

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

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“That’s not the way you do it. You don’t hold a gun out in front of you in plain sight in a room full of cops if your intentions are serious; instead you get up close and whip out your gun and shoot the guy so quickly that nobody has a chance to stop you. Jack Ruby himself was the most surprised man there when he shot Oswald. Ruby expected to get slapped around a bit, arrested and then fined about fifty dollars for reckless display of a pistol in a public place; but then he would look like a hero for having tried to avenge the death of Kennedy and he expected to get rich as a result of all the publicity.”

Bo Miller

I never met either Oswald or Ruby but I did know several of the people who were named by the New Orleans prosecutor in his attempts to prove a conspiracy in the Kennedy killing in Dallas. David Ferrie, who was well named even if he did not spell it Fairy, applied to me for a job as a pilot a few weeks before the murder in Dallas, bringing with him a young boyfriend, another obvious homosexual, and he was perhaps the strangest looking man I ever saw. I assumed that he had been badly burned, probably in an airplane crash, and had lost all of the hair and a lot of the skin on his entire head and neck; I read later that he suffered some sort of medical problem that was responsible for his appearance.

He had glued what appeared to be pieces of a brillo pad dyed bright orange onto his head in a rather random fashion that made him look even stranger than he would have without such an obviously phony wig and eyebrows.

He had been a captain for Eastern Airlines at one time and even had a type rating for the kind of planes I was flying, B 25 medium bombers; so he was certainly qualified to fly my planes; but I would never have hired him, his appearance alone would have stopped me from hiring him even if I had been tempted to do so.

Strangely enough I had fucked his ex-wife in Chicago more than a year earlier. Her father was the director of the REA which is what the Railway Express Agency was called after the company was reorganized in an attempt to avoid bankruptcy; and he had been watching my television shows that were then on the air in Chicago, where he lived with his daughter, who by then had divorced David Ferrie. Her father introduced himself to me at a show that I put on in the stockyards and later introduced me to his daughter, and then one thing led to another. I have not had a lot of fathers set me up with their daughters but ran in to a few along the way; some appear to be anxious to give you their daughter. And, sometimes, when I got to know those daughters I also learned just why their fathers wanted to get rid of them. Almost exactly the same thing happened with Terri Brantner when she was seventeen and with Eliza Steffee when she was nineteen and with a few other girls.

I was somewhat surprised when Garrison, the New Orleans prosecutor, did not accuse me of being involved in the supposed conspiracy to kill Kennedy; I was accused of just about everything else and was under continuous investigation for many years, while they were trying to prove me guilty of a long list of things that I had never done. Meantime ignoring quite a few things that I was guilty of.

In 1935, a veterinarian named K. F. Meyer discovered a disease that he named parrot fever, because he discovered it in Mexican parrots; but he could have discovered it in a duck, or a chicken or almost any kind of bird because it was not limited to parrots as he initially believed. So the continued importation of parrots was then strongly regulated; they could be legally brought to this country only if you got a Federal permit for their importation, and then they had to be held in quarantine under strict conditions for a period of at least thirty days. Dr. Meyer also believed, wrongly, that a parrot with that disease would always die in less than thirty days; so if they lived for thirty days in quarantine they were then believed to be free of the disease.

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What he did not know then was that parrot fever was not endemic to Latin America, that it had been introduced there fairly recently by birds from Africa or Asia, and thus Latin American birds had no natural immunity to the disease; but African and Asian birds did, could live for years with the disease, were not bothered much by it themselves but were very infectious if brought into contact with birds that had no such an immunity.

Federal restrictions on the importation of parrots both increased the price for them and led to a lot of parrot smuggling, and many of the people who I knew in the animal business were involved in parrot smuggling; but I never was, although Federal agents spent years in futile attempts to prove that I was smuggling parrots.

So, eventually, I got tired of all the bullshit and decided to start importing parrots legally; more in the way of a 'fuck you' gesture towards the government than because of any real interest in parrots on my part. Personally, I never liked parrots very much; they are mean as Hell and shit all over the place. I had a big Hyacinth macaw bite the keys off of a cash register and all but destroy my office.

So I built a quarantine station on my property near Slidell, Louisiana, following the government specifications exactly, and then applied for a permit to import thousands of parrots; if I was going to do it at all I planned on doing it on a scale that would produce a big profit. I have always tried to do everything on the biggest scale possible; whether it was fucking young girls or catching elephants or anything in between. Over the years managed to fuck a few thousand young girls and catch several hundred elephants. I liked the girls better, but still have great admiration for elephants; have found them to be intelligent almost beyond belief and brave close to the point of insanity. While girls are frequently neither intelligent nor brave; but are usually far more dangerous than elephants are. If you could fuck a female African elephant they would probably make a perfect wife, although you would need a strong bed. But they don't spend much on clothes or cosmetics so you could afford a strong bed. But, then, they are not perfect: they would eat practically everything on your property including all of your trees and a good part of your house. But, again, almost everything is a compromise of some sort.

When I applied for a Federal permit to import parrots it was initially denied; on the grounds that . . . "We have special information in your case, Mr. Jones."

To which I responded . . . "Bullshit, you don't have any information, special or otherwise; what you do have is a lot of false accusations, none of which you can prove, because I never did any of the things you have accused me of. And while I perhaps cannot prove what I did not do, you damned sure can't prove something that never happened. I have abided by all of the Federal regulations now existing in regard to the importation of parrot family birds, so you cannot deny me the permit."

He not only gave me the permit but later became a close friend, and eventually treated me in a fashion without precedent; gave me fifty blank permits that he had already signed, permits that I could later fill out myself with any number of birds of any kind I wanted to import. In effect I was then without restriction in that regard, although I did still have to quarantine the birds for thirty days after they were imported.

I had signed a contract with the city of Monroe, Louisiana, to design, build and stock a large zoo for them, with almost unlimited funds and with total discretion to do anything I wanted to. The mayor of Monroe was a close friend of my then-partner, Bill Carpenter, who was a state Senator himself.

Having been there previously, I knew that a wide variety of Asian parrot family birds could be purchased in great numbers in Singapore, could be had in their thousands; and among them were some of the most valuable types of parrots in the world, some of which sold even then for several thousand dollars each.

I planned to get several hundred parrot family birds for the Monroe zoo and several thousand to sell to other people; and I did get the birds in the numbers I wanted, together with thousands of other exotic types of wildlife, snakes, including about twenty tons of giant pythons, the largest type of snakes in the world, snakes that sometimes eat people, although not as frequently as they have been accused of doing so, giant monitor lizards that are sometimes man-eaters, crocodiles of several kinds, orangutans, monkeys and a long list of other things. Literally millions of dollars worth of animals, birds and reptiles.

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Then, just before I departed for Singapore, the government man in charge of regulating parrot importations asked me to visit Dr. Meyer in San Francisco before I left the country enroute to Singapore; he told me that Dr. Meyer wanted a favor from me. Dr. Meyer was then the director of the Hooper Foundation and was conducting research with parrots that was funded by the government; he believed he had discovered a cure for parrot fever, and was then trying to prove that his cure worked.

Dr. Meyer gave me three large boxes filled with his new drug, a total of sixty pounds of the drug that cost several thousand dollars; he wanted me to give the drug to all of my parrots for a month before I shipped them to this country, believing that doing so would remove any disease that they might have. The drug was a dark brown powder and tasted terrible; in order to get the birds to eat it you had to mix it with rice and a lot of brown sugar in an attempt to reduce the very bitter taste, but it still tasted like shit to me. And mixing the drug into the bird's food was impossible to do without inhaling a lot of it and then your mouth tasted like shit for weeks afterwards; so I quickly gave the food mixing job to somebody else.

In addition to giving me the drug, Dr. Meyer gave me a very large sum of money, in cash, that he wanted me to use for buying sick parrots; previously he had been trying to keep sick parrots out of this country, but then he wanted sick birds by the hundreds for his research. I wanted only the healthiest birds I could find, but then had to try to find sick ones for him.

Which dual project produced a few amusing incidents in Singapore: when I would go into one of the hundreds of bird shops in Singapore and ask them if they had any sick parrots they would always assure me that all of their birds were perfectly healthy, but when they learned that I wanted sick parrots their stories quickly changed: all of a sudden they would then remember that in fact they had a lot of sick parrots.

I stayed in Singapore for nearly three months on that trip, fucked more than a hundred women including two from New Orleans that I ran into in Raffles hotel, bought thousands of birds, reptiles and animals, shipped the heaviest ones by water and then chartered a cargo Boeing 707 that could haul about 80,000 pounds of my most delicate types of wildlife that I could not send by ship.

That was in the summer of 1962 and this country was not yet officially involved in the Vietnam war; but off the record we were already directly involved on a massive scale. When we landed in Saigon for fuel we had to walk more than a mile in order to reach the terminal and get some drinking water for my birds; we could not park our plane any closer to the terminal because the entire airport was literally covered with thousands of U. S. military airplanes; planes being flown by American pilots employed by the CIA, who ostensibly were serving as instructors for Vietnam pilots but were in fact flying combat missions. Flying in combat as civilians. I had never seen that many airplanes in one place before in my life, not even during the Second World War.

I was then engaged in the first of three planned steps for establishment of the Monroe zoo; the mayor told me that if they were pleased with my results during the first stage that I would then be given a much larger contract for the next stage; so I went to great lengths in my attempts to see to it that they would be more than pleased with the first stage of the project. Thus I made very little profit on that first Monroe project, provided everything I could as cheaply as possible; even gave them quite a few animals free.

Following the official opening of the new zoo the Mayor told me he had never previously seen such a success; he said that because the crowds that came to that opening of the zoo were simply far too large, the place was packed solid with people from dawn to dark. That night the mayor told me to bring a copy of my plans for the second stage to his office two days later and that he would sign a contract for anything I wanted. Monroe was a very wealthy town since the city owned and operated all of the utilities.

But when I went to the mayor's office at the appointed time he refused to even speak to me. Somebody had gotten to him and successfully discredited me to the point that the mayor would have nothing to do with me. So I never got the other two promised contracts.

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I was never able to determine just what story about me was told to the mayor, nor did I learn who told him the story; but have always believed that a man named Kit Beecher was responsible; Kit had been an employee of mine years earlier, and later I saved his life after he had decided to commit suicide because of a deep depression that resulted when his second wife left him; then I got him a job as the director of the Monroe zoo, and in return I believe he thanked me for my earlier help by causing me to lose the two big contracts I had been promised. He probably did not want me looking over his shoulder; or perhaps he resented the fact that I had fucked both of his first two wives, Pat and Mildred. But I did not come on to either of them, they came on to me; and, besides, Mildred had a boyfriend in New Orleans that she had been fucking for years, and Kit was clearly aware of that, she would leave Kit at home to care for the kids while she went off out of town to fuck her boyfriend, and told Kit what she planned to do.

So when I sent the city my final bill, listing everything item by item, at the bottom of the list I mentioned all of the animals I had given them free; together with the actual value of these free gifts and listed them under the heading of Langiappe, which is a term that means 'something for nothing.'

They then sent me two checks, one for everything else and one for Langiappe, and under the circumstances I cashed both checks. Was later tempted to visit the zoo and ask one of the guides to show me which cage the Langiappe was in.