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File

Text of Jim Garrison Interview

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Here is the text of Sunday night's interview of New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison concerning his Kennedy assassination conspiracy probe to newsmen Bob Jones:

Q. At this point, can you summarize the investigation, can you put it into perspective?

A. I can in general terms, Bob. I think the best thing to say first of all is there's not as much mystery as I suppose the detractors would like to believe. It was not that hard to find out what happened and how President Kennedy was killed. The problem is getting the final details when they are in custody of agencies of the federal government, really an agency of the federal government, namely the CIA. We feel that every principal in the assassination has been known to my office for some time. That's why quite a while ago I was able to say that and I certainly was not being. Although I understand much of the Eastern press has built me up as a liar. But purely and simply a case of former members of the CIA, a large number of them Cubans, having a vendetta against me from the 1961 Bay of Pigs episode and in October of '62 the defense, the undersanding which President Kennedy reached with Khrushchev of Russia. As a result of this reaction certain individuals with interests in remaining assassinated the President. It's obvious that to me is the conspiracy subsequent to that by an agency of the federal government, the Central Intelligence Agency, to keep those facts from the American people, from the Warren Commission, from the world at large. And it has succeeded in doing it as to final details which we are trying to get. As a result we are moving at a snail's pace. On the other hand, it isn't that fatal a problem for us because the essential elements we have clarified a long time ago. I don't believe they can stop us. They can just delay us.

Q. You have said in the past that the Central Intelligence Agency and the FBI are involved in some way in all this. Can you explain on this?

A. It's easy to criticize the bureau with hindsight. But the bureau has the problem of working with all the government agencies. Some extent these two individuals agents with Cuban assignments here, they had to service the CIA. But I find that it is too much when the main fault in this thing is the Central Intelligence Agency and its fantastic cover. Its totally unproductive

account for its funds. For example the Central Intelligence Agency is through devious ways and through intermediaries actually paying lawyers to block the completion of the investigation into President Kennedy's death. What it's doing is a criminal act. And if the director of the CIA and the top officials of the CIA were in the jurisdiction of Louisiana I would charge them without hesitation. That includes Mr. Helms because he has to know what he's doing. The Central Intelligence Agency began its criminal activities, in my judgment, immediately after the assassination when they failed to reveal to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its entirety what its activities were in New Orleans when Lee Oswald was working for it and it has compounded them since by essentially criminal activities by making every possible effort to block our investigation. Now it's not a case which I have to defend against, let's say against elements that have no understanding whatsoever, whether it's Newsweek or WDSU or NBC. I don't really have to defend the organization against questions, will it be successful? We have even located photographs in which we have found the men behind the grassy knoll and stonewall before they dropped completely out of sight. There were five of them. Three behind the stone wall and two behind the grassy knoll. And they're not quite out of sight. We then located another by process of bringing them out. Although they are not distinct enough you can make an identification from the faces. The point is the Warren Commission said nobody was back there and they had to say nobody was back there because not enough evidence was presented for them to make any other conclusion. Again, not so much the bureau's part as the Central Intelligence Agency.

Q. Mr. Garrison, what was Lee Harvey Oswald's role in this whole thing?

A. Lee Harvey Oswald was not an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency. He was, and I don't know what phrase, what secret phrase, the secret police agency uses, but he was an employe of the Central Intelligence Agency. He was the anti-Castro Cubans with whom he associated. As a matter of fact, Lee Oswald's associations in the summer of 1963 in New Orleans were not merely frequently with anti-Castro Cubans, but with anti-Castro Cubans. And every one of them was on the Central Intelligence Agency's payroll. And, of course

that that was no great surprise to us after we had gone in to it for while. The point is he not that's really what he was. One of the most important men in history is an overstatement and working for the CIA. Once this sometimes in the rush of things I largely occurred, the CIA's will tell members of my staff to include seemed to have been, write out what a descriptive of well, President Kennedy is a something is and in this case conspiracy of the cold war. And, as they put that and I put my name to this kid, that's just one of those things. The cold war must go on. The cover must be kept.

The CIA cannot be injured and as a result there's been no penetration of its secret. Its power has just continued untouched, when actually its power as a result of this demonstration of totalitarian police state tactics, its power should be stripped. It should be cut down tremendously and made responsible to Congress. The CIA, as I have learned from this case, I wasn't aware of it before, the CIA has infinitely more power than the Gestapo and the NKVD of Russia combined.

Q. Did Lee Harvey Oswald kill President Kennedy?

A. No, Lee Harvey Oswald did not, did not even shoot President Kennedy. He did not fire a shot from the book depository building. There's no question about that anymore at all. One of the concepts is just about right now in the position of Dumpty Dumpty. It can never be really resurrected. One of the unfortunate things is that not enough of the press has done their homework, so I'm still in a position of having to defend that against those who don't want to believe that the whole truth was not brought out. But he did not touch a gun on that day. He was a decoy at first. And then he was a patsy and then he was a victim.

Q. At this point, can you say if Lee Harvey Oswald did not kill the President, who did?

A. Oh, I can say who did without any question, except, and we know the group and we know some of the names of the group. But we don't know which one was standing where and we can't find out with the CIA keeping its vaults locked. They were former employes of the CIA. We managed to get the names of some of them in a way I can't describe here, but we cannot find out through any government agency where they are located now, if they are still in America, and we have a stone wall there as far as the identification of the other individuals. But I can say the rest of them are Cubans who were in the CIA. David Ferrie was, most people admit, an eccentric, a strange person. What was Mr. Ferrie's role in this whole thing?

A. Well, I'm glad you said very important person (sic), because for while. The point is he not that's really what he was. One of the most important men in history is an overstatement and working for the CIA. Once this sometimes in the rush of things I largely occurred, the CIA's will tell members of my staff to include seemed to have been, write out what a descriptive of well, President Kennedy is a something is and in this case conspiracy of the cold war. And, as they put that and I put my name to this kid, that's just one of those things. The cold war must go on. The cover must be kept.

This role is twofold and I don't want to go into more detail because it goes into evidence that begins to tie in with the case here. In other words I feel like I can talk in some generalities about the total picture and about aspects that do not touch Mr. Shaw's case. But I am not going to say anything that will reflect on Mr. Shaw or his trial, which limits me with regard to Ferrie somewhat. But Ferrie's role in the summer of '63 was in connection with, well, he was an intermediary. He was not a CIA agent for example. He did not carry a CIA card. He was, if you were to ask the CIA, 'did David Ferrie work for you,' you would receive a very polished lie from Washington, which they are practiced and adept at.

They would say 'we have searched our files exhaustively and we do not find that this man worked for us at anytime and there's no sign.' Usually that means that he did, because the first rule of the CIA is that the end justifies the means, which is one reason it should be eliminated and reorganized, because you can't have any agency in a democracy which really believes that the end justifies the means. This is never the case. Ferrie worked for the CIA in Florida in 1961. This appears to be, as far as we can find, his initial connection. He was making flights for them.

When '63 came and they had a special adventure planned in spite of President Kennedy's order involving Cuba, he was deeply involved in it and he was actually helping with the training. They have a problem in training in cases like that, they don't want to use members of the United States Army and the United States forces, and in this case Ferrie was involved in servicing, in a sense. With regard to what happened in Dallas, well, I would rather just say in general terms that, although there is no question about what the reason for it is, it is a very important part of the President's

power. It does not have it

death in which he drove nine hours through a thunderstorm and later on to Charleston was directly connected with what happened after the President was killed.

Q. We now had three people who are outside Louisiana and who are fighting their return to the state in connection with your investigation, Gordon Novel, Sergio Araccha Smith and Sandra Motte McInnes. Could you briefly discuss those three people and their role in all this?

A. The point that you're going toward is that we're having such tremendous difficulty in getting them back. That all course is because of the intercession of the U.S. government. Not necessarily the government at the topmost level, but certainly through the intercession of the CIA which has great power because of the billions of dollars it spends and for other reasons. Sandra Motte, for example, who has no money is represented by a very successful lawyer who is the chairman of a 16-state Democratic national committee.

Gordon Novel not only has a very successful lawyer in Ohio but he has a lawyer down here. Mr. Araccha seems to have no problem with representation either. He initially announced he was represented by the chief assistant of the district attorney in Dallas, but now he seems to have private counsel.

Generally, Alvin Beaubouef, who has never been regarded as a crucial witness by us nor ever been regarded as of great value by us, is represented by a successful and high-priced lawyer.

It is obvious to us, and we have evidenced in some cases that these lawyers are being paid by the Central Intelligence Agency. The money is being diverted to other people and then coming to them.

So you have the effect of the CIA actually being used to thwart justice here so it won't be embarrassed. We have had no problem with extradition in five years. Not with a single extradition. Not one in five years. And now, of course, we have nothing but trouble. We haven't succeeded in getting them down here.

And, of course, the reason is that we are committing the offense of trying to get back witnesses who can help us in varying degrees, some a little and one quite a lot.

With regard to the question of the identities of the men in the assassination of President Kennedy. And the reason we're having trouble is there are people who are being out of the question, the Central Intelligence Agency, who do not have done so, but I will say that I do not regard Perry Russo as our main witness. And I'm not sure that will be a definite disappointment to those gentlemen from the federal government who are working so hard to

What I feel that they do not have a right to know. That the national security is involved.

In other words, we have here a part of the federal government blocking completely the inquiry into, attempting to block the inquiry into the death of President Kennedy.

Again I want to emphasize that it is not a case of my saying now we won't be able to find out. We have found out how it happened. There is no mystery. It wasn't that complicated. The question is getting the names, the final names of some of these people, a few details to wrap it up. And we are being blocked completely by the CIA. While we have a problem of cooperation with other federal agencies at this time, it is apparent to me that the CIA is engineering this because its future, its prestige is at stake, and above all, its power. One of the things I'm sure it's worried about is that Congress may begin to get curious about this monstrosity. In this cancer it has developed in this country and begin to apply controls which should have been applied a long time ago.

Q. Because of this blocking effort which you prescribe to the CIA, will this in any way hinder or eliminate the possibility of your solution of the assassination?

A. No, I don't think there is anything to eliminate it. But it will slow it up. If it were not for this, if we had had the slightest cooperation of the Central Intelligence Agency there would be nothing else to investigate. In other words, the picture has become that clear in a sense of being confirmed. It's just some details which we regard as very important details. But we're not going to stop until we get them, but right now they are in effect blocked in the CIA vaults.

They know the name of every man involved and the name of the individuals who pulled the triggers from the grassy knoll and signal area. And they know that they did it because they were former employees of the CIA while they were training in New Orleans in the summer of 1963.

Raymond Russo told a strange and startling tale about the conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. Is Perry Raymond Russo your star witness in this whole investigation?

A. Well, the question of the course, is a little involved. But I can't answer to much without at least inferentially reflecting on Mr. Shaw's right's to a fair trial and I don't want to even raise the possibility of a question of not having done so, but I will say that I do not regard Perry Russo as our main witness. And I'm sure that will be a definite disappointment to those gentlemen from the federal government who are working so hard to

nation. We know it, and if we will make arrests and there will be convictions. It is now 50 days since that statement was made. Is there anything that would lead you to believe that that statement is not true now?

A. No, the only thing is, however, first of all, is solved as a bad word. But it is nevertheless true. But let me clarify what I meant because it was presented as a goat. As I went into the elevator, they said, "when's your next arrest." And I said, "Arrests, it may be a long time."

I don't want to talk about arrests. I first said no comment. But there will be arrests. And I said yes, there will be. Then you've solved the case? And I said we solved the case some time ago, mainly that we understood what happened and who the principal people were and it turned out to be confirmed without any question.

Well, the next thing I knew there were photographs of me, selected from some other incident, with a big smile on my face, announcing that we had solved the case. Well, it wasn't intended to be a goat. What I'm remaining as to the general motives and as to the key people involved. And this remains true.

On the other hand, I did not mean there was no obstruction that there would be such a great obstruction by elements of the federal government where we could not get any federal cooperation from any federal agency, that we have our lines monitored constantly. Well, not just us, any, any, major witness, constantly.

Again, we're so used to it that it doesn't bother us. But as a result I think that in closing out the case the final details of evidence that we want take us much longer, but we're not going to quit, we're going to get them. Anyway, but I'd say that, what time is now? The Central Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States if it wants could in the next 60 minutes give us the name of every last Cuban involved in this and we can help them with a description if they have a problem of how to find the names and in 60 minutes from now the case would be completely closed. And that's how close we have been to the end for it sometime, but we are blocked by this glass wall of this totalitarian, powerful agency which is worried about its power. And it's obviously worried about its power, because it's desperate.

When you try to make it down to is this, we have drifted away from our constitution too far. The CIA, for example, regards the state as an inconvenience, as many agencies of the federal government do. A state official is an inconvenience and the state is not a sovereignty, it's just a problem to the federal agency concerned. Well, this is wrong and this country won't survive in the way we've known unless we change it and the change has to begin in this case with that federal agency which has concealed the true facts of the assassination, whose employees were involved in the assassination and it knows this and that in the Central Intelligence Agency.

In the final analysis, what it comes down to is whether a federal power can be allowed to be totally uncontrolled. If this is so, then we are no different than Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. And I can't believe that that day it is possible for the CIA to continue to obstruct with power. As far as I'm concerned they are wasting their time with me. They can slow me down but there's no way in the world they can stop me from bringing our conclusion to this case.

appear that the kind of office I have built up would "bribe somebody or threaten to shoot them in order to tell a lie, it's pretty desperate. Because any trial lawyer knows there is nothing worse in a major case than a witness who is lying. There is nothing easier for a defense lawyer to tear apart. This is a conspiracy. I think obviously engineered by the CIA, to derail us and this will be exposed in time, there's no problem about that. The problem is the conspiracy they are engaged in. But again, I can summarize it by saying, of course, it was true. I'm not a perfect person by any means but I don't happen to be a liar.

What does all of this mean to you, this lack of cooperation and in certain instances an actual hindrance, as you say, in your investigation of the assassination?

A. The summary, what it gets down to is this, we have drifted away from our constitution too far. The CIA, for example, regards the state as an inconvenience, as many agencies of the federal government do. A state official is an inconvenience and the state is not a sovereignty, it's just a problem to the federal agency concerned. Well, this is wrong and this country won't survive in the way we've known unless we change it and the change has to begin in this case with that federal agency which has concealed the true facts of the assassination, whose employees were involved in the assassination and it knows this and that in the Central Intelligence Agency.

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