



How Garrison was framed (ctd.)

"And I said, 'well, that's not asking too much, I guess.' And I stick it in the desk and he reaches over and says, 'Look.' He says, 'I haven't had a chance to even count it myself and, so there'll be no dispute between two people who've been friends as long as we have, I'll keep the key to the desk and I'll be back.' I realized the next day that I couldn't move it to some place else.

"Anyway, next day I'm coming down and the doorbell rings and I'm half dressed. I'm coming down to get breakfast and four U.S. Marshalls come to the door. Later on there were seven and then they increased steadily. And they're leading me everywhere, hands on my shoulders, mugging and printing. They left nothing out, see. They said, 'Mr. Garrison, we want to notify you that you are under arrest.' I said, 'What on earth are you talking about?' And they said, 'For the violation of the Organized Crime Act of 1970.' And I said, 'Well, I haven't even violated any act, much less that act, whatever it is.' And they say, 'Well, we'll explain it to you soon enough. Where is your office?' And I said, 'Right there.' And they said, 'You've got a desk in it, haven't you?' And I said, 'Sure. Come on in. It's over there.' They said, 'Have you got a key to the drawer?' and I said, 'I had until last night but I don't have it now. I have a duplicate down at the office I can send for.' They said, 'It won't be necessary.' They went out and got a crowbar and busted the drawer open... that's the only desk I had.

"So they bust it and they reach straight for the envelope. They don't turn to any side drawers and so forth and so on. They didn't even search. They reached over right where I put it. Then they produced a mimeographed form which I recognized as a formal charge against me by the U.S. government of violating the Organized Crime Act. The first paragraph describes the trips I have taken around publicizing my book. Remember when they wouldn't let me on a network, naturally, because the FCC they're kind of a large control? But they had some independent TV stations that did let me on -- Channel 5 in St. Louis, and they got one in Frisco that's great, and Steve Allen really came through. He told them he'd quit show business if they didn't put me on. He's unbelievable! You wouldn't think so -- he seemed so bland.

"So, I apparently was communicating at the end of that month's swing around the country because my book really started moving and now it's about to move into the fifth printing, which I understand is pretty good for a first book. Anyway, a fifth printing is kind of like getting off the runway. You've got a sort of a bestseller when you reach that point. By word of mouth it starts spreading.

"Anyway, what happened is they pull out the bills. I noticed over their shoulder in reading these mimeographed charges. They make a hundred copies and they made them even before they brought the envelope. One of the first charges is that I traveled around the country as a representative of the pinball machines. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that? Now, that shows you how far they will go to frame. My travels -- in which I bankrupted myself by using my personal funds rather than office, just to push my book. The publisher was very courageous to publish a book that nobody else would publish. They're almost as old as the Government and they don't give a damn what the Government says. On the other hand, they are equally conservative about public relations. So, I got tired of waiting for them to advertise the book, so I designed my own ad, and I've been pushing it on TV, and so forth. And anyway, then I see money supposedly received by me as a payoff from lottery operators and they have the number of each bill and they open the bills, the envelope, and read off the number of the bills which match the mimeographed sheet. You see -- it's too much!

"They then take me by the shoulders in front of my children and everybody else and out into the car. And, God knows, my mother's in her 70's, with heart trouble and she's pretending not to be concerned but this is the kind of thing that could kill her, you know. She knows what it's for.

(to be continued in the next issue)

A. Not over me. He just -- I could feel when he-- I was right close to the steam table when we pass through, and I guess I could feel that the gun was about this far, when he shot, right from me, from my right."

Q. "Your body was in between this person's body and --"

A. "-- and Senator Kennedy."

Q. "And his arm reached over your body when he fired --"

A. "Around me, around me, not over me."

This clinches the matter, really. Nobody can reach with a gun around a man's body - and Karl Uecker is of massive build - and still hold the point of his revolver an inch from the inside of a third man's ear, walking behind.

Is Uecker a reliable witness? Any doubt on that score would be settled by the testimony of Edward Minasian (Transcript, pp. 153-171).

Questioned by Deputy District Attorney John E. Howard, the witness related:

"...I was walking, possibly no more than two feet in front of the Senator, on his right-hand side, and Karl Uecker was approximately in the same distance on the left-hand side of the Senator. And as we were walking forward, and just as we reached the serving table section here, the steam tables, on the Senator's left there was several hotel employees standing in this area, and the Senator noticed them and he stopped to shake hands. He turned to his left, and I proceeded to take an extra step or two, and I felt that he wasn't as close as I - as he was when we started walking.

"And I turned my head to the left again, and I took a step back towards him to stay a little closer to him -- and Karl Uecker did the same thing -- and it seemed to me just at that precise moment that I turned to my left, out of the side vision, my peripheral vision, I noticed someone dart out from this area, dart out and lean against the steam table. And I saw a hand extended with a revolver, and I saw the explosion of the cartridges out of the -- out of a revolver."

According to Minasian, then, Sirhan was leaning against the steam table, as he started shooting, while Uecker thought the gunman had fallen over it. Either testimony - there is no essential conflict between the two statements - makes it plain, then, that Sirhan was not in a position wherefrom he could have pressed the muzzle of his gun close to and behind the right ear of Kennedy - which was on the side away from the steam table. Nor could Minasian have seen the explosion of the cartridges out of the revolver, had the muzzle of the gun been pressed against the Senator's head by Sirhan.

Later on, Howard asked: "Could you tell how close to the Senator the barrel of that gun would be?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Minasian replied: "Approximately three feet."

Give or take a few inches, give or take even a foot, a shooting distance of approximately three feet, observed concordantly by the two eyewitnesses closest to the victim, is absolutely incompatible with a shooting distance of one inch, as established by the experts Noguchi and Wolfer. And the massive body of Karl Uecker stands squarely between the allegation, by the District Attorney, that Sirhan fired the fatal bullet into Kennedy's head and the demonstrated facts of the case.

Further corroboration of the testimony of Uecker and Minasian is to be found in the deposition (Transcript, pp.75-111) of a young man named Vincent di Piero, a son of the Maitre d' at the Ambassador Hotel and a part-time waiter there, who was also in the pantry at the time of the shooting. For some time before that event, Di Piero had been watching Sirhan who was standing on a tray stacker at the far end of the pantry - looking towards the Colonial Room - and to the right, in the company of "a very good-looking girl."

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evidently, because this was yet another CIA ploy designed to throw the critics off and to cover up the ugly truth about the JFK assassination some more. Anderson puts it this way:

"Could the plot against Castro have backfired against President Kennedy? The late President was murdered nine months after the last assassination team was caught on a Havana rooftop with high-powered rifles. Presumably, they were subjected to torture until they told all they knew. None of the assassination teams, however, had direct knowledge of the CIA involvement. The CIA instigators had represented themselves as oilmen seeking revenge against Castro for his seizure of oil holdings."

Here, of course, Anderson is being naive and his logic is faulty. Even if it were true that the members of the assassination teams had no direct knowledge of the fact that the CIA was behind the murder plot, the Cuban security people certainly would not have swallowed the story that this had been some private enterprise of vengeful oilmen. For one thing, the close and permanent connection between the CIA and the US oil industry at all levels (the then CIA boss McCone was himself a former director of Standard Oil of California!) is well-known throughout the world; for another, Southern Florida, with its tens of thousands of anti-Castro Cubans is so tightly controlled by the CIA, it would be impossible even for powerful oilmen to stage an invasion or assassination attempt against Castro without having been given the nod from Langley. Most importantly, a private plot against his life would certainly not have caused the Cuban leader to order the assassination of the US President in reprisal! This, however, is what Anderson pretends to believe and seeks to prove. If there were any substance at all to that theory, then logically only on the basis that Castro believed these attempts on his life had been instigated by Kennedy himself, acting through the CIA.

That's also why the next few paragraphs of the Jack Anderson story are equally out of kilter. He writes: "Former associates recall that Robert Kennedy, deeply despondent, went into semi-seclusion after his brother's assassination. Could he have been tormented by more than natural grief? He certainly learned that the assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, had been active in the pro-Castro movement and had traveled to Mexico to visit the Cuban embassy a few weeks before the dreadful day in Dallas. Could Bob Kennedy have been plagued by the terrible thought that the CIA plot, which he must at least have condoned, put into motion forces that may have brought about his brother's martyrdom?"

Readers of my TRILOGY OF MURDER know full well that Robert Kennedy was indeed tormented by the thought that he might bear some responsibility for the train of events that led to Dallas, but that feeling arose out of a deep insight into what had really happened. Robert Kennedy was far too intelligent and too highly placed to believe for one moment - as he pretended to believe for the sake of convenience - that Oswald was his brother's assassin, much less that he was a tool of Castro's. It is no credit to Anderson, who in other respects has shown himself to be a sharp and independent-minded observer, to see the Warren Report line as slavishly as he does in the above-cited passage, the more so as in a preceding paragraph he touches correctly on the heart of the matter:

"Did the late Robert Kennedy know about the assassination attempt? After the Bay of Pigs fiasco, President Kennedy swore to friends he would like 'to splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds.' He put his brother, Robert, in charge of the CIA with instructions to shake it up. The CIA made five attempts on Castro's life after the Bay of Pigs while Robert Kennedy was riding hard on the agency."

That's the crux of the matter. Robert Kennedy was supposed to "ride herd" on the murdering agency, but since he had always been a great CIA fan himself, he sadly failed in this duty. And as these professional killers got out of hand and slew his own brother, Anderson tells a true story - upside down: the way the CIA works it told and perpetuated.

(to be continued)