

The Metropolitan Crime Commission Position On the Garrison-JFK Murder Conspiracy Probe

THE ORLEANS PARISH DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE SHOULD BE GIVEN EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE AND INCENTIVE TO EXHAUST ALL RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATIVE LEADS TO THE END OF EITHER PROVING OR DISPROVING ALLEGATIONS THAT A CONSPIRACY TO MURDER PRESIDENT KENNEDY OCCURRED IN NEW ORLEANS.

ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN P. F. GREMILLION HAS BOTH LEGAL AND MORAL OBLIGATION TO INVESTIGATE THE SERIES OF ALLEGATIONS THAT THE OFFICE OF THE ORLEANS PARISH DISTRICT ATTORNEY HAS ENGAGED IN VARIOUS CRIMINAL ACTS. IT IS UNTENABLE THAT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OF LOUISIANA BE PRESENTED TO ITS OWN CITIZENS AND THE NATION AS ONE IN WHICH SERIOUS CRIMES CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO A DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND BE IGNORED.

At a time when District Attorney Garrison was confronted with various inconsistent statements issued by his office to explain his demands for a pardon for strip-teaser Brigitte, unofficial statements emanated from that office to the effect that a quiet investigation was being initiated into a matter of international importance. Attention of the news media, through "leaks" from the D.A.'s office, was diverted to conjecture about the vast implications of our district attorney's office proving a New Orleans-based conspiracy to murder former President Kennedy. The public generally was not informed of this, however, until a front-page story in the New Orleans STATES-ITEM on February 17, 1967 revealed expenditure of public funds for that purpose.

Immediately there descended upon New Orleans representatives of the press from throughout the nation and elsewhere in the world. Thereafter statements by Mr. Garrison and members of his staff held the headlines almost continuously for several months. The news media carried stories of Garrison's flat prediction that he would prosecute and convict all key persons responsible for the death of the former President, and disprove the investigative findings of the FBI, the Secret Service and the Warren Commission.

Attention of most of the civilized world was focused on New Orleans, and held there, by the startling predictions and accusations made by our District Attorney.

On March 1, 1967 Clay Shaw was arrested as one of the alleged conspirators and subsequently held for trial by three judges sitting as committing magistrates, and by indictment of the grand jury, based upon the testimony of two witnesses unknown to Mr. Garrison at the time of his announced solution of the Presidential assassination.

Beginning on June 8, 1967 our community and the entire nation were presented with publication of charges that District Attorney Garrison's office had been using bribery and intimidation in efforts to secure witness testimony in support of Mr. Garrison's claims.

NEWSWEEK Magazine, published under date of June 15, 1967, and local newspapers conveyed charges to that effect by Alvin Beauboeuf. A countrywide telecast of the National Broadcasting Company on June 19, 1967 projected the allegations of various persons to the effect that the two witnesses had committed perjury in their testimony which resulted in the charge against Clay Shaw. Other persons on the telecast claimed the D.A.'s office had attempted to induce them to make false statements in this case.

During a nationally televised presentation of the Columbia Broadcasting System on June 27, William Gurvich, an aide especially selected by Mr. Garrison to assist him in the conspiracy probe, announced that Garrison's claims were without factual foundation; that Garrison had ordered his subordinates to commit such crimes as robbery, kidnapping, aggravated assault and false imprisonment, in order to achieve his ends. Despite widespread charges of this kind against the district attorney's office, no official prosecutive agency of the City or State Government undertook responsibility, under the law, to aggressively investigate them.

This is not intended as, and should not be interpreted to be, an expression of opinion as to the innocence or guilt of any defendant in any pending prosecution.

The above statement of position was approved at regular meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans, Inc., an organization of citizens, financed by voluntary contributions, working to improve law enforcement and the impartial administration of justice.

As a citizen watchdog of law enforcement and criminal justice, the MCC believed it then had a responsibility to speak out.

The situation, as we see it, is this:

1. If District Attorney Garrison does, in fact, have evidence of a conspiracy, in this jurisdiction, to murder President Kennedy, he has the responsibility to use every available resource, within the law, to investigate and prosecute.

2. If such an investigation requires personnel and finances outside the capacity of his Office, he should call upon the Governor and the Attorney General for assistance with manpower and money. The use of voluntary funds for that purpose is considered undesirable from the standpoint of both doubtful legality and undependable planning.

3. Mr. Garrison has made serious charges of a Federal conspiracy to conceal evidence and to delude the public. Whether or not his charges are true, they tend to destroy credibility of the various high level officials who served on the Warren Commission; of the CIA, upon whom we must depend for protection of this nation against foreign subversion; and of the FBI, the protector of our internal security. If his charges are true, our nation is in a perilous situation. If Mr. Garrison's charges are false, then those whom he accused have been made less effective by undermining their credibility, and no correction is possible other than by disproof of Mr. Garrison's statements.

4. Mr. Garrison and his staff have now been publicly accused by known persons of having committed perhaps 22 or more crimes against the State of Louisiana. Suppression of crime requires that any allegation of crime be promptly investigated and appropriate action taken based upon evidence. In the case of a District Attorney so accused, the responsibility for such investigation and prosecution is vested in the Attorney General of the State by Article 7 of the Louisiana Constitution and Article 62 of the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure.

5. Laws of our State were intended to establish essential responsibility and authority to be carried out by persons in public offices. The MCC is not concerned with the Names of the District Attorney and of the Attorney General. It is concerned with the responsibilities placed in their hands for the protection and security of the people.

So long as the cloud of unresolved charges against the district attorney remains, any final action by that office in the JFK murder conspiracy probe will be accompanied by suspicion and doubt, which will equal, if not exceed, the suspicions and doubts expressed concerning the Warren Commission Report.

We claim this to be a "government of laws, not of men". Let's prove it.