

“There are guns between me and the White House”

Robert F. Kennedy to Jim Garrison

Mark Lane

1968

On Tuesday evening, June 4, just one hour before the polls closed in the California primary, I was being interviewed in Washington, D.C. by John Hightower over television station WEAN.

I was asked why Robert Kennedy appeared to accept the findings of the Warren Commission. For some months I had been aware of conversation between emissaries from Robert Kennedy to New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison. (Since the confidence was not originally shared with me, I am not at liberty to reveal the names of the emissaries. However, should Garrison be asked for that information by the press, it is conceivable that he might reveal the names.) Yet I felt that it would be unfair to breach a confidential relationship while the primary campaign proceeded.

It was quite plain however, that as the last primary was about to end and that no remarks that I made in Washington could reach California in time to influence any voters, my revealing the confidential exchanges could not affect the primary result.

Accordingly I answered the question frankly and disclosed the nature of the various meetings between Garrison and Robert Kennedy's representatives. Over a period of several weeks, two different emissaries had arrived in New Orleans Each had sought out Jim Garrison: each stated that he was carrying a message from Robert Kennedy; each was known by Garrison to be associated with Robert Kennedy; each carried almost the identical message; each said that Robert Kennedy did not believe the conclusions of the Warren Commission and agreed with Garrison that a conspiracy had taken the life of President Kennedy.

Robert Kennedy, they said would investigate the assassination of his brother thoroughly if he were elected president and would vigorously prosecute those responsible. The essential purpose of the visits was to “reassure” Garrison that despite his public utterances,

Robert Kennedy very firmly held a different private view.

Garrison asked why Senator Kennedy felt it necessary to suppress his dissent. Each emissary answered with the same phrase: He (Robert Kennedy) knows that there are guns between him and the White House.

Garrison pointed out that John Kennedy had not been assassinated during the campaign but long after his election. This was proof, Garrison added, that the presidency offered no immunity from an assassin's bullet.

Garrison said: “The lesson of November 22 is very clear. Any man who wishes to dismantle the war-machine and who appears to be in a position to do it will have his head blown off in the middle of an American city.”

Garrison said that the only defense was a full and open assault against the assassins and full disclosure of the role played by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Garrison pleaded with the emissaries to convince Robert Kennedy that his life was more endangered by his silence than it would be by his public disclosure of the known facts.

Robert Kennedy had said that if he lost the California primary he would withdraw from the presidential campaign. Clearly there would be no reason to kill him unless he won. Minutes after his victory was assured in California he was executed.

The *New York Post* advised in its headline that this is “a time to mourn,” evidently not having considered the possibility of thinking as well.

On television, utilizing the most modern devices for communication but in the spirit of medieval alchemists, the elders of the society inveighed against vague demons. They offered incantations to the atmosphere in the hope that they might alter it and exorcise from it the evil spirits.

Everywhere the representatives of the news media spoke of guilt that we all share equally for the evil times that had come upon us.

While it is true that the air and the rivers have been thoroughly polluted by our industrialists over the years, it is not that atmosphere which caused the death of John Kennedy or of Dr. King or of Robert Kennedy.

We are not all equally guilty.

Those guilty are those who planned these deaths, those who executed the plan and those who have permitted these crimes to remain unsolved. An unsolved and unpunished assassination of a public official is an invitation to more.

John F. Kennedy was not the first to die at the hands of the Central intelligence Agency. Robert Kennedy will not be the last public official to be assassinated unless the full truth regarding all of these events is made public.

There is in this country one man with both the inclination and the ability to do this. He is the district attorney of New Orleans. Yet the press has ridiculed his efforts and distorted his evidence. The press has refused to reveal the efforts of the federal government to prevent Garrison from trying Clay Shaw, a man charged with conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy.

The federal government has issued an injunction that prohibits Garrison from proceeding with the case. Not content with that, the federal courts are moving in a direction which indicates a commitment to imprison Garrison and the members of his staff.

For Garrison this might be the most pleasant personal alternative available, for his life has been threatened repeatedly and should he ever be permitted to initiate the actual prosecution, the consequences to him may be more grave than the threat of mere imprisonment. Yet knowing this, he pushes relentlessly.

* We are not all equally guilty.

EDITORS' NOTE: The preceding article originally appeared in the *Los Angeles Free Press*. Mark Lane is a former New York State Assemblyman who has devoted the last five years to providing answers to the mysteries of the Kennedy assassination. He is the author of *Rush to Judgment*.

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