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The New Yorker began publication in 1922 with the subtitle, "Not for the old lady from Dubuque." Now, forty-five years later, it has BECOME an old lady—but NOT from Dubuque. She is a glib, slick, vicious old lady from Madison Avenue.

The New Yorker started as an avant garde magazine and during the thirties and forties its pages communicated the vitality of fine young writers like James Thurber, Frank Sullivan, and A.J. Liebling. Years passed. Fattened by expensive ads for expensive cars, expensive liquors, expensive clothes, and luxury liner cruises, it became less youthful and less avant garde.

Now Thurber, Sullivan and Liebling are all dead, and the columns of the New Yorker have degenerated to a kind of precious, pointless prose in which nothing ever happens, written by polished, top-drawer, commercial hacks with a flair for the well-turned phrase, and the well-placed obscure archaism: the kind of prose in which spinsterly English teachers and exually deprived matrons delight. Stories about young people who talk to each other in the vernacular of 1948.

I mention all this apropos a very vicious hatchet job which the New Yorker performed upon New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison last week. Almost the entire issue (July 13) was allocated to a slick and dishonest article by Edward Jay Epstein which is nothing more than a compilation of every scrap of available information and misinformation that would tend to discredit Garrison.

Any factual material that would support Garrison's position—and there is plenty!—is carefully omitted from the piece. And another gross error of omission—one hardly explainable except in ugly terms—is that no one reading this article would find from the article that the Warren Commission Report is full of falsehoods and evasions—or that Epstein himself contributed to this critical finding in his own book, "Inquest."

To be sure, Garrison, in his impulsive enthusiasm, has made blunders, has gone after false leads. He, like anyone else, has made mistakes along the way. Epstein has picked out all the mistakes that could be found and strung them together in a story that, to anyone who does not know the facts—and that includes nearly everyone—would seem to completely demolish Garrison and everything he has said about the assassination.

Epstein begins by referring to Garrison, repeatedly, as "an ambitious politician," which is what the news media have been doing to him from the start. He does not mention, on the other hand, the fact that how ambitious Garrison is has very little bearing on the validity of what he had said about the Kennedy assassination. And aren't we all a little bit ambitious? Isn't Epstein an ambitious writer? You can bet your life he is!

And he does not omit to mention that Garrison once legally changed his name from Earling Carothers to Jim (who wouldn't!) This piece of intelligence has little or no relevance to the validity of Garrison's charges against Shaw and the CIA, but for a great many people it would raise dark suspicions that Garrison is vain, unstable, or, somehow, not quite "above-board."

He quotes, as an authoritative source, one Gordon Novel, who has publicly admitted to being a CIA agent.

Page after page, he cites trivial and misleading contradictions in Garrison's investigations such as the fact that Garrison's star witness, Perry Russo contradicted himself, and did not tell the same story under sodium pentothal that he told without drugs. This is supposed to discredit all of his testimony! He cites possible ulterior motives for practically everything Garrison has done in the past two years. And he does not neglect to point out that Russo once visited a psychiatrist.

He casts doubt on Russo's testimony that he saw Oswald in Ferrie's apartment in October,

1963, "because he was known to have been in Dallas and Mexico during this period." But if he was able to commute between Dallas and Mexico during this two-month period, what would prevent him from also visiting New Orleans?

He questions Russo's testimony on the grounds that Russo described Oswald as having a beard, and other "reliable" witnesses said that Oswald was clean-shaven at that time. But just how reliable are those unnamed witnesses? And who are they? And in this period of two months or more, could not Oswald have been seen wearing a beard, shaved it off, and then grown again another beard?

I cite these examples to show the kind of glib deception that is used in this sort of hatchet job. Soothing deception for those anxious to be reassured.

He does not fail to mention that Garrison received tips from men who were inmates of state prisons, even though Garrison later dismissed the statements of Torres and Cancler in view of their criminal records.

Ray Marcus, author of "The Bastard Bullet," and a critic of the Warren Report told me, "Almost everything Epstein says in the article is untrue. He accused me of claiming that there were four gunmen with cowboy hats in one of the photographs of Dealy Plaza. He knows very well that I never said that."

Maggie Field, also a critic, and an expert on the assassination and the Warren Report, told me that Epstein's piece was "false from beginning to end."

Jim Garrison, with whom I spoke yesterday, said, "There are a lot of Epsteins and they're all for sale. Epstein is the kind of guy who, if we were all in prison, would be eating with the guards."

Epstein made much of the fact that in the early days of Garrison's investigation, with the constant influx of new leads and new tips, his theory on the number of assassins often changed. He ridicules the unprofessional amateurs, the "irregulars" and the volunteers who have offered to help Garrison in his investiga-

tion.

"Of thirteen new witnesses found through the mail, or with the help of the irregulars assisting Garrison, nearly all have turned out to have criminal records, or to have been under psychiatric care," Epstein states. But what does that prove?

And in the matter of Edgar Eugene Bradley, Epstein flatly states that on the day of the assassination Bradley was in El Paso, not in Dallas. THAT has definitely NOT been proven and there is substantial evidence that he WAS in Dallas. But Epstein does not bother to tell you this. Certainly he knows it.

Epstein ridicules Garrison's charge that much evidence is concealed in the national archives, including proof of his contention that Oswald was an employee of the CIA. But if these allegations are so ridiculous, then why can't we see what's in the archives until the year 2039?

He ridicules the evidence that Oswald purchased and signed for an order of ten Ford trucks for an Anti-Communist Cuban organization, on the ground that Oswald

was in Russia at the time, but wouldn't that lend some credibility to Popkin's theory of a "second Oswald," which Epstein also ridicules?

He ridicules Garrison's allegation that Oswald never fired a shot on the day of the assassination, on the ground that paraffin tests are completely unreliable and don't prove anything, but what does that do to the government's contention that Oswald DID fire a gun that day?

Over and over again, he states that Garrison exploits popular suspicions about government secrecy, but as a matter of fact, the public has been incredibly apathetic about government secrecy, in spite of all of Garrison's sensational pronouncements. And what about that? Is

government secrecy compatible with the theory and practice of a free society? Is there ever any possible justification for government secrecy?

Epstein notes, superciliously, that "... it is hardly surprising to find his speeches printed verbatim in such papers as the Los

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Angeles Free Press, and to find his portrait on the cover of Ramparts..." He states that "His

(Garrison's) charge that there is a conspiracy between the government and the mass media to conceal the truth from the people, accords perfectly, after all, with what such journals see as their *raison d'être*." Of course, we know that couldn't possibly be true, don't we, boys and girls? I mean, who could imagine our nice government concealing anything?

But why indeed were the underground papers the only ones to cover Garrison's speeches—when almost all major metropolitan dailies had a very obvious policy of NO COVERAGE AT ALL, and what little they printed about Garrison was false and defamatory?

And why do American papers treat Garrison with total silence while European newspapers put him in banner headlines?

Epstein declares forthrightly that the news media have the right to scrutinize and criticize Garrison's activities and methods. But it is precisely the opposite that Garrison and his defenders have complained of—that the newspapers have, for the most part, blacked him out, and what little they have printed about him has been false.

At the end, Epstein tells us, piously, that the federal court did the right thing, in stopping the trial, because the rights of the defendant were violated. He does not make a convincing case to support that statement.

But that's not really the relevant point of the matter. Even if it could be proven that Garrison is a lunatic, a liar, a charlatan, as the media would have you believe, there are still so many questions about the assassination of John Kennedy that just will not wash!

(1) Why did the Warren Commission place Oswald in the 6th floor window of the Book Depository Building, on the testimony of one highly unreliable witness, who first said it was definitely NOT Oswald, and then, after much persuasion, changed his mind?

(2) Why did the doctor who performed the autopsy on Kennedy burn his notes?

(3) Why can't we see the Zapruder film?

(4) Why won't they let Garrison bring Shaw and Bradley to trial, or, as Garrison puts it, "If I'm all wet, why don't they let me go into court and prove it? Why don't they just let me fall on my face?"

(5) Why can the evidence in the archives, including documents with such provocative titles as "Oswald's knowledge of the U-2 Affair," not be seen until the year 2039?

(6) Why did the Dallas police,

only two hours after the shooting of Kennedy, insist, "The case is closed! The case is closed!"

(7) Why did Earl Warren, in a moment of fatigue or absent mindedness, say, "Yes, the people will get the full story of the assassination, but not in our lifetime"?

(8) Why was Oswald, a former Communist defector, able to get a passport at the drop of a hat, while others with no taint of heresy wait for days?

(9) What about the twenty-or-more people who knew Oswald and Ruby, who since then have died under extremely suspicious circumstances?

(10) How could Oswald possibly have fired three times with such accuracy in five seconds, at that distance, with an awkward, bolt-action rifle?

(11) And why does the government cling to the single-bullet theory, which is clearly absurd—the theory that the injuries suffered by Gov. Connally and Pres. Kennedy were caused by one bullet?

The timing of this hatchet job makes its purpose abundantly clear: Recently, the federal district court ordered Garrison

to halt the trial of Clay Shaw, in an action without precedent or parallel in American jurisprudence. While all these months Garrison has been trying to bring Shaw to trial and has been frustrated by repeated delaying tactics by Shaw's attorneys, the news media have been telling the public just the opposite.

Now, with the federal court stepping in to stop Garrison, there must be some stirring of doubt in the mind of Mr. White America, disturbing his blubbery lethargy. The New Yorker article is very obviously timed to reassure Mr. Middle Class Liberal that everything is all right, Garrison is the enemy, the federal court did the right thing, and you can turn your muzak on and go back to sleep now.

Garrison speaks often of the "second conspiracy"—to conceal the evidence and the truth about the assassination of John Kennedy. Ironically, they really didn't need to do that. The great blubbery American middle class does not want to believe that the Warren Report is false, because it doesn't want to believe the in-

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evitable conclusion that flows from that—that the leaders of our country are corrupt and vicious from top to bottom. Mr. White, faced with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, refuses to admit that, because he is very much a willing and inseparable part of this fabric of corruption. He has not the slightest desire to

challenge it and he wants nothing more than to be reassured that everything is just fine.

Turn up your muzak, Mr. White, and drown out the rumbles of civil war and insurrection, military and economic disaster and incipient revolution. That's it ... turn on television. Pour yourself a drink.

There. Why don't you curl up on the davenport with the New Yorker. Make yourself comfortable.