Jim Garrison Finds Warmth in the Cold Glare of Post-Watergate Revelations
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Some people always regarded Jim Garrison as a brave crusader for a long-buried truth. Others thought he was merely a nut.

For years, the former New Orleans District Attorney carried on a lone battle to prove his contention that John F. Kennedy was murdered — not by Lee Harvey Oswald alone, but by a conspiracy of CIA employees enraged by certain Kennedy policies.

For all practical purposes, such as obtaining substantive convictions on the responsible parties, Garrison failed — although this he denies, stoutly maintaining success.

But today — more than 12 years after the assassination, and almost a decade since the start of Garrison's self-imposed mission — Americans know a great deal more than they used to about the capacity of government officials and agencies to lie to the people they serve.

And in the cold light of 1976, Garrison's insistence there was a plot — originally carried out by a small group of men and later concealed by any number of government agencies, in a cover-up he now describes as "the biggest conspiracy in the history of the country" — surely seems less paranoiac and more possible than in those relatively innocent days of the early 1960s.

Obsession Gone

Jim Garrison, 54, a towering six-foot-six, swears that the public climate of acceptance can mellow as it may, but that he's given up on his magnificent obsession.

After 12 stormy years as New Orleans D.A., he finally lost his 1973 re-election bid and today maintains he's just "trying to survive" and earn a living as a lawyer in private practice, and as an author.

Accordingly, he has just come out with his second book, a first novel called "The Star-Spangled Contract" (McGraw-Hill), which brought Garrison to Philadelphia last week on the usual author/salesman circuit.

But it's a funny thing about that "novel." A lot of the details are oddly reminiscent of...something or other. Who could fail to feel a pang at the mention of Foley Square, a presidenti-
eventually be achieved years later.

"Worth Billions"

"The Cold War was worth billions and billions of dollars, not only to the warfare sector but also to the CIA. And in addition to money, of course, there was simply power."

It was that power, in Garrison’s scenario, which eventually defeated his own drive. "The CIA is so powerful there is nothing any individual could do, except perhaps the President himself."

Which is why Garrison figures, even John Kennedy’s devoted brother didn’t expose the conspiracy: "Robert Kennedy undoubtedly understood what happened, but he seems to have felt he could do more about it if he remained silent until he was President."

Needless to say, Robert Kennedy never made it to the White House. Only in an unlikely sense is ‘the question of probability’ at the same time, says Garrison."

The crusading JFK survived a difficult proposition at times. "I have regrets about having disclosed some of the truth in the right place, because it brought an enormous welcome burden to me. At an early juncture it became apparent to us we were dealing with federal intelligence, the power of which we could only guess at. And I knew I had everything to lose, and nothing to gain."

"Still, we accomplished quite a few things, which may not be apparent till further down the road. In my other book I listed the evidence, so that at some future date, that much will have been preserved in detail. I don’t think the federal government is the foreseeable future, will ever do anything to make the truth available."

"As for me, I don’t regret having done my duty. Would I do it over again? Yes, because it had to be done. But I would go into it more reluctantly. A more sophisticated or practical man would have said from the beginning in the beginning, this thing is too big to fight. It is involved in too many issues, developed too many issues, developed too many issues, and I didn’t know what the consequences were.

But I have been more inaccurate than anyone else in this area, but what I have been incorrect with hindsight ever even investigated is in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."
Jim Garrison...thought he'd be killed.