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JIM GARRISON, INVESTIGATOR INTO KENNEDY ASSASSINATION, DIES NEW ORLEANS, OCT 21, REUTER - FORMER NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT ATTORNEY JIM GARRISON, WHO PROMOTED THE CONSPIRACY THEORY IN THE 1963 ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, DIED HERE ON WEDNESDAY, THE CORONER:S OFFICE SAID.

GARRISON, WHO WAS 71 YEARS OLD, DIED AT HOME OF NATURAL CAUSES, SAID THE CORONER, DR FRANK MINYARD. HE SAID AN AUTOPSY WOULD BE CONDUCTED ON THURSDAY.

GARRISON:S BOOK ABOUT THE NOVEMBER 22, 1963 ASSASSINATION BECAME THE BASIS OF OLIVER STONE:S 1991 FILM JFK,:: IN WHICH

THE NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT ATTORNEY IS PORTRAYED AS A MAN WHO WOULD DO ANYTHING TO GET AT THE TRUTH ABOUT KENNEDY:S KILLING.

THE FILM HAS BEEN CRITICISED FOR BLENDING FACT AND FICTION BUT STIMULATED GREAT PUBLIC CURIOSITY ABOUT THE KILLING.

GARRISON, WHO CONDUCTED HIS OWN INVESTIGATION AFTER THE ASSASSINATION, IS KNOWN FOR BEING THE ONLY PERSON EVER TO BRING CHARGES IN KENNEDY:S SLAYING.

HIS CONSPIRACY CASE AGAINST NEW ORLEANS BUSINESSMAN CLAY SHAW ENDED IN SHAW:S ACQUITTAL ON MARCH 1, 1969.

THE TRIAL, PROBING GARRISON:S CONTENTION THAT SHAW WAS PART OF A WIDER GROUP THAT CONSPIRED TO KILL KENNEDY, WAS WIDELY VIEWED AS A COURTROOM DISASTER.

BUT OVER THE YEARS MANY HAVE JOINED GARRISON IN REJECTING THE OFFICIAL 1964 REPORT BY THE WARREN COMMISSION, WHICH SAID THAT KENNEDY WAS KILLED BY LEE HARVEY OSWALD, ACTING ALONE.

STONE, WHO DIRECTED THE MUCH-DISCUSSED FILM, URGED CONGRESS LAST APRIL TO MAKE PUBLIC SECRET GOVERNMENT MATERIAL ON THE ASSASSINATION TO HELP RESOLVE CONSPIRACY THEORIES.

GARRISON ALSO EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT REOPENING AN NVESTIGATION INTO THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF A GREAT MANY AMERICANS.

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