

# Alleged assassin's contemporaries cast doubt on his son's account

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He left the police force on Oct. 18, 1965, to work at a dragstore. On Sept. 24, 1971, Mr. White was working as a welder and shop foreman at M&M Equipment Co., when he fired at a fire at the East Dallas business.

The story might have ended there, Ricky White said, if he had not found his father's diary, in which the man supposedly admitted to the killings.

But Ricky White said the diary — known only to him and his mother — disappeared from his home after an FBI agent visited in 1968.

Mr. White now is trying to reconstruct the diary passages from memory, said Robert Groden, author of a book on the Kennedy assassination. Seven other people have come forward since the news conference, saying they saw and read parts of the diary without the knowledge of Ricky White or his mother, said Mr. Groden.

But experts disagree about the authenticity of three vaguely worded cables — the only physical evidence in the case — that Ricky White said ordered his father to kill the president.

And Mrs. White is too sick to talk to reporters.

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In any case, the story presented that day differs from one presented a few months earlier by Mr. West, a Houston private investigator, and J. Gary Shaw, vice president of the JFK Assassination Information Center. The two held a news conference in May at which they blamed the Mafia for the assassination.

Mr. West said then that Mr. Kennedy was killed by Charles Nicoletti, a hit man for the Sam Giancana crime family of Chicago, and was

backed up by another Mafia hit man, John Roselli. Mr. West said last week that both men joined Roscoe White on the grassy knoll near Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963, as part of a joint operation between the CIA and the Mafia.

Mr. West said that Mr. White and Mr. Nicoletti fired one shot each; Ricky White said his father fired both shots.

"Ricky is confused, I think, at the point where he's thinking his father fired both of those shots," Mr. West said.

In all, there were nine armed operatives in the area around Dealey Plaza that day, Mr. West said.

Mr. West said he and two other panel members threatened to walk out of the news conference because the other members wanted to tell only the "Ricky White story" without portraying Roscoe White as a collected assassin who killed dozens of victims.

"They'll make this just a sugar-coated, beautiful little story about how a good former Marine fired a shot — when he was ordered — at the president," Mr. West said. "That's not the truth."

"The whole truth might not be good for the sale of a book that Ricky wants to write," Mr. West said.

The JFK Assassination Information Center is no stranger to controversy.

Earlier this year, the center closed its doors and moved out of its headquarters for more than a month before settling a contract dispute with the West End MarketPlace.

Larry Howard, co-director of the center, said the suit did not deal with financial problems but with the failure of developers to live up to lease conditions that guaranteed the center prominent visibility in the mall. The MarketPlace counter-sued for back rent.

Ten days before the news conference, the two parties reached a settlement that included two promissory notes from the center for about \$62,000.

The center was the stage for the news conference Aug. 6 in which Ricky White accused his father of one of the most heinous crimes of the century.

But those who knew Roscoe White growing up in Arkansas describe him as a normal, disciplined young man who was the center and co-captain of the Foreman High

School football team.

Minnie Cannon, 62, said she was Mr. White's math teacher from the seventh through 12th grades.

"He was as fine a youngster as I ever dealt with, caused nobody any trouble," she said. "He was not a top-flight student, but he did his work."

As a trainee at the Dallas Police Academy, Sgt. Don Young said he was seated next to Roscoe White, and the two quickly became friends, playing 60 minutes at lunch and during breaks.

"I can remember Roscoe just like it was yesterday, and to me, this whole thing is ridiculous," Sgt. Young said. "He was a very outgoing guy, very likable, no problems. It's just hard for me to believe something like this."

After the assassination, Dallas police Officer Maurice McDonald — a locker mate of Officer Tippitt's — arrested Lee Harvey Oswald in the Texas Theater in Oak Cliff.

Mr. McDonald said that Roscoe White could not have killed Officer Tippitt because a half-dozen witnesses told the Warren Commission that they saw the officer fall, then watched Oswald walk by, reloading his gun.

"That's a bunch of crap," Mr. McDonald said of the Roscoe White story. "There's no credibility to that at all. J.D. Tippitt was just one of them good old East Texas boys."

Six years after Roscoe White left the Dallas Police Department, he died in an industrial fire. Ricky White said the "mysterious" fire is proof that his father was murdered.

But retired Dallas lawyer Lamar Holley said he represented the White family in a lawsuit against the manufacturer of a flammable chemical that apparently caused the explosion that resulted in Mr. White's death. Mr. Holley said he considered the lawsuit nothing more than a product liability case.

"Never once in our thorough and complete investigation — never once — was there any hint of any foul play or anything criminal happening," Mr. Holley said.

The issue of foul play was never mentioned by anyone in the White family, he said.

The chemical manufacturer settled the suit out of court in 1973 for \$37,500, court records show. Ricky White collected \$11,738 from the settlement in 1978.

In an unusual sidelight, Roscoe

Roscoe Anthony White ... his son says the former Dallas policeman assassinated John F. Kennedy.

White briefly was the subject of inquiries by the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1976. Mrs. White supplied the committee a photo that she found among her late husband's possessions. The photo was an original, previously unknown print of Oswald, armed with a pistol on his hip and holding the rifle that investigators said was used to shoot Mr. Kennedy.

Mr. Holley said that Mrs. White sometime in 1973 gave him one of Mr. White's pictures for safekeeping. The subject of the photo was Oswald — naked and dead, lying on a slab in an autopsy room.

"It was quite a shock to see that picture," Mr. Holley said. "The photograph was something she felt could get somebody in big trouble."

But former Dallas police Officer William Bernard said he met Mr. White when both were working in the Police Department's identification bureau before attending the academy together.

Mr. Bernard said "quite a few" prints of Oswald and other photos were made by department personnel.

"We all had those kinds of pictures," Mr. Bernard said. "It was not unusual for us to have those pictures. I had, for a time, pictures of Oswald and I think I still have one picture of Jack Ruby."

Mr. Bernard said he is convinced that Roscoe White could not have been involved in the assassination because the two men routinely shared close quarters in a car pool during that time.

"He and I rode together every day for three months," Mr. Bernard said. "There's no way that a man could have kept up a front like that."

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School football team.

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"He was as fine a youngster as I ever dealt with, caused nobody any trouble," she said. "He was not a top-flight student, but he did his work."

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After the assassination, Dallas police Officer Maurice McDonald — a locker mate of Officer Tippitt's — arrested Lee Harvey Oswald in the Texas Theater in Oak Cliff.

Mr. McDonald said that Roscoe White could not have killed Officer Tippitt because a half-dozen witnesses told the Warren Commission that they saw the officer fall, then watched Oswald walk by, reloading his gun.

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But former Dallas police officer William Barnard said he met Mr. White when both were working in the Police Department's identification bureau before attending the academy together.

Mr. Barnard said "quite a few" prints of Oswald and other photos were made by department personnel.

"We all had those kinds of pictures," Mr. Barnard said. "It was not unusual for us to have those pictures. I had, for a time, pictures of Oswald and I think I still have one picture of Jack Ruby."

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