

Perhaps the most outrageous aspect of the sideshow that Garrison conducted with the media—while Clay Shaw was forced to wait for his day in court—was his evolving pronouncements on the number of assassins at Dealey Plaza. When he started his investigation he thought there were only two, one in the Depository and one on the grassy knoll.⁹³ After he spoke to Harold Weisberg, he put a shooter at the Dal-Tex building and cleared Oswald of firing any shots.⁹⁴ To *Playboy*, he proffered a second “Oswald” at Dealey Plaza, based on his talks with Richard Popkin.⁹⁵ Garrison added four more assassins in a CBS interview after speaking to Raymond Marcus, who told him that blown-up photos of the trees revealed the men.⁹⁶ Allan Chapman convinced him that another shooter was hidden inside a storm drain. To *The New York Times* Garrison flatly announced the fatal shot was “fired by a man standing in a sewer manhole.”⁹⁷ Soon, he made the three tramps, as well as Jerry Belknap, the epileptic who had a seizure and was taken away by ambulance only minutes before the shooting, part of the killing team.⁹⁸ Jones Harris convinced him that a pickup truck shown in a photo hid two more assassins.⁹⁹ After Garrison received an anonymous letter saying that Kennedy might have been shot with “frangible” bullets (those that fragment upon impact), he told *Playboy* “some of the gunmen appear to have used frangible bullets.”¹⁰⁰ Eventually, Garrison placed sixteen assassins at five locations in Dealey Plaza.^{101*}

His preoccupation with conspiracies was not confined to Kennedy’s assassination. “He saw conspiracies everywhere,” recalls Milton Brener. “And there’s a word for that; and it’s called *paranoid*. I know that word is discredited because it’s overused, but if it ever fit somebody, it fit him.”¹⁰² Since early 1967, Garrison had carried a pistol clipped onto his belt. He once showed

CIA’s Domestic Contact Division, the same as thousands of other Americans during that period, but he had no other relationship to the Agency.

*Although the buffs usually encouraged Garrison’s proclivity to widen his conspiracy charges, sometimes they prevented him from making major mistakes. At one point in the investigation, he had a warrant drafted for the arrest of Robert Perrin, who supposedly could testify about Ruby’s gun-smuggling activities to Cuba. The night before he made the arrest notice public, Weisberg proved to him that Perrin had died in 1962.

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- 94. Epstein, *Counterplot*, p. 78.
- 95. *Playboy*, p. 170.
- 96. "The Warren Report," CBS News, Part II, June 27, 1967, p. 12.
- 97. *The New York Times*, December 11, 1967.
- 98. Epstein, *Counterplot*, p. 81.
- 99. *Playboy*, p. 165.
- 100. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.
- 101. Epstein, *Counterplot*, p. 78.
- 102. Interview with Milton Brener, December 11, 1992.
- 103. Phelan, op. cit., p. 149.
- 104. Aynesworth, "The JFK Conspiracy," *Newsweek*, May 15, 1967, p. 40.
- 105. Rogers, "The Persecution of Clay Shaw," *Look*, p. 56.
- 106. Edward Wegmann memorandum, June 4, 1968, p. 5.
- 107. Interview with Layton Martens, March 19, 1992.
- 108. Phelan, op. cit., p. 172.
- 109. *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 174.
- 110. Transcript of April 16, 1971, interview of Perry Russo by William Gurvich, Edward Wegmann, and Irvin Dymond, p. 3.
- 111. *Ibid.*
- 112. Phelan, op. cit., p. 174.
- 113. Interview with Cynthia Wegmann, March 17, 1992.
- 114. Interview with Irvin Dymond, March 20, 1992.
- 115. Interview with Milton Brener, December 11, 1992.

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