

4535 Bonita dr.
New Orleans, La.
70126
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Mr. Michael Eddowes
22 Yeoman's Row
Brompton rd., S.W. 3
~~Washington D.C.~~
London, England

Dear Michael,

It seems I always begin letters by apologizing for their tardiness, but apologize I must. So much has taken place here since your visit, including the deaths of my father and ~~my~~ grandmother, that I haven't even had time to pause and take stock of the situation. Jo Ann has been after me some time to ~~write~~ answer your two letters, so I finally decided -- though it meant passing up a dinner invitation to do so -- to sit down and write you.

It would take considerable space to relate all of the events pertaining to Garrison's case that have taken place since your departure, but I will try to capsule them for you.

To begin with, you asked about the code numbers (according to Garrison) found in Clay Shaw's notebook and Lee Oswald's address book. As you surmised, the reaction to this bombshell was rather heavy, but, strangely enough, it was mostly oral. Very little appears to have been written about it in the national press. The first criticism to arise was that the numbers in Oswald's book were preceded not by "P.O.," as Garrison contends, but rather by two Russian letters ("D.D." I believe). If you will look at the ~~address book~~ Warren Commission's reproduction of the ~~address book~~ address book, I believe you will find both evidence and doubt of the dad's assertion. They do indeed appear to be something besides "P.O.," but at the same time, do not appear to be the same letter. A careful examination by you might reveal some suspicion that the addressbook has been altered slightly in some instances. This could be one of them.

The primary defense allegation was that there is indeed a "Lee Odom," and Clay Shaw met him in New Orleans in late 1965. Five days after the number revelation (long enough for the CIA to have doctored the post office files) and after the Post Office department said the box number was not opened in Dallas until late 1965, the mysterious Lee Odom turned up in suburban Dallas (Irving, Tex., where the Paines and many of Oswald's Russian ~~and~~ friends lived). Odom said he had been at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans to promote a bullfight. At that time, he said, he was in the businesses of promoting and running the "L&R Barbecue Co." He said he had been referred to Shaw ~~about~~ as a man who might be able to help him with his bullfight, had met him and given him his address, P.O. 19106.

On the face of it, that sounds rather conclusive. However, Odom said he met Shaw in November, 1966, (His N.O. to Dallas airline ticket stub is dated No. 22, 1966; how's that for a bit of irony.) not in "late 1965," as Shaw's attorney's originally contended. Could it be that there was no date available in the waning months of 1965 in which ~~the~~ Odom's name might have inconspicuously been inserted into the post office files?

The bit about the bullfight always did sound phony. In the first place, no one in his right mind would attempt to promote a bullfight in New Orleans. It would be like selling Old Testaments in Iran. And in the second place, Shaw would ~~xxx~~ know very little about possible bullfight markets. Mr. Shaw himself removed all speculations along these lines, however, about two weeks ago, when he confided to a reporter friend of mine that of course Odom was no business associate, "he was just one of my lovers." This is from a reliable source and highly believable, since Shaw apparently flaunts his sexual deviance when he is partying with friends, as he was on this occasion. Odom's story has been pretty much believed, though, by the populace, although there seems to remain with them a lingering mystery over the numbers themselves. The coincidence of identical, five-digit numerals is a bit too much to swallow without a grain of salt.

As to Odom, your remarks concerning him have led to some interesting speculation. There is indeed some doubt as to the spelling of his last name. As a matter of fact, when I finally brought it up to Garrison today, the first thing he told me was, "We were never really sure whether that was an 'o' or a 'u.'" I had already gone to the files to examine it, and there is, indeed some question. Here is the way Shaw has written "Odom":

As ~~it~~ you can see, the top of the second "o" is not nearly as dark as the rest of the name. The rest of his ~~two~~ o's are clearly joined at the top and all made with equal pressure. This is a unique occurrence, which ~~leaves~~ leaves it open to question.

I brought the matter to the attention of Bill Boxley, Garrison's latest addition to his investigative team and obviously a highly intelligent and imaginative man. He had spent the previous three weeks researching in Texas. Boxley immediately warmed to the subject. He told me that the Odom question has been gnawing at him since he did some checking into the man's background. He is constantly moving around, changing jobs and addresses, Boxley stated, and always manages to cover his tracks quite thoroughly and professionally. In addition, he has, in the past, used at least three spellings of his last name: "Odom," "Odom" and "Otem." How's that?

Garrison is intrigued with the idea that Odom might be a CIA operative, and Boxley thinks it quite possible. The District Attorney asked me to solicit from you whatever information you might have in this area that might be of any use. It would not only cast a long shadow of doubt on the bullfight story, but would provide a further link between Shaw and covert spy operations.

In that vein, something has come up -- though not in print -- concerning Shaw's involvement. Garrison says he is fairly certain that Shaw is or was connected in some way with the Gehlen apparatus in Germany. This, as I am sure you know, is the West German super-spy organization that came out of a post-World War II deal between the U.S. and top Nazi intelligence officers. Of the exact connection I am still uncertain, but Shaw did serve in Germany after the war and his sudden rise from corporal to colonel has never been explained, neither in his Army records nor elsewhere.

The enigma that is Gordon Novel has continued to grow curiouser and curiouser. It begins to appear that our loquacious fugitive may be more deeply involved than even he cares to admit. He has been placed in Dallas shortly before the assassination and again shortly after by a man who says he played pool with him there. Another man (an ultra right-winger) has told Garrison's office he was approached by Novel and one Larry Schmidt in Dallas in 1963. The man says Schmidt and Novel were soliciting funds for the anti-Castro cause on behalf of "someone named Jose," who was later snubbed by Cubans for allegedly betraying them during the Bay of Pigs debacle. (I speculate that this may have been Dr. Jose Miro Cardona, but this is not certain.) The two said they were from Miami. Schmidt's involvement is still an uncertainty, but it is known that he was one of the group who paid for the hate-Kennedy poster that appeared in the Dallas papers the day of the assassination. The ad began "Welcome to Dallas, Mr. Kennedy," then went on for a full page of scathing questions and comments on Kennedy's views, beginning with a reference to the Bay of Pigs and another question on Cuba. I thought perhaps you might have further knowledge of Schmidt. Have you perhaps come across his name, or that of a Volkmar Schmidt in your research?

Novel has admitted, you must have learned, that he was at one time in the employ of the CIA. Even his attorneys admitted it after my accomplice, Hoke May, stumbled across a letter Novel wrote, then hid in his apartment. It was to a Mr. Weiss, obviously of the CIA, asking for help and threatening disclosure of CIA operations if help was not forthcoming. The letter referred to the activities of Double-Chek Corp. in Miami, a known CIA front. Perhaps you know something of Double-Chek or similar operations. (All this business about Novel in Dallas, of course, is confidential.)

There ~~is~~ are a number of other things that have happened since you were here, some important, others not. Novel is still in Ohio, Arcacha still in Dallas. Garrison has witnesses who put Shaw, Ruby and Oswald together in several Louisiana cities in '63. NBC came out with the most vindictive, slanted journalism I have

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ever witnessed in its attempt to smear Garrison's case. Walter Sheridan of NBC, Richard Townley of WDSU-TV and James Phalen of Post Magazine cooperated in what ~~may~~ may go down in history as the most blatant example ever of aborting the truth. At several points, I am sure, they stooped to lying when the truth, or even half-truths would not support their cause. Also, the Shaw trial still seems several months away.

I have become quite an investigator and Garrison has taken me completely into his confidence. I find this ironic, since, by initially revealing Garrison's investigation, my newspaper did the most to hinder it, and, in fact, my editors are still bitterly opposed to any suggestion that the investigation might be legitimate, a thesis which I am continually trying to force down their throats. Perhaps if I get fired, Garrison will take me on.

Well, please don't think you must repay me for the time you had to wait for a letter, especially since I am looking forward with much enthusiasm to receiving additional news of Odom. Why did the FBI question you about him, anyway, and how do you know he was a CIA man?

Don't think I have discounted your theory of the assassination, because I haven't. The night we talked I got no sleep, lying awake thinking of the awful consequences of such a thing. After much careful thought, however, I concluded that, even if you are correct, still the only way to get at the truth is by doing it Garrison's way. Even he, self-assured as he is, was forced to admit the good possibility of your theory. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you, or, for that matter, anything you can do for us. I hope some day, before it becomes too late, to receive a detailed account of your theory, even though it took you the better part of a day to roughly outline it for me.

By the way, although you may have thought of this, it might be wise to subscribe to the States-Item, since, slanted though it is, it seems to contain more about the investigation than appears anywhere else. If you take this suggestion, ask to be sent the Final Edition, since it contains most of the news.

Sincerely Yours,

Ross Yockey