

Merry-Go-Round

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Probe Reprobed



Jack Anderson

HOUSE PROBERS have quietly returned to the scene of former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's flamboyant investigation into the John F. Kennedy assassination.

The House assassinations committee has set up offices in New Orleans, where the investigators are retracing Garrison's steps and again questioning his witnesses of a decade ago.

Secret testimony has been taken, for example, from Carlos Marcello, the reputed boss of the New Orleans underworld. He was summoned to Washington for questioning under oath about his relationship with a New Orleans private eye, the late David William Ferrie, whom Garrison arrested.

The controversial Garrison charged that Ferrie was Lee Harvey Oswald's getaway pilot. Ferrie was a strange, conspiratorial figure who had ties to right-wing militants and once reportedly flew a private plane on a bombing mission over Cuba.

He was found dead in 1967, possibly a suicide. But mystery surrounds his death as it did his life.

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GARRISON became convinced that Ferrie was implicated in a right-wing conspiracy to murder Kennedy. Oswald was supposed to be set up as the assassin because of his pro-Fidel Castro activities. The presumed secret plot was to throw suspicion on Castro for the killing.

It has been reported that Ferrie showed up in Texas not long after the assassination, supposedly to fly Oswald to safety. Ferrie had also told friends that he had no use for Kennedy. The late president's brother, Robert Kennedy, had used his position as attorney

general to hound Marcello. It was suggested, therefore, that Marcello might have joined in the alleged conspiracy to murder Kennedy.

Under oath, Marcello acknowledged that he had made payments to Ferrie at the time of the Kennedy assassination. But the mobster testified that he had paid Ferrie to investigate the credibility of a government witness against him in an immigration case.

On the day of the assassination, Marcello told the committee behind closed doors, he and Ferrie were together at the federal courthouse in New Orleans. Marcello was questioned by the committee as a witness, not a suspect.

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PRESIDENT CARTER'S unofficial ambassador to Wall Street, Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal, has reported to the Cabinet behind closed doors that he's finding "a widespread feeling of uncertainty" and "a low level of confidence" in the business community.

With the President listening intently, Blumenthal said the "general mood" of businessmen is "not good but certainly not hopeless." Their "lack of confidence," he said, "relates specifically to the uncertain fate of the energy program — especially its tax aspects."

Businessmen are convinced, he reported, that "certain aspects" of the energy program "simply will not work." They are also concerned about the replacement of Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns, the Treasury secretary said.

"It would be a good idea," he suggested, "for the President to deliver a fireside chat or other major address on the economy."