

22 AUG 68



Editor.....Penn Jones Jr.
Publisher.....The Midlothian Mirror, Inc.
"The Only 'History of Midlothian' Being Written"
PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

Second-class postage paid at Midlothian, Texas. 76065. Office of publication is 214 West Avenue F Midlothian, Texas 76065. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation, appearing in the columns of The Mirror will fully and gladly be corrected upon being brought to the attention of the editor of this paper.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

For One (1) Year in Ellis, Tarant, Dallas, Kaufman, Henderson, Navarre, Hill and Johnson Counties.. \$5.00 Six Months \$3.00
For One Year Elsewhere \$6.00 Six Months \$3.50
Single Copies 15c

Winner of the 1963 Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award for Courage in Journalism.



Editorial

Ferrie Confessed His Involvement In John Kennedy Assassination Plot

August 5, 1968 Los Angeles By Stephen Jaffe

(Steve Jaffe is a student at UCLA and a growing critic of the Kennedy Assassination. He is concentrating his efforts into the events surrounding the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy.)

The first public disclosure of a confession by any of the participants in the conspiracy which led to the Dallas assassination of President Kenedy was revealed in surprising fashion recently on the Stan Bohrman, Tempo I, television show in Los Angeles. An ex-roommate of the late David Ferrie appeared on the program as a last minute guest. The roommate, Reverend Raymond Broshears of Long Beach, was asked to replace a guest who had been scheduled to discuss psychic phenomena and predictions of the future.

After introductory comments were made, the program, which is in the format of receiving questions from outside

SIMILAR TO ARTICLE IN L.A. FREE PRESS 9 AUG 68

telephone callers, became one of significant historical importance. In response to one of the callers questions the Reverend told of his association with the late David Ferrie of New Orleans.

Ferrie was named by District Attorney Jim Garrison of New Orleans as one of the participants in the conspiracy which ended in the murder of President Kennedy. Garrison said of Ferrie, "He was one of history's most important individuals."

The caller questioned Reverend Broshears and much to the shock of host Stan Bohrman, Broshears answered the questions frankly. When asked if Ferrie had told him of the assassination conspiracy his former roommate replied, "David admitted being involved with the assassins. There's no question about that."

Reverend Broshears, who has tried to escape harrassment by "individuals from mysterious sources" ever since his short association with Ferrie in 1965, told of the role which Ferrie had played in the plot. "He was in Houston at the time Mr. Garrison has him in Houston, with an airplane waiting," reported Broshears. The Reverend said that Ferrie had intended to fly the assassins on the second leg of a getaway trip which was to carry at least two of the gunmen, first to South America and then to South Africa. The location in Africa was chosen as a final destination because that country has no extradition agreement with the United States.

According to the Reverend, Ferrie was waiting in the Houston airport, that Friday afternoon, when the two

assassins, having just murdered President Kennedy, fled in a light aircraft from a landing strip just outside of Dallas. Instead of going straight to Houston as was arranged, the assassins tried to make their escape all the way to Mexico without stopping. The assassins died in a plane crash that afternoon off the coast of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Broshears said that Ferrie had been a nervous wreck in the days of their acquaintanceship. This was over a year before the public disclosure of the investigation of Jim Garrison and, according to a recent article in Ramparts Magazine by William W. Turner, Garrison hadn't begun his probe even secretly, until the later half of 1966. Broshears told of Ferrie's fears that someone was going to kill him. "No matter what happens I will never commit suicide," Ferrie had told the Reverend. "He was emphatic about this," Broshears reiterated.

Broshears said that he knew David Ferrie had been murdered and thus confirmed another portion of Garrison's analysis of the evidence since his probe began.

More questions in the assassination matter are added by the case of David Ferrie. Aside from his mysterious death, the strange activities of Ferrie on November 22, 1963 had led Garrison to arrest him for questioning when Ferrie returned from his trip to Houston. After the District Attorney's office questioned Ferrie they referred him to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for further questioning, and examination by the Warren Commission. As in so many similar cases, the Warren Commission never questioned Ferrie, who, it is evident, might have shed considerable light on the true events of the assassination.

Compounding the federal negligence is the fact that the F.B.I. did question Ferrie and the forty page transcription of that interview has been committed to the National Archives for the duration of 75 years from the issuance

of the Warren Report.

Reverend Broshears was asked by the caller if he was ever arrested for threatening the life of President Lyndon Johnson. Most reluctantly he replied that he had been. But he qualified the implication saying that it was for the love of his country that such an incident transpired. He did not actually threaten President Johnson, and he explained that he does not believe in killing. "What then," Bohrman puzzled, "did you say?"

At the risk of being re-arrested for repeating a statement that had caused Secret Service agents to take the Reverend into custody two years ago, Broshears stated, "I said that Mr. Johnson, the person who was responsible,

directly or indirectly, for the assassination of President Kennedy, should be put to death'."

With the energy of ten men, and the breath of a parakeet, Bohrman activated his lips to form the words, "We'll be right back after this word from Arid Extra Dry."

But the shock which characterizes most of the assassination revelations did not stop there. Broshears admissions, however courageous or honest, have meant nothing but total torture and harrassment for him ever since the television program.

Since the time of his arrest by Federal Agents in New Orleans for the incident of his alleged threat on President Johnson (after which he was questioned and released without conviction or sentence) he has had to be in constant touch with Federal offices of the Secret Service and F.B.I. by order of the Federal Government. Agents from those organizations have warned him to "keep his mouth shut" or risk being committed to a mental institution.

After the television program Broshears was served by his landlady, Mrs. Norma L. Smith, with a seven-day-limit eviction notice. Phone calls from anonymous sources told him, "How many presidents did you kill today, Reverend?" And two reporters from the Sunday supplement of the Long Beach Press Telegram newspaper, have planned an article for this Sunday's edition which will reveal that Reverend Broshears is a homosexual. A friend of the Reverend's on the Long Beach Police Force confided that the article would not be favorable to him at all. Broshears realizes that the price of breaking his silence on the case could certainly bring damaging comments about him and possibly endanger his life. Ironically Broshears never tried to hide the fact that he is a homosexual. He answered, "I am a homosexual but I have never denied it." Homosexuality is often used as a source of smear material but that is usually in the case of a person who would be damaged by that public revelation. Broshears only fault or sin seems to be his persistent honesty.

Apparently, freedom of speech is something which Broshears has always taken as a cause to defend. When an attack was waged by Reverend John C. Bonner, of the Long Beach-Lakewood Area, to try and halt the sale of the Los Angeles Free Press, in March of 1968, Broshears replied to the aggressor. In a modest but outspoken newspaper published by Reverend Broshears, called "The Light of Understanding," Broshears replied to Reverend Bonner's limited acceptance of journalistic freedom. "In the Bible it states that if you raise your children rightly, you need

not fear," he wrote. Where Reverend Bonner had requested that the representatives of some 47 area churches "stand up and be counted," Broshears answered, "Stand up and be counted as what? A person who opposes freedom of the press?" As a result of this small but noble defense Reverend Broshears was expelled from the ministerial alliance of his district.

Another Los Angeles broadcaster, Elliot Mintz of KPFFK, invited Reverend Broshears on his show. Responding to his tremendous audience interest in the events surrounding the murder of President Kennedy, Mintz questioned Broshears on his association with Ferrie. After callers quizzed the Reverend there was not much time allowed to the Reverend to discuss his Night Ministry school which is his occupation in Long Beach. Although the program closed without the discussion of some of the Reverend's work in the Community Relations field (finding help for "skid row" bums, improving conditions in the ghettos) the oversight of time promised the Reverend shall be corrected by the show's host. Mintz told me, "If Mr. Broshears would like to come on our show to discuss his work, and his Night Ministry school and not to discuss his association with David Ferrie, he has a standing invitation from me to do that."

It is impossible to estimate the truth or falsehood of the Reverend's statements about the assassination. It is certain that in his association with Ferrie he had the unique opportunity to learn what Ferrie might have told the New Orleans Grand Jury had he lived. In the case of the assassination of President Kennedy it seems apparent that those with important knowledge, who speak out, risk death. In the current issue of Reverend Broshears' newspaper he explains his puzzle in a different way. He says, "The price of SILENCE is death."

WATCHMAN WAKETH BUT IN VAIN

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But there were others. Minutes after the shots an unarmed 31-year old man was arrested in the railroad yards adjacent to the parking lot. He was arrested and booked on charges of "investigation

of conspiracy to commit murder." These charges weren't dropped until December 2, eight days after Lee Harvey Oswald's murder. He was held for eight days during which the Dallas police and nationwide news media were claiming the case was closed and Oswald was the sole assassin. He was still being held on December 8 on "city charges" and there is no way of knowing when, if ever, he was released (DALLAS TIMES HERALD, Dec. 8, 1963)

Just after the shots, Patrolman W. E. Barber noticed workers on the third floor of the Depository tapping on a window and pointing to a man wearing horn-rimmed glasses, a plaid jacket, and a raincoat. He was immediately arrested and taken to Sheriff Bill Decker's office for questioning. (DALLAS TIMES HERALD, Nov. 22, 1963) At about 1:15 Patrolman L. S. Debenport told the police radio

dispatcher that he was "taking a prisoner to the downtown jail." (XXIII H 919) A short time later police brought a "disheveled-looking man" from the Depository. Jack Beers Jr., a photographer for the DALLAS MORNING NEWS, snapped a picture of him. (XIII H 105) Chief Deputy Sheriff Allen Sweatt reported an arrest made about this time which may be a reference to the same incident. According to him, a police officer "brought a boy in a sport coat up and said, 'Here is the man that had done the shooting.' " Since the Warren Commission never made any inquiries about this arrest, there is no way of knowing why the police officer thought that he had apprehended the assassin. (XIX H 532)

Finally, when Oswald's mother and wife went to visit him in the Dallas Sheriff's office, they were told that there would be a long delay because the police had "picked up another suspect." Whoever this man was, the police were quite interested in him. (I H 149) Perhaps the most interesting thing about these suspects is that most or possibly all of them were arrested at the scene of the crime. Oswald, of course, was not.

Physical evidence and eyewitness testimony were also pouring in. Three empty cartridge cases

were found near the southeast corner window on the sixth floor of the Depository Building, and a bolt action rifle with a telescopic sight was discovered in a different section of the same floor. Ownership of the rifle was not traced until about 2:00 a.m. the next morning. (W 79)

Eyewitness testimony indicated the following:

1. Shots had been fired from behind a picket fence which is on top of a grassy knoll to the west of the Book Depository Building. In addition to ear-witness testimony, several witnesses saw a puff of smoke in that area, and a police officer smelled gunsmoke. (VI H 243,245; XXIII H 833,836) Many footprints were found on the ground, and strangers had been seen in the area prior to the assassination. (VI H 245, 246; XXII H 833; VI H 287) Finally, a man with credentials identifying him as a Secret Service man, was encountered by a policeman as he was escaping from the area just after the shots. (VII H 535)
2. Shots had been fired from the southeast corner window of the sixth floor of the Book Depository Building. Three men had been seen on the sixth floor prior to the shots, two of whom were armed with rifles. (II H 171, 175-176) Eyewitness testimony seemed to indicate that only one of these men had done any shooting.
3. A man was seen escaping from the area between the Depository and the picket fence who was thought to have a "headpiece" in his hands (restricted to police cars) behind the picket fence prior to the shooting, and at least one car was driven by a man speaking into a microphone. (XXV H 853; VI H 285--286)
4. A man was seen carrying a "guncase" up towards the picket fence more than an hour prior to the assassination while another man stayed in their truck which seemed to be stalled. (XIX H 983-84; XXIV H 216)

In conclusion, even if all of the preceding tes-

timony was later judged to be incorrect in a court of law, on the day of the assassination it suggested in an overwhelming fashion a conspiracy to kill Kennedy. We quoted Dallas District Attorney on this very point in our first installment.

There was reason to believe of course, that others might be involved as accessories before and after the fact. It should be added that, if Oswald was involved, there was immediate evidence of at least one accessory after the fact. The only convincing eyewitness identification of Oswald made that day was by a Deputy Sheriff, Roger D. Craig, who saw him leave the Depository ten minutes after the shooting and then identified him at police headquarters. (VI H 266, 267) Craig stated that he saw Oswald run from the Depository and jump into a car driven by another man and they sped away from the scene. Oswald, according to Craig, immediately admitted that he had full knowledge of the incident. (VI H 270; XIX H 524)

On that afternoon, the strongest evidence against Oswald was that he was inside the Depository when the shots were fired. Since he worked in the Depository, and there were also others in the building at the time of the assassination, this is poor evidence indeed. When asked where he was at the time of the shots, he replied that he was on the first floor eating his lunch. Since Patrolman Marion Baker and Depository manager Roy Truly rushed up into the Depository immediately following the shots and found Oswald in the second floor lunchroom, there would appear to be no reason to question Oswald's claim. Baker testified Oswald was calm and not out of breath. (W 149, 152) Depository employees who were near the stairs or who ran

down them were questioned, but none had seen or heard Oswald descending the stairs. (W 71; VI H 388; XXII H 632, 676)

Since the shots fired from the Depository appeared to have come from the sixth floor, Oswald seemed to have had an alibi.

By late in the afternoon of November 22, 1963, the following was the state of affairs:

1. John F. Kennedy was dead and his body had been illegally taken from Dallas ostensibly because of the concern for the protection of Jacqueline Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. But what possible excuse could be provided for the immediate and illegal removal to Washington of the Presidential car which was damaged in the firing on the motorcade and constituted vital evidence in the anticipated trial of Oswald? Such patent disdain for the evidence on the part of the federal authorities indicated that more than the Presidential limousine were being taken for a ride. Until proven otherwise, the Secret Service was dutybound to assume that there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy and other high officials.

2. The available evidence overwhelmingly indicated that there had been a conspiracy to kill at least the President. There had apparently been enough gunmen strategically placed in Dealey Plaza to have also killed Lyndon Johnson. There was no way of telling at the time whether the plans had been to kill Johnson.

3. A number of suspects had been arrested. Of these suspects, we know only of Oswald, against whom at the time of the assassination there was no evidence for participation in the crime and who was not charged with the crime until 1:30 the next morning.

What is most disturbing about the investigation of the assassination is that it seemed to proceed with the lone assassin thesis at the outset. If such is the case, then one is faced with prima facie evidence of foreknowledge of the assassins actions on the part of those who guide our federal intelligence agencies. Again we must also raise questions about the conduct of the Dallas police, but their failure is nowhere near as disturbing as that of federal agencies.

Let us now further examine the unusual facets of the investigation of the assassination of J. F. K.