

SERIALIZATION OF EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK

The Garrison Case

A Study in Abuse of Power

IN AN INTERVIEW published in Playboy magazine in October, 1967, Garrison explained how his investigation into the assassination of John F. Kennedy began:

There's a tremendous amount of esprit among our staff and an enthusiasm for looking into unanswered questions. That's why we got together

the day after the assassination and began examining our files and checking out every political extremist, religious fanatic, and kook who had ever come to our attention. And one of the names that sprang into prominence was that of David Ferrie. When we checked him out, as we were doing with innumerable other suspicious characters, we discovered that on November 22nd he had traveled to Texas to go "duck hunting" and "ice skating."

The naked facts are considerably more prosaic. It had started with a telephone call to an assistant district attorney two days after the assassination, Sunday, Nov. 24th, 1963. The party calling was Jack Martin. The message:

Ferrie had been in Dallas about two weeks previously; Ferrie had been corresponding with Oswald; Ferrie taught Oswald how to shoot.

Martin was employed as an assistant to Guy Bannister, one of two partners of Guy Bannister Associates, Private Investigators. Bannister himself had been a former Assistant Superintendent of Police until he was dismissed from the department in 1957 for pulling a pistol in a French Quarter bar in the course of a quarrel. Bannister was in the Newman Building at the corner of Lafayette and Camp. It bore two municipal addresses, 544 Camp Street and 531 Lafayette Street. Bannister's company used the Lafayette

Street address.

Martin subsequently admitted to both the Secret Service and

One of a Series

TO READERS: These installments comprise excerpts from the book to which we are limited by our serialization rights. Through necessity, the description of events and the characterizations are not as full as those in the complete book.

the Federal Bureau of Investigation that the alleged connection of Ferrie with Oswald was a figment of his imagination. He acknowledged that he was drunk, a not infrequent occurrence, and that when drunk he frequently suffers from "telephonitis." To others he has denied the incident occurred at all.

In fact, Ferrie had not been to Dallas, as far as is known, for at least six years. Nor has any connection with Oswald ever been reliably established.

The motive for the call? Many have speculated. Some say merely that Jack Martin needed no motive. Others maintain that he was piqued at having been excluded by Ferrie and Bannister and by a criminal law attorney, G. Wray Gill, from any involvement in the investigative phase of the defense of Carlos Marcello, reputed boss of the Louisiana branch of the underworld, on charges of illegal entry into the country. Ferrie was an investigator for Gill who, with New York lawyer Jack Wasserman, represented Marcello.

According to Martin himself, he hatched the idea upon hearing on TV that Oswald was once in the Civil Air Patrol in 1955 or 1956, an organization in which Ferrie was quite active.

Whether Martin knew that Ferrie had left with two com-

panions that night for a weekend in Texas following the Marcello trial, has never been clear. It is doubtful, for he did not relate this fact to the District Attorney's staff.

AND DAVID FERRIE? In 1963 he was forty-six, a former airline pilot by profession, having been fired by Eastern Airlines in 1961 for misconduct.

In 1958, while still with Eastern Airlines, he became Senior Executive Officer of the Cadet Squadron at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport, one of two Civil Air Patrol units located in the New Orleans area. Lee Harvey Oswald served for a few weeks in the summer of 1955 or 1956 in one of the two squadrons; no one has been able to prove with certainty whether in Ferrie's or in the other, located at Moisant International Airport.

In early 1961 Ferrie became associated with a group of Cuban expatriates whose purpose was counterrevolution in Cuba. There were several organizations of these refugees from Castro at this time and membership frequently overlapped.

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One group known as the Crusade to Free Cuba was headed by one Sergio Areacha Smith. It had been formed in early 1961 by Smith with the assistance of a New Orleans public relations man, Ronnie Caire. Caire was successful in recruiting as financial supporters many prominent and affluent New Orleansians of conservative persuasion. The nucleus of the group

was about a dozen or so Cubans who were allowed to frequent the office of Guy Bannister and to use his telephone and other office services. Bannister was never a member.

Another organization active in 1961 was the Cuban Revolutionary Democratic Front. Locally, the group was not as well organized or financed as the Crusade; however, it was but part of a large apparatus operating in several cities, including Miami. Smith apparently exercised leadership in this group, also.

In early 1961 Ferrie persuaded Smith that he, Ferrie, could render valuable service to the cause. The two became friends, and Ferrie was active, probably in both groups, but certainly in the Democratic Front.

SOMETIME in early 1961 a number of the group journeyed to Houma, Louisiana, about 60 miles south of New Orleans to an ammunition bunker of a company known as Schlumberger Well, a surveying corporation with home offices in Texas. The purpose of the journey was to pick up a quantity of explosives and deliver them to New Orleans for further transportation to Miami for use in the Bay of Pigs invasion. The invasion itself commenced April 17th, 1961.

Among the group journeying to Houma with Sergio Arcacha Smith and Ferrie were a twenty-six-year-old electronics expert specializing in bugging equipment, a sometime bar operator named Gordon Novel, his fiancée, Marlene Mancuso, to whom he was later married and divorced, two young men, Rancier Ehlinger and Andrew Blackman, and a younger man, then only nineteen, unknown to most of the others, who seemed to wander around Ferrie's home as though lost while the balance of the group made plans. He was Layton Martens, a music student who had become acquainted with Ferrie while serving as a member of his Civil Air Patrol Unit. Although the intricacies of the operation are still somewhat shrouded, it appears clear that the Schlumberger Well's bunker was serving that night as a transfer point for explosives with the acquiescence of its management, either here or in Texas and with officials of the United States Government, in-

cluding, presumably, the Central Intelligence Agency.

In October, 1961, Carlos Bringuer, a Cuban expatriate and attorney, asked Smith if he might meet with Ferrie; for from the things he had heard, said Bringuer, he did not think that association with Ferrie would do Smith or the Cuban cause any good. Shortly thereafter, Ferrie's association with the group ended.

In February, 1962, the Crusade to Free Cuba disbanded. Smith, in considerable disfavor with the Cuban community, left New Orleans for Texas, settling first in Houston and ultimately in Dallas.

The activities of the Cuban community in New Orleans, if there were any, through the balance of 1962 and early 1963 apparently have left little impression on the memories of those close to the scene. There remains no evidence of any activity of significance, and such conjecture as has been forthcoming has made no mention of specific ventures.

IN THE FALL OF 1963, Layton Martens had returned to New Orleans because of a serious illness suffered by his mother. Upon her discharge from the hospital in mid-November, 1963, he stayed for two weeks with Ferrie, who now resided in an upper apartment on Louisiana Ave. Parkway.

Following Marcelo's acquittal, Ferrie had attended a victory party at the Royal Orleans Hotel. Immediately thereafter, about 9:00 P.M., he and two companions drove first to Vinton, La., to attend to certain business for Gill, then to Houston and Galveston for a short vacation. The trip had been

planned for some time and was to take place when the trial ended.

Ferrie's companions were Alvin Beauboeuf, nineteen, whom he met as a cadet in his Civil Air Patrol Unit, and Melvin Coffee, an engineer at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Facility at Michoud. The first night Ferrie took care of his business in Vinton, then drove to Houston where he and his companions registered at the Alamotel about 4:30 A.M. on Saturday, the 23rd. Late that afternoon they went to the indoor Winterland Skating Rink, one of the few in this part of the country. Three and one-half

years later, Garrison was to claim that Ferrie did not even put on a pair of skates, but that he stood by a telephone.

This was obviously the "communications center," Garrison was to claim. According to Beauboeuf and Coffee, however, Ferrie went ice skating, then talked to the manager about the possibility of opening a rink in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Ferrie had recently received a substantial sum of money from Eastern Airlines as a result of his severance in 1961 and he was seeking a venture in which to invest. The night of the 23rd was spent at the Driftwood Motor Hotel in Galveston.

According to Ferrie, they went hunting the next morning, which was Sunday.

At about this time came Jack Martin's telephone call. The information was passed on to the First Assistant D.A., Frank Klein, who thereafter conducted the operations. Five investigators were assigned to watch the Louisiana Avenue Parkway apartment. Garrison left two telephone numbers, one for the New Orleans Athletic Club and the other for the local Playboy club, with instructions that he should be called if any thing developed.

The investigators went to Ferrie's apartment. No one was there. Martens himself spent very little time at home that weekend. Finally, the investigators called G. Wray Gill, Marcelo's attorney and Ferrie's employer.

Later that day Ferrie and his companions decided to go to Alexandria, La., where Beauboeuf had relatives. They decided to stay two or three days, but Ferrie thought it wise to call Gill and advise him of his whereabouts. Gill told Ferrie that he had better get back at once as the D.A.'s men were looking for him.

"For what?" asked Ferrie. "It has something to do with the assassination of the President," responded Gill. Gill narrated the information that Jack Martin had passed on to the D.A.'s office concerning Ferrie's supposed acquaintance with Oswald.

FERRIE DECIDED that he was not yet ready to be arrested. Upon arriving in New Orleans, shortly after midnight on the 24th, he dropped Beauboeuf at his, Ferrie's, apartment with instructions to remove certain

items that had best not be there if the apartment was raided — specifically, certain lewd photographs and a number of hypodermic needles that he might need. Ferrie, as far as is known, did not use narcotics, but injected himself with various drugs for numerous ailments with which he was constantly plagued.

Martens was in the apartment, an upstairs duplex, when Beauboeuf entered. After removing the photographs and needles, Beauboeuf was greeted at the bottom of the stairs by the D.A.'s men. "Let's go upstairs, son," said one. Beauboeuf and Martens were arrested. They were booked with being "fugitives from Texas."

Meantime, when Ferrie realized what had happened, he fled to Hammond. He returned the following day and, accompanied by his attorney, surrendered to the District Attorney's Office. He was asked if he knew Oswald. Ferrie replied that he did not. The D.A.'s aides decided this was a lie and booked him with being a fugitive from Texas.

On Monday night, Martens and Beauboeuf were released to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The F.B.I. had been contacted by Garrison's office and advised of possible implications by the two men, as well as Ferrie. The F.B.I. as well as the Secret Service questioned Ferrie following his release by the District Attorney. Ferrie's movements and whereabouts in Texas were corroborated fully. Satisfied with Ferrie's story, the Bureau did not thereafter contact Beauboeuf or Martens. The conclusion of the Secret Service: Martin was apparently an alcoholic and was totally unreliable.

The purpose of the trip, the business in Vinton, the gloomy

sojourn to Galveston, all were later to be characterized by Garrison as clever fabrications to cover a major involvement in a plot to assassinate the President. The repeated protestations and minute accountings by Ferrie, Beauboeuf, and Coffee were dismissed as lies, or perhaps, in the case of Beauboeuf and Coffee, as naïve interpretations of the events by men intended to be pawns in the sinister affair.

This was the fall of 1963, and Garrison turned to more important things. For the time being, the matter was closed.

NEXT—How two imaginary characters, "Clay Bertrand" and "Manuel Garcia Gonzales" got into Jim Garrison's "conspiracy" case.