

12/21/63

Commentary of an Eyewitness

Some of the points raised here bothered me on the scene in Dallas, where I witnessed President Kennedy's assassination and the slaying of the accused assassin two days later. Three circumstances—the entry wound in the throat, the small, round hole in the windshield of the Presidential limousine, and the number of bullets found afterward—suggested that there had been a second sniper firing from a point in front of the automobile.

The throat wound puzzled the surgeons who attended Mr. Kennedy at Parkland Memorial Hospital when they learned how the Dallas police had reconstructed the shooting. Dr. Robert McClelland, one of the three doctors who worked on the throat wound, told me afterward that they still believed it to be an entry wound, even though the shots were said to have been fired from almost directly behind the President. He explained that he and his colleagues at Parkland saw bullet wounds every day, sometimes several a day, and recognized easily the characteristically tiny hole of an entering bullet, in contrast to the larger, tearing hole that an exiting bullet would have left.

A few of us noticed the hole in the windshield when the limousine was standing at the emergency entrance after the President had been carried inside. I could not approach close enough to see on which side was the cup-shaped spot that indicates a bullet has pierced the glass from the opposite side.

As for the number of bullets, although all who heard them agreed there were three shots, authorities repeatedly mentioned four bullets found afterward—one found in the floor of the car, a second found in the President's stretcher, a third removed from Governor Connally's left thigh, and a fourth said to have been removed from President Kennedy's body at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda. On the day the President was shot, I happened to learn of a possible fifth. A group of police officers were examining the area at the side of the street where the President was hit, and a police inspector told me they had just found another bullet in the grass. He said he did not know whether it had anything to do with the assassination.

With these circumstances in mind, I returned to the scene to see where a shot from ahead of the President's car might have originated. From the stretch traveled by the car when the shots were fired, a large sector in front is taken up by a railroad viaduct. It crosses over the triple underpass, through which the motorcade was routed. No buildings are visible beyond the viaduct; it forms the horizon.

Between the tracks and the near side of the viaduct is a broad gravel walkway. Along the side is a three-foot concrete ballustrade, with upright slots two

or three inches wide. At each end is a five-foot wooden fence that screens the approaches to the viaduct.

Normal Secret Service procedure is to have local police stationed on and under any such overpass before a Presidential motorcade approaches. The standing order also is to clear each overpass of all spectators. The Secret Service now declines all comment on the assassination, refusing to answer the specific question as to precautions taken with respect to that particular viaduct. Railroad police seem to have been assigned responsibility there. The area is marked with no-trespassing signs as private railroad property. Railroad police chased away an Associated Press photographer who tried to set up his camera there before the motorcade arrived. But the precautions apparently were not perfect. Early reports of the shooting told of a police pursuit of a man and woman seen running on the viaduct. There was no report that they were caught. Regardless, their presence indicates that unauthorized persons had access to that vantage point.

The south end of the viaduct is four short blocks from the office of the *Dallas Morning News*, where Jack Ruby was seen before and after the shooting. He had gone to the *News* office to make up an advertisement for his strip-tease place. An employee remembered the time as 12:10 p.m., because the ad deadline was noon and Ruby often was late. The advertising man Ruby wanted to see had gone out to watch the motorcade; he returned at 12:45, unaware that the President had been shot. No one remembered for sure seeing Ruby between 12:15 and 12:45. The shooting was at 12:30.

If the entry wound in the throat presents any problem to the FBI in analyzing the crime, the agency has not indicated this by its actions. Dr. McClendon said a few days ago (December 9) that no official investigators, from the FBI or anywhere else, had questioned the surgeons at Parkland Hospital about their observation of the throat wound.

Conclusions reached in a post-mortem examination at Bethesda would have questionable validity. The doctors at Dallas had made their incision through the bullet hole in performing a tracheotomy in an effort to restore satisfactory breathing. The hole was slightly below the Adam's apple, at the precise point where a tracheotomy normally is performed. Changes in tissue in the several hours before the body reached Bethesda, moreover, would have increased difficulty of reconstructing the path of the bullet.

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OSWALD and the FBI Harold Feldman

NA 71000 - 1/27/64

The Warren Commission should, if possible, tell us how President Kennedy was killed, who killed him, and why. But beyond that, it must tell us if the FBI or any other government intelligence agency was in any way connected with the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. At this moment, the possibility of such associations in the young man's life is intolerably a subject for speculation.

On the day after the assassination, the Dallas Chief of Police complained on television that the FBI had interviewed Oswald about a week earlier and had failed to inform the Dallas authorities of this fact — something the bureau would normally do after making contact with a suspicious Red. Drew Pearson also reported this but added, "In Washington, the FBI denied that they had interrogated Oswald recently."

However, Michael Paine, who with his wife helped take care of Mrs. Oswald and the two children, "claimed that FBI agents had visited Oswald more than one time after he returned to Dallas from a trip to Mexico City." Oswald returned to Dallas from Mexico on October 3, 1963. This report also is contradicted by another:

The FBI picked up the trail again in Dallas after Oswald's return there on Oct. 3. He was not interviewed, but agents checked twice with Mrs. Ruth Paine, who told them that Oswald had gone to work on Oct. 16 in the Texas State School Book Depository. (The New York Times, 12/10/63.)

The *Minority of One* (January, 1964) tells us:

William M. Kline, chief of the U.S. Customs Bureau investigative services in Laredo, Texas, stated on November 25 that Oswald's movements were watched at the request of "a federal agency at Washington." (New York Post, November 25.) Eugene Pugh, U.S. agent in charge of the Customs office on the American side of the bridge at Laredo, Texas, said that Oswald had been

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checked by American immigration officials on entering and leaving Mexico. Mr. Pugh admitted to the New York Herald Tribune that this was "not the usual" procedure. He said Americans were not required to check in with Immigration when crossing the border, "but U.S. immigration has a folder on Oswald's trip."

One thing is clear: the FBI was in fairly constant touch with Oswald's activities. How far these contacts went is indicated in "the revelation that the Federal Bureau of Investigation tried to recruit Oswald as an undercover informant in Castro groups two months before Mr. Kennedy's death." This report, which appeared in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* dispatch from Dallas, December 8, went on:

The FBI attempt to recruit Oswald as an informant, an informed law enforcement source said, was made in September, just after he had moved to Dallas from New Orleans.

Oswald's mother said an "agent named Hosty" came to the Irving house and talked to the young man at length in his car.

An FBI agent named Joseph Hosty handles investigations of subversives for the Dallas field office.

The source said he did not know if the FBI succeeded in hiring Oswald; and the federal agency would not discuss the matter.

On January 1, Lonnie Hudkins of the *Houston Post*, published a story under the headline: "Oswald Rumored as Informant for U.S." Hudkins found that Oswald did know agent Hosty. He had Hosty's home phone, office phone and car license number — this on the authority of William Alexander, assistant to Henry Wade, Dallas District Attorney. Alexander had attended the grilling of Oswald on November 22 and 23. Hudkins notes that if the FBI had Oswald under surveillance, the watch could not have been too close or they would have known about the rifle and other matters; but, as a sheriff deputy put it, "you just wouldn't think to check out one of your own stoolies." Hudkins quotes Wade, himself a former FBI agent, as saying: "It may be true, but I don't think it will ever be made public if it is."

What the public hears of the

FBI's part in the Oswald case is usually a report that such and such a witness or authority has been asked, or ordered, to keep his mouth shut. Thus, Dr. J. J. Humes of the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., the man who conducted the autopsy on the President, seemed to be the best authority on the exact angle of entry of the murder bullets; but "Dr. Humes said he had been forbidden to talk." A thirty-four-year-old machinist named Malcolm Howard Price said he had looked through the telescopic sight of Oswald's rifle on a rifle range in suburban Dallas — but "Mr. Price declined to answer further questions because, he said, the FBI had asked him not to talk. The FBI here [Dallas] denied this." (The *New York Times*, December 10.) On December 6, the *Times* had observed:

Most private citizens who had cooperated with newsmen reporting the crime have refused to give further help after being interviewed by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Dallas city and county police withdrew their help the same way. One high officer said he wished he could answer questions "because it would save us a lot of work."

The Western Union office in Dallas handled frequent messages for Lee Oswald, but inquiries there brought the reply that "any details or comment would have to come from Washington headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

It is in the light of this official coyness that we must consider the possible connection of Oswald with the attempted shooting of General Walker. Oswald's widow is said to have declared that he boasted of shooting at that doughty warrior. In view of her prolonged seclusion from the public, and even from relatives, under government supervision, we must infer that any statement alleged to be hers at this time is a deliberate "leak." It is interesting that a similar "leak" at the beginning of the case — that a rifle which Mrs. Oswald knew her husband had kept in a garage was missing on the morning of the assassination — proved to be false. The FBI is also reported to have found a document in Oswald's hand-

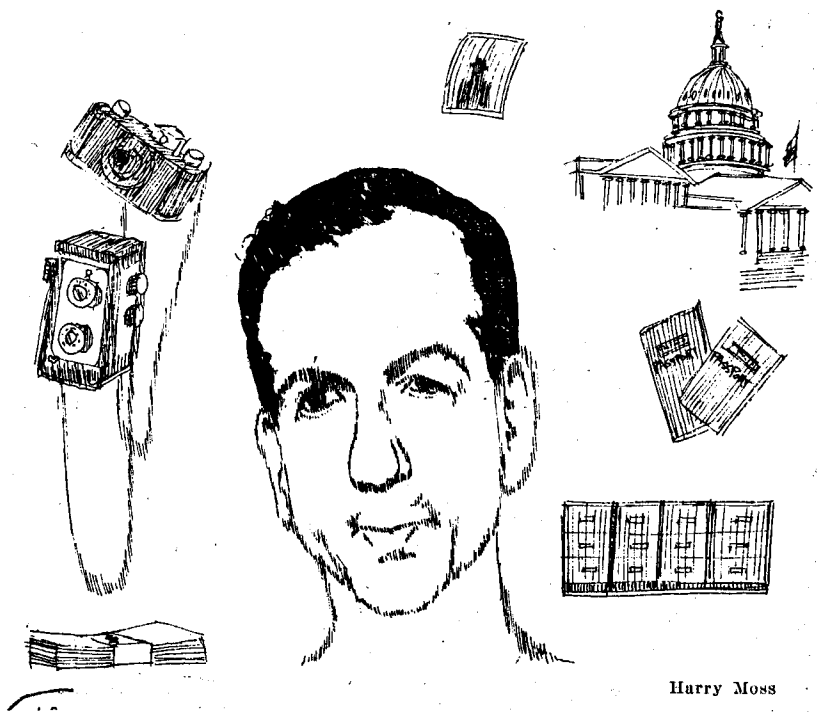
writing that mentions his attack on Walker, but once again the document has not been produced for examination or reproduced in the press.

Incidentally, if "the loner" did try to shoot General Walker, we would be again confronted with questions like those raised about the killing of the President. "At the time of the Walker shooting," we read in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of December 7, "Dallas police reported the bullet was from a .30-06 caliber rifle. The weapon used to kill Mr. Kennedy was a 6.5 millimeter weapon, equivalent to about .270 caliber." Moreover, an eyewitness in the Walker affair informed police that he saw at least two men enter the getaway car after the shooting. (Oswald never learned to drive a car.)

Was the alleged assassin of President Kennedy employed by the FBI? We have seen a news report that the agency tried to recruit him and that it has refused to say whether he accepted the offer. At present, all we know is that his history, as we have been able to piece it together, is *not inconsistent* with such employment. Indeed, his financial record seems entirely inexplicable unless we make some such hypothesis.

If there is anything constant in Oswald's life, it is his need of money. After three years on a marine private's pay, he goes to Russia. There he works in a factory for the pittance of 80 rubles a month. He returns to America with a wife and child in mid-1962 and thenceforward works at a series of jobs paying the legal minimum wage or less — when he is not unemployed. For months his only acknowledged source of income is the Texas unemployment compensation of \$33 a week. His job at the School Book Depository, from whose warehouse he is supposed to have shot the President and Governor Connally, paid him \$1.25 an hour.

Surely he was a pauper, a fellow whose monetary resources could only keep him swinging between want and destitution. But if there is another thing about Lee Oswald as certain as his indigence, it is that he was often capable of expenditures that would have cramped the purse of a suburban status seeker.



Harry Moss

After years of subsisting on a marine's pay, from which he occasionally sent money to his mother, he undertakes a trip to Russia with a capital of \$1,600. How could he have put aside this nest egg? After years of low factory remuneration in the Soviet, he wants to return to the United States and, in a letter to his mother, estimates the cost at:

\$800. He borrows \$435.71 from the United States Embassy in Moscow but, *mirabile dictu*, he repays the loan between October, 1962, and January, 1963, during which time he was unemployed for several weeks and worked for a time as an unskilled developer of photostatic prints.

A Miss Pauline Bates, public stenographer, whom Oswald paid for typing his notes for a book about Russia three days after his return, has said that "he hinted he had gone to the Soviet as a U. S. secret agent." He allegedly told her then that "when the State Department granted my visa, they stipulated they could not stand behind me in any way," an admonition suggestive of instruction, to an undercover man.

Back in America, as impecunious as ever, he finds the money to rent an office for \$30 a month, where he sets up in business as the New Orleans chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He buys a rubber stamp, he prints 2,000 leaf-

lets, he pays a \$10 court fine, he buys a rifle and telescopic sight by mail, gets them assembled and bore-sighted — and in his room after his arrest the police find \$150. This young man, untalented, it appears, for anything but finding odd wind-falls of money, goes to Mexico City for a week to get visas for a trip to Cuba and Russia that would have cost at least \$1,000. (The Cuban and Russian consulates did not issue the visas.) After the murder of the President, the police find in his room, in addition to the wad of money, "several expensive cameras and rolls of film."

Where did the money come from? The FBI and the Dallas

police fail to supply information on the subject. For the Russian period, we have the unsupported assertion of *Pravda* that Oswald was an American spy who made numerous contacts with the American Embassy. This might indicate a CIA affiliation. He wrote his mother that, on his return, he would spend a day or so in New York and Washington for "sightseeing." After that, all is dark except for one hint. An Associated Press dispatch of November 30 from Dallas says in part:

"Someone telegraphed small amounts of money to Lee Harvey Oswald for several months before the assassination of President Kennedy, it was reported today," the

Dallas Times Herald said. The unidentified sender telegraphed Oswald \$10 to \$20 at a time.

Here apparently are some of the Western Union items about which the FBI has been so secretive — but why this secrecy? If the money came from the Communist Party, it is hard to understand why the FBI should cooperate in a Bolshevik plot. If it came from a right-wing or Fascist source, the FBI could not lose much by revealing it. But if the money came from a government source, then the agency's reticence is understandable.

Shortly before the assassination, Oswald seemed to be expecting better times:

Mrs. Ruth Paine, the woman with whom Marina was staying, said: "He seemed in exceptionally high spirits." [When he visited his wife the weekend prior to President Kennedy's arrival in Dallas.] Oswald told his wife "things are looking up" and that soon they would have enough to look for an apartment, buy furniture. (Sunday Bulletin, Philadelphia, 12/15/63.)

If the FBI did not employ Oswald or work with him, then who wrote the letters he addressed to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York? Oswald alone certainly didn't. Whoever wrote the letters to New York was coherent, commanded a good vocabulary, rarely misspelled a word, and punctuated decently. Oswald himself wrote English that a sixth-grader would blush to acknowledge. Here is a letter he wrote to his mother from Russia on June 28, 1963. I preserve the original spelling and punctuation:

Dear Mother.

Recived your letter today in which you say you wish to pay me back the money you used last year that, of course, is not nassicary however you can send me some things from there every now and than.

If you decide to send a package please send the following:

One can Rise shaving cream
(one razor (Gillet)

Pocket novels westerns and scienace fiction — Time or News-week magazine

Chewing Gum and chocolate bars.

Thats about all. Ha-ha

I very much miss sometime to read you should try and get me the pocket novel "1984" by Wells.

I am working at the local Radio plant as a mettal worker. We live

only five minutes from there so it is very convenient.

Well thats about all for now. I repeat you do not have to send me checks or money!

Love XX

Lee

P.S. Marina sends a big Hello to you also

Now compare this semi-literate effusion with the following addressed to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee about two years later. (A *New York Times* report on the letters to FPCC indicates that they were handwritten, so presumably no public stenographer improved their style.)

Dear Mr. Lee:

I was glad to receive your advice concerning my try at starting a New Orleans F.P.C.C. chapter.

I hope you won't be too disapproving at my innovations but I do think they are necessary for this area.

As per your advice I have taken a P.O. Box (N.O. 30061).

Against your advice I have decided to take an office from the very beginning.

I u c [apparently meaning, as you see] from the circular I had jumped the gun on the charter business but I don't think it's too important. You may think the circular is too provocative, but I want it to attract attention even if it's the attention of the limatic fringe. I had 2,000 of them run off.

The major change in tactics you can see from the small membership blanks, is that I will charge \$1 a month dues for the New Orleans chapter only and I intend to issue