

February 3, 1997

## MEMORANDUM

To: Jeremy Gunn  
From: Christopher Barger  
Subj: Gordon Novel  
File No: 4.0.2

The following is a brief summary of Gordon Novel and the allegations and controversy surrounding him.

Gordon Dwayne Novel was an important character in the Clay Shaw trial conducted by Jim Garrison.

What is known to be fact is this: Novel testified to the grand jury on March 16, 1967; he was scheduled to re-appear before that same grand jury on March 22, 1967, but did not do so, having "fled" to Ohio. Garrison filed papers with the state of Ohio to have Novel extradited, and the Governor of Louisiana apparently personally placed a phone call to the Governor of Ohio in an effort to aid this endeavor, but Ohio denied the extradition and Novel never testified again. It also appears unquestioned that Novel was involved in an arms heist at a blimp air base at Houma, Louisiana, some time in 1961; the weapons were stolen from an explosives garage apparently belonging to the Schlumberger Corporation. It appears that the others involved in this heist were David Ferrie, Layton Martens, and Sergio Arcacha Smith. Novel also was reporting to the FBI about his contact with the Garrison investigation.

Beyond that, the stories around Novel and the arms pickup become more difficult to verify. It is alleged by many that Novel claimed that the incident was not "stealing," but instead was a case of carrying out orders given to him by his CIA handler; i.e. that they were picking up weapons that were placed there by the Agency for them to pick up.<sup>1</sup> Schlumberger has long been alleged by the research community to have been controlled by the French OAS, and through the OAS, the CIA was able to use Schlumbereger to further its anti-Castro activities in the New Orleans/Caribbean area. There are also allegations, allegedly confirmed by Novel's lawyer, that Novel had written a letter to his CIA contact, a "Mr. Weiss," suggesting different ways to circumvent the Garrison trial, even suggesting that the trial be delayed or even ended by having the government call up Garrison, who was in the National Guard, for active duty in the military.

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<sup>1</sup> On the Trail of the Assassins, Jim Garrison, p. 179-180

What this all boils down to, without making any comment on the validity of the conclusion, is this: Novel was and is, in the minds of Garrison and others in the research community, the piece of the puzzle connecting Oswald and the right wing. Garrison thought that in Novel, he had a tie to David Ferrie, and through him to Guy Bannister. If Garrison could successfully demonstrate that Ferrie and Bannister was involved in gun running and anti-Castro activity, and could also prove that Oswald and Bannister had offices in the same building (544 Camp St.), then he could cast doubt on the idea that Oswald was pro-Castro and a Marxist. The contention would be that Novel's story, if true, would finger Oswald as someone involved in cover or deception, perhaps on a mission to penetrate pro-Castro forces while secretly working against Castro for the right wing.