

The Garrison Commission

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Ramparts

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Jim Garrison is an angry man. For six years now he has been the tough, uncompromising district attorney of New Orleans, a rackets-buster without parallel in a political freebooting state. He was elected on a reform platform and meant it. Turning down a Mob proposition that would have netted him \$3,000 a week as his share of slot machine proceeds, he proceeded to raid Bourbon Street clip joints, crack down on prostitution and eliminate bail bond rackets. His track record as the proverbial fighting DA is impressive: his office has never lost a major case, and no convictions have been toppled on appeal because of improper methods.

Garrison is angry right now – as angry as if some bribed cops had tried to steer away from a vice ring or as if the Mob had attempted to use political clout to get him off their backs. Only this time, the file reads “Conspiracy to Assassinate President Kennedy,” and it isn’t *Cosa Nostra*, but the majestic might of the United States government which is trying to keep him from his duty.

“Who appointed Ramsey Clark, who has done his best to torpedo the investigation of the case?” he fumed in a recent speech before a gathering of southern California newscasters. “Who controls the CIA? Who controls the FBI? Who controls the Archives where this evidence is locked up for so long that it is unlikely that there is anybody in this room who will be alive when it is released? This is really your property and the property of the people of this country. Who has the arrogance and the brass to prevent the people from seeing that evidence? Who indeed?”

“The one man who has profited most from the assassination – you friendly President, Lyndon Johnson!”

Garrison made it clear that he was not accusing Johnson of complicity in the crime, but left no doubt that as far as he was concerned, the burden had shifted to the government to prove that it was not an accessory before or after the fact. “I assume that the President of the United States is involved,” he said. “But wouldn’t it be nice to know it?”

The simple probity of Garrison’s challenge is underscored by the fact that the government and government-oriented forces have concealed and destroyed evidence, intimidated witnesses and maligned, ridiculed and impeded Garrison and his investigation. In short, the conduct of the government has not been that of an innocent party, but of one determined to cover its tracks. For the past nine months, I have worked closely with the DA and his staff, hoping to contribute to their investigation. In my opinion there is no question that they have uncovered a conspiracy. Nor is there any doubt that Jim Garrison is one of a vanishing breed: a Southern populist anchored in very traditional American ideals about justice and truth, who can neither rationalize nor temporize in pursuit of them.

By design or ignorance, the mass media – from NBC to *Life* – have created an image of Garrison as a ruthless opportunist with vaulting political ambitions, which naturally leads to the conclusion that he is trying to parlay the death of a President into a political *tour de force*. He is, in fact neither knave nor fool. No politician on the make would be reckless enough to attempt to usurp the findings of the seven distinguished

men of the Warren Commission. “It’s not a matter of wanting to gain headlines,” says Garrison indignantly. “It’s a matter of not being able to sleep at night. I am in an official position in a city where the greater part of the planning of the assassination of President Kennedy took place, and this was missed by the Warren Commission. What would these people who have attacked me do if they were here and had official responsibility? Would they be able to sleep nights? Would they be able to say, ‘Jack Kennedy is dead and there is nothing I can do about it?’”

The Making of a DA

Garrison’s attitudes were undoubtedly set by his experiences during World War II in Europe where, flying a Piper Cub as an artillery spotter during the Allied sweep, he came upon Dachau. The residue of the horror he witnessed there etched itself so deeply on his conscience that in the forward to a collection of criminology essays published in 1966, he deplored the apathy that permitted Dachau. Since man emerged from the mists of time, he wrote, “such reason as he possesses has produced the cross, the bowl of hemlock, the gallows, the rack, the gibbet, the guillotine, the sword, the machine gun, the electric chair, the hand grenade, the personnel mine, the flame thrower, poison gas, the nearly obsolete TNT bomb, the obsolescent atom bomb and the currently popular hydrogen bomb – all made to maim or destroy his fellow man.” Garrison, who is fond of allegorical example, pictured an extra-terrestrial being happening upon a self-desolated world and asking, “What happened to your disinterested millions? Your uncommitted and uninvolved? Your preoccupied and bored? Where today are their private horizons and their mirrored worlds of self? Where is their splendid indifference now?”

With a diploma from Tulane University law school, Garrison tried the life of an FBI agent but found the role too circumscribed to the stimulating. A stint with a firm specializing in corporation law was likewise unrewarding. After another tour of duty in the Korean War – he is presently a Lt. Colonel in the Louisiana National Guard – he latched on as an assistant DA in New Orleans and began his public career. After two unsuccessful tries at elective office, he pulled an upset in the 1961 district attorney race. Bucking the Democratic machine and backed only by five young lawyers known as the “Nothing Group” because of their lack of money and prestige, he took to television and came on strong. Like Jack Kennedy, he projected a youthful vigor and enthusiasm that was missing in the stereotypical politicians he was opposing.

Garrison’s current battle to get the Justice Department, the FBI and the CIA to release evidence about the assassination is not the first time he has tangled with anal retentive government authorities. After the DA’s Bourbon Street raids, the city’s eight criminal judges began blocking his source of funds for the raids, a fines forfeitures pool. Garrison took on the judges in a running dispute that was the talk of New Orleans. On one occasion, a luncheon of the Temple Sinai Brotherhood, he likened the judges to “the sacred cows of India.” On another, he accused them of goldbricking by taking 206 holidays, “not counting legal holidays like All Saint’s Day, Long’s Birthday and Saint Winterbottom’s Day.” Outraged, the judges collectively filed criminal defamation charges. (Complained one, “People holler ‘Moo’ at me.”) The case escalated to the US Supreme Court, where a landmark decision upheld Garrison’s right to criticize public officials.

He exercised that right. When Mayor Victor H. Schiro vacillated on an issue, he quipped, “Not since Hamlet tried to decide whether or not to stab the king of Denmark

has there been so agonizing a decision.” But if he was an embarrassment to officials, he was a delight to the voters. In 1965, he was returned to office by a two to one margin – the first New Orleans DA to be reelected in 30 years.

Garrison’s political philosophy defies definition. He subscribes in part to Ayn Rand’s individualist dogma, but is too much of a traditional democrat to accept its inevitable elitism. He is friendly with segregationists and archconservatives, but bristles at the mention of the Ku Klux Klan. Negro leaders have no quarrel with his conduct of office, and he has appointed Negroes as assistant DAs. Several years ago when the police vice squad tried to sweep James Baldwin’s *Another Country* from bookstore shelves, he refused to prosecute (“How do you define obscenity?”) and denounced the censorship in stinging terms, thus incurring the wrath of the White Citizens Council. He sees no virtue in capital punishment, but is somewhat ambivalent on the libertarian trend in court decisions. In a law quarterly he predicted that increasing emphasis on “the rights of the defendant against the state may come to be seen as the greatest contribution our country has made to this world we live in”; yet on occasion he has implied that Supreme Court decisions are a factor in the rising rate of violent crime.

But since the start of his assassination probe, his views on many issues have changed appreciably. “A year ago I was a mild hawk on Vietnam,” he relates. “But no more; I’ve discovered the government has told so many lies in this [the assassination] case it can’t be believed on anything.” He fears that the US is evolving into a “proto-fascist state,” and cites as one indication the subtle quashing of dissent by an increasingly autocratic central government. The massive and still growing power of the CIA and the defense establishment, he contends, is transforming the old America into a Kafkaesque society in which power is equated with morality.

Garrison detests being called flamboyant, which is the most common adjective applied to him, and in truth he makes no conscious effort at ostentation. But he is one of those arresting figures who automatically dominates any gathering, and his bold strokes in battle, as deliberate as his moves in chess, seem to dramatize his formidable personality. He also must rank as one of the more intellectual big city DAs. He avidly devours history – it reflects in his metaphor – and quotes everything from Graham Greene and Lewis Carroll to Polonius’ advice to Laertes. But his is not exactly a square. Once known as a Bourbon Street swinger, he is still familiar in a few of livelier French Quarter spots, where he can sometimes be found holding forth on the piano and crooning a *basso profundo* rendition of a tune popular a half a generation ago. But mostly he sticks to his study at home, and his striking blonde wife and five kids.

It may be that in the end, the rank unfairness of the current siege on Garrison will be his undoing, for the American sense of fair play is not easily trifled with. But do people really want the truth about the assassination, or is it more comfortable to let sleeping dogs lie? Garrison sees this as the pivotal question in the history of the American democratic experiment: “In our incipient superstate it really doesn’t matter what happened. Truth is what the government chooses to tell you. Justice is what it wants to happen. It is better for you not to know that at midday on November 22, 1963, there were many men in many places glancing at their watches. But if we do not fight for the truth now, we may never have another chance.”

The FBI Clears a Suspect

On the morning after the assassination, as the nation lay stunned by grief, Garrison summoned his staff to the office for a “brainstorming session” to explore the possibility that Lee Harvey Oswald had accomplices in New Orleans, where the previous summer he had stumped the streets advocating Fair Play for Cuba.

The DAs men put out feelers into the city’s netherworld, and it was First Assistant DA Frank Klein who registered the first feedback. A slight, furtive, sometime private eye named Jack S. Martin confided that a David William Ferrie had taken off on a sudden trip to Texas that afternoon of the assassination. The tipster knew Ferrie well, although there was bad blood between them. Both had worked intermittently for the same detective firm, W. Guy Banister & Associates, and were affiliated with the Apostolic Orthodox Old Catholic Church, a sect steeped in theological anti-communism. An exceptionally skilled pilot, Ferrie had been dismissed from Eastern Air Lines in 1962 due to publicity over alleged homosexual activities.

According to Martin, Ferrie had commanded a Civil Air Patrol squadron of which Oswald had once been a member. He had taught Oswald to shoot with a telescopic sight, and had become involved with his protégé in an assassination plot. Less than two weeks before the target date, Ferrie had made a trip to Dallas. His assigned role in the assassination, Martin said, was to fly the escaping conspirators to Matamoros, Mexico, near Brownsville, Texas.

When Ferrie returned to New Orleans on the Monday following President Kennedy’s death, he was interrogated by the DAs office. He said his trip had been arranged “on the spur of the moment.” With two companions, Alvin Beauboef and Melvin Coffey, he had driven straight through to Houston on Friday night. On Saturday afternoon, the three skated at an ice rink; that evening they made the short jog to Galveston and hunted geese Sunday morning. Sunday afternoon they headed back to New Orleans, but detoured to Alexandria, Louisiana, to visit relatives of Beauboef.

Garrison was unconvinced by Ferrie’s account. An all-night dash through the worst rainstorm in years to start a mercurial junket of over 1,000 miles in three days for recreational purposes was too much to swallow. “It was a curious trip to a curious place at a curious time,” the DA recalls. He booked Ferrie as a “fugitive from Texas” and handed him over to the FBI. The G-men questioned him intensively, then released him.

Since the 40-odd pages recording the FBI interrogation of Ferrie are still classified in the National Archives, one can only surmise the reasons the Bureau stamped its file on him “closed.”

Apparently the FBI did not take the pilot too seriously. A short Bureau document in the National Archives reveals Ferrie had admitted being “publicly and privately” critical of Kennedy for withholding air cover at the Bay of Pigs, and had used expressions like “he ought to be shot,” but agents agreed he did not mean the threat literally.

Most convincing at the time, the fact that Ferrie did not leave New Orleans until hours after the assassination seemed to rule out his role as a getaway pilot. Moreover, the Stinson monoplane he then owned was sitting at Lakefront Airport in unflyable condition.

Accepting the FBI’s judgment, Garrison dropped his investigation. “I had full confidence in the FBI then,” he explains. “There was no reason to try and second guess them.”

For three years the DA's faith in the Bureau's prowess remained unshaken. Then in November 1966, squeezed into a tourist-class seat on an Eastern jet headed for New York, his interest in the possibility of a conspiracy was rekindled. Flanking him were Senator Russell B. Long of Louisiana and Joseph Rault Jr., a New Orleans oilman. The previous week, Long had remarked in the course of a press conference that he doubted the findings of the Warren Commission. It was at the height of the controversy stirred by publications ripping at the Commission's methods and conclusions.

Garrison bombarded the senator with questions in the manner, he reminisces, "of a prosecutor cross-examining a witness." Long maintained that there were grievous flaws and unexplored territory in the Warren Report. He considered it highly implausible that a gunman of Oswald's "mediocre skill" could have fired with pinpoint accuracy within a time constraint barely sufficient "for a man to get off two shots from a bolt-action rifle, much less three."

The DA's mind reverted to the strange trip of pilot David Ferrie, and he began to wonder how perceptive the FBI had really been in dismissing the whole thing. When he returned to New Orleans, he went into virtual seclusion in his study at home, lucubrating over the volumes of the Warren Report. When he became convinced that Oswald could not have acted alone, and that at least a phase of the conspiracy had been centered in New Orleans, he committed his office to a full-scale probe. He launched it quietly, preferring to work more efficiently in the dark.

The probe refocused on Ferrie, and on December 15 he was brought in for further questioning. Asked pertinent details of the whirlwind Texas trip in 1963, he begged lack of memory and referred his questioners to the FBI. What about the goose hunting? "We did in fact get to where the geese were and there were thousands," he recounted. "But you couldn't approach them. They were a wise bunch of birds." Pressed for details of what took place at the ice rink, Ferrie became irritated. "Ice skate – what do you think?" he snapped.

It didn't take the DA's men long to poke holes in Ferrie's story. Melvin Coffey, one of his companions on the 1963 Texas trip, deposed that it was not a sudden inspiration:

Q. The trip was arranged before?

A. Yes

Q. How long before?

A. A couple of days.

The probers also determined that no one had taken along any shotguns on the "goose-hunting" trip.

In Houston, the ice skating alibi was similarly discredited. In 1963, the FBI had interviewed Chuck Rolland, proprietor of the Winterland Skating Rink. "FERRIE" contacted him by telephone November 22, 1963, and asked for the skating schedule," a Bureau report, one of the few unclassified documents on Ferrie, reveals. "Mr. FERRIE stated that he coming in from out of town and desired to do some skating while in Houston. On November 23, 1963, between 3:30 and 5:30 PM, Mr. FERRIE and two companions came to the rink and talked to Mr. ROLLAND." The report continues that Ferrie and Rolland had a short general conversation and that Ferrie remarked that "he and his companions would be in and out of the skating rink during the weekend" (CE 301). When Garrison's men recently talked to Rolland, they obtained pertinent facts that the FBI had either missed or failed to report in 1963. Rolland was certain that none of

the three men in Ferrie's party had ice skated; Ferrie had spent the entire two hours he was at the rink standing by a pay telephone – and finally received a call.

At Houston International Airport, more information was gleaned. Air service personnel seemed to recall that in 1963 Ferrie had access to an airplane based in Houston. In this craft, the flight to Matamoros would take little more than an hour.

Ferrie had patently lied about the purpose of the trip. One of the standard tactics of bank robbers is to escape from the scene of the crime in a “hot car” that cannot be traced to them, then switch to a “cold car” of their own to complete the getaway. Garrison considers it possible that Ferrie may have been the pilot of a second craft in a two-stage escape of the Dallas assassins to south of the border, or may have been slated to be a backup pilot in the event contingency plans were activated.

Did Ferrie know Oswald? The pilot denied it, but the evidence mounts that he did. For example, there is now in Garrison's hands information that when Oswald was arrested by Dallas police, he had in his possession a *current* New Orleans library card issued to David Ferrie. Reinforcing the validity of this information is a Secret Service report on the questioning of Ferrie by that agency when he was in federal custody in 1963. During an otherwise mild interrogation, Ferrie was asked, strangely enough, if he lent his library card to Oswald. No, he replied, producing a card from the New Orleans public library in the name Dr. David Ferrie. That card had expired.

When he realized he was a suspect in Garrison's current investigation, Ferrie seemed to deteriorate. By the time he died on February 22, 1967, he was a nervous wreck, subsisting on endless cigarettes and cups of coffee and enough tranquilizers to pacify an army. He had sought out the press only days before his death, labeling the probe a “fraud” and complaining that he was the victim of a “witch hunt.” “I supposed he has me pegged as a getaway pilot,” he remarked bitterly.

When Garrison delivered his epitaph of Ferrie as “one of history's most important individuals,” most of the press winked knowingly. The probe was, after all, a publicity stunt, and the DA had had his headlines. Now that his prime suspect had conveniently passed away, he had the perfect excuse to inter his probe alongside the deceased pilot.

But for DA Jim Garrison, it was not the end but the beginning.

544 Camp Street, New Orleans

“While the legend ‘544 Camp St., NEW ORLEANS, LA.’ was stamped on some of the literature that Oswald had in his possession at the time of his arrest [for “disturbing the peace”] in New Orleans, extensive investigation was not able to connect Oswald with that address” (Warren Report, p. 408). So said the Commission. But Garrison *has* connected Oswald with that address. His investigation shows that Oswald functioned in a paramilitary right-wing milieu of which 544 Camp Street was a nerve center, and that Oswald's ostentatious “Fair Play for Cuba” advocacy was nothing more than a façade.

The dilapidated building at 544 Camp Street is on the corner of Lafayette Place. Shortly after news of Garrison's investigation broke, I went to 531 Lafayette Place, an address given me by Minutemen defector Jerry Milton Brooks as the office of W. Guy Banister, a former FBI official who ran a private detective agency. According to Brooks, who had been a trusted Minutemen aide, Banister was a member of the Minutemen and head of the Anti-Communist League of the Caribbean, assertedly an intermediary between the CIA and Caribbean insurgency movements. Brooks said he had worked for

Banister on “anti-Communist” research in 1961-1962, and had known David Ferrie as a frequent visitor to Banister’s office.

Banister had died of an apparent heart attack in the summer of 1964. But Brooks had told me of two associates whom I hoped to find. One was Hugh F. Ward, a young investigator for Banister who also belonged to the Minutemen and the Anti-Communist League. Then I learned that Ward, too, was dead. Reportedly taught to fly by David Ferrie, he was at the controls of a Piper Aztec when it plunged to earth near Ciudad, Mexico, May 23, 1965.

The other associate was Maurice Brooks Gatlin Sr., legal counsel to the Anti-Communist League of the Caribbean. Jerry Brooks said he had once been a sort of protégé of Gatlin and was in his confidence. Brooks believed Gatlin’s frequent world travels were as a “transporter” for the CIA. As an example, he said, Gatlin remarked about 1962, in a self-important manner, that he had \$100,000 of CIA money earmarked for a French right-wing clique that was going to attempt to assassinate General de Gaulle; shortly afterward Gatlin flew to Paris. The search for Gatlin, however, was likewise futile: in 1964 he fell or was pushed from the sixth floor of the El Panama Hotel in Panama during the early morning and was killed instantly.

But the trip to 531 Lafayette Place was not entirely fruitless. The address, I discovered, was a side entrance to 544 Camp Street. Entering either at the front or the side, one arrives via a walkup staircase at the same second floor space. That second floor once housed the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front and W. Guy Banister & Associates.

Guy Banister had been in charge of the Chicago FBI office before retiring in 1955 and becoming New Orleans deputy superintendent of police for several years. He was regarded as one of the city’s most vocal anti-Castroites, and published the racist Louisiana Intelligence Digest, which depicted integration as a communist conspiracy. Evidence of his relationship with the federal intelligence *apparatus* has recently surfaced. A man who knew Banister well has told Garrison that Banister became associated with the Office of Naval Intelligence through the recommendation of Guy Johnson, an ONI reserve officer and the first attorney for Clay Shaw when he was arrested by Garrison.

A copyrighted story in the *New Orleans States-Item*, April 25, 1967, further illuminates the Camp Street scene. The newspaper, which at the time had an investigative team working parallel to the Garrison probe, reported that a reliable source close to Banister said he had seen 50 to 100 boxes marked “Schlumberger” in Banister’s office-storeroom early in 1961 before the Bay of Pigs. The boxes contained rifle grenades, land mines and unique “little missiles.” Banister explained that “the stuff would just be there overnight ... a bunch of fellows connected with the Cuban deal asked to leave it there overnight.” It was all right, assured Banister, “I have approval from somebody.”

The “somebody,” one can surmise from the Gordon Novel episode which follows, was the CIA. Novel is wanted by the DA as a material witness in the 1961 burglary of the Schlumberger Well Co. munitions dump near New Orleans. Subpoenaed by the grand jury last March, Novel fled to McLean, Virginia, next door to the CIA complex at Langley, and took a lie detector test administered by a former Army intelligence officer which, he boasted to the press, proved Garrison’s probe was a fraud. He then skipped first to Montreal and then to Columbus, Ohio, from where Governor James Rhodes, in one of the most absurd stipulations ever attached to a normally routine procedure,

refuses to extradite him unless Garrison agrees not to question him on the assassination.

From his Ohio sanctuary the fugitive cryptically asserted that the munitions caper was one of “the most patriotic burglaries in history.” When an enterprising reporter took him to a marathon party, Novel’s indiscreet tongue loosened further. According to the *States-Item* article, Novel’s oft-repeated account was that the munitions bunker was a CIA staging point for war materiel destined for use in the impending Bay of Pigs invasion. He is quoted as saying that on the day the munitions were picked up, he “was called by his CIA contact and told to join a group which was ordered to transport munitions from the bunker to New Orleans.” The key to the bunker was provided by his CIA contact. Novel reportedly said the others in the CIA group at the bunker were David Ferrie, Sergio Arcacha Smith – New Orleans delegate to the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front – and several Cubans. The munitions, according to his account, were dropped in Novel’s office, Ferrie’s home and Banister’s office/storeroom.

Ferrie worked on and off for Banister as an investigator, and the mutual affinity was such that in 1962, when Eastern Air Lines was in the process of dismissing Ferrie for publicity over alleged homosexual acts, Banister appeared at a Miami hearing and delivered an impassioned plea on his behalf. When Banister suddenly died, the ex-pilot evidently acquired part of his files. When he realized he was a prime suspect in Garrison’s probe, Ferrie systematically disposed of his papers and documents for the years 1962 and 1963. But in photo-copying the bibliography of a cancer paper he had written (at one time he had caged mice in his home on which he experimented with cancer implants), he inadvertently overlapped the bottom portion of notes recording the dispositions. Included is the notation: “Copies of B’s [presumably Banister’s] microfilm film files to Atlanta rite-wingers [sic].”

The Banister files were reputed to be largest collection of “anti-communist intelligence” in Louisiana, and part were sold by his widow to the Sovereignty Commission, a sort of state HUAC, where a Garrison investigator was able to examine them. Banister’s filing system was modeled after the FBI’s, and contained files on both friends and foes. The “10” and “23” classification dealt with Cuban matters; 23-5, for example, was labeled Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front and 10-209 simply labeled Shaw file, but someone had completely stripped it before Garrison’s man got there.

The Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front, which occupied what was grandiosely called Suite 6 at 544 Camp Street, was the coalition of Cuban exile “liberation” groups operating under CIA aegis that mounted the Bay of Pigs invasion. Arcacha, the New Orleans delegate of the Miami-based organization, is a dapper, moustachioed man who had served in Batista’s diplomatic corps. There are numerous witnesses who attest that he was a confidant of Banister and Ferrie, and that his office was a way station for the mixed bag of Cuban exiles and American adventurers involved in the “liberation” movement. Late in 1962, the Front closed up shop, at which time Arcacha became a founder of the Crusade to Free Cuba, a paramilitary group of militant right wingers. In March 1963, he moved to Houston, Texas. Early in his investigation, Garrison charged Arcacha with being a party to the munitions burglary with Novel and Ferrie, but by this time he was living in Dallas, where he refused to talk to the DA’s men without Dallas police and assistant DA Bill Alexander present. When Garrison obtained an arrest warrant and sought to extradite him, Texas Governor John Connally would not sign the papers.

As for Oswald and 544 Camp Street, Garrison declares that “we have several witnesses who can testify they observed Oswald there on a number of occasions.” One witness is David L. Lewis, another in Banister’s stable of investigators. In late 1962, Lewis says, he was drinking coffee in the restaurant next to 544 Camp Street when Cuban exile Carlos Quiroga, who was close to Arcacha, came in with a young man he introduced as Leon Oswald. A few days later, Lewis saw Quiroga, Oswald and Ferrie together at 544 Camp Street. A few days after that, he barged into Banister’s office and interrupted a meeting between Banister, Quiroga, Ferrie and Leon Oswald. It was not until he was interviewed by Garrison that Lewis concluded that Leon Oswald was probably Lee Harvey Oswald. Noting that the “natural deaths of Banister and Ferrie were strikingly similar,” Lewis has slipped into seclusion.

CIA: The Common Denominator

On or about the night of September 16, 1963, a nondescript Leon Oswald, the brilliant, erratic David Ferrie, and a courtly executive-type man named Clem Bertrand discussed a guerrilla ambush of President Kennedy in Ferrie’s apartment. There was talk of “triangulation of fire ... the availability of exit ... one man had to be sacrificed to give the other one or two gunmen time to escape.” Escape out of the country would be by a plane flown by Ferrie. This was the nub of the testimony of Perry Raymond Russo at a preliminary hearing for Clay Shaw, accused by Garrison of conspiracy in the assassination. Russo identified Leon Oswald as Lee Harvey Oswald, and Clem Bertrand as Clay Shaw.

What would bring three such widely disparate men together in the first place? One possible answer: the CIA.

On the fringe of downtown New Orleans, the building at 544 Camp Street is across the street from the government building which in 1963 housed the local CIA headquarters. One block away, at 640 Magazine Street, is the William B. Reily Co., a coffee firm where Oswald was employed that pivotal summer. He worked from May 10 to July 19, earning a total of \$548.41 (CE 1154). Despite this, he did not seem hard put to support Marina and their child. Nor did he seem particularly concerned about being fired. The personnel manager of the Reily Co. told the Secret Service that “there were be times when Oswald would be gone for periods of an hour or longer and when questioned he could not furnish a plausible explanation as to where he had been ...” (CE 1154).

Next door is the Crescent City Garage, whose owner, Adrian T. Alba, testified that Oswald spent hours on end in his waiting room buried in gun magazines (WC X p. 226). Shortly before leaving the coffee firm, Oswald mentioned to Alba that his employment application was about to be accepted “out there where the gold is” – the NASA Saturn missile plant at Gentilly, a suburb (WC X p. 226).

On the face of it, the idea that Oswald could get a job at a space agency installation requiring security clearance seems preposterous. He was a self-avowed Marxist who had tried to renounce his American citizenship in Moscow, married the niece of a Soviet KGB colonel, openly engaged in “Fair Play for Cuba” activity, and attempted to join the Communist Party, USA. But Garrison points out that it is an open secret that the CIA uses the NASA facility as a cover for clandestine operations. And it is his contention that Oswald was a “witting” agent of the CIA.

There is a surfeit of indications of Oswald’s status. One is the story of Donald P. Norton, who claims he was impressed into the Agency’s service in 1957 under threat of

exposure as a homosexual. In September 1962, Norton related, he was dispatched from Atlanta to Mexico with \$50,000 for an anti-Castro group. He had no sooner registered in the Yamajel Hotel in Monterrey, Mexico, per instructions, than he was contacted by one Harvey Lee, a dead ringer for Oswald except that his hair seemed slightly thicker. In exchange for the money, Lee gave him a briefcase containing documents in manila envelopes. According to plan, Norton delivered the briefcase to an employee of an American oil firm in Calgary, Alberta, who repeated the pass phrase, "The weather is very warm in Tulsa."

Norton also contends he met David Ferrie earlier in his CIA career. In early 1958, he was tapped for a courier trip to Cuba and told to meet his contact at the Eastern Air Lines counter at the Atlanta airport. The contact was a singular-appearing man who called himself Hugh Pharris or Ferris; Norton now states it was Ferrie. "Here are your samples," Ferrie remarked, handing Norton a phonograph record. "It is in the jacket." "It" was \$150,000, which Norton duly delivered to a Cuban television performer in Havana. Norton asserts he went to Freeport, Grand Bahamas, on an Agency assignment late in 1966, and upon his return to Miami his contact instructed that "something was happening in New Orleans, and that I [Norton] should take a long quiet vacation."

He did, and started to fret about the "people who have died in recent months – like Ferrie." Then he decided to contact Garrison. Norton was given a lie detector test, and there was no indication of deception.

Garrison believes that Oswald was schooled in covert operations by the CIA while in the Marine Corps at the Atsugi Naval Station in Japan, a U-2 facility (interestingly, two possible relevant documents, "Oswald's access to information about the U-2" [CD 931] and "Reproduction of CIA official dossier on Oswald" [CD 692] are still classified in the National Archives). Curiously, the miscast Marine who was constantly in hot water had a Crypto clearance on top of a Top Secret clearance, and was given two electronics courses, "Isn't it odd," prods Garrison, "that even though he supposedly defected to the Soviet Union with Top Secret data on our radar nets, no action was taken against him when he came back to the United States?"

Equally odd is Oswald's acquisition of Russian language ability. Although the Warren Report spread the fiction that he was self-taught, and Oswald falsely told a New Orleans acquaintance that he had studied Russian at Tulane University, the likelihood is that he was tutored at the CIA's Atsugi station. Marine Corps records reflect that on February 25, 1959, at the conclusion of his Atsugi tour of duty, he was given a Russian language proficiency test (Folsom Exhibit No. 1 p. 7, vol. 19). A former Marine comrade, Kerry Thornley, deposed to Garrison that Oswald conversed in Russian with John Rene Heindel every morning at muster.

Oswald's "defection" to the Soviet Union also smacks of being CIA-initiated. In retrospect, the clearance of US departure and reentry formalities seems unduly expeditious. When the Marine Corps *post facto* downgraded his discharge to less than honorable, Oswald indignantly wrote Secretary of the Navy John B. Connally, "I have allways [sic] had the full sanction of the US Embassy, Moscow USSR and hence the US government." (WR p. 710). When an interviewer on a New Orleans radio station asked him on August 21, 1963, if he had had a government subsidy during his three years in Russia, the normally articulate Oswald stammered badly: "Well, as I, uh, well, I will answer that question directly then as you will not rest until you get your answer, uh, I worked in Russia, uh, I was, uh, under the protection, uh, of the, uh, that is to say I was

not under the protection of the American government but I was at all times, uh, considered an American citizen ..." (This is the original version as disseminated by the Associate Press. The version released by the Warren Commission has been edited to delete the hemming and hawing and the apparent slip of the tongue, "I was under the protection ..." [vol. XXI, p. 639])

Possibly the most cogent suggestion of Oswald's mission in the Soviet Union can be found in the testimony of Dennis H. Ofstein, a fellow employee at Jaggars-Chiles-Stoval Co. in Dallas (this is the photographic/graphic arts firm where Oswald worked upon his return from Russia; it receives many classified government contracts). Ofstein's smattering of Russian evidently set the unusually phlegmatic Oswald to talking. "All the time I was in Minsk I never saw a vapor trail," Ofstein quotes him. "He also mentioned about the disbursement [dispersement?] of military units," Ofstein continued, "saying they didn't intermingle their armored divisions and infantry divisions and various units the way we do in the United States, and they would have all of their aircraft in one geographical location and their tanks in another in another geographical location, and their infantry in another ..." On one occasion, Oswald asked Ofstein to enlarge a photograph taken in Russia which, he explained, represented "some military headquarters and that the guards stationed there were armed with weapons and ammunition and had orders to shoot any trespassers ..." (WC X, p. 202) Oswald's inordinate interest in the contrails of high flying aircraft, Soviet military deployment and a military facility involving an element of risk to photograph hardly seems the natural curiosity of hapless ex-Marine private.

An intriguing entry in Oswald's address book is the word "microdots" appearing on the page on which he has notated the address and phone number of Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall (CE 18, p. 45 vol. XVIII). Microdots are a clandestine means of communication developed by German intelligence during World II and still in general use among espionage agencies. The technique is to photograph the document to be transmitted and vastly reduce the negative to a size that will fit inside a period. The microdot can be inserted in an innocuous letter or magazine and mailed, or left in a "dead drop" – a prearranged location for the deposit and pickup of messages.

Thus it may be significant that Oswald obtained library cards in Dallas and New Orleans, and usually visited the libraries on Thursday. The possible implication of his visits was not overlooked by the FBI, which confiscated every book he ever checked out, and never returned them. A piece that may fit into the puzzle is the discovery by Garrison of an adult borrower's card issued by the New Orleans public library in the name of Clem Bertrand. The business address shown is the International Trade Mart [Shaw's former place of employment], and the home address 3100 Louisiana Avenue Parkway, a wrong number, but conspicuously close to that of David Ferrie at 3330 Louisiana Avenue Parkway. There may be a pattern here, since Oswald supposedly carried a card issued to Ferrie when arrested in Dallas.

Still another hint of Oswald's intelligence status is the inventory of his property seized by Dallas police after the assassination. Included is such sophisticated optical equipment as a Stereo Realist camera, a Hanza camera timer, filters, a small German camera, a Wolensak 15 power telescope, Micron 6X binoculars and a variety of film – hardly the usual accouterments of a lowly warehouseman (Stovall Exhibits WC XXI).

Upon his return from Russia, the man who subscribed to Pravda in the Marine Corps and lectured his fellow Marines on Marxist dialectics set about institutionalizing

his leftist façade. He wrote ingratiating letters to the national headquarters of the Communist Party, Fair Play for Cuba for Cuba Committee and Socialist Workers Party (a copy of the famous snapshot of Oswald with a revolver on his hip, a rifle in one hand and the Party organ, the *Militant*, in the other was mailed to the SWP office in New York in April 1963). Garrison believes the façade was intended to facilitate his entry into communist countries for special missions.

Ferrie's involvement with the CIA seems to stem mainly from his anti-Castro paramilitary activity, although there is a suggestion that he was at one time a pilot for the Agency. In the late 1940s and early 1950s he flew light planes commercially in the Cleveland, Ohio area, and was rated by his colleagues as an outstanding pilot. In the middle 1950s there is an untraceable gap in his career. Then he turns up as an Eastern Air Lines pilot. Although he supposedly obtained an instrument rating at the Sunnyside Flying School in Tampa, Florida, there is no record that any such school ever existed.

A clue to Ferrie's activities may lie in the loss of hair he suffered. A fellow employee at Eastern recalls that when Ferrie first joined the line he was "handsome and friendly," but in the end became "moody and paranoiac – afraid the communists were out to get him." The personality change coincided with a gradual loss of hair. First a bald spot appeared, which Ferrie explained was caused by acid dripping from a plane battery. Then the hair began falling out in clumps – Ferrie desperately studied medicine to try to halt the process – until his body was entirely devoid of hair. One speculation is that he was moonlighting and suffered a physiological reaction to exposure to the extreme altitudes required for clandestine flights. Chinese Nationalist U-2 pilots reportedly have suffered the same hair-loss phenomenon.

One of Ferrie's covert tasks in the New Orleans area was to drill small teams in guerrilla warfare. One of his young protégés has revealed that he trained some of his Civil Air Patrol cadets and Cubans and formed them into five-man small weapons units, this under the auspices of the Marine Corps and State Department. Coupled with this is the information from another former protégé that Ferrie confided "he was working for the CIA rescuing Cubans out of Castro prisons," and on one occasion was called to Miami so that the CIA could "test him to see if he was the type of person who told his business to anybody." In a speech before the Military Order of World Wars in New Orleans in late 1961, Ferrie related that he had trained pilots in Guatemala for the Bay of Pigs, and professed bitter disappointment that they were not used.

Clay Shaw, an international trade official with top-level contacts in Latin America and Europe, would have been a natural target for CIA recruitment. Gordon Novel, who was acquainted with Shaw, was quoted by the *States-Item* as venturing that Shaw may have been asked by the CIA to observe the traffic of foreign commerce through New Orleans. More persuasive is Shaw's membership on the board of directors of a firm called Centro Mondiale Commerciale in Rome. According to the newspapers *Paese Sera* of Rome and *Le Devoir* of Montreal, among others of the foreign press, CMC was an obscure but well-financed firm that was ousted from Italy by the police because it was suspected of being a CIA front. It transplanted its operation to the more friendly climate of Johannesburg, South Africa, where it still functions.

The same group that incorporated CMC also set up a firm called Permindex Corporation in Switzerland, but that company was dissolved by the Swiss government when it was proved to be a conduit for funds destined for the Secret Army Organization (OAS), a group of right-wing French officers dedicated to "keeping Algeria French" by

force of arms. The composition of the CMC group with which Shaw was associated is of more than cursory interest, since it includes a former US intelligence officer, now an executive of the Bank of Montreal; the publisher of the neo-Nazi *National-Zeitung* of Germany; Prince Guitere de Spadaforo, an Italian industrialist related by marriage to Hitler finance minister Hjalmar Schacht; and the lawyer to the Italian royal family and secretary of the Italian neo-Fascist Party. Through his attorney, Shaw has stated he joined the CMC board of directors in 1958 at the instance of his own board of directors of the International Trade Mart of New Orleans.

On August 1, 1963, the front page of the *States-Item* carried two news stories which, Garrison asserts, symbolize the bitter end of the paramilitary right's tolerance of John F. Kennedy. "A Treaty Signing Set on Monday" was the lead to one story, disclosing that the test ban treaty was about to become reality and that a NATO-Warsaw bloc nonaggression pact was in the wind. "Explosives Cache Home Lent to Cuban, Says Owner's Wife," announced the lead to another story, telling of an FBI raid on a military training site and arms cache on the north side of Lake Pontchartrain. Agents had seized more than a ton of dynamite, 20 100-pound bomb casings, fuses, napalm ingredients and other war materiel.

The whipsaw developments – Kennedy's patent determination to affect a rapprochement with the communist nations on the one hand, and his crackdown under the Neutrality Act on anti-Castro paramilitary groups on the other – triggered a rage against the President that would find vent in his assassination.

The true nature of the group raided at Lake Pontchartrain was not evident from the story. The FBI announced no arrests, and the wife of the property owner, Mrs. William J. McLaney, gave out the cover story that the premises had been loaned to a newly-arrived Cuban name Jose Juarez as a favor to friends in Cuba. (McLaney had been well-known as a gambler associated with the Tropicana Hotel in Havana before being ousted by Castro in 1960).

According to information leaked to Garrison by another government agency, the FBI had in fact arrested 11 men, then quietly released them. Among those in the net was Acelo Pedro Amores, believed to be a former Batista official who slipped out of Cuba in 1960. Also caught was Richard Lauchli Jr., one of the founders of the Minutemen. Lauchli, who possessed a federal license to manufacture weapons in his Collinsville, Illinois machine shop, was arrested again in 1964 when Treasury investigators, posing as agents of a South American country, trapped him in a deal to sell a huge quantity of illicit automatic arms. The others arrested were American adventurers and Cuban exiles.

Garrison believes that the assassination team at Dealey Plaza included renegade Minutemen operating without the knowledge of the group's central headquarters. Freelance terrorism has plagued Minutemen national coordinator Robert DePugh since the organization's inception, and there have been several abortive assassination schemes hatched by individual cliques.

For example, in 1962, a Dallas extremist using the pseudonym John Morris was given money by a Minutemen clique at the Liberty Mall in Kansas City to subsidize the sniper slaying of Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. The plan called for Morris to escape in a plane flown by a Texas man, but DePugh got wind of it and aborted it. And a Cuban exile close to Guy Banister has told Garrison that in 1962 Minuteman Banister

seriously discussed “putting poison in the air conditioning ducts in the Havana Palace and killing all occupants.”

The latest plot to surface was formulated in Dallas in September 1966; its target was Stanley Marcus of the Neiman-Marcus department store, a pro-United Nations liberal who somehow has managed to thrive in rigidly conservative Dallas. According to an informant who was present, several Minutemen decided to ambush Marcus outside of Dallas, because “another assassination in Dallas would be too much.” Again, there was a leak and the plan fell through. However, as the Warren Report might phrase it, such schemes “establish the propensity to kill” on the part of the radical right.

“Minutemen” has become an almost generic term for the paramilitary right, a far from homogenous movement. Some elements are driven primarily by race hatred and anti-Semitism, others by perfervid anti-communism, still others by a personal interest in overthrowing Castro and regaining property or sinecures in the Cuban bureaucracy. There is considerable cross-pollination, especially in the South. A graphic example can be found in rural St. Bernard Parish, near New Orleans. A state police undercover investigator relates that inside a farmhouse which serves as a Ku Klux Klan regional headquarters are Nazi emblems and a shrine to Horst Wessel, and in back, behind a copse of trees, a rifle range and large cache of guns belonging to Minutemen.

There is intense factionalism inside the paramilitary right, and in recent years a power struggle for hegemony over the movement raged between DePugh of the Minutemen and the late George Lincoln Rockwell of the American Nazis. In a recent public statement DePugh commented that “fascism is the number one danger in this country today, and that the “fascists” are using anti-communism as a smokescreen to cover their own rush for power. I had occasion to talk to DePugh, and suggested to him that the guerrilla team that bushwhacked the President included Minutemen who had drifted into the Nazi orbit. “I’m inclined to agree,” he said.

One of the most inexplicable entries in Oswald’s address book is “Nat. Sec. Dan Burros, Lincoln Rockwell, Arlington, Virginia” (CE 18, p. 55 vol. XVI). Other right-wing figures in the address book are Carlos Bringuier of the Cuban Student Directorate in New Orleans and retired General Edwin Walker of Dallas. Bringuier told the Warren Commission that Oswald had approached him and offered to train Cuban exiles in Marine tactics, but he suspected Oswald was a plant.

An anti-Castro adventurer who trained in the Florida Keys prior to the assassination claims that by November 22, 1963, there was not one but several paramilitary teams gunning for Kennedy. They had been in contact, he said, with “wealthy backers who wanted to see Kennedy dead and had been given money to do the job.”

The Making of a Patsy

On January 20, 1961, two men approached Oscar W. Deslatte, assistant manager of the Bolton Ford Truck Center in New Orleans, *and identified themselves as members of the Friends of Democratic Cuba*. To help their cause, they wanted to purchase ten trucks at cost. Deslatte filled out a bid form, recording their names as Joseph Moore and Oswald. The young man calling himself Oswald said that if the trucks were purchased he would be the one to pay for them. This is the gist of an incident recorded by the FBI immediately after the assassination and dug out of the obscurity of the Archives by Garrison researcher Tom Bethell (CD 1542).

Garrison has located the former Bolton Ford manager who was present at the time, Fred A. Sewell. He recalled that the younger “skinny” man gave the full name *Lee Oswald*, and that “Joseph Moore” actually was a Cuban who gave a Cuban name on the bid form. What is puzzling about the incident is that Lee Harvey Oswald was in Minsk, Russia in 1961, thus raising the question of who was impersonating him and why.

Any answer must necessarily be conjecture, but it may be significant to recall that Lee Harvey Oswald spent four days in New Orleans in September 1959 before departing on the first leg of his journey to the Soviet Union aboard the SS *Marion Lykes* (CE 1963). Garrison has picked up indications that Oswald’s decision to embark via ship *from New Orleans* was dictated by intelligence considerations. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that during the four-day period in the city he was inducted into a CIA group, an anti-Castro member of which would later use Oswald’s name.

The genesis of the Friends of Democratic Cuba is not inconsistent with this theory. One of the incorporators of the organization was Guy Banister, the Minutemen/CIA type. Another was William Wayne Dalzell who knew Ferrie and Arcacha, and was still another in the Banister coterie of sleuths. To a *States-Item* reporter he admitted he was CIA.

The Friends of Democratic Cuba was founded January 9, 1961, less than two weeks before the Bolton Ford incident. It was intended as a kind of American auxiliary to Arcacha’s all-Cuban Revolutionary Front, and Arcacha was instrumental in its creation. Government advisors to the Friends, says an informant who was closely involved with the group, were a CIA man named Logan and the FBI’s Regis Kennedy, who invoked executive privilege when questioned not long ago by the New Orleans grand jury looking into the assassination. The Friends were short-lived, and the Front slowly dissolved after the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion. The diehard remnants of these moribund groups formed the Free Cuba movement.

The Secret Service stumbled upon the Free Cuba group in its hectic post-assassination inquiries at 544 Camp Street, but apparently the T-men were completely sold on Oswald’s left-wing orientation and never thought to connect him with a right-wing outfit. Learning that “Cuban revolutionaries” had occupied space at that address, Secret Service men talked to a Cuban exile accountant who said that “those Cubans were members of organizations known as ‘Crusade to Free Cuba Committee’ and ‘Cuban Revolutionary Council.’” Arcacha, the accountant related, was authorized to sign checks on both accounts (CE 3119). He said that Arcacha continued with the Free Cuba group even after he had been ousted from the CRC (CE 1414). There is no record that the Secret Service questioned Arcacha about Oswald.

It was a grievous omission, for it is now manifest that Oswald was intimately involved with the Free Cuba group. One indication is implicit in the testimony of Mrs. Sylvia Odio, an aristocratic Cuban refugee. When Lee Harvey Oswald’s picture was flashed on television after the assassination, she fainted. She explained to the Warren Commission that in late September 1963, three men appeared unannounced at her Dallas apartment seeking assistance for the anti-Castro movement. The spokesman gave a “war name” that sounded like Leopoldo; a second man was introduced as something like Angelo. The third man was introduced as Leon Oswald, and Mrs. Odio was certain he was the accused assassin.

Unsure of the trio's true allegiance, Mrs. Odio was noncommittal. They left, after commenting that they had just arrived from New Orleans and were leaving shortly "on a trip." The next morning Leopoldo telephoned Mrs. Odio with a new sales pitch. "Leon" was an ex-Marine, he said. "He told us we don't have any guts, you Cubans, because President Kennedy should have been assassinated after the Bay of Pigs ... It is easy to do. He has told us." When his listener became upset at talk of killing Kennedy, Leopoldo remarked that it would be just as easy to kill the Cuban Premier. Leon was an expert shot, he said, a man who "could do anything like getting underground in Cuba, like killing Castro" (WC XI pp. 367-389)

Just before the Warren Report went to press, the FBI located three men possibly identical with Mrs. Odio's provocative visitors. Some three weeks after the visit, Loren Eugene Hall and William Seymour had been arrested by the Dallas police on a technical narcotics charge. Significantly, their arrest record bore the notation: "Active in the anti-Castro movement ... Committee to Free Cuba." G-men traced them and a companion, Lawrence Howard Jr. to the west coast.

Hall admitted to the FBI that he, Howard and Seymour had been to see Mrs. Odio, whose apartment he correctly located on Magellan Circle, "to ask her assistance in the movement," presumably the Free Cuba movement. But Howard, although conceding he was with Hall in Dallas in late September, flatly denied being at Mrs. Odio's. Seymour alibied that he was working in Miami Beach at the time; the FBI verified that pay records of a Miami Beach firm showed him at work from September 5 through October 10.

In a second session with the FBI, Hall recanted his admission and claimed he had been mistaken, a turnabout that did not seem to be viewed too skeptically by the G-men. The Bureau closed its inquiry by observing that Seymour bore a striking resemblance to Oswald, a meaningless footnote considering that the pay records had been accepted as *prima facie* evidence that he was in Miami Beach at the relevant time.

With Seymour "out of the way," the Warren Commission had only to dispose of the possibility that it *was* Oswald at Mrs. Odio's. It did so by declaring it improbable that Oswald could have traveled to Dallas in the limited time between his departure from New Orleans and his crossing of the Mexican border. But the Commission reckoned from surface transportation timetables, and there is a suggestion he flew at least part of the way. Mrs. Horace Twiford of Houston stated that in late September, when Oswald telephoned her husband, he commented that he "had only a few hours" before "flying to Mexico" (CE 2335 WC XXV).

The post assassination search at the Irving premises of Ruth and Michael Paine, with who Marina had been staying, yielded another tie to the Free Cuba movement. Among Oswald's belongings in the garage was a barrel that had, said Deputy Buddy Walthers, "a lot of these little leaflets in it, 'Freedom for Cuba'" (WC VII p. 548). And at his celebrated press conference the night of the assassination, DA Henry Wade let it slip that "Oswald is a member of the Free Cuba Committee." He was immediately "corrected" by Jack Ruby who had mingled with the press: "No, he is a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee."

Deputy Walthers added a final link. In a "Supplemental Investigative Report" dated November 23, 1963, he stated that he had advised Dallas Secret Service Chief Forrest Sorrels that "for the past few months at a house at 3128 Harlendale some Cubans had been having meetings on the week ends and were possibly [sic] connected

with the 'Freedom for Cuba Party' of which Oswald was a member." Three days later, when the Secret Service had evinced no interest, he wrote a wistful addendum: "I learned today that sometime between seven days before the President was shot and the day after he was shot these Cubans moved from this house. My informant stated that subject Oswald had been to this house before" (Decker Exhibit 5323 WC XIX).

Why Oswald's anti-Castro comrades decided to make him the patsy is open to conjecture. Perhaps he balked at going through with the assassination. Perhaps they did not trust him and suspected he was an infiltrator. The most likely explanation is a pragmatic one: they needed a patsy and he was the ideal candidate. To make the assassination look like the work of an avowed Marxist and Castro sympathizer would have been a propaganda *tour de force*. "Even so," offers Garrison, "I think the big money backers of the plot were a little disappointed. Oswald was supposed to be killed trying to escape, and if those Cuban and Soviet visas he applied for but didn't get could have been found on his body, public opinion against Russia and Cuba would have been incited to a dangerous pitch."

In the weeks preceding the assassination, there are a number of instances of an Oswald double in Dallas who probably was instrumental in "setting him up." Gunsmith Dial D. Ryder told the Commission that in early November, someone giving the name Oswald brought in a rifle to have a telescopic sight mounted; he produced a repair tag in that name as confirmation (WR p. 315). Garland G. Slack and other target shooters patronizing the Sports Dome Rifle Range reported that a man resembling Oswald had practiced there as late as November; the man made himself obvious, at one time incurring Slack's displeasure by firing on his target (WR pp. 318-319).

An incident at Downtown Lincoln-Mercury is highly revealing. Immediately after the assassination, salesman Albert Guy Bogard reported to the FBI that a man giving the name Lee Oswald, who closely resembled the accused assassin, came into the showroom on November 9. Remarking that in several weeks he would have the money to make the purchase, he test-drove an expensive model on the Stemmons Freeway at 60 to 70 miles an hour. Both Bogard and another salesman, Oren Brown, wrote down the name Oswald so that they would remember him if he called back.

A third salesman, Eugene M. Wilson, recalled that when the man purporting to be Oswald was told he would need a credit rating, he snapped, "Maybe I'm going to have to go back to Russia to buy a car" (WR p. 320).

Given a lie detector test by the FBI, Bogard's responses were those "normally expected of a person telling the truth." Nevertheless, the Warren Commission dismissed the incident by noting that Oswald supposedly could not operate an automobile and that on November 9 he allegedly spent the day drafting a lengthy letter to the Soviet Embassy. It evidently never considered the possibility someone might be impersonating Oswald. But Bogard will never identify the impersonator. He stuck to his story in news interviews, and subsequently was beaten to within an inch of his life by an unknown assailant and arrested by the Dallas police on seemingly trumped-up bad check charges. He retreated to his native Louisiana, where on St. Valentine's Day 1966, he was found dead of exhaust fumes in his automobile.

The main ingredients of the patsy theory are wrapped up in a story that has gradually filtered out of Leavenworth Penitentiary. The story is that of inmate Richard Case Nagell, and paradoxically, the most cogent confirmation for it is the manner in which he wound up sentenced to ten years in federal custody.

Nagell was a highly decorated infantry captain in the Korean War who, he claims, subsequently became a CIA agent. It is a matter of record that in 1957 he was seriously injured in a plane crash in Cambodia, which tends to support his contention, since Cambodia was not exactly a tourist playground. On September 20, 1963, Nagell walked into a bank in El Paso, Texas, fired a gun into the ceiling, and then sat outside waiting to be arrested. He says he staged the affair because he wanted to be in custody as an alibi when the assassination took place. It was a desperate measure, he admits. But he had sent a registered letter to J. Edgar Hoover warning him of the impending assassination, which he says was then scheduled for the latter part of September (probably the 26th in Washington, D.C.), and the letter had gone unanswered.

There is an incredibly brief FBI interview report stating, in part, that on December 19, 1963, Nagell advised, "For the record he would like to say that his association with OSWALD (meaning LEE HARVEY OSWALD) was purely social and that he had met him in Mexico City and in Texas (CD 197). Another report states that when the prisoner was being led from court on January 24, 1964, he "made wild accusations to newspaper reporters, accusing the FBI of not attempting to prevent the assassination of President Kennedy ..." (CD 404).

That the charges may not be so wild is indicated by the fact that the government threw the book at Nagell, a first offender who says he expected to be charged only with discharging a firearm on government-protected property. Since his sentencing, he has been shuttled between Leavenworth and the federal medical center (a euphemism for mental institution) at Springfield, Missouri. While the government has suggested in court that his airplane crash mentally affected Nagell, the fact remains that he was given intelligence training *after* the crash. What Nagell alleges is damning not only to the FBI, but to the CIA. In brief, he says that the motive for the assassination was Kennedy's move in the direction of a rapprochement with Castro, which was a rank betrayal in the eyes of anti-Castro elements. As he puts it, an anti-Castro group in New Orleans and Mexico City, code name Bravo Club, decided to give Kennedy a "Christmas present" to be delivered September 26, a date that was postponed. A party was required. Two members of Bravo Club approached Oswald while he was working at the Reily coffee firm in New Orleans in the summer of 1963 and appealed to his ego in setting him up as the patsy. When the "delivery" site was shifted to Dallas, Bravo Club enlisted the aid of a Dallas "subsidiary," Delta Club.

Meanwhile the CIA got wind of the plans and sent several agents into the field to ascertain whether they were "for real." Nagell says he was one of the agents dispatched. Within a short time, he claims, he was pulled in. It had been verified that the plans were authentic, that "*gusanos* [anti-Castroites] were making the watch tick," and that the sum of the plot was right-wing in nature. Nagell says that he was instructed to "arrow" the patsy, that is kill him, *after* the assassination. At this point, he contends, he got cold feet and bailed out. "I would rather be arrested than commit murder and treason," he declared in a self-prepared petition for *habeas corpus*.

In the petition, Nagell asserts that he used the pseudonyms Robert Nolan and Joseph Kramer in the US and three foreign countries under the authorization of the Defense Intelligence Agency. He states that the files of the FBI and the CIA contain information that Oswald was using the aliases Albert Hidel and Aleksei Hidel. He charges that the FBI illegally seized from him evidence crucial to his defense, such as notebooks containing the names of certain CIA employees, photographs, two Mexican

tourist cards (one in the name Joseph Kramer, the other in the name Albert Hidel), and receipts for registered mail, including the one for the letter sent Hoover the warning of the assassination.

When Nagell complains he has been “salted away” because of what he knows, he just might be making the understatement of the year.

The Elimination of a Patsy

“I didn’t kill anybody ... I’m just a patsy,” Oswald shouted to newsmen while in police custody. A marked patsy, contends Garrison – one who was not supposed to have lived long enough to utter his cry of innocence. But something had misfired, and Oswald fell not into the hands of his would-be executioners, but into the comparative safety of the Dallas jail. The denouement presented a crisis that the conspirators could solve only by pressing police buff Jack Ruby into service.

Although the Warren Commission concluded that Oswald ducked into his Oak Cliff rooming house to pick up the .38 revolver, later confiscated from him in the Texas Theater, it did not explain why, if he had gone to work at the School Book Depository that morning intending to kill the President and escape, he did not take the revolver with him. That he made a beeline to his rooming house for the sole purpose of getting the revolver speaks of a man who desperately wanted to protect himself from treacherous comrades rather than from the police. Notwithstanding the mild resistance he put up in his refuge in the Texas Theater, Oswald’s demeanor in custody gave every indication that he would solve the great riddle – given the time.

Oswald does not appear to be the only double-cross victim of that bloody afternoon: the evidence is persuasive that someone other than the accused assassin killed Officer J.D. Tippit, a friend of Jack Ruby, whose patrol area included the Harlandale Street section headquarters of the Free Cuba group. The Commission’s star witness in fingering Oswald was Mrs. Helen Markham, a billing that precipitated strong dissent among some staff members, notably Wesley Liebler who called her testimony “contradictory” and “worthless” (*Inquest*, Edward Epstein p. 109). Although ballistics tests could not positively match the bullets in the dead officer’s body with Oswald’s revolver, they did determine that three bullets were of one manufacture, the fourth of another, while the four recovered shell casings were evenly divided between the two manufacturers. The Commission wriggled out of this dilemma by wildly speculating that five shots were fired, one completely missing (WR p. 172).

Moreover, the police radio logs describe a killer other than Oswald. Sergeant Gerald Hill alerted all cars that “Shells at the scene indicate the suspect is armed with an automatic .38 rather than a pistol” (presumably, Hill noted the distinctive marks made by the ejector of an automatic). In the same vein, Patrolman H.L. Summers announced, “He’s apparently armed with a .32 dark finish automatic pistol ...” First flashes had the killer with “black wavy hair” and a “white shirt,” certainly not a description of Oswald that day (Sawyer Exhibit no. A pp. 396-397 WC XXI). And the best placed witness, Domingo Benavides, described a killer quite different from Oswald: “I remember the back of his head seemed like his hairline sort of went square instead of tapered off – it kind of went down and squared off and made his head look flat in back.”

Garrison posits that the real killer hid in a cavernous building at the corner of Tenth and Crawford which in 1963 was known as the Abundant Life Temple. In an aerial view of the area, the Commission traced the killer’s escape path from the scene near

Tenth and Patton to Jefferson Boulevard one block south, thence to the Texaco service station one block west at Jefferson and Crawford. A “white jacket” was found at the rear of the station, which the Commission said was Oswald’s. Consequently, it had the killer reverse his path so as to bring him back onto Jefferson and proceeding in a westerly direction toward the theater (CE 1968 WC XXIII).

Rejecting this arbitrary reconstruction, Garrison points out that the killer could have proceeded straight ahead from the rear of the Texaco station, across an alley, and into the rear door of the Abundant Life Temple. This view is corroborated by police radio logs. Shortly after 1:40 p.m., Sergeant Hill came on the air: “A witness reports that he last was seen in the Abundant Life Temple about the 400 block. We are fixing to go in and shake it down.” On an alternate channel, Car 95 ordered, “Send me another squad over here to Tenth and Crawford to check out this church basement.”

At this point Car 223 burst in excitedly, “He’s in the library on Jefferson east 500 block ... I’m going around back, get somebody around the front, get them here fast.” The dispatcher complied, and Car 19 soon affirmed, “We’re all at the library.” There was no suspect at the library, but the Abundant Life Temple had been spared a shakedown.

The grave problem, of course, was how to eliminate Oswald, who knew too much. This is where Jack Ruby came in. Although the Warren Commission pictured Ruby as a blustery night club operator with a soft spot in his heart for dogs and dames, who killed Oswald on an impulse of one-man justice, the real Ruby was no buffoon. The fiction that he executed Oswald out of compassion for the Kennedy family was conjured up by his first attorney, the late Tom Howard. “Joe, you should know this,” Ruby scribbled to a succeeding attorney, Joe Tonahill. “Tom Howard told me to say that I shot Oswald so that Caroline and Mrs. Kennedy wouldn’t have to come to Dallas to testify. OK?”

In a memorandum dealing with his background, Ruby specialists on the Commission compiled a list of persons seemingly “the most promising sources of contact between Ruby and politically motivated groups interested in securing the assassination of President Kennedy” (CE 2980 WC XXVI). Included were Ruby’s sister, Eva Grant, and a brother, Earl, of Detroit, who sent “a telegram undisclosed nature to Havana, Cuba, April 1, 1962” and made “calls to Welsh[sic] Candy Company” in Blemont, Massachusetts, then owned by Birch Society founder Robert Welch. Also listed by the Commission was Thomas Hill, an “official of the John Birch Society” in Belmont whose name was in Jack Ruby’s notebook, and Lamar Hunt, the son of H.L. Hunt, who subsequently denied knowing Ruby.

Ruby was an admirer of General Edwin A. Walker. He told former Oklahoma City police detective Cliff Roberts, who had been hired by Walker to investigate the potshot at Walker in April 1963, that Walker was “100 per cent right” about Castro’s Cuba and it should be “blown out of the ocean.” William McEwan Duff, who served as the retired general’s “Batman” from late 1962 to early 1963, advised the Secret Service that Ruby, who was addressed only as “Jack,” visited Walker “on the basis of about once a month, each time in the company of two unidentified white males” (CE 2389 WC XXV).

A cross-section of Ruby’s acquaintances can be found in the list of 66 persons he favored with permanent passes to the Carousel Club. There is of course a passel of local businessmen. But there is also W.F. (Bill) Alexander, the hard-bitten Dallas assistant DA, and three men pegged by a Garrison investigator as Dallas Minutemen. Since no facet of the investigation seems complete without a strange coincidence, it can be noted that when Carousel Club pass-holder Sue Blake vacated her apartment, 10746D Lake

Gardens, the next occupant was Sergio Aracacha Smith, formerly of 544 Camp Street, New Orleans.

Also on the pass list is H.H. (Andy) Anderson, at the time manager of the Adolphus Hotel. Last May, Garrison sought to explain the legal materiality of Claw Shaw's notebook in terms of an entry, "Lee Odom, PO Box 19106, Dallas, Tex." He pointed out that it corresponded to "PO 19106" in Oswald's address book, and theorized that it might be a coded version of Ruby's unlisted telephone number. Within a few days a Lee Odom came forth in Dallas to explain away the coincidence. In 1966, he was in New Orleans "trying to promote a bull fight" and asked the manager of the Roosevelt Hotel who might put him in contact with the right people. "He suggested Mr. Shaw," said Odom, "so I called him – or the manager called him ... He came over to the hotel and we talked." The manager of the Roosevelt was Anderson, who had moved from Dallas. In subsequent versions of the story, including the one told to a national audience on CBS television. Odom left Anderson completely out of it and maintained he and Shaw had introduced themselves at a bar.

Ruby's affinity for Cuba is well-documented. The Warren Report advises that in January 1959, just after Castro took power, "Ruby made preliminary inquiries, as a middleman, concerning the possible sale to Cuba of some surplus jeeps located in Shreveport, La., and asked about the possible release of prisoners from a Cuban prison" (WR p. 369). Ruby had telephoned a Houston man named Robert Ray McKeown, known throughout Texas as a friend of Castro, offering a total of \$15,000 to use his influence to obtain the release of three Americans held in Havana. The money, Ruby told McKeown, would come from a Las Vegas, Nevada source (CE 1689 WC XXIII).

McKeown heard nothing more about the prisoner deal, which may be explained by the news report on January 6, 1961, that three Americans had made their way out of jail and back to the United States. But a few weeks after the telephone call, Ruby contacted McKeown in person, this time offering him \$25,000 for a letter of introduction to Castro. According to McKeown, Ruby "had an option on a great number of jeeps which were in Shreveport, Louisiana, and he desired to sell them to Castro at a very profitable figure." McKeown agreed to arrange the introduction, but once again Ruby failed to follow through. The reason may have been that Maurice Brooks Gatlin of the New Orleans-based Anti-Communist League of the Caribbean scotched the deal. Minutemen defector Jerry Brooks discloses that the minute Gatlin found out that Ruby proposed to sell Castro 100 jeeps, he warned the venturesome night club owner to call it off. Gatlin may have detected signs that the new Cuban Premier was about to surface as a communist.

The Warren Report observes that during the period of the jeep negotiations, gambler Russell D. Matthews, described as a "passing acquaintance" of Ruby's, returned to Dallas from Havana, then several months later went back to the Cuban capitol for a year. It also makes the correlation that Matthews' ex-wife in Shreveport received a lengthy telephone call from Ruby's Carousel Club on October 3, 1963. But with a denial from Matthews that he knew anything about the "jeep deal," and an inability on the part of Mrs. Matthews to remember the long distance call, the Commission ran out of curiosity. Matthews is no lightweight: in the heyday of the Dallas rackets a couple of decades ago he ran with a crowd whose luminary was Benny (Cowboy) Binion, who moved to Las Vegas and founded the Horseshoe Club.

The account given by Ruby of his trip to Cuba in September 1959 also strains credulity. “Ruby traveled to Havana as guest of a close friend and known gambler, Lewis J. McWillie,” The Report declares (WR p. 370). “Both Ruby and McWillie state the trip was purely social.” Ruby gulled the Commission with a story he stuck close to the hotel, got bored stiff, and left within a week. But Thayer Waldo, an old Latin hand with sources inside Cuba, reports that Ruby boasted to at least two Americans that he was “in with both sides” while sitting in Castro’s domain. Among the Cuban exiles he claimed to be close to was Rolando Masferrer, a former Batista official who had headed “The Tigers,” a dreaded private army during the dictator’s regime.

One of the many Dallas police officers who frequented the Carousel Club has told Garrison that in mid-1962 Ruby left on a two-week trip, saying he was going to New Orleans and then to Cuba “to pick up an act for the club.” When he returned he was uncharacteristically tight-lipped about his trip – and without an act. Whether Ruby circumvented the travel ban and got to Cuba is a moot question. However, there remains Earl Ruby’s unexplained telegram to Havana on April 1, 1962. And the word that circulated through Cuban émigré circles in 1963 had Ruby visiting Havana via Mexico City that year (e.g. CE 3055 WC XXVI).

If Ruby did go to Cuba in 1962, it may have been on narcotics business. As long ago as 1956, a woman named Eileen Curry told the FBI that her paramour, James Breen, had become cozy with Ruby and had “accompanied RUBY to an unnamed location, where he had been shown moving pictures of various border guards, both Mexican and American.” Curry said that Breen “was enthused over what he considered an extremely efficient operation in connection with narcotics traffic.” Curry went to the FBI after Breen failed to return from a trip to Mexico, and repeated her story in 1963 after the assassination (CE 1761, 1762 WC XXIII).

Texas editor Penn Jones Jr. has delved into a story consistent with Eileen Curry’s. On November 20, 1963, a woman named Rose Cherami was thrown from a moving automobile near Eunice, Louisiana. Hospitalized with injuries and narcotics symptoms, she said she was a Ruby employee traveling to Florida with two men to pick up a load of narcotics for Ruby. She told the attending physicians that Kennedy and other officials were going to be killed on their impending visit to Dallas. Shown a news story after the assassination in which Ruby denied knowing Oswald, Miss Cherami chortled, “They were bed mates.” When his probe got underway, Garrison attempted to locate her but was too late. On September 4, 1965, she was killed by a hit-and-run driver while walking along a highway near Big Sand, Texas.

It is also possible that Ruby’s alleged 1962 trip to Cuba concerned gun-running. Nancy Perrin Rich told the Commission that she and her late husband, who had ties to organized crime, attended a meeting in Dallas in 1962, in which plans were discussed to smuggle guns into Cuba and refugees out. The key planners were Ruby, an Army “light colonel,” and a heavy-set “Cuban or Mexican,” and she gathered that Ruby was the “bag man” who handled the funds. She said the guns were to be procured through a Mexican contact (WC XIV p. 33off). Garrison has additional evidence of gun-running by Ruby which cannot be divulged at this time.

The allegations of narcotics trafficking and gun-running should be put in some perspective. In 1962, Cuba and Red China reportedly had entered into a barter agreement in which Cuban sugar would be exchanged for narcotics, but the narcotics were a white elephant until sold for US dollars. This is where buck-hungry organized

crime elements came in, and just possibly Jack Ruby. In this context his claim that he was playing both sides of the street may not have been sheer braggadocio. In the strange accommodations of international intrigue, Ruby may well have been smuggling narcotics into the United States and guns into the hands of the Cuban insurgents.

It is fair to say that not much in the way of Caribbean intrigue went on in those days without the CIA, or at least CIA operatives, having a finger in it. Thus the allegations of Gary Underhill, a weapons expert and sometime CIA “unperson,” may be quite plausible [RAMPARTS, June 1967]. Immediately after the assassination, a distraught Underhill told friends that a semi-autonomous CIA clique which had been profiteering in narcotics and gun-running was implicated in the assassination. Several months later, Underhill was found dead of a bullet wound in the head; although police decided it was self-inflicted, the circumstances indicated otherwise. When an old friend wrote to Underhill’s widow asking about his demise, the reply came from an official of a now defunct Washington firm, Falcon Aeronautics, Inc., which smacks of having been an ad hoc CIA front. The official dismissed Underhill’s allegations with the comment that they were “similar to those flights of his imagination which he had during the last year or so of his life.”

The question remains whether or not newsmen in the police basement had flights of imagination when they thought they detected a flicker of recognition on Oswald’s part just before Ruby shot him. We have already examined the report of attorney Carroll Jarnagin [RAMPARTS, November 1966] – who claims that he eavesdropped on a Ruby-Oswald conversation in the Carousel Club the night of October 4, 1963, in which the desire of organized crime to do away with Governor Connally was discussed – and the statement of Wilbryn “Bob” Litchfield that he sat next to Oswald in the Carousel Club office in early November while both were waiting to see Ruby [RAMPARTS, June 1967].

In addition, there is the cogent statement of Harvey L. Wade, a Chattanooga building inspector who dropped into the Carousel Club the night of November 10, 1963. Wade said that a club photographer snapped a shot of a customer and in the background were three men sitting at the bar. Ruby strode over the photographer and “yelled that the photographs did not turn out.” One of the men in the background was identified by Wade as Oswald. He described the others as a young man of “very fair pale complexion,” and an older, stocky Latin man who had “numerous bumps on his face and was believed to have a one-inch scar in the eyebrow of his left eye” (CE 2370 WC XXV). The two match the descriptions of prime suspects in Garrison’s investigation, the latter of the bull-necked Cuban who tagged around after Oswald in New Orleans in the summer of 1963.

Further indication of a Ruby-Oswald link appears in the statement of the Rev. Clyde Johnson which was filed by Garrison in answer to a Clay Shaw defense motion. Rev. Johnson, a candidate for governor of Louisiana in 1962, who ranted against Kennedy in his campaign, said that he twice attended meetings that fall at which Oswald, Ruby, Shaw and an unknown Cuban were present. The first was in the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, the second on September 29 in the Capitol House Hotel in Baton Rouge. He recalled that Oswald was introduced as Leon, Ruby as Jack, and Shaw as Alton Bernard. On the latter occasion, he said, Shaw passed manila envelopes to Oswald and Ruby which purportedly contained money.

While such eyewitness accounts must be weighed with the credibility of the witness in mind, there is documentary evidence of a Ruby-Oswald link as well. Oswald’s

address book contains the entry “Midland 2550”; Ruby’s has the entry “Newton 2550.” While their significance is unknown – Garrison speculates they may be communications signals of some sort – the odds against the same four-digit numbers preceded by the names of Texas cities being in two unrelated persons’ address books by sheer happenstance are astronomical. It was, in fact, just this kind of mathematical improbability that was instrumental in the recent convictions of a mugging team in Los Angeles County.

And there are other “coincidences” as well. In his address book, Oswald twice jotted down the number of a Ft. Worth television station, PE 8-1951; in June 1963, Ruby twice called that number (CE 1322 p. 517 WC XXII). On September 24, 1963, David Ferrie’s telephone was charged with a call to Chicago number WH 4-4970; on November 20, 1963, this number was called from Kansas City by Lawrence Meyers, a Chicago businessman and close friend of Ruby’s. Meyers arrived in Dallas from Kansas City that same night, and was in touch with Ruby through traumatic post-assassination hours (WC XXV p. 335).

The Dallas number FR 5-5591 appears twice in the last pages of Oswald’s book, which leads to another correlation. The number is listed to Kenneth Cody, a Continental Trailways bus driver on the Shreveport run and an uncle of Dallas police officer Joe Cody. A homicide detective, Cody was the partner of Detective James R. Leavelle, one of the pair of officers escorting Oswald through the police basement when he was shot by Ruby.

In an FBI interview, Joseph Cody acknowledged having known Ruby “12 or 13 years.” He met Ruby at one of his clubs during the Korean War, when Cody was “assigned in the Counter Intelligence Corps” and stationed for a time in Dallas. Cody related that he enjoyed ice skating at Fair Park, as did Ruby, and “there had been at least a half dozen times in the last two or three years that RUBY had arrived at Fair Park while he, CODY, had been skating” (CE 1736 WC XXIII).

Garrison contends that Ruby’s stagey behavior between the assassination and his slaying of Oswald was a way of disassociating himself from the plot by “reversing the magnetic field” – drawing attention to himself as the opposite of what he actually was. Andrew Armstrong, a Carousel employee, told the Commission that his boss was crying on the afternoon of the 22nd. In the early morning hours of Saturday, Ruby roused a club flunkey, Larry Crafard, who watched while his boss took a Polaroid picture of a Birch Society “Impeach Earl Warren” billboard. That afternoon, Ruby displayed the picture in Sol’s Turf Club, his favorite haunt, with suitable expressions of indignation. He went to the post office with companions, peered at the box receiving responses to the black-bordered “Wanted for Treason” ad in Friday’s Dallas Morning News, and uttered words of outrage.

Ruby’s survival as a “little big shot” in Aryan Dallas depended upon his obsequiousness to powerful masters. Some of those whose boots he licked were Nazis, and subliminally he became one of them. As Garrison put it, “The connecting link at every level of operation, from the oil-rich sponsors of the assassination down to the Dallas police department, down through Jack Ruby and including anti-Castro adventurers, at the operating level were Minutemen, Nazi oriented. It was essentially a Nazi operation.”

Ruby’s letters, smuggled out of jail by a trustee, reveal that towards the end, he realized what his masters really were [RAMPARTS, February 1967]. The letters, sold by

the reputable New York document auctioneer Charles Hamilton, portray a man acutely aware of his Jewishness who realizes with anguish that he has served not ultraconservatives but Nazis. "They are going to come out with a story that it was the Minutemen who killed the Jews," he wrote, "don't you believe it, they are using that to cover up for the Nazis ... Oh the way I fucked up this world who would ever dream that the motherfucker was a Nazi and found me the perfect setup for a frame ... I was used to silence Oswald. I walked into a trap the moment I walked down that ramp Sunday morning."

Reconstructing the Crime

In October 1963, a number of key figures in Garrison's probe converged upon Dallas. The Free Cuba group was installed in the house on Harlandale, which is in south Oak Cliff past Ruby's apartment. On October 3, the evening he returned from Mexico, Oswald checked into the YMCA on North Ervay and remained two days. The same two days the room next to him was occupied by a Cuban-appearing young man who registered as R. Narvaez. On the night of October 17, Loran Hall and Lawrence Howard Jr. arrived at the YMCA; they checked out on October 22. The arrival of Hall possibly dovetails with the story of a new witness located by Garrison. The witness stated that in 1963, Hall was short of funds and petitioned him for assistance in the anti-Castro movement. He declined, but lent Hall \$50, holding a .30 caliber rifle as collateral. About a month before the assassination, the witness says, Hall redeemed the weapon, commenting that he was going to Dallas to meet with a wealthy oilman – the same oilman who, Garrison knows, posted bail for Hall and William Seymour when were arrested in Dallas in mid-October (in September 1966, the FBI stripped Dallas police files of all pertinent material concerning the arrests). As will be recalled, the record shows that the FBI did not locate and interview Hall, Howard and Seymour until just before the Warren Report went to press. But what makes these belated interviews seem dissembling is the new witness swears that he was questioned by the FBI about Hall and the .30 caliber rifle *on the day after the assassination*.

Coupled with this development is the statement of Joseph Roland Hummel, who resided at the YMCA that October. Hummel has told Garrison that he had been casually acquainted with Oswald in New Orleans, and saw him again at the Dallas YMCA in late October. On two occasions he saw Oswald with a "skinny, thin-haired" young Anglo, on one occasion on the sun roof of the YMCA with Jack Ruby.

What was Ruby's role before he was pressed into service to do away with Oswald? A Houston Secret Service report prepared within days of Ruby's shooting of Oswald synthesizes: "Numerous witnesses identify Jack Leon Rubenstein, alias Jack Ruby, as being in Houston, Texas on November 21, for several hours, one block from the President's entrance route and from the Rice Hotel where [the President] stayed." The Houston report was countermanded by a Dallas SS report that flatly declared: "Ruby was in Dallas on November 21, 1963." The Dallas version was predicated upon two alibi incidents furnished by Ruby, plus the inconclusive statement of Andrew Armstrong that "he did not know Ruby having made any long trips away from Dallas recently" (CE 2399 WC XXV).

Garrison points out that there was a 4 ½ hour gap in accounting for Ruby's presence in Dallas that day, giving him adequate time to fly back and forth that afternoon to "case" the Presidential motorcade in Houston. Complementing this is the

report of a Mexico City attorney that Ruby's sister, Eva Grant, was in San Antonio that same morning watching the motorcade there [RAMPARTS, November 1966]. Arturo Alocer Ruiz, his wife and her woman friend were in San Antonio on vacation. They noticed an obese woman rooted to a spot near the Gunter Hotel – she was there at least two hours – waiting for the President's entourage to pass on its way to the airport and the short hop to Houston. After Ruby shot Oswald and Eva's picture was shown on television, the Alocer party immediately recognized her as the obese woman they had seen in San Antonio. Although the FBI sloughed off the report, Garrison considers it reliable.

Shortly before and after the assassination, Ruby was placed by witnesses in the *Dallas Morning News* building, which commands a view of Dealey Plaza. Around 1:00 p.m. he was spotted at Parkland Hospital by housewife Wilma Tice and newsman Seth Kantor (in one of its more disingenuous moments, the Commission claimed that Mrs. Tice was mistaken and that Kantor, who knew Ruby well, had seen him somewhere other than Parkland – even though Kantor graphically described being collared by the night club owner at the bottom of a hospital staircase). Was it Ruby who planted the so-called magic bullet on a stretcher outside the trauma room? Since no one saw him do it, we can only speculate. But as we have seen, Ruby's actions were hardly irrational, and it was that bullet which forged the final link for the Commission between Oswald and the assassination. (It did not seem to bother the Commission that the bullet was in near-pristine condition, looking more like it had been fired into a stuffing box than through the sinew, muscle and bone of Kennedy and Connally [CE 399]).

For a bachelor of casual habits, Sunday morning, November 24, was possibly the most synchronized in Ruby's life. At 11:17 p.m. by automatic time stamp, he wired \$25 to Mrs. Bruce Ray Carlin, stage name Little Lynn, one of his performers who lived in Fort Worth (surely a pretext: the night before, Little Lynn and her husband had made a special trip to the Carousel – Ruby lent him \$5 – and Ruby was carrying several thousand dollars in cash). The he strode from the Western Union office across the street from the police department to the Main Street entrance of the police basement. How he slipped through the guard is open to question, but his timing was exquisite. Listening to the sound tracks of videotapes made in the basement about the time the elevator carrying Oswald arrived at basement level, one hears the hollow-sounding “honk” of a car horn (only police vehicles were in the basement”, then a pause of some four seconds, then another “honk” closely followed by the crack of Ruby's pistol. Were the “honks” signaling to Ruby the progress of his victim so he could suddenly push through the press ranks? In one of his letters smuggled from jail Ruby wrote, “If you hear a lot of horn blowing, it will be for me, they will want my blood!”

Based on the fresh evidence in Garrison's possession, we can now partially reconstruct the operation and getaway on November 22.

As previously reported [RAMPARTS, June 1967], the DA contends that the assassination bore the classic earmarks of a guerrilla ambush in which the President was caught in converging fire. The fatal head shot, he says, was fired from Grassy Knoll area, a quartering angle from the front. The operation was coordinated by radio.

To recapitulate, railroader S.M. Holland, standing on the Triple Underpass, insists to this day that “there definitely was a shot fired from behind that fence [on the Knoll]”. The late Lee Bowers, who was in the railroad tower directly north of the Knoll, testified that three cars, one radio-equipped, prowled the parking lot between his tower

and the Knoll shortly before the shooting; he said they definitely were not law enforcement vehicles. Bowers stated he saw two men behind the picket fence on the Knoll just before the shots were fired, one “middle-aged” and “heavy-set,” the other “about mid-twenties in either a plaid short or plaid coat or jacket.” Although the men were partly obscured by foliage when the shots rang out, Bowers said that in their vicinity there was “some unusual occurrence – a flash of light or smoke or something ...” (WC VI pp. 228ff). Postal employee J.C. Price, who had a bird’s-eye view of the scene, picked up from there: “I saw one man run towards the passenger cars on the railroad siding after the volley of shots [the parking lot is bisected by a railroad spur]. This man had a white dress shirt, no tie and khaki-colored trousers. His hair appeared to be long and dark and from his agility in running could be 25 years of age. He had something in his hand. I couldn’t be sure but it may have been a head piece.” (CE 2003 p. 222 WC XXIV)

A new witness of Garrison’s (he is afraid to have his name made public), who had the same vantage point as Price, states that after the shot were fired, two men dashed from behind the Knoll fence and headed behind the Depository Building, where they were joined by a third man. Two of them got in a Rambler station wagon and drove north, away from the scene. The third, a “heavy-set, dark-complexioned” man, proceeded back toward Dealey Plaza and disappeared. It is quite possibly this third man whom James R. Worrell described to the Commission. When the shooting started, said Worrell, he sought cover across Houston Street from the rear of the Depository Building. “I was there approximately three minutes before I saw this man come out the back door ... the way he was running, I would say he was in his late twenties or middle – I mean early thirties ... his coat was open and kind of flapping back in the breeze.” Worrell asserted the man ran alongside the building back toward the Dealey Plaza area (WC II pp. 190-201). Although his questioning by the Commission was less than exhaustive, there will be no more interviews: Worrell died in a traffic accident on November 9, 1966.

About 15 minutes after the assassination, Deputy Sheriff Roger D. Craig testified he “observed an individual run down the grass area from the direction of the Texas School Book Depository. He heard this individual whistle and a white Rambler station wagon, driven by a Negro male, pulled over to the curb and said individual got in ...” (CE 1967 WC XXIII) The incident is corroborated by Marvin C. Robinson, who told the FBI he was driving past the Depository sometime between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. when “a light-colored Nash station wagon suddenly appeared before him. He stated this vehicle stopped and a white male came down the grass-covered incline between the building and the street and entered the station wagon after which it drove away in the direction of the Oak Cliff section ...” (Dallas FBI report 89-43).

Robinson paid no attention to the man, but Craig said it was Oswald. The Commission rejected his identification “because of the overwhelming evidence that Oswald was far away from the building at that time.” Once again, the Commission ignored the possible manifestations of an Oswald double, this time one who may have been one of the assassins, shooting from the Depository Building. Recently Craig went to New Orleans to confer with Garrison. Among other things, he told the DA that he had not said that a Negro was driving the Rambler, but a “dark, swarthy man, possibly a Cuban.” On his return to Dallas, Craig noticed that he was being shadowed. As he came out of a restaurant after lunch, a bullet whizzed by his head.

A possible getaway plane was spotted at Red Bird Airport some few miles south of Oak Cliff at about 1:00 p.m. Two women have reported that they saw a twin-engine plane, engines idling, sitting well away from the paved access strips and runway, and close to the highway from Dallas via Oak Cliff. Coupled with this information is the assertion of a Garrison informant that a Minuteman in Arizona boasted to him that one of the Cubans on the assassination team was flown to Arizona and hid out in his home before slipping across the border into Mexico.

There is a sequel to this flurry of movement; it took place in the restaurant of the Winnipeg, Canada airport February 13, 1964. Richard Giesbracht, a businessman who Garrison's staff had interviewed, was waiting for a luncheon partner and overheard a conversation at an adjacent table between a man of about fifty who wore a hearing aid and spoke with a Southern accent and a younger man with "bushy hair and bushy pronounced eyebrows." Both expressed concern over how much Lee Oswald had told his wife about the assassination plot. In their conversation, they brought up an unidentified man named Isaacs; they found it odd that "Isaacs" would become mixed up with a "psycho" like Oswald. In their conversation, a man referred to as Hoffman or Hockman was to "relieve" Isaacs and destroy his 1958 model automobile. "We have more money at our disposal now than at any other time," the older man reported. He disclosed that the group of which both men apparently were a part would hold a meeting in a Kansas City hotel in March with reservations made in the name of a textile concern. At his point the pair noticed Giesbrecht, who started to a phone to notify police. A third man materialized and blocked his way. The trio quickly disappeared.

The FBI checked on the incident – but the results of this investigation are also "classified." However, a classified document captioned "Harold Isaacs" does exist. A Garrison investigator has located a Harold Isaacs in Texas, and Isaacs acknowledges that he owned a 1958 Ford which was "crushed in a wrecking yard." It is also noteworthy that Kansas City is the headquarters of the national Minutemen organization. Recently witness Giesbrecht was shown an assortment of photographs. "That's the man with the bushy eyebrows" he explained, picking out a mug shot of David Ferrie.

The Power Play

The closer Garrison comes to fitting together all the pieces of the assassination mosaic, the more desperate the attempt to squelch him becomes. Long ago the "national security" curtain was dropped on over 200 documents in the National Archives that range from "Allegation Oswald in Montreal, summer 1963," to a teaser like "re Charles Small, aka Smolikoff (Mexican trip)." Many of these documents now appear relevant to his investigation, but despite the fact that he is a duly constituted law enforcement officer, he cannot gain access to them.

And how do items turn up *missing* from a citadel of security like the National Archives? Twenty-six items connected with the assassination are so listed, including "Jack Ruby's notebook maintained by Larry Craford [his Carousel Club flunkey who scurried out of Dallas the afternoon of the assassination]." Moreover, Garrison observes that there was "an incredible incidence of spontaneous combustion" in Washington the day after the assassination when autopsy notes went up in flames and a secret CIA report on Oswald's activities prior to the assassination was singed beyond recognition in a Thermo-fax machine.

Coupled with the secrecy has been an aggressive drive to intimidate and discredit witnesses. Abraham Bolden, the first Negro Secret Service agent, accused his brother agents of carousing into the wee hours of November 22, and stated that while in custody Oswald blurted out, "Ruby hired me"; Bolden was subsequently charged by his superiors with bribery and convicted, and he protests to no avail that the charges against him were a frame-up. A Dealey Plaza eyewitness who in 1963 told the FBI that two men ran from behind the Grassy Knoll fence was brusquely warned, "If you didn't see Oswald shoot from that sixth floor window, you'd better keep your damn mouth shut." A New Orleans man with pertinent information about a local Minuteman was admonished by the FBI not to tell the DA anything because "District Attorney Garrison was trying to overturn the findings of the Warren Report."

The affair of Jules Rocco Kimble illustrates how governmental pressure has induced potential witnesses to slip from Garrison's grasp. A self-avowed member of the Ku Klux Klan who got in trouble over bombings in Baton Rouge, Kimble approached the DA's men in the apparent hope of gaining mitigation. He said that on the day after David Ferrie died, he drove a top KKK official, Jack Helm, to Ferrie's apartment. Helm came out with a satchel crammed with papers, which he placed in a bank safe deposit box. Kimble also divulged that in 1962, he had flown to Montreal with Ferrie on what was purported to be Minutemen business. He promised the DA's investigators that he would garner further information and report back.

He didn't come through. Shortly afterward, he phoned his wife from Atlanta, saying he had met a CIA contact. "They'll never get me back to New Orleans," he vowed. A few days after that, he called from Montreal. For reasons unknown, Kimble backtracked to Tampa, Florida, where he was arrested by local police. Interviewed by Garrison's men, he said he had once worked special assignments for the CIA, and in verification named his Agency contacts and the box number at the Lafayette Street station they assigned him. He averred he had re-contacted the CIA after Walter Sheridan had counseled him to say nothing and go to Canada. Sheridan, the ex-Bobby Kennedy ramrod in the Justice Department's "get Hoffa" crusade, is now with NBC News and has been instrumental in that television network's extraordinary effort to abort the assassination investigation. Sheridan was so overzealous that he was subsequently indicted by a grand jury for public bribery in attempting to induce witnesses to make statements against Garrison. However, the network does not consider this newsworthy.

NBC's special on the Garrison case broadcast last June exemplifies their effort. One of the stars of the program was Dean Andrews Jr., who has since been convicted of perjury by a New Orleans jury in connection with his testimony about the Clay Bertrand phase of the investigation. Andrews lent an ethereal quality to Garrison's probe by saying that he invented the name Manuel Garcia Gonzales and watched the DA's men frantically look for him as a suspect. There *is* a Manuel Garcia Gonzales. I have seen the nasty Llama pistol confiscated from him by New Orleans police in September 1966, shortly before Garrison became interested in him, and the immigration file documenting his admission to the United States. Another canard fabricated by NBC was the assertion that the network had located the real Clay Bertrand, and that he was not Clay Shaw. The man's name had been turned over to Justice Department, the narrator said. The man turned out to be bar owner Eugene Davis, who loudly protested that he

had never used the name – and indeed, he did not fit the description – of “Clay Bertrand.”

Another medium that has been particularly shrill in its anti-Garrison invective is *Newsweek*, which at times seems to parrot the administration line as faithfully as Izvestia hawks the Kremlin’s. The magazine’s “expert” on the case is Hugh Aynesworth, who at the time of the assassination was an ace reporter for the *Dallas Morning News*, which saw fit to print the black-bordered “Wanted for Treason: John F. Kennedy” ad on November 22nd. In his Garrison put-down (May 15, 1967), Aynesworth reported the charges of Alvin Beauboeuf, Ferrie’s companion on the Texas trip the afternoon of the assassination, that two DA investigators tried to bribe him. What Aynesworth didn’t report was that the tape recording of the conversation made by Beauboeuf’s attorney had been carefully edited to delete the investigator’s emphatic warnings to Beauboeuf that they sought only the truth, and that they would subject him to lie detector testing to verify as far as possible that he was telling the truth.

The tandem attack on Garrison, with much of the press copy sounding like it had been ghostwritten by Richard Helms, seems to be the preliminary to legal moves aimed at removing the DA from office or even jailing him.

The behavior of the US Attorney General Ramsey Clark has been most suggestive that such a play is in the works. On March 2, 1967, the day after Clay Shaw was arrested, the attorney general announced that Shaw had been investigated by the FBI in 1963 and “cleared” of any complicity in the assassination. Three months later, after the world had been noisily advised that the prestigious FBI had found Shaw innocent, Clark sheepishly admitted there had been no investigation at all. The retraction hardly caused a ripple in the press. Then on October 14, UPA quoted Clark as telling an audience of law students at the University of Virginia that Garrison “took a perfectly fine man, Clay Shaw, and ruined him just for personal aggrandizement,” and that the Department would prosecute the DA. Clark promptly issued a denial, and a Department spokesman lamely explained that the boss had “discussed this matter hypothetically in response to a question.”

But the most reasonable interpretation is that Clark let slip precisely what was on his mind. The notion is reinforced by the affidavit of Gordon Novel’s former wife, Marlene Mancuso, who told Garrison that Richard Townley of NBC’s New Orleans affiliate tried to get her to testify against the investigation. “He said they were not merely going to discredit the probe,” she swore. “He said Garrison would get a jail sentence.”

When news of the assassination probe first broke, Garrison declaimed in a burst of rhetoric, “Let justice be done though the heavens fall!” The heavens are still there, but Washington has come crashing down upon him.