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Tampa writer asks trial in JFK assassination case

By TOM RAUM
Times Staff Writer

Tampa writer Kerry W. Thornley today called for New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison to bring him to trial, so he might have the same chance to clear his name that was afforded to another charged in Garrison's probe of the John Kennedy assassination, Clay Shaw.

Thornley, who has been charged by Garrison with lying about an alleged association with Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans in the months prior to the presidential assassination, said he felt Shaw's acquittal Saturday further pointed to his own innocence.

But, said Thornley, "I want an opportunity to go into court to answer charges which are utterly ridiculous."

The writer, who was a Marine Corps friend of Lee Harvey Oswald, purported assassin of Kennedy, complained that he had been available for trial since his arraignment in New Orleans last April, "but Garrison has yet to set a trial date."

Thornley said he had heard rumors that Garrison would be "out to get me" if his prosecution of Shaw failed, but discounted them on the grounds that "I don't think Garrison wanted either the Clay Shaw case or my case to get to trial."

It was all just a big "propaganda campaign," charged Thornley, but Garrison unexpectedly had his bluff called when forced to

actually go to trial with Shaw, Thornley claimed.

However, Thornley said he had no way of anticipating Garrison's next move. "He's very unpredictable, nothing he might do would surprise me."

Shaw, charged with conspiring with Oswald in New Orleans to assassinate President Kennedy, was acquitted Saturday following a lengthy, much-publicized trial.

Garrison's forces have suggested that Thornley on several occasions posed as Oswald while the two were in New Orleans.

Thornley has vigorously denied that he posed as his former friend, or that he even knew Oswald was in the city while he (Thornley) worked as a French Quarter waiter in 1963.

The writer, who published the book "Oswald" in 1965, was stationed with Oswald at a Marine Corps base at El Toro, Calif., in 1959. He denies seeing Oswald since.

Thornley said that Garrison had earlier claimed Shaw, as a prominent New Orleans businessman, had helped Thornley publish another book about Oswald — an earlier novel. However, the district attorney dropped that theory when he learned that the book was never published, Thornley said.

The writer also charged that Garrison's "propaganda mill" has circulated rumors that he posed as Oswald for a picture which appeared on the cover of Life magazine shortly after the assassination. "Now something like that could be easily proved or disproved," said Thornley.

Lane's Facts Need Checking

TAMPA — While it is entirely possible that the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy had private reservations concerning the conclusions of the Warren Commission, there is ample reason to doubt Mark Lane's assertions — reported in the November 13 issues of both Tribune and Times — that Senator Kennedy at any time secretly supported the Garrison probe.

As one with a more-than-academic interest in the New Orleans "investigation" — having been charged with perjury relating to it by Mr. Garrison — I've taken the trouble to check out Mark Lane's statements on this and a number of other subjects.

According to all sources except Mr. Lane, Robert Kennedy was deeply suspicious of Mr. Garrison in both public and private. And when Senator Kennedy planned a visit to Louisiana shortly before his death, he took the trouble to request assurance from the governor of that state that he would be immune to Garrison's powers of subpoena. Even Jim Garrison, when questioned about Mr. Lane's stories of "secret emissaries," told an interviewer in the July 12, 1968 Los Angeles Free Press. "... I would not say 'emissaries,' because they did not come straight from Robert Kennedy to me carrying red briefcases, or anything like that — in other words, it was a very loose liaison."

And according to the very scholarly and objective Warren Report critic, Sylvia Meagher — the woman who single-handedly indexed the Report and the 26 volumes of "supportive material," and who wrote the book, "Accessories After The Fact" (Bobbs-Merrill, 1967) — even Mr. Garrison's watered-down version of Mark Lane's tale of two emissaries is untrue. Mrs. Meagher says that figure of speech concerning "guns between" Senator Kennedy and the White House was originated by yet another Warren Report critic, Jones Harris, who does not attribute it to Robert Kennedy.

Both Mr. Lane and Mr. Garrison are extremely loose with their facts, even on matters of public record. They seem unconcerned when their carelessness harms innocent people, or even when it serves to convince responsible and informed people that Warren Report critics are generally untruthful. This has caused a growing number of those who disagree



MARK LANE
Inquiry Proposed

with the findings of the Warren Commission — including Leo Sauvage, Mrs. Meagher, J. D. Thompson, David Lifton, Edward Epstein, and others — to speak out against the distortions, errors, exaggerations, and misrepresentations put forth by Mr. Garrison and his politically motivated followers.

In rejecting the findings of the Warren Commission, it is not necessary to accept those of the Garrison probe. If more Americans realized this a Congressional investigation of the assassination of John F. Kennedy would become a political possibility, since a majority of the people reject the conclusions of the Commission — but all too many of them do nothing about it because they believe Jim Garrison's claim that he has "solved" the assassination, though Garrison himself has admitted that only a Congressional investigation can bring the full truth out.

Write your Congressman and your Senators today — urging them to support a professional and objective investigation of the JFK assassination. That way Mr. Lane will have an opportunity to repeat his story of the secret emissaries — under oath.

KERRY THORNLEY

