

Oswald Buddy Lied, Says DA



KERRY THORNLEY

Free-lance writer Kerry W. Thornley, once a Marine Corps buddy of Lee Harvey Oswald, was charged with perjury by District Attorney Jim Garrison today in connection with his testimony Feb. 8 before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury in its Kennedy assassination probe.

The 29-year-old Thornley was accused of lying before the jury when he testified that he had not been with Oswald in New Orleans in September of 1963.

OSWALD WAS THE MAN NAMED by the Warren Commission as the lone assassin of President Kennedy in November, 1963, at Dallas, Tex.

The charge details the testimony of Thornley and the questioning by Garrison,

who has spearheaded the Kennedy investigation.

IN IT THORNLEY DENIED meeting with Oswald. In reply to Garrison's questions, the witness said he had been told by Barbara Reid, a French Quarter resident, that he had been seen with Oswald that September in the Bourbon House restaurant.

Thornley told the jury, the charge alleges, that he was sure he had not met with Oswald despite Miss Reid's statements.

THE CHARGE SAYS THAT Thornley knew this testimony was "false and untrue." Thornley, who has written two novels

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concerning Oswald, "Idle Warriors" and "Oswald," has said repeatedly that he never saw the accused murderer after they went their separate way in the Marine Corps.

Now a resident of Tampa, Fla., Thornley had first fought extradition to New Orleans to testify before the jury, but later changed his mind.

In Tampa, Thornley said the perjury charge is false and said he had a "feeling of futility about going through the rest of my life bailing myself out of debt over this thing."

He said he probably would not fight extradition and would ask for a public defender to represent him in court.

IN RESPONSE TO the charge, Thornley said there is either a conspiracy afoot to "frame me" by someone with a large amount of money, or the grand jury was misled by "an overwhelming amount of circumstantial coincidences."

Many witnesses, Thornley declared, apparently "deliberately lied" in testifying that they saw him with Oswald in restaurants and other places.

"I have neither the resources investigative-wise nor legal-wise to prove that these witnesses were lying," he said. "I feel a comprehensive investigation would clear me."

He has said that before he left New Orleans in September, 1967, he gave Garrison an affidavit concerning Oswald and his relationship with him at the Marine Corps base at El Toro, Calif.

Along with the charge, Garrison filed these quotations from the testimony of Thornley before the grand jury:

Q. You left the Sheraton Charles the second time on

Sept. 20, 1963. Now going back, can you remember about a week afterward where you were?

A. I have been going through this whole September thing so much in my mind

Q. HAVE YOU REACHED some result as to this last week in September?

A. No, the only thing referring to this time period, ever since the assassination Barbara Reid said, "Mark my words, when the truth of the assassination comes out,"—and this was within a week after Oswald was killed, and it was in her house one night—and she said, "When the truth of the assassination comes out it will be a New Orleans-based conspiracy, it will have right-wing elements involved and it will have something to do with Latin elements."

Q. What do you recall thinking about this last week in September?

A. LET ME TELL you first how I got on to thinking about it to begin with. She said she had seen me sitting with Oswald in my little corner of the Bourbon House, where I sat whenever it was empty, and she had said to me a couple of times, "You have a nice voice" or something like that. I did not know her too well but I had seen her around and I had been introduced to her casually—we weren't friends or anything. She was sitting up at the bar and I was sitting down here and somebody was on my right and she said "I am sure you were sitting there with Oswald, I am positive it was Oswald, because I never forget a face; I have been a casting director

and I never forget a face, he was very neat and he sitting there and talking to you and I made that comment to you about your voice"—and I remember the incident, I was sitting there one day, I was talking to somebody and Barbara did make a comment about my voice, and the reason I think it was not Oswald is because first of all that night she was talking to me and we decided after talking about two hours, that she was so sure of herself, and all of this travel pattern had emerged and I am saying Barbara is suggesting, she is saying, "Well, maybe you didn't recognize him, he came walking in," and of course there is always the other consideration that I was revising the book at that time and he could have come walking in, and she convinced me that this is what probably happened, he came walking in and sat next to me and we were talking to her and she made this comment on my voice and she went back to her conversation and I went back to mine . . .

Q. DID SHE SEE you with Oswald?

A. I don't think she did because the next day I started asking people . . .

Q. You don't think so?

A. I don't know whether it was Oswald, I can't remember who was sitting there with me, I don't think it was

Oswald for two reasons, the first thing is if I could remember who it was then I could say definitely, in view of the fact that . . .

Q. I understand those facts, but in view of the fact that you were writing a novel about him, I should think you would recognize him.

A. YES, THIS was Barbara's theory.

Q. Was her theory right?

A. I don't know. First of all, the next day I started saying to people "Barbara is sure she saw me with Oswald in the Bourbon House." That is the first thing. I kept asking people.

Q. Did you ask them if they saw you at the Bourbon House with Oswald?

A. No I did not ask them, how would they know? Barbara was there. I said Barbara is sure she saw me at the Bourbon House with Oswald, I don't know whether it is true or not but she is sure she saw me there and she has convinced me that she saw me. And everybody said, "Oh, Barbara Reid gets involved with everything that happens."

Q. IS IT POSSIBLE that you were with Oswald at the Bourbon House?

A. I don't think it possible. For here is the other reason. I remembered this thing that happened after she turned away and after she went back to conversing with this person at the bar and I felt obligated to explain to this person sitting with me, "That is Barbara Reid, she is a character around here," to somebody who did not know Barbara," She is a witch or something like this, and I felt that there was a barrier to my explaining this to this person and this could only have been one of the Cuban waiters at the Sheraton-Charles and the only barrier would have been a language barrier . . . why did I feel that this was a barrier, and on the basis of that—that is all I know. On the basis of that, I am sure I was not with Oswald, but Barbara is sure I was.

Q. All right, have you finished giving me the basis for getting to what you were doing the last week in September?

A. That is the only thing I don't know what I was doing

Q. . . . ARE YOU SURE that you never saw Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans in 1963? For a while you seemed to be on the fence.

A. No, the only time I ever thought I did was when Barbara Reid was so sure about it, and I became convinced

Q. Does it seem possible now?
A. Well, no, it doesn't seem possible to me unless I was drugged or something.

A. It seemed to be possible when she got all through, until the next day and people began to say Barbara Reid connects herself with everything that happens, then it seemed impossible . . .

to me and she said, "Kerry, what must have happened was this, you must have walked into the Bourbon House and he must have sat down next to you . . ." She was so certain, so positive . . .
Q. Did it seem to you that was possible?

but I am sure I did not see Oswald and recognize him in New Orleans in 1963.
Q. You are telling me there was a point when she had convinced you that you were with Oswald?
A. Yes, she convinced me, certainly, there was the two hours or so she was talking