

18 August 1971

Dear Harold:

I'm humiliated, unable to locate that Gervais quote about Garrison and loyalty. We looked up the March 4, 1967, issue of Paris Match, and there was the article by Bernard Giquel we remembered, based mostly on an obviously none-too-rewarding interview with Gervais. But the quote I told you about simply isn't there. We must have seen it elsewhere, and will keep an eye out for it. The Giquel article, "The Kennedy Mystery: Garrison the Prosecutor -- 'I'll Go On To The End,'" is quite brief, and while mostly routine it does have a few paragraphs about Gervais that might interest you and which I'll try to translate below (with all appropriate protestations of incompetence).

It traces Garrison's career up through the point where he chooses Gervais, his old Army Air Force comrade, as his chief investigator. It notes that JG is "profondement anti-federal" and cites with evident relish an alleged incident wherein JG, before a witness, told the governor of Louisiana, who wanted the DA to hire a political friend as an aide, to go fuck himself [Allez vous faire f...."]

Gervais sketches the cleanup of Bourbon Street, ending with "We did it, he and I. Since then he's married, has four or five kids -- it's finished." The author describes Gervais:

"Pershing Gervais, now 50 and retired, carries on some obscure [mal determinees] activities as a private detective. Married three times, he has a son 25 years old in Vietnam and another 10 months old. On his left wrist he wears a gold-plated watch and on the little finger of his right hand a signet ring with two diamonds. His office is the lobby [hall] of the Hotel Fontainebleu, near the bar, where he takes mysterious telephone calls. In rumpled grey flannel slacks and a black and yellow polo shirt, he has the air of a veteran of the ring. 'Boxing is the only thing that interests me in going on living,' he says....."

"For several years the most astonishing of the whole lot of astonishing characters in New Orleans, [chef de la brigade des stupefiants de la Nouvelle-Orleans] he seems at once a cop and a thief, someone out of the novels of James Hadley Chase.

"When he needed me, I helped Jim because he's honest [regulier -- also strict, exact]. His hands are clean. Never has he taken money that he shouldn't. He lives on his salary, around \$20,000 a year. That's all."

[Quand il a eu besoin de moi, j'ai aide Jim parce qu'il est regulier. Il a ~~maint~~ les mains propres. Jamais il n'a accepte d'argent de qui que ce soit. Il vit avec son salaire, environ 20,000 dollars par an. C'est tout.]

"Between a couple of telephone calls, Gervais told me:

"I'll say one thing. I loathe newsmen. they're all dogs."

The author then quotes Gervais in a passage I can't untangle but which appears to say he thinks little of Bobby and even less of LBJ [cet nullite] and winds up with a brief lamentation about the New Orleans mentality, its corruption, its fondness for Mardi Gras and other 18th Century frills, and how all this bears on the DA's assassination probe, which Gervais calls "rotted" from the beginning. "I don't think even Jim can furnish irrefutable proof of a plot," Giquel quotes Gervais as saying.

"That's a pity," Gervais concludes. "Give me enough money and I'll find you twenty people in town who'd swear to having heard David Ferrie talking of a plot against Kennedy. So what!"

Be glad to photocopy all this for you. As a translator I have just burnt out a main bearing.

Best,


jdw