

## *Jim Garrison, Libertarian*

**I**n the welter of discussion (mainly abuse) on Jim Garrison's conspiracy case in the Kennedy assassination, an important story has been overlooked: the inspiring and knowledgeable devotion to individual liberty that has shone through Garrison's statements.

Thus, in the famous and impressive *Playboy* interview of October, 1967, Garrison said this about the role of District Attorney: "You know, I always received much more satisfaction as a defense attorney in obtaining an acquittal for a client than I ever have as a D.A. in obtaining a conviction. All my interests and sympathies tend to be on the side of the individual as opposed to the state."

On the political trends in contemporary America:

What worries me deeply, and I have seen it exemplified in this case, is that we in America are in great danger of slowly evolving into a proto-fascist state. It will be a different kind of fascist state from the one the Germans evolved. ... But in the final analysis, it's based on power and on the inability to put human goals and human conscience above the dictates of the state. Its origins can be traced in the tremendous war machine we've built since 1945, the "military-industrial complex" that Eisenhower vainly warned us about, which now dominates every aspect of our life. The power

of the states and Congress has gradually been abandoned to the executive department, because of war conditions, and we've seen the creation of an arrogant, swollen bureaucratic complex totally unfettered by the checks and balances of the Constitution. In a very real and terrifying sense, our Government is the CIA and the Pentagon, with Congress reduced to a debating society. Of course ... we won't build Dachaus and Auschwitzes; the clever manipulation of the mass media is creating a concentration camp of the mind that promises to be far more effective in keeping the populace in line. ... The ... awesome power of the CIA and the defense establishment seem destined to seal the fate of the America I knew as a child and bring us into a new Orwellian world where the citizen exists for the state and where raw power justifies any and every immoral act. ... I'm afraid, based on my own experience, that fascism will come to America in the name of national security.

In his foreword to the latest important book on the Kennedy case, Harold Weisberg's *Oswald in New Orleans* (New York: Canyon Books, [1967]), Garrison adds that national security "usually refers to the security of the men who allowed" such a disaster to occur. "The greater threat to national security is the cynical concealment of such facts from the people. Behind the facade of earnest inquiry into the assassination is a thought control project in the best tradition of (Orwell's) *1984*."

Jim Garrison's political beliefs are explicitly and superbly libertarian; in answer to the *Playboy* interviewer, Garrison said:

over the years, I guess I've developed a somewhat conservative attitude — in the traditional libertarian sense of conservatism, as opposed to the thumb-screw-and-rack conservatism of the paramilitary right — particularly in regard to the importance of the individual as opposed to the state and the individual's own responsibilities to humanity.

It has been clear for some time that Jim Garrison is a man of enormous courage, courage to stand up against the entire Establishment, officialdom and news media, in a field where well over twenty witnesses who could help shatter the official Warren Commission case have met mysterious deaths. But it turns out that he is a man of keen insight and high principle as well.