

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JULICE ... FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In Reply, Please Refer to File No. Dallas, Texas May 26, 1964

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT
JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY
NOVEMBER 22, 1963, DALLAS, TEXAS

On May 21, 1964, Mr. Blue Beathard, Managing Editor,
"Henderson Daily News," Henderson, Texas, made available a copy of
a story written by him, which is located on page 6 of the "Henderson
Daily News" dated Tuesday, May 19, 1964, which reads as follows:

"MAN SAYS VISION WARNED HIM OF KENNEDY DEATH IN ADVANCE

"B. A. Birdwell, a Mt. Enterprise farmer, said Tuesday that he had a vision concerning President Kennedy's assassination two weeks before it happened and tried to warn Dallas authorities of the danger.

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"Nobody would take his warning seriously, according to Birdwell, who is a parttime preacher.

"Birdwell said he received his first 'vision from God' about two weeks before the assassination. The vision showed that Kennedy would be shot in the back of the head, he said. Birdwell claims he told County Attorney Bill Ferguson and Assistant County Attorney Robert Allen about the vision before Kennedy's death. Ferguson says he does not remember any such discussion.

"On the day Kennedy was shot in Dallas, Birdwell says he had a second vision about an hour before the actual shooting. It gave more details of the tragedy, he says. Birdwell said he could see the brick building at the corner of Commerce and Elm in Dallas and also saw the assassin in his vision.

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"According to Birdwell he hastily called the Dallas County Sheriff's Department and told them about his vision. He said the man he talked with, who he thinks was the sheriff, did not take his warning seriously.

"'Our President could have been saved if he had only believed me,' Birdwell said.

"Birdwell says the vision about President Kennedy was not the first forewarning he has had about a tragic event. In 1947 he claims he received a vision about the Texas City disaster several days before it happened. Birdwell says he was working in Texas City at the time. In his vision he saw a large number of buildings destroyed. Birdwell says he told his boss about the vision and quit his job to return to Mt. Enterprise. He tried to preach on the streets to warn the people in Texas City, he says, but they would not believe him. A few days after he left Texas City the city was rocked by the explosion which killed more than 400 people, he claims.

"Birdwell says he wrote a letter to Mrs. Kennedy about his vision and received a letter from her. He plans to write to her again to give her more details of the vision."

Mr. Beathard said he had interviewed Birdwell, and had printed the story, even though in his own mind he feels Birdwell is a mental case.

On May 21, 1964, Mr. William Ferguson, Rusk County Attorney, Henderson, Texas, furnished the following information:

Ben A Birdwell, Mount Enterprise, Texas, is known in the county as being mentally unbalanced. Birdwell claims to receive "visions from the Lord" telling him of coming events. It is always after these events have already happened that Birdwell will tell people of having had a vision predicting this event. Birdwell has no occupation other than he occasionally butchers cattle for people and he also preaches some on street corners in Henderson and Mount Enterprise.

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On about May 15, 1964, Birdwell came in to Ferguson's office and Ferguson's assistant, Robert Allen, and Tax Assessor and Collector Tommy, Maskins, Jr., were also in Ferguson's office. Birdwell told them he had a "vision from the Lord" the previous that some seamen were going to kill President Lyndon B. Johnson. Birdwell wanted Ferguson to call President Johnson and to warn him of what Birdwell had seen in this vision. When Ferguson refused to make the call, Birdwell then accused Ferguson of being responsible for the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Birdwell said he had been in Ferguson's office about two weeks before President Kennedy was assassinated, and had told Ferguson and Robert Allen he had had a "vision" that President Kennedy would be assassinated in Dallas, and that Ferguson had refused to do anything about 12. Birdwell said he had then called the Sheriff's Office in Dallas, Texas, at 11:00 a.m., on November 22, 1963, and had told them of the impending assassination, and had even described to them the building and the window from which the fatal shots would be fired that day.

Mr. Ferguson continued that both he and Robert Allen told Birdwell they could recall no such conversation pertaining to the impending assassination of President Kennedy, and that this conversation had never occurred.

On the morning of May 19, 1964, Birdwell again came to Ferguson's office and said the local newspaper wanted his picture and the picture of Ferguson, Allen, and Tommy Haskins, Jr., who Birdwell then said had also been present during the conversation two weeks before the assassination of President Kennedy. Birdwell said he had written to Mrs. John F. Kennedy and told her of the incident concerning his vision, and she had written him a letter requesting a picture of him and the people to whom he had furnished this information.

Ferguson said he again assured Birdwell that no such conversation had occurred and that he and Allen had no intention of having their photographs taken with Birdwell. Ferguson also notified the newspaper that the information being supplied by Birdwell was not true, and he had no intention of being photographed with Birdwell.

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Birdwell then contacted Torry Backins, Jr., who also told Birdwell he had not been present during the alleged conversation, and would not consent to be photographed with Birdwell.

Mr. Ferguson continued that Birdwall said he was going to pray that Ferguson, Allen, and Haskins would remember the conversation. Birdwell stayed around the court house most of that day, and later in the day, Birdwell asked him again if he remembered this conversation and Ferguson again said he did not. Birdwell then said the devil was in Ferguson and it was for this reason that Ferguson could not remember the conversation.

On the evening of May 19, 1964, the "Benderson Daily News" carried a story concerning the alleged vision by Birdwell, and Birdwell's alleged conversation with Ferguson and Allen prior to the assassination of President Kennedy.

On May 21, 1964, Mr. Tommy Haskins, Jr., Rosk County Tax Assessor and Collector, Handerson, Taxas, furnished the following information:

Es has been acquainted with Ban A. Birdwell of Mount Enterprise, Texas, for many years and has conversed with him on many occasions. In his opinion, Birdwell is a religious fanatic, who is also mentally unbalanced.

On approximately May 15, 1964, he was in the office of County Attorney William Furgueon and Assistant County Attorney Robert Allen was also present. At that time, Birdwell said something about having had a "vision from the Lord" that same assence or assumen were going to kill President Lyndon B. Johnson. Birdwell also said something about having been in Fergueon's office about two or three we keep prior to the assassination of President Kennedy, and of having told Ferguson and Allen of a vision that President Kennedy was to be assassinated. Both Ferguson and Allen denied that any such conversation had taken place.

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On the morning of May 19, 1964, Birdwell came to his office and said he had a photographer coming at 12:30 p.m., that day as Mrs. John F. Kennedy wanted his picture and the picture of Haskins, William Ferguson, and Robert Allen for her album. At this time, Birdwell said he had also told Haskins before the assassination of President Kennedy that the assassination was to take place. Haskins assured Birdwell he had not been present during any such conversation, and that Birdwell had not told him of any such vision prior to the assassination of President Kennedy.

On May 21, 1964, Mr. Ben Allen Birdwell, mailing address General Delivery, Mount Enterprise, Texas, furnished the following information:

He is a white male, born March 8, 1908, at Mount Enterprise, Texas. He is married, has nine living children by his third wife, ages 2 to 13, and he has a seventh grade education. He is unable to write but has learned to print. He has a small tract of land and a three-room house in which he and his family live. He does not facultise land as it is in the Soil Bank Program. He picks up odd jobs, but has no steady work or source of income. His electricity and telephone have both been disconnected due to overdue bills.

Mr. Birdwell continued that since 1947 he has been receiving "visions from the Lord" and also "radio waves from the Lord" telling him of impending disasters and deaths. Although no church will accept him as a minister, is spends a lot of his time preaching along the highways and on the streets. When he gets emotional in his delivery, he then speaks in the unknown tongue.

About two weeks prior to November 22, 1963, he had a "vision from the Lord" in the middle of the night, warning him that President John F. Kennedy would be assassinated in Dallas, Texas. The next day he went to the Post Office in Mount Enterprise, Texas, and purchased a stamped envelope from Mr. Brinkley, the Postmaster. He had Mr. Brinkley address the envelope to President John F. Kennedy in Washington, D. C., as he, Birdwell, does not write well. He also wanted Brinkley to write a letter warning President Kennedy that he

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was to be assassinated but Brinkley refused. Birdwell then printed a letter to President Kennedy, warning him, and mailed it at the Post Office. He never received a reply to this letter.

He believes it was about the same day be went to Henderson.

He believes it was about the same day he went to Henderson, Texas, and told William Ferguson, the County Attorney, and Robert Allen, Assistant County Attorney, in the presence of Tommy Haskins, Jr., the Tax Assessor, of the impending assassination of President Kennedy. He told Ferguson to call President Kennedy for him but Ferguson refused. Now Ferguson, Allen, and Haskins all deny he told them of the impending assassination.

At approximately 11:30 a.m., November 22, 1963, he was praying at home, and had another "vision from the Lord" showing him the location of the building in Dallas and the window from which the fatal bullets would be fired at President Kennedy that afternoon. He tried to use his own telephone, but "the devil was in his phone," as a it would not work. He then drove into Mount Enterprise and used the pay telephone at the bus station, having the operator charge it to his home number, 3536, Mount Enterprise. He called the Dallas Sheriff's Office and talked to some man, and told him of his vision and that President Kennedy would be assassinated that afternoon. This man thanked him but said he did not think the Lord would put out any such visions.

He continued that he wrote to Mrs. John F. Kennedy, and, in this letter of consolation, he enclosed a newspaper clipping which told of his son being shot in the head by his uncle in Mount Enterprise about two days after the assassination of President Kennedy. Also in this article was mention of donations being sent to Birdwell although he did not ask Mrs. Kennedy for a donation. He received a letter from Mrs. Kennedy's secretary, which he displayed, which thanked him for his letter of consolation, and it also said Mrs. Kennedy would be unable to help him as she was utilizing all her resources to build the Kennedy Memorial Library.

Approximately a week ago he had a "vision from the Lord" telling him that "three old seamen" would kill President Johnson if they ever got a chance. There was nothing more to this vision and the seamen were not identified.

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On May 19, 1964, he went to Henderson, Texas, and told the newspaper about his visions in November, 1963. He wanted to get photographs of himself, Ferguson, Allen, and Haskins to send to Mrs. John F. Kennedy so she could put them in her book, but the others would not agree to have their photographs taken.

On May 21, 1964, he mailed copies of the May 19, 1964, issue of the "Henderson Daily News," which carried a story about his visions, to the "Washington Star," Washington, D. C., and also to the "Shreveport Times," Shreveport, Louisiana.

On May 21, 1964, records of the Eastex Telephone Cooperative, Incorporated, 1125 Highland Drive, Henderson, Texas, contained the following information:

Mount Enterprise, Texas, telephone No. 3536 is listed to B. A. Birdwell and this was an operating number on November 22, 1964.

It has been discontinued now as of May 1, 1964.

Microfilm records and ledger card records reflect there was only one toll call charged to Mount Enterprise number 3536 during the month of November, 1963. This call was made from Mount Enterprise, Texas, on November 6, 1963, and the call was to Henderson, Texas.

On May 21, 1964, Mr. Moye Lee McCrary, employee, United States Post Office, Mount Enterprise, Texas, furnished the following information:

Mr. Brinkley, the Postmaster, is on annual leave and not available for interview.

He is certain, however, that B. A. Birdwell did not tell
Mr. Brinkley of the impending assassination of President John F.
Kennedy prior to the time it happened as Mr. Brinkley certainly
would have mentioned it to Mr. McCrary after the assassination
occurred.

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He continued that he has known B. A. Birdwell since Birdwell was a small boy. There is mental illness in this family as Birdwell's mother spent 40 years in a mental institution. As a young man, Birdwell was elmost normal but in later years has been completely umbalanced and umbelievable. It is a joke in the community that he is a complete fake in his "visions from the Lord," as no one ever hears anything about his visions until after the event has already taken place. Birdwell reportedly has a racket going among the Negroes in this community, as Birdwell tells then of a vision they will disand the Negro will then pay Birdwell \$1,00 to counteract this vision. Birdwell has no income from employment, and his sunt contributes most of the money to feed Birdwell's family.

On May 21, 1964, Mr. Norris Langford, President, Merchants and Planters State Bank, Mount Enterprise, Texas, furnished the following information:

He has known B. A. Birdwell many years and Birdwell has always been mentally deficient. Birdwell's mother and his aunts have all been confined as mental patients and it apparently runs in the family. Birdwell, himself, has been a community joke due to his "visions from the Lord." For a number of years, Birdwell would predict events that never diff occur, so in later years he has played it safe and makes his predictions only after the event has happened.

At approximately 4:18 p.m., on May 21, 1964, Forrest B. Sorrels, Special Agent in Charge, United States Secret; Service, Dallas, Texas, was notified of the foregoing information in view of the information obtained with respect to Birdwell's "vision from the Lord" telling him "three old samen" would kill President Johnson if they ever got a charges.



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