

3/1/68
RAMPARTS



Marginalia



Letters:

A BURNING QUESTION

SIRS: This morning's New York Times described your December cover and it sounds like a dandy.

Many people (some of whom have the potential to become the most adamant supporters of your stand) view draft card burning as unpatriotic and irresponsible.

Speaking from the distaff side may I suggest that you put a gentle smile on your faces and sock it to them.

MARIAN SHANLEY.

Irvington, New Jersey

THE GARRISON COMMISSION

SIRS: If NBC, CBS, Newsweek, the CIA, the FBI and all other concerns are so sure of Jim Garrison [“The Garrison Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy,” RAMPARTS, January 1968] being wrong in his investigation, why not allow him free reign and see if he makes the ass out of himself they all think he will? If Garrison's wrong, think of the laughs all these people will have. If Garrison's right, think of all the faith we had in our federal government.

R. C. HOOD JR

Fullerton, California

SIRS: Just a note to commend your writer on the recent Jim Garrison story. He interpreted correctly the UPI pick-up of the AP report of the threat by U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark against Jim Garrison. The remark, as your writer said, indicated a state of mind! As the reporter who picked up the line, I can describe the background.

Following a speech at the University of Virginia, Oct. 13, Clark, several law students, and a reporter resembling a student talked privately on stage. Clark answered the reporter's probing by saying, “Much as I may hate to do it, I just might have to prosecute Jim Garrison . . . he took a perfectly fine man, Clay Shaw, and ruined him just for personal aggrandizement.” When asked what Garrison would obtain by bringing a groundless, losing case, Clark answered,

“Perhaps Garrison is not as logical as you are.”

Clark also denied Garrison's assertion that the government has a large secret file of documents on the assassination. The only records not open to public inspection, he said, are those pertaining to President Kennedy's corpse. These are being withheld until the demise of the President's children.

Following Clark's denial that the Garrison prosecution statement was ever made, I contacted his office. The upshot was a note from press officer Cliff Sessions which could be interpreted as backtracking on the denial. Sessions said, “The Attorney General issued no statement on your story. In response to several inquiries, I released the following statement on the day after your story was carried by the AP: ‘The Attorney General discussed this matter hypothetically. He stated no conclusion. The Department of Justice has no plans for any case against Mr. Garrison.’ ”

This differed from the denial carried by the AP, Oct. 14, which read: “However, a spokesman for the Justice Department in Washington said the department has no plans for bringing a case at this time [italics added]. The spokesman further denied that Clark had accused Garrison of ruining prominent New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw.”

Observers and friends of Clark maintain the whole thing was a simple unguarded-moment incident. I have found no evidence to the contrary. But it's a reporter's job to have an essential distrust of innocence.

REY BARRY

The Daily Progress

Charlottesville, Virginia

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