

Star 3/16/67

Garrison's Plot

It is hard to know just what to make of Jim Garrison's sleazy legal extravaganza. Will the New Orleans district attorney, in the end, be able to establish a substantial connection between his pathetic cast of emotionally disturbed characters and the national tragedy of November 22, 1963? Or does the plot, in fact, exist only in the overstimulated imaginations of Garrison's strange troupe?

At the moment, certainly, the prospect of a legally presentable "solution" of the Kennedy assassination and a refutation of the Warren Commission findings seems remote at best. The prosecutor's star witness, Perry Raymond Russo, has told a story that contradicts, on several key points, public statements he made less than a month ago. Until prodded by Garrison, he did not recognize the "Leon Oswald," who, he says, plotted the death of Kennedy, as Lee Harvey Oswald who carried it out. And yet he was able, with absolute certainty, to describe minute differences

between a rifle Oswald was cleaning three years ago and a rifle produced in court by the district attorney.

It is, of course, possible that Garrison has more to offer in support of his arrest of Clay L. Shaw as a participant in an assassination plot. Indeed it would seem incredible for an experienced lawyer, who must be aware of the possibility of a suit for false arrest, to stick his neck out so far on such slender evidence. One can only assume that there is more to come.

But one conclusion can already be drawn from the strange goings on in New Orleans. This investigation into the assassination of the President is being conducted with the dignity and legal propriety of a smalltime circus sideshow. Regardless of the outcome, it is clear that Garrison's interest in that terrible moment of history lies solely in how it can be used for the personal and political betterment of Jim Garrison. It is a disgraceful performance.