

Untold Story of the 'Tramps' Arrest

The conspiracy proponents dubbed the leader of the trio "Frenchy" because his clothes had a continental cut.

The disheveled man behind him was called "the tall man." He sometimes grimaced during the three-fifths mile trek.

The little guy who seemed to be shielding himself behind "the tall man" became "the walking man."

THESE WERE THREE of a dozen people arrested and questioned in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Their identities are not known, but their significances in the investigation of whether a conspiracy

was involved in the Kennedy assassination is a major question mark.

Numerous pictures of the "tramps" were taken by three newspaper photographers snapping pictures at random in Dealey Plaza the day the President was shot.

Underground newspapers began publishing the pictures in 1968. And when Watergate blew the lid off the Nixon Administration, the pictures look on new fascination among Americans who never felt the CIA was jolly-white in the Kennedy assassination.

"The tall man" bore a startling resemblance to Frank Sturgis, a former CIA agent who was con-

victed in the Watergate scandals.

THE "SHORT MAN" or "walking man" strikingly resembled E. Howard Hunt, the CIA "super-spook" who had a penchant for assassinations and who masterminded the Watergate burglary and other odds and ends for Richard Nixon.

But "Frenchy" is perhaps the most interesting of the trio.

In 1968, after Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed while making a speech on a Memphis motel balcony, the FBI moved an artist's sketch of a suspect in the killing. This was before James Earl Ray was pegged as the "lone

assassin."

The official sketch was an exact double for "Frenchy" the "tramp" arrested in Dealey Plaza when Kennedy died.

Another picture surfaced. It was of a youthful Lee Harvey Oswald, the so-called "lone assassin" of President Kennedy, handling out pro-Castro literature in New Orleans. Oswald is surrounded in the picture by several men.

On Oswald's far right in the street scene, with head drooped forward, is a man who looks a lot like "Frenchy."

Who is "Frenchy"? And "the tall man"? And "the walking man"? Dallas police never bothered to

find out.

SOME ASSASSINATION buffs have even questioned the identity of the policemen herding the "tramps" to the county jail on Nov. 22.

But through interviews conducted by TAITLER, the circumstances of the arrest of the "tramps" can now be revealed.

After the firecracker-sounding shots were fired into the Kennedy motorcade at 12:30 p.m. a state of chaos ensued in and around Dealey Plaza.

Policeman Billy Bass, Marvin Wise and Roy Vaughn responded to a report from railroad switchman Lee Bowers, who was stationed in a (Continued on Page 34)

lower in the railroad yards about three-fifths of a mile north of the Triple Underpass near where the President was shot.

"Some strange things are going on down here," Bowers reported to Dallas police.

Bowers had seen some men security around in the yards.

THE OFFICERS searched the yards and found the tramps hiding in an open gondola car.

"Come out of there," Officer Vaughn ordered.

"Go to hell!" came the voice of "the tall man."

Vaughn climbed atop the gondola and threw down on the "tramps" with his shotgun.

"Yes, sir," said "the tall man"

Officer Vaughn

has unique place in the history written that

day in Dallas

anekly, who grimaced and climbed out of the gondola with his hands up.

Vaughn's role in the "tramps" incident was over, but his role as a footnote in history was only beginning. He left the "tramps" in the care of the other officers and rode a switch engine back to the assassination site.

The "tramps" were arrested about 1:15 p.m., Wise recalled recently. They were picked up minutes after the radio report was broadcast that Officer J. D. Trippett had been shot.

BASS AND WISE turned the "tramps" over to Sheriff's Deputy Harold E. Elkins at the county jail. Elkins, in his report on his activities that afternoon, said that he took the "tramps" to the Dallas police station and turned them over to Homicide Capt. Will Fritz.

By then, police had Oswald in custody. They had found Oswald's Carcano-Mannlicher rifle on the

Despite criticism over Ruby's action, Vaughn has risen up through ranks of police dept.

sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building and figured the assassination was solved.

The "tramps" were released without Dallas police bothering to get their names.

Vaughn would go on to take a controversial place in history. Two days later, it was Officer Vaughn — the same policeman who brought the "tramps" out of the gondola at the point of a shotgun — who was assigned to guarding the ramp to the Dallas city jail basement when

TRAMPS:

'Frenchie': Always in Right Place at Worst Possible Time



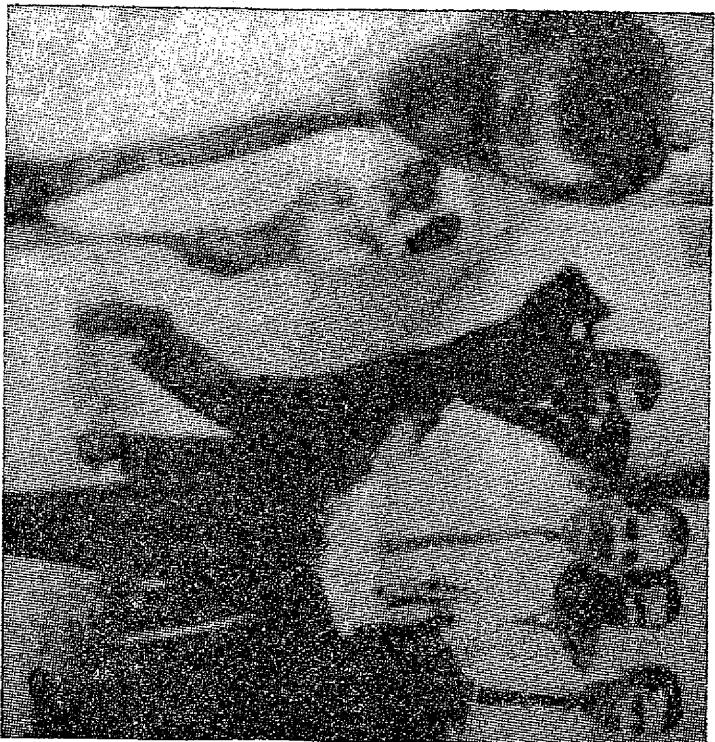
is the man in the clothes with the continental cut leading the three "tramps" in the picture at right a mere hobo or one of the most important men of the 20th Century? The photo was taken by a news cameraman in Dealey Plaza after the "tramps" were arrested as suspects in the John Kennedy assassination, then released. Above, the police composite sketch of a suspect in the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Compare the sketch of suspect in Dr. King's death, top left, with a blowup of the picture of the "tramp" who has been nicknamed "Frenchie" by assassination buffs. The resemblance of the suspect at first sought by the FBI after the Memphis assassination to "Frenchie" is uncanny. The FBI cancelled their pickup for the suspect after drifter James Earl Ray was charged as the "lone assassin" of Dr. King.



Still other photographs indicated "Frenchy" the tramp was also casually turning up in New Orleans at the same time, on the same corner, when Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President Kennedy, was handing out pro-Castro leaflets after the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion. The photo at left is an-



other view of the "tramps" being escorted by police in Dealey Plaza. The picture in the center shows a man with a striking resemblance to "Frenchy," jacket slung casually over his shoulder, walking by an Oswald demonstration in New Orleans. Compare the faces in the pictures at right. Some assassina-



tion buffs -- especially comedian-civil rights activist Dick Gregory and Ralph Schoenman -- are contending that the other two "tramps" in the photo at left are Watergate burglars Frank Sturges and E. Howard Hunt. But nobody has yet tried to pin an identity on "Frenchy," who may have been at the ap-

propriate spot in three different cities at the exact time history was in the making. The Dealey tramp photos are being investigated by the Rockefeller Commission looking into assassination of President Kennedy. A few days ago, a Rockefeller investigator interviewed a Dallas policeman involved in the arrests.

Oswald was brought out to be transferred to the county jail.

A LITTLE STRIP joint owner named Jack Ruby walked down the ramp Vaughn was guarding and shot Oswald once in the stomach, silencing the suspect forever.

Vaughn has been alternately criticized and defended for his role in the basement affair, but it hasn't stopped him from rising in the police ranks. Today he is a sergeant in the police intelligence division.

Numerous comparisons have been made - both by laymen and scientists - of the pictures of the "tramps" and pictures of Watergate

figures.

A most acceptable conclusion is that the "tall man" is not Frank Sturgis. "The tall man" is too tall. The "walking man" in the "tramp" pictures looks a lot like E. Howard Hunt does today, but not like Hunt looked 12 years ago.

Both Hunt and Sturgis have repeatedly denied they were in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. Hunt contends he didn't even know Sturgis then.

Hunt, the old CIA pro who helped alter the course of history behind the scenes, has found an ally in the head of the FBI.

CLARENCE KELLEY, FBI director, said recently that the agency has no evidence to indicate that Hunt was at the assassination scene.

"To our knowledge and from our

examination of the photograph, he (Hunt) is not that man," Kelley said.

Comedian-civil rights activist Dick Gregory is lecturing around the country, telling college audiences the man in the photograph is E. Howard Hunt.

One fact is clear: The 'Tramps' were not real tramps

Gregory has even testified to this effect before the Rockefeller Commission investigating domestic spying by the CIA.

HUNT HIMSELF has been called before the Rockefeller panel and has

testified he was at a meeting in Washington on the day Kennedy was shot. His witnesses: other CIA agents.

Many assassination buffs are convinced of one point: The "tramps" were not real tramps.

The suspects in the photographs, though disheveled, had close-cropped hair, indicating recent barbership haircuts. Their clothing did not appear to be as worn as tramps would be. Their shoes had thick soles.

The three men arrested in the railroad yards could have merely been hobos down on their luck, placed in Dallas by fate on Nov. 22, 1963. But until their identities are established and their stories told and verified, they'll remain a part of the Kennedy conspiracy mystery a thousand years from now.

John Moulder