

18 June 1972

HW:

Replying to your note of June 6 in regard to Gervais, we never have found the quote on loyalty you ask about. In the meantime here is our attempt to translate the Bernard Giguel article from Paris Match for March 4, 1967, up to the point covered in my letter of 18 August 1971. You are warned that this is an attempt only, by people whose recollection of French is extremely rusty and unused, and involves words which we cannot find in our dictionary. In cases where we are in doubt I'll bracket in the original French so that someone who really knows what he's doing may be able to straighten it out. In no case should our version be relied upon.

GARRISON THE PROSECUTOR

"I'll go on to the end."

A giant like a champion basketball player, Jim Garrison knows he's near the goal. From the height of his two meters and one centimeter, he regards his players with a certain contempt. At the age of 49, he is still handsome, and his bass voice has charmed more than the Creoles of Louisiana [sa voix de basse chantante a charme, dit-on, plus de creoles qu'il y en a en Louisiane], they say. "He's thirsty for publicity," says his enemies. "He's an honest man, and he has guts [et il a du cran]," say his supporters. Back of eye and hair, he has within his well-tailored figure what is rare in a state as hot and sluggish as the Mississippi itself. In New Orleans, all the streets carry names from the Blues: Basin Street, Canal Street, Perdido Street. Jim Garrison was born and grew up with the history of jazz.

"He could make a fortune in Hollywood. He's a fantastic actor on television. Beside him, Robert Stack is a poor beginner," I was told by Pershing Gervais, one of his former collaborators at the courthouse.

From a poor Protestant family, Jim Garrison studied law seriously and had a brilliant war career in Europe. When he was demobilized in 1946 ~~he~~ as a major he had been awarded the Silver Star. A young man, a bon vivant, a spender, every evening he was the last man out of the bars along Bourbon Street [il ferme tous les soirs les bars de Bourbon Street]. But peacetime was not[Mais le temps de paix ne lui sied guerre...] and he volunteered for the war in Korea. Always looking for action, on his return ~~he~~ to New Orleans, he offered his services to the FBI ~~xxxx~~ where he ~~distinction~~ distinguished himself by his flair and his tenacity which became legend [ou il ~~distinction~~ se distingue par son flair et sa tenacite desormais legendaires].

"Whatever happens," he has declared, "I'll go from in front" [j'irai de l'avant] (since the beginning of his inquiry he has, for the first time in his career, carried a revolver in his waistband[])

From behind his modern desk, leaning back in his black leather rocking chair, Jim Garrison fingers his red and marine blue necktie. His favorite response is "no comment." "He speaks when he decides to, never when one questions him," says his blonde secretary.

On the wood-panelled walls are ~~the~~ framed the better cartoons of him from the local press. Like a bull about to charge, he scrapes his slippers on the floor, -- he wears size -- [il chausse de 45]-- slippers of plush of a kind of mustard color. Behind him, on a cabinet, a set of the ~~Encly~~ Encyclopaedia Britannica and, something odd for a prosecutor, not on e law book. The prosecutor likes to fill his pipes with different tobaccos, even though he doesn't smoke. [Enfouies] under mountains of dossiers are the complete works of Shakespeare. Speaking of the ex-mayor of New Orleans, he confides: "This old Hamlet never has made up his mind to challenge [frapper] the King of Denmark."

Profoundly anti-federal, Jim Garrison has a sharp tongue [a l'insulte facile] and prefers direct language to metaphor. To the judges of New Orleans he said one day: "You're like the sacred cows of India, entrenching yourselves behind tradition." These same judges sued him in court [lui intenterent un proces]. Flegmatic and "cold as a refrigerator," in the words of his secretary, Jim Garrison spent the time of the hearings in writing a three-act comedy with characters caricatured like those of Daumier. "If only I were Shakespeare," he confided to a friend.

In 1960 he got back into politics. A Democrat, he refused the pleas of the politicians, ^{rather than keep} his own party ~~and above~~ ^{on} ~~his own~~ staff ~~that he keep~~ those already there; ~~instead~~ he chose some non-professionals, among them his old comrade in arms from the Army Air Force, Pershing Gervais, a police agent, mercenary, adventurer, but "more evil than the dishonest intellectuals" [plus malin que des intellectuels vereux].

To the governor of Louisiana, who brought pressure on him to put a political friend on his staff, Jim Garrison responded in these words, before a witness, "Go fuck yourself." [allez faire f.....]

He won the election over his opponent by a crushing majority. He financed his campaign himself with very little money (27,000 dollars) and some independent funds [et des fonds independants].

"If you don't have ~~more than~~ \$100, spend \$90 on television the evening before the election." ^{steadied, [range]}

"It was only there that Jim ~~straightened up,~~ said his old manager Gervais. "He commenced by cleaning up Bourbon Street. We, he and I, closed the bars where we had ~~been~~ ^{done our} drinking. Meanwhile," continued Gervais, "he married, had four or five kids; that's all over. [c'est fini]."

Pershing Gervais, now 50 and retired..... 4th graf letter of 18 August 1971.

We think we sent you a photocopy of the French original. If we didn't, we'll be glad to.

jdw18jun72