

Garrison, D.A. delivers what he promises, say former girl friends

NEWS ANALYSIS
BY JOHN RAYMOND

What began as one of the century's most tragic news stories has slowly proliferated into a kaleidoscopic web of intrigue, plots, charges, counter charges, and finally filtered down into the seamy side of New Orleans and a trial that embraces the entire bizarre spectrum from the death of a President to the sado-masochistic trappings of a sexual sub-culture that includes chains, whips, black hoods and capes.

World attention is now riveted on the flamboyant District Attorney of New Orleans, Jim Garrison, and Clay L. Shaw, 54, the man he has charged with complicity in the plot to assassinate John F. Kennedy. The chief witness thus far against Shaw is a 25-year-old Baton Rouge insurance salesman, Perry Russo.

Sunday Ramparts has reached three girls, two of them now living in San Francisco, one in the mid-west, who have shed further light on the Garrison-Shaw-Russo triumvirate. The girls are all friends, and each has lived and worked in New Orleans. Sunday Ramparts promised them complete anonymity because of their relationships to some of the principals in the trial and the possible reflection on their present lives.

Does Garrison promise more than he delivers?

"No," says an ex-girl friend, who saw him as recently as two weeks ago. "Jim may be flamboyant, and he likes to take on the Establishment, but I've never knew him to stick his neck out and make a fool of himself. He always gets results."

The girl said that when she recently saw Garrison in New Orleans, he was confident and sure of himself. There was no indication on his part, she said, that he

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had any doubts about proving the spectacular charges he has made about Shaw and the organized conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

And what of Perry Russo, the man who says he heard Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald, and David Ferrie, now deceased, plot the death of Kennedy in Shaw's apartment?

A San Francisco girl now married to an attorney went to high school with Russo in New Orleans. She described him as "very intelligent" and said he had been on the debate team at school.

"He was an easy going kind of guy, a good student," she said. "I know he was liked by both elements in school, although he wasn't a homosexual as far as I know. He was just a very nice guy; I'd be inclined to believe what he said. He wasn't a showoff, not the kind of guy who's always trying to get attention. He wasn't a swinger, just down to earth."

She said Russo didn't date often in high school, but "that was because his family didn't have a car—it was sort of a status thing. So he didn't ask many girls out."

And last, but certainly not least, what of Ferrie and Shaw? Shortly after Garrison named Ferrie, an ex-airlines pilot with a homosexual record, as part of the conspiracy, Ferrie died. "Natural causes," said the coroner. "Sui-

cide," insisted Garrison. "Odd," muttered jaded readers of the daily press.

When Shaw was bagged by Garrison, a wierd assortment of playthings—the kind of toys von Sacher-Masoch might have kept around the house to entertain guests with—were found in his home.

Now we take you to the third of our girls, who also knew Garrison and whose hairdresser was the queen of Shaw's fag jet set, the lad who was every inch a lady and loved it.

"They've got a sub-culture going in New Orleans you wouldn't believe," she said. The homosexual community isn't integrated. All the fags want to be nice proper little old ladies. The intellectual fags get out, they don't stay around. So does anyone else with any sense. My hairdresser knew them all—Shaw, Ferrie."

No matter how you look at it, it's a long way from that dreadful day in Dallas to the French Quarter in New Orleans and the seamy accoutrements of flagellation and sexual psychosis.

If Jim Garrison can synthesize and correlate these diverse elements, these disorganized threads, into a tapestry of assassination, he'll go down in history along with Harry Houdini and Merlin the Magician.