one of his staff lawyers told me, whether or not it is true, that I'd saved Jim from being disbarred by the Supreme Court.

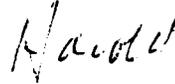
If I had ever intended doing Jim any harm so you thinks I'd have been silent about this, about what goes with it, and about other such incredible adventures that would have done legitimate criticism of the assassination investigations so much harm?

What Jim made up himself he blamed on the CIA. He said it had infiltrated Boxley onto his staff do do this kind of thing to him. In fact Jim personally hired Boxley over the strong objections of his assistants. I have the memos on it, so you can believe me or not.

So, if you have any self-respect or personal honesty, you will explain yourself.

If you do not, then the record, as lawyers say, will speak for itself.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg



Jim Garrison
In Tulane University Hospital

Garrison in hospital since July 9

For nearly two weeks, while Oliver Stone has been shooting a big-budget movie about one of the most important phases of his life, Judge Jim Garrison has been in Tulane University Hospital.

His family has told the hospital to release no information about the former Orleans Parish district attorney except that he was admitted July 9, Tulane Medical Center spokeswoman Fran Simon said.

Staff members at the 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, where Garrison has been a judge since 1978, were equally tight-lipped.

Orleans Parish Coroner Frank Minyard, who has visited Garrison twice in the past week, said he had infected ankles and inflamed blood vessels in both legs.

But after treatment with antibiotics, Garrison looked much better, said Minyard, a doctor who maintains a private practice.

Garrison's investigation of President Kennedy's assassination is the subject of "JFK," which Stone has been shooting for the past two months. Kevin Costner portrays Garrison.

Garrison plays Chief Justice Earl Warren, but he filmed his scenes before his hospitalization.

Stone should film real hero story — Clay Shaw

New Orleans

Oliver Stone's diatribe on his film "JFK" (Letters, June 27) dismisses Rosemary James' account of Jim Garrison's circus trial of Clay Shaw (Letters, June 20) as "riddled with factual errors." How absurd!

It is Mr. Stone's letter that is riddled with errors. His rambling dissertation shows the same disregard for truth and reliance on fantasy that characterized Garrison's witch hunt.

This sickness, born of fear, paranoia and distrust of the federal government, the FBI, CIA and all federal agencies, incubated Garrison's "fraudulent case." Disregard for truth and contempt for individual civil rights was the poisonous brew that resulted.

As a television reporter, columnist and chief editorialist for WDSU-TV, I witnessed the humiliation heaped on Clay Shaw and the international ridicule it caused New Orleans. I'll never forget the day one of Garrison's chief investigators, the late Bill Gurvich, resigned. "Clay Shaw had nothing to do with it," he said, flatly. Plagued by his conscience and a bleeding ulcer developed "chasing Garrison's phantoms," he told me, "Garrison is hanging on to anyone and anything to keep the case open ... and in the international press, no matter what the cost to others."

Gurvich then sought out Robert Kennedy. "What I told him, the exact words were (Gurvich wrote) 'Senator, Mr. Garrison will never shed light on your

brother's death.' Earlier, Garrison's chief assistant Pershing Gervais defected, stating that Garrison had no case. He stressed the DA's "obsession with any and all conspiracy theories," an obsession Oliver Stone apparently has wholeheartedly embraced.

Garrison's witnesses were not, as Stone claims, kept from testifying by officials who refused to extradite key witnesses. He had no key witnesses. He had no hard evidence.

Stone claims Garrison's files were plundered. To the contrary, Garrison's files existed mainly in his head. Bill Gurvich revealed that Garrison's paranoid belief that the FBI bugged his every movement caused him to propose to his wife an incredible plan: an assault on the local FBI office using "red pepper guns."

One night I delivered an editorial in which we carefully assembled at least 14 separate and distinct assassination theories the great Crusader had invented, revised, espoused or discarded.

Afforded equal time on WDSU, Garrison brushed it all aside and instead cautioned me to, in the words of Mark Twain, "First get the facts, then distort them." Unfortunately, he never heeded his own counsel.

Certain facts are so grotesque that they are in themselves "distortions." Garrison's Mardi Gras of "key witnesses" was a circus sideshow of oddballs, psychopaths, grudge bearers and sensation seekers. In time, an honest

and respected man's reputation was slowly eroded and finally destroyed.

After two years twisting in the wind, Clay Shaw was declared not guilty by a jury that deliberated less than half an hour. Clay Shaw died three years after the trial. He had been stripped of his reputation, his money, his position in the community, but not his pride.

If Oliver Stone sincerely "seeks the truth," he should consider telling the story of Clay Shaw's ordeal. It could be a timeless commentary on the abuse of power and the systematic destruction of an innocent man.

If Stone wants high drama, he need only review this statement from an interview I conducted

"I often had the feeling I was living through a Kafka novel ... the impotent anonymous, dispensable 'K' ... unable to communicate with the Castle."

The late James Kirkwood wrote in his definitive study of Shaw's ordeal, "American Grotesque":

"Garrison cried wolf at a lamb, then slaughtered the lamb. That cry should be remembered."

Kirkwood published "American Grotesque" in 1970. He concluded this masterful piece of investigative reporting with a prophetic admonition:

"We must all watch out and speak out. Otherwise, in twenty years people will be asking, 'How did Jim Garrison ever get this far?' And the answer will be: We let him."

Mel Leavitt