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The JFK Assassination

THE RALEIGH CALL

The Raleigh Call

Dr. Grover B. Proctor, Jr.

Combined from two articles published in *Spectator Magazine*
July 17 and 24, 1980

One of the most interesting and potentially important aspects of the John Kennedy assassination may not have anything to do with the murder itself story concerning the actions of the accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald simmered on the back burner of the investigation since its discovery ten y ago, and is considered by leading assassination authorities to be a key in unsolved mystery.

Oswald's movements and statements inside the Dallas jail up to the time murder have always been a huge mystery, and any clues to what happen during that time are vigorously sought by all researchers. So when a story surfaced that Oswald attempted to place a call from the jail to a person w name had not otherwise entered the assassination investigation, it was bi news.

In short, it is alleged that Oswald attempted to place a call to a John Hurt Raleigh, North Carolina on Saturday evening, November 23, 1963, but wa mysteriously prevented from completing the call. Though there is specula that the call was incoming rather than outgoing (for example, a crank call jail from someone by that name), private and Congressional researchers l Oswald, for whatever reasons, was the one attempting the call. The implic of that call have prompted former U.S. Intelligence officials to speculate o Oswald's possible link with intelligence agencies.

How We Know What We Know

On the night of November 23, 1963, two telephone operators were workin switchboard that controlled, among other Dallas municipal offices, the jail. of the ladies, Mrs. Alveeta A. Treon, made a statement concerning the ev that night to assassination researcher and attorney Bernard Fensterwald : five years after the assassination, but then refused to sign it on advice fro



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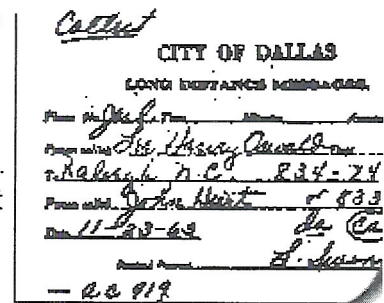
lawyer, according to Fensterwald. The following is a condensation of that statement:

Mrs. Treon arrived for work at the switchboard between 10:15 and 10:35 in the evening, and was told by her fellow worker, Mrs. Louise Swinney, that the supervisor had asked them to assist law enforcement officials to listen to a call that Lee Harvey Oswald would be making soon. Two men, that Mrs. Treon thinks might have been Secret Service agents, subsequently came into the switchboard area and were put in an adjacent room where they could monitor the expected call.

At about 10:45, the call from the jail came through, and both ladies rushed to take it. Mrs. Swinney handled the call, as it turned out; she wrote down the information on the number Oswald wished to reach; and notified the two men of the call. Quoting from Mrs. Treon's statement: "I was dumbfounded at what happened next. Mrs. Swinney opened the key to Oswald and told him, 'The number doesn't answer.' She then unplugged and disconnected Oswald without ever really trying to put the call through. A few moments later, Mrs. Swinney tore the page off her notation pad and threw it into the wastepaper basket."

After Mrs. Swinney left work at approximately 11:00 p.m., Mrs. Treon retrieved the piece of paper, and copied the information from it onto a telephone slip commonly used by the operators to record calls, so that she could keep it as a "souvenir."

That slip, which would turn up seven years later in a Freedom of Information suit brought by Chicago researcher Sherman H. Skolnick (a civil action filed in Federal District Court in Chicago, April 6, 1970, No. 70C 790), contains some startling things. It purports to show a collect call attempted from the jail by Lee Harvey Oswald to a John Hurt at 919-834-7430 and it gives another telephone number in the 919 Area Code, 833-1253. (The slip is reproduced in the Appendix of the 1975 book, *Coup d'Etat in America* by Canfield and Weberman, the first major work to deal with the "Raleigh call" and its implications for Oswald's links to intelligence agencies.)



What do we know about those two telephone numbers? The House Assassinations Committee gave one of its staffers, Surell Brady, responsibility for investigating the "Raleigh Call." Though the committee's final report did not mention the call, Brady wrote a 28-page internal memorandum outlining the results of their investigation of the incident.

In an insert after page 15 of the document, it is incorrectly reported that the numbers listed on the telephone slip "were unpublished in 1963." This information was reported as having been supplied by Carolyn Rabon of Southern Bell Telephone Co. in 1978. However, a simple check of the December, 1962 Southern Bell telephone directory for Raleigh, North Carolina (which would have been current at the time of the assassination) and the



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December, 1963 directory (which would contain any new information and any changes of listing status) shows that both numbers were published.

Thus, both of these numbers would have been available to anyone calling "Information" in Raleigh, asking for a John Hurt. This is the way the listing appear in those directories:

DECEMBER, 1962

Hurt John D	415 New Bern Av	TE4-7430
Hurt John W	Old Wake Forest Rd	833-1253

DECEMBER, 1963

Hurt John D	201 Hillsbro	834-7430
Hurt John W	Old Wake Forest Rd	833-1253

Why Southern Bell would have provided incorrect information, or how they have made such a gross mistake, is uncertain.

Who Is John Hurt?

Obviously, the identity of any person whom Lee Harvey Oswald might have attempted to contact after having been arrested for the murder of the President would be of immense interest. Other than identifying the second telephone number as belonging to one "John W. Hurt of [Old Wake] Forest Road in Raleigh, North Carolina," the Brady report does not supply any information that number. Subsequent attempts to trace John W. Hurt have proven fruitless.

The first number, however, presents less of a mystery. I dialed the number and spoke at some length with a man who identified himself as John David Hurt (Excerpts from that interview accompany this article.) The most tantalizing aspect of this Mr. Hurt is that he was a U.S. Army Counterintelligence officer during World War II. Mr. Hurt acknowledged this wartime service, but denied ever having been anything other than an insurance investigator and an employee of the State of North Carolina since the war.

Hurt denied that he made or received a call to or from the Dallas jail or Lee Harvey Oswald. When asked if he knew of any reason why Lee Harvey Oswald would wish to call him, he said, "I do not. I never heard of the man before President Kennedy's death." Mr. Hurt professed to having been a "great Kennedyphile," and said he "would have been more inclined to kill" Oswald anything else. Asked if he had any explanation as to why his name and telephone number should turn up this way, he said, "None whatever."

I also asked him if he had any knowledge of the second phone number or slip, and he said he had never had that number in his use. "My number has been the same for, oh, I'd say forty years."

Incoming or Outgoing?



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So did Oswald attempt to call out? If so, why was his call thwarted by mere authority? And why would Oswald want to call a man in Raleigh, North Carolina who seems never to have heard of him before? And if Oswald didn't call out, how do we explain Mrs. Treon's statement, one she gave reluctantly and in an attempt to gain publicity?

To begin with, let's explore the possibility that Oswald did not make the call to Anthony Summers, in whose 1981 book *Conspiracy* the Raleigh call has surfaced most recently, told me privately that some researchers believe the call in question to have been incoming to the jail, not an attempt by Oswald to call out. One of the most distinguished of today's assassination researchers, Fred Hoch, explained to me an alternative theory of his concerning the events of November 23.

Hoch believes that Hurt, or someone using his name and telephone number, called the Dallas jail prior to 10:15 p.m. on that date, requesting to speak to Oswald. He theorizes that whoever took the call, possibly Mrs. Swinney, scribbled down some information, decided it was a crank call, and threw away the slip. Later, when Oswald made the call that Mrs. Treon overheard, Hoch says it was to the New York attorney John Abt, whom Oswald wanted to represent him. We know from testimony from a Secret Service inspector Robert Kelley that Oswald expressed interest in getting help in reaching Abt by telephone.

Hoch's theory is based on the assumption that when Mrs. Treon went to pick up for the slip of paper that Mrs. Swinney discarded after the 10:45 call, she picked up with the earlier, incorrect slip that related to the "crank call." When I asked Hoch how he explained the fact that there were two telephone numbers on the slip if indeed it were an incoming call, Hoch said he could not explain it. Nonetheless, by the way, could Bernard Fensterwald when I posed the same question to him after he told me he also believes Mrs. Treon to have been mistaken. Mrs. Swinney has, to date, refused to confirm, deny, or comment on Mrs. Treon's statement.

But at least at present, Hoch's view does not seem to be shared by other researchers. Sometime after my first conversation with author Anthony Summers about the Raleigh call, he contacted me by telephone to amend my earlier, more skeptical comments.

He related an incident that followed a nationally-televised appearance before the House Assassinations Committee Chief Counsel G. Robert Blakey. After the program, during a longer, private conversation covering many aspects of the case, Summers confided to Blakey some details about the authenticity of the call, especially concerning whether it was an incoming call to Oswald, or outgoing from him, as alleged by Mrs. Treon.

Blakey confessed to being troubled by the call as well, but, to Summers' surprise, for the exact opposite reason. As a subsequent interview with Blakey confirmed: "The call apparently is real and it goes out; it does not come in. That's the sum and substance of it." Blakey continued, "It was an outgoing call and therefore I consider it very troublesome material. The direction in which



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went was deeply disturbing." (It should be noted that another reason for Summers' surprise at confirmation of the importance of the Raleigh call was that it came from Blakey, an open critic of Summers' conclusions that JFK's killing came from elements of American intelligence, anti-Castro Cubans, and organized crime.)

Chicago researcher Sherman Skolnick, who heads up a group called the Citizens' Committee to Clean Up the Courts, also does not agree with Hoover Fensterwald and believes the call was outgoing. Skolnick has a theory that the call "was Oswald's ticket to verify that he [Oswald] was a lower-level intelligence operative."

One fact uncovered by Skolnick in sworn statements in his lawsuit that we heard in open court is that the Secret Service took a sudden interest in someone named Hurt on November 23, 1963. In a statement from former agent Abner Bolden, who was duty officer for the Secret Service's Chicago office that weekend, he claims that the Dallas Secret Service office called him late on the 23rd and asked for a rundown on any phonetic spelling of "Hurt" or "Hear". Obviously, something happened in Dallas that day to cause such a far-flung investigation all the way to Chicago. Whether this was because of Oswald's interest in a party named "Hurt" or because of a crank call into the Dallas office is still unknown.

The Fingerprints of Intelligence

So what if Oswald really were attempting to make a call to John David Huie in Raleigh, North Carolina from the Dallas jail. Where is the significance?

Anthony Summers suggests that Oswald may have been, or may have been able to believe he was, working for some aspect of American intelligence. This is as far-fetched as it might sound, since Senator Richard Schweiker's Intelligence Committee brought to light evidence that made the senator state that Oswald had the "fingerprints of intelligence" all over him. This, plus the fact that Huie served in Military Counterintelligence, caused Surell Brady to refer to the call as "provocative."

Victor Marchetti, the former CIA official whose book *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* was the first book in U.S. history to be subject to pre-publication censorship, claims that the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) operated in a building in Chapel Hill, N.C., a training base for intelligence candidates to be sent to the Soviet Union. Says Marchetti, it was for "young men who were made to appear disenchanted, poor, American youths who had become turned off and wanted to see what communism was all about."

Interviewed from his Northern Virginia home, Marchetti confirmed the existence of the ONI base to me privately, saying the plan was to send young men to the Soviet Union as defectors, but who in actuality were hoping to be picked up by agents by the KGB. This process is known as "doubling," as the young men would then in effect be double agents for both American and Soviet intelligence. Once placing an agent in the KGB, American intelligence could then begin



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funneling in disinformation. According to Marchetti, this was the plan for C Whether it worked or not, Marchetti did not say.

Marchetti seems positive in his own mind that, in making the Raleigh call, Oswald was following a set intelligence practice. That practice consists of contacting his case officer through what is known as a "cut-out," a "clean" intermediary who can act as a conduit between agent and officer without getting involved in the intelligence operation itself. All the "cut-out" knows if anyone ever calls asking for a certain officer's real name, or pseudonym then to contact a predetermined person or agency. The "cut-out" can legit say he never heard of the agent calling, in this case thought to be Lee Ha Oswald.

Who was Oswald's "cut-out," if the above scenario is correct? Was it either the John Hurts listed in Raleigh in 1963? According to committee records, John David Hurt seems to have had an unusual career, but aside from his Counterintelligence work in the second World War, there is nothing to condeny his candidacy as Oswald's "cut-out." Chief Counsel Blakey told me, that call occurred. Now whether it occurred to [John D.] Hurt or not, I'm not sure I was not able to come up with anything sinister about Hurt."

If we cannot know who, says Marchetti, we can at least understand why. Whether guilty or not of the assassination, once inside the Dallas jail Oswald was looking for some way to assure his interrogators, which may well have included agents of the CIA, according to Marchetti, that he was "okay." If true, then one must imagine that Oswald remembered either the name John Hurt in Raleigh, or some other location which got confused with Raleigh and that either he or someone acting for him obtained the two telephone numbers from "Information." That the call was blocked from going through another disturbing, and as yet unsolved, aspect to the case.

The importance of the Raleigh call ultimately is that both Marchetti, who is convinced of at least a partial involvement in the assassination by intelligence agents, and Blakey, who eschews that explanation as unnecessary, agree is an important, disturbing aspect of the JFK case. Said Blakey, "I consider unanswered, and I consider the direction in which it went substantiated and disturbing, but ultimately inconclusive." When asked if he would recommend the Justice Department look into the incident, if and when it re-opens the case, Blakey said no. His reason? "The bottom line is, it's an unanswerable mystery."

Excerpts of Interview with John David Hurt

PROCTOR:

Do you know any reason why Oswald would have tried to call you?

HURT:

I do not. I never heard of the man before President Kennedy's death was a great Kennedyophile, and I would have been more inclined to than anything else.

PROCTOR:



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Oswald, you mean.

HURT:

Yes

PROCTOR:

Did you place a call that day to the Dallas jail?

HURT:

No, I did not, and he didn't place a call to me either, I don't know he ever got [unintelligible].

PROCTOR:

Do you have any explanation as to why your name ...

HURT:

None whatever.

PROCTOR:

Do you have the telephone number 833-1253 (the second number slip) in any of your business associations?

HURT:

No.

PROCTOR:

Did you in 1963?

HURT:

No, I did not.

PROCTOR:

That was the other number listed on the telephone slip beside your

HURT:

I don't know. My number has been the same for, oh, I'd say forty ye

PROCTOR:

In speaking with another investigator that called you about six year: you indicated at that time that during World War II you were in the Counterintelligence Division. Is that correct?

HURT:

That's correct.

PROCTOR:

You left that, and went into investigative work after the war.

HURT:

I was in insurance claims adjusting work, and I worked for a year fo state as a [unintelligible].

PROCTOR:

Were you ever involved as an agent in the Defense Department's Industrial Security Command?

HURT:

No, I was not.

PROCTOR:

So, once again, you have no knowledge of any call made from your number or to your number that day?

HURT:

No knowledge whatsoever.

Excerpts of Interview With Victor Marchetti

PROCTOR:



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If you were, as an agent, in trouble somewhere in America

MARCHETTI:

I was never an agent. I was an officer.

PROCTOR:

Okay, if someone were an agent, and he were involved in something nobody believes he is an agent. He is arrested, and trying to communicate, let's say, and he is one of you guys. What is the procedure?

MARCHETTI:

I'd kill him.

PROCTOR:

If I were an agent for the [Central Intelligence] Agency, and I was involved in something involving the law domestically and the FBI, would I have contact to call?

MARCHETTI:

Yes.

PROCTOR:

A verification contact?

MARCHETTI:

Yes, you would.

PROCTOR:

Would I be dead?

MARCHETTI:

It would depend on the situation. If you get into bad trouble, we're not going to verify you. No how, no way.

PROCTOR:

But there is a call mechanism set up.

MARCHETTI:

Yes.

PROCTOR:

So it is conceivable that Lee Harvey Oswald was

MARCHETTI:

That's what he was doing. He was trying to call in and say, "Tell the all right."

PROCTOR:

Was that his death warrant?

MARCHETTI:

You betcha. Because this time he went over the dam, whether he knew or not, or whether they set him up or not. He was over the dam. At that point it was executive action [assassination].

PROCTOR:

Is the contact person's name ever the name of someone who is not necessarily an active agent but is just a contact person?

MARCHETTI:

That's right.

PROCTOR:

Then that person would go up to the next level?

MARCHETTI:

That's right, and it would be a "funny name" -- a pseudonym. Like for example, you would have a number to call. If you were my agent, a



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got yourself into a peck of trouble, you might try to contact me, but you can't get through.

PROCTOR:

I would contact you by telephone, right?

MARCHETTI:

Yes. But I might have covered my tracks real good so you can't cor me by telephone. In other words, I contact you, you don't contact m I give you a [unintelligible] number. So you call him, but I've already to him and said, "Don't touch him." You're screwed up.

PROCTOR:

But you would use, for that middle man, people who were not nece active agents or agency people, right?

MARCHETTI:

That's right. Most likely they would be cut-outs. You would have to indirectly.

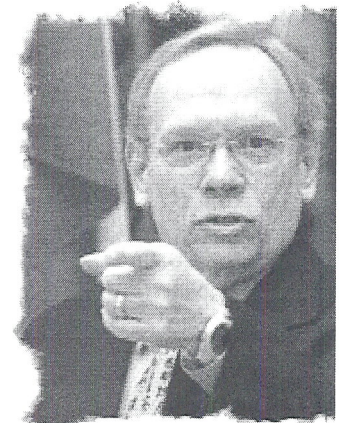
PROCTOR:

Could Oswald have had a name

MARCHETTI:

He was probably calling his cut-out. He was calling somebody who put him in touch with his case officer. He couldn't go beyond that p There's no way he could. He just had to depend on this person to s "Okay, I'll deliver the message." Now, if the cut-out has already bee alerted to cut him off and ignore him, then [unintelligible].

Dr. Grover B. Proctor, Jr. is a historian and former university Dean who is widely acknowledged as an expert on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He has published numerous articles, lectured extensively, and has frequently been consulted by print and broadcast media. While most of his work comprises analysis and interpretation of the assassination research phenomenon, he broke new ground in the investigation in the early 1980's with his work on Lee Harvey Oswald's alleged telephone call from the Dallas jail to a former military counterintelligence agent in Raleigh, N.C.



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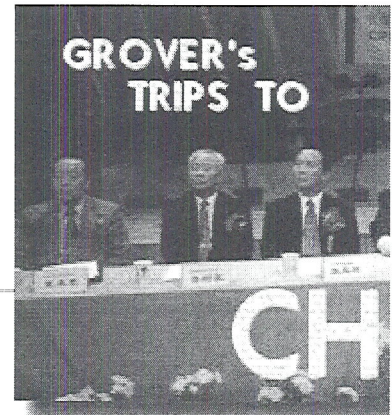
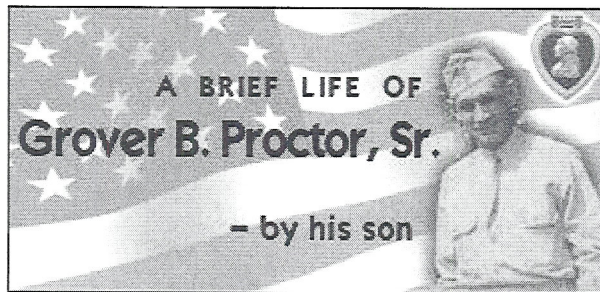
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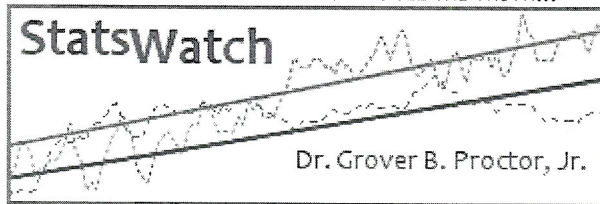
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