The FBI, JFK and Jim Garrison

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with help from Malcolm Blunt
Turner told me:

The JFK case was a turning point for the FBI, in both its public reputation and its inner corruption.
The FBI and the JFK case

FBI advance warnings that Kennedy would be killed that fall:

1. Chicago tip from a guy codenamed “Lee”
2. The Walter Telex
3. Richard Case Nagell

How could Hoover not know something was going to happen?
Yet, in the face of all this, what was Hoover’s reaction on 11/22/63?

- He calls Bobby Kennedy and says: Your brother’s been shot.
- He calls 20 minutes later and says: Your brother is dead.

The next day he and Clyde Tolson went to the racetrack.
Make no mistake, Hoover knew something was going on, especially with what he was turning up in New Orleans and Mexico City.

And so did Jim Garrison.
Seven weeks after the assassination, Hoover wrote in the marginalia of a memorandum:

“OK but I hope you are not being taken in. I can’t forget CIA withholding the French espionage activities in the USA, nor the false story re: Oswald’s trip to Mexico City, only to mention two of their instances of double dealing.”

Internal Memo, 1/15/64, from D.J. Brennan to W.C. Sullivan on safeguarding FBI interests re CIA
What exactly was Hoover referring to when he said the CIA had given the FBI a snow-job about Oswald being in Mexico City?

In a nutshell from the new files: the CIA in MC was going nuts trying to find any evidence Oswald was there. They couldn’t find anything. They threw up their hands and turned it over to the Secretary of the Interior, Luis Echeverria, and his assistant Mr. Ochoa.

see David Joseph's 6-part series at KennedysAndKing
When the FBI finally gets onto the matter of Oswald in MC, they discover that Echeverria and Ochoa have set up a phony trail of dubious evidence: they have intimidated witnesses and falsified the record. This is what Hoover was referring to as a false story.

Mr. Echeverria was apparently rewarded: he became president of Mexico in 1970.

Indicted in 2006 for his role in the 1968 Tlatelolco and Corpus Christi Massacres.
Jim Garrison, January 19, 1968: He understands what Hoover was talking about.

“All information re LHO in Mexico City is clouded with a mist, as if it were something that happened about the time of the Druids. This place is the thing wherein we’ll catch the conscience of the Queen Bee.”

Jim Garrison was the first Warren Report critic to realize that something was really rotten about Oswald and Mexico City.
As we know, the first suspect that Garrison brought in for questioning was David Ferrie. He had been mentioned by Jack Martin and referred to Garrison by an assistant. Garrison checked him out and found his activities on the day of the assassination to be rather odd.
Thanks to Malcolm Blunt, we now know that the FBI was also tipped off about Ferrie on 11/22/63 ...

... except they had a different source, the NOPD Intelligence Unit. And they suspected Ferrie knew Oswald.

The FBI tells their source they would appreciate more information about Oswald and Ferrie.
They get more info on the 24th, from a TV source, named Bill Reed. He tells them Ferrie had been a friend of Oswald in the CAP and is employed by Wray Gill, a local attorney.

On the 25th, the FBI calls the Secret Service and John Rice says he would be interested in talking to David Ferrie when he is located.

The investigation was then stopped by Deke DeLoach on about the 26th. And the Bureau is told to announce it was not their idea to bring anyone in for questioning, it was only the local District Attorney’s idea. But they hide the fact of their similar information.
Once in their custody, Ferrie lied his head off.

- He said he never owned a telescopic rifle and would not know how to use one.
- He did not know Oswald and Oswald was not in his CAP unit.
- He had no association with any anti-Castro group since 1961.

What makes it worse: the FBI knew he was lying.
On November 27, 1963 the FBI got a report from Roy McCoy because Ferrie had called him that day. Ferrie wanted to know if McCoy had any photos from their CAP days, when he was the head of the unit. He asked about a cadet named Oswald.

This would clearly suggest that Ferrie did know Oswald, and he did handle weapons. From here, the Bureau could have found out that:

1. Ferrie had called other people about evidence associating him with Oswald, specifically his library card.
2. Several CAP members recalled Oswald with Ferrie in the Moissant unit. From here, they would have discovered the photo of them together.
Allard Lowenstein:

“In my experience as an attorney, people with nothing to hide, don’t hide things.”

It is a crime to lie to an FBI agent, and also to obstruct justice. Ferrie was trying to do both. He should have been arrested by November 28th. But Hoover was not interested in doing anything with the JFK case except covering it up.
Let us now turn to the man Garrison arrested after Ferrie died:

- Shaw denied he was associated with the CIA.
- Denied he knew David Ferrie.
- Denied he knew Oswald.
- Denied he was in Clinton/Jackson with them.
- Denied he was Clay Bertrand or had called Dean Andrews to defend Oswald.

All of these were lies, and the FBI knew they were lies.
• In March of 1967, Aura Lee, a former secretary to Shaw, said that Ferrie had visited Shaw at the ITM on several occasions (the FBI knew this through an informant).

• Carrol Thomas, who was a funeral director, told the FBI he knew Ferrie through Clay Shaw.

• Wray Gill’s secretary, Sandra Anderson, told Wackenhut she had seen a photo of Shaw with Ferrie. (Wackenhut was almost an alumni association for the FBI.)
Thanks to the ARRB, we now know Shaw had a long career with the CIA, from about 1949-72. This included being a highly paid contract agent, and part of the clandestine services, Office of Security and DCS.

Further, the CIA has deliberately destroyed many records on Shaw, as the ARRB found out.

(see my essay, “Jim Garrison: The Beat Goes On”,
This is utterly fascinating to me. Why?

Because back in the mid-seventies, Gordon Novel wrote a letter to Mary Ferrell. There he admitted his CIA role in wrecking Garrison’s inquiry. But he also said that he knew the Agency had issued an order in 1964 to keep info about Shaw from any official inquiry into the JFK case.

This has turned out to be true.
How did Novel know about this internal cover-up at CIA about Shaw?

One way could have been that he was hired by Allen Dulles to infiltrate Garrison's office and wire it for sound.

He did both.
In 1967, FBI agent Regis Kennedy told a woman who had been a source of information to Garrison that “Shaw was a CIA agent who had done work of an unspecified nature over a five-year span in Italy.”

This, of course, refers to Shaw’s serving on the board of Centro Mondiale Commerciale.

The whole idea that Permindex was a KGB disinformation story has now been demolished by Michele Metta’s book on the subject.
THIS IS A FACT

Thanks to the ARRB, there are now about 14 sources on this in a variety of forms (discussed in *Destiny Betrayed*).

One of those forms is FBI documents. Two FBI documents from 1967 say that the Bureau had at least 4 sources who said Shaw used the alias Bertrand.

But it is even worse than that. Why?
When Garrison’s investigation broke, AG Ramsey Clark said that Shaw had been investigated back in 1963 and the *NY Times* reported this.

The FBI quickly got to Clark and told him to walk the statement back. Which he did.

He had to. BECAUSE IT WAS TRUE!

The FBI did investigate Shaw in the wake of JFK’s assassination. DeLoach told Clark that Shaw was part of the original FBI inquiry in December of 1963. Several parties had furnished them with information concerning Shaw.
As we all know today, the reporting on the Clay Shaw trial, as on everything concerning Garrison, was abysmal.

For instance, the testimony of Pierre Finck should have been front page news everywhere.

It was not, because Jim Phelan, an FBI asset, rehearsed the reporters each day in a rented house as to what the next day’s headlines would be.

He even pulled out a chalkboard the day the Zapruder film was shown.

This is also why no one knew how AG John Mitchell had directly intervened in the trial over Regis Kennedy’s testimony.
The trial was halted, while US attorney Harry Connick called Washington. Connick then allowed Jim Alcock to ask two questions to Kennedy.

Q: Mr. Kennedy, prior to your interview with Dean Andrews, were you engaged in the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy?
A: Yes I was.

Q: Mr. Kennedy, were you seeking Clay Bertrand in connection with your overall investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy?
A: I was.
Regis Kennedy Lies about Andrews

This is why Regis Kennedy had to lie about Dean Andrews being under sedation at the time of his call from Clay Bertrand.

The FBI knew this was a lie since they had the real records which showed he was not under medication.

An absolutely central point, for two reasons:

1. It shows that almost everyone in Washington and New York was hiding the fact that Shaw was Bertrand.
2. This encouraged Andrews in his perjury, which Garrison later convicted him over.

But there was something even more important than that.
This prevented Garrison from getting the right info from Andrews at Shaw’s trial.

We now know that Andrews told Harold Weisberg that Shaw was Bertrand. But he swore him to secrecy.

As a consequence of this cover-up, Garrison could not ask Shaw the key question: Why did you call Andrews and tell him to go to Dallas to defend Oswald?
Did the FBI know about Oswald and Guy Banister?

Regis Kennedy: Banister knew everything that went on in New Orleans.

Joe Oster: Banister would pick up the phone and call J. Edgar Hoover.
Both the CIA and FBI had anti-FPCC programs going on in the summer of 1963.

According to William Walter, Oswald was Warren DeBrueys’ confidential informant.
Banister was very upset when he learned Oswald was arrested with his address on a pamphlet.

“How is it going to look for him to have the same address as me?”

He needn’t have worried.

Before transferring several FPCC pamphlets from New Orleans to Washington, FBI agent Harry Maynor whited out the 544 Camp Street address.
If you needed any more evidence of what Bugliosi called “consciousness of guilt”, when the FBI questioned Banister they never asked him about Oswald ...

... even though about 12 people saw him at his office that summer, including two INS agents following David Ferrie.
THIS IS A FACT.

All you have to do is go there. The people will talk about it when asked, even those not called by Garrison. Their children talk about it also. They even joke about it.

Garrison had a picture of Shaw, Ferrie and Oswald in the car. But it was at a distance, and the resolution was not good, so it could not be presented as evidence since it lost resolution when blown up.
Oswald knew the name of one of the doctors at the East Louisiana State Hospital.

Oswald showed his service separation papers to the registrar of voters, Henry Palmer, as his form of ID.

Shaw showed Sheriff Manchester his driver’s license, and told him his place of business, the International Trade Mart.
The FBI knew Oswald was there and lied about it.

An FBI agent showed up at the hospital to ask for Oswald’s job application and got it.

Elmer Litchfield, the FBI agent in the area, also knew Reeves Morgan called Oswald’s name in after the assassination, as did his working partner.
As Bill Turner told me,

“When I saw the reports, I knew the fix was in.”

There are three steps in any FBI inquiry:

1. Collection of all relevant leads;
2. The following of those leads to their ultimate end;
3. The collation of all relevant information into a report which does not come to a verdict.
It was obvious to Bill that step two had been rigorously avoided.

And if you did that then your report was worthless.

Yet Hoover had still declared Oswald guilty.

As Turner told me, something like that can only come from the very top since FBI agents do not act like that under normal circumstances.
In fact, it was even worse than that, because near the end, after Shaw’s lawyers pleaded for help, the FBI ended up doing work for them before the trial...

... even though they knew Shaw was Bertrand, that he had called Andrews, worked for the CIA, and had lied about Ferrie.
I am one of maybe ten people in America who has read every page of Vincent Bugliosi’s *Reclaiming History* — all 2,646 of them.

One can gauge the value of that book by this paraphrase of what it claims:

There is not a scintilla of evidence to support the proposition of an FBI cover-up in the JFK case.

Recall, Hoover told the Commission that Oswald did not shoot Kennedy on Houston Street because of the trees there.
When FBI agent Don Adams was transferred to Dallas in the summer of 1964, he went to a screening room to see the Zapruder film with two other agents.

After viewing the film he turned and said: Well, he was obviously hit from two directions.

They replied that they understood that.

But Hoover and Tolson did not want to hear that kind of information.
1. FBI and Justice Department did all they could to thwart him.
2. MSM incessantly blasted away at him.
3. The Garrison Group was set up by Dick Helms at Langley.

The ARRB declassified four documents on the latter project. Others were released in redacted form.

They literally say the Agency will assign “task forces” to plan for before the Shaw trial, during the Shaw trial and after the trial.
What were some of the actions taken by the CIA?

- Quashed subpoenas—at both ends with the sending judge and the receiving judge.

- Flipped witnesses and, during the trial, physically assaulted witnesses: e.g., Habighorst, Nagell, and Clyde Johnson.

Robert Tanenbaum also saw documents like this and they came from Richard Helms’ office.
The strategy was:

1. to place Garrison in jail;
2. then burn his evidence.

and thus the reaction, “See, the guy was just a loon who had nothing!”

So:

- Garrison went through two phony show-trials.
- Harry Connick literally incinerated many of Garrison’s files.
People like Don Carpenter, with his ridiculous book about Clay Shaw, keeps this idea up.

He actually says that Garrison did not risk anything in his investigation, and then he argues it was all a sideshow.

In other words, in Carpenter's world, Garrison would have had to go to jail to convince Mr. Carpenter he was sincere in his case.

These are the facts:

In 1966, Jim Garrison had a promising career ahead of him. He had just gotten John McKeithen elected as governor. There is very little doubt he could have been either governor or senator from Louisiana.

He threw that all away with the JFK case. He ended up renting space in a big law firm with a group secretary when this ordeal was all over.
In 1991-92, the film JFK again presented Garrison’s case.

Everyone knows that the film was attacked months before it was released, and that the director/co-writer was especially singled out.

Recall, this was three decades after Kennedy was killed. It was 22 years after Shaw was acquitted. One would have thought people in the media would have done some homework.
ABC’s hit man on the King and JFK cases.

Sawyer tells Oliver Stone on Nightline that he made up the scenes of Garrison giving the summation at Shaw trial, of Ferrie panicking at a hotel with Lou Ivon and Jim Garrison there, and the scene with Mr. X.
• Garrison did give one of the summations at the Shaw trial. Sawyer could have read it in James Kirkwood’s hatchet job *American Grotesque*.

• Ferrie did begin to crack at a hotel room with Lou Ivon. Garrison was not there. But Sawyer could have called Lou Ivon, as later, Bill Davy and Joan Mellen did.

• Garrison did discuss the case with Fletcher Prouty, but it was after the Shaw acquittal. But Garrison did have a similar meeting with Nagell in a park in New York. *And Garrison was the first Warren Commission critic who said that Vietnam would not have happened if Kennedy had lived*. So the points in that scene are valid; Garrison was on to those aspects of the case.
In 1992, there was a debate in New York, arranged by *The Nation* and hosted by Victor Navasky.

Edward Epstein stated that Ferrie never said anything like what is depicted in the film, either to Garrison or any of his investigators.

I called Ivon and asked: “Did a writer named Epstein call you recently about the film *JFK*?” He replied, “Epstein, recently? No, that’s bull.”

So much for Mr. Epstein.
Some would say, “Well, questioning Ferrie about ‘Who killed the president?’ was really a stretch.”

Really?

Even if Ferrie had a map of Dealey Plaza in his drawer at work? Which according to one Garrison witness, he did.

If you match that up with Sergio Arcacha Smith’s diagram of the Dealey Plaza sewer system in his apartment in Dallas, then asking Ferrie “Who killed the president?” is not a stretch.

But we only found out about these two things after the ARRB declassification process.
If Garrison had been out to write a comprehensive book about every piece of evidence he uncovered, that book would be a thousand pages long.

It would include things like:

- A job application made out by Oswald with Jack Ruby as a reference.
- The exposure of *Farewell America* being written by a CIA asset.
- Aynsworth going up to Clinton to bribe Manchester.
- One of the Clinton witnesses being shot at.

He wasn’t writing that kind of book. It was designed as one man’s memoir of a Sisyphean task.
In addition to people like Carpenter and Epstein, there are those in the critical community who actually hold this view of Garrison, even to this day.

When *JFK* came out, Paul Hoch encouraged everyone to read *American Grotesque*.

A book commissioned by Clay Shaw.

That book compares Garrison’s assistant DA’s to guards at the Nazi death camps. Meaning, I guess, that Garrison was Himmler.
At a conference in Chicago, Hoch actually advised everyone to ignore any documents declassified by the ARRB about Shaw.

That is, if Garrison was right about Shaw, which he was, just ignore it, even if the FBI confirmed it.

In other words, Hoch was taking out an insurance policy on his previous comments if they were endangered by the ARRB.
At that conference, Hoch enlisted Josiah Thompson to attack Garrison. Thompson gladly helped.

In 1968, at the time Garrison was saying the killing of Kennedy was a coup d’état, Thompson was still undecided if Kennedy’s assassination was a conspiracy.

Fifty years later, he has decided that it was. Remember, he is a private investigator.
Peter Scott co-edited the book *The Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond*. It includes an article by Peter Noyes.

Noyes says Garrison’s case against Shaw was a monumental fraud; that, after Ferrie’s death, Garrison sounded like a lunatic; that the trial of Clay Shaw was a disgraceful legal event; and that a perceptive observer of Garrison was Hugh Aynesworth.

In the intro, the editors say that the prosecution of Shaw was indefensible.
A very painful moment for us all occurred in 2014:

Tony Summers nearly had a stroke when Andrew Krieg showed Garrison’s reply to the NBC attack on him at the AARC conference.

Right after that, Summers said online that the JFK case might well be a conspiracy.

This is the author who promoted the lying Judith Exner, and witnesses like the lying Robert Slatzer and Jeanne Carmen in the Marilyn Monroe case.

By doing so, he turned that whole episode into a three-ring Barnum and Bailey circus.
WHENEVER ONE OF THESE PEOPLE STARTS TALKING ABOUT GARRISON, JUST DO THIS:
Jim Garrison said some things I wish he had not said. He did some things I wish he had not done, like the Edgar Eugene Bradley indictment.

But Jim Garrison was also in uncharted waters. That was a different world. People still believed in Chet Huntley and Dan Rather and Walter Cronkite.

And here comes this DA from New Orleans saying that the CIA killed JFK, President Johnson helped cover it up, and Vietnam would not have happened if Kennedy had lived.
This is at a time when, each evening, most Americans watched TV shows like *I Dream of Jeannie* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*. 

![Image of Jeannie](https://kennedysandking.com)

![Image of Hillbillies](https://kennedysandking.com)
Jim Garrison did not fail because he had no case and was after the wrong people.

On the contrary, he failed because he had the right people. And the FBI knew it.

Garrison commented on this later. He said his ideas about what happened had changed after the Shaw trial.

He only had one corner of the conspiracy.

In reality, he was not in any position to uncover the whole thing.

But he tried.
J. Edgar Hoover understood what Garrison was up against, which is why he had no interest in unraveling the disinformation about Mexico City.

In the late summer of 1964, while on vacation, he was asked by an acquaintance if Oswald really did it.

He replied, “If I told you what I really know, it would be very dangerous to this country. Our whole political system could be disrupted.”
In Lisa Pease’s book on RFK, *A Lie Too Big to Fail*, she relates an anecdote about John Meier, who used to work for Howard Hughes.

John went to DC to see Hoover, since he suspected that something was really up in the Robert Kennedy assassination.

Hoover said that he understood what that was. He said, “We know this was a Maheu operation. People think I'm so powerful, but when it comes to the CIA, there's nothing I can do.”

Which explains a lot.