

By STANLEY ROSS

In a lonely cell at Creedmore State Hospital for the insane in Queens, New York, broods a 45-year-old Cuban who may hold the key to one of the great mysteries of our time: The answer to the question of who planned the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Tex., on Nov. 22, 1963.

But Pascual Enrique Ruedolo Gongora, at the moment, is not talking. He refuses to say another word about his knowledge of the assassination plot.

The last time he talked, 40 months ago, he was hidden away from the world in a series of maneuvers that could theoretically occur only behind the Iron Curtain, or in Cuba.

On Nov. 14, 1963, a week before the assassination in Dallas, Tex., Gongora was arrested by Federal agents in Manhattan on suspicion of being an agent of dictator Fidel Castro's government.

At the New York office of Department of Immigration and Naturalization, 20 West Broadway, a top official who refused to be named said that Gongora admitted that he was a Castro



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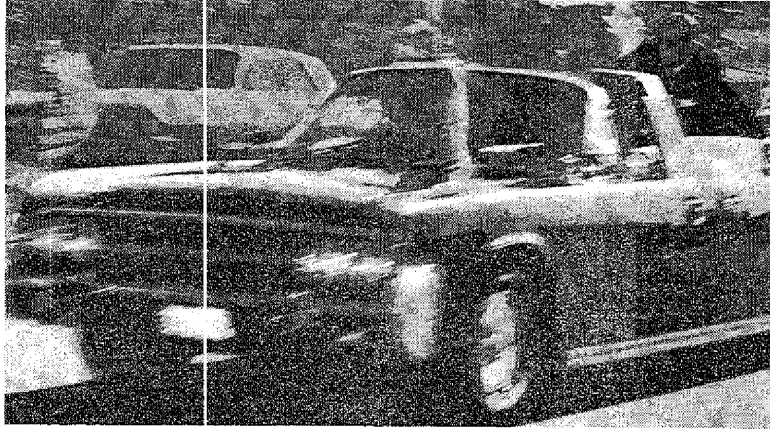
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P.A. Esperdy



CASTRO AGENT: Lee Harvey Oswald.

Find Cuban Agent Secretly Held by U.S. for 3 Years Who...

Told of Plot 8 Days Before JFK's Assassination



CARRYING DYING JFK: Blurred photo shows car racing through street with wounded President Kennedy, on way to hospital, in a vain effort to save his life. Secret Service man is on trunk.

spy — and then, startled his questioners by boasting: "We are going to kill your President. I am only one of three in my assassination cell. But there are six to eight other groups sent by Fidel to kill Kennedy. One of us will get him — and soon."

"You'll see!" A week later, John F. Kennedy lay on a slab in a Dallas hospital, and 48 hours afterwards, JFK's

killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, whom Gongora says was a member of another of Castro's assassination teams, had been silenced forever.

Gongora had claimed — a full week before the Kennedy tragedy — that the six to eight Castro teams of assassins were lying in wait — and had been ready for the kill since shortly after the Bay of Pigs invasion.

"Fidel is certain," Gongora had said when he was arrested, "that the CIA and Kennedy sent agents to assassinate Dictator Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, and Premier Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam."

"Fidel is convinced his is the next name on Kennedy's liquidation list. He is going to get Kennedy before Kennedy gets him."

If Gongora sounded like a nut, the impression was compounded when he produced a hunting knife from a brown paper bag and lunged at an immigration inspector, wounding him.

He was disarmed of the knife — and three long, sharp and deadly-looking spikes he had concealed under his shirt.

But, when asked why Gongora had not simply been arrested for carrying concealed weapons, or for stabbing the inspector, P.A. Esperdy, director of the New York regional office of Immigration and Naturalization, gave the incredible explanation that since the police knew Gongora was crazy, he could not have been convicted for those crimes.

Instead, Federal authorities went to such tremendous lengths to conceal Gongora's very existence, that he became a man without a country and he remained hidden until March 5, of this year, when his whereabouts were learned by "El Tiempo" (a New York Spanish-language daily newspaper).

The day the President was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald, Gongora had been in the immigration jail for eight days. But on November 22, while the President's body was still bleeding, frantic efforts were started to get Pascual Enrique Ruedolo Gongora out of the way.

Thus, on the day of the assassination, the Department of Immigration asked the Canadian,



TRUJILLO
Slain by CIA agents?



DIEM
Another CIA victim?



PRESIDENT KENNEDY
Teams of assassins lay in wait for him

Mexican and Spanish governments if Gongora could be shipped back to Cuba through their countries. Mexico shied off, and Canada refused point-blank.

Gongora, with Cuban effervescence, cheerfully suggested to authorities that he be set free in Key West, Fla., where he offered to "steal a boat and get back to Cuba myself."

On November 24, the Spanish government cabled it would ship Gongora to Cuba providing the U.S. guaranteed to take him back if Castro disowned him. Two

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days later, Joseph Dernetz, writing for the Department of Immigration and Naturalization gave the guarantee. On November 28 — six days after the President's death — Gongora was escorted to Spain where he was jailed incommunicado to await Fidel Castro's okay — and tacit admission — that he was a hired killer. Castro, however, wasn't ready to admit anything.

The Cuban dictator refused to let Gongora return home — the first time a Cuban had been denied reentry to his homeland even by a batthless dictator.

Finally, on Feb. 25, 1964, a U.S. agent escorted Gongora back to New York and the Cuban was held in the Federal House of Detention at 427 West Street.

A man in this free country cannot be jailed indefinitely without trial or counsel. But the authorities weren't going to let anyone know they'd



JAMES EGAN
Secured habeas corpus

been tipped off to Castro's assassination plans and had ignored them, so Gongora was silently transferred to Bellevue Hospital on March 11.

Twelve days later, on March 23, 1964, the doors of Creedmore closed on the man who knew too much.

Pascual Enrique Ruodolo Gongora was committed "voluntarily," according to the records.

But later Gongora's records were changed to "involuntarily"

and for the next three years the Cuban saw only fellow inmates and the attendants who brought him his three meals a day. There was no shock treatment, no visitors, no correspondence in or out with the prisoner.

"El Tiempo" had learned of the case when Gongora reached Spain — and the newspaper published the story that he had claimed to be a member of a Castro assassination squad. Immediately I was contacted by someone in the Department of Justice who carefully explained that though there is freedom of press in this country, it was not in the national interest to follow up on this case.

Washington, I was told, was then trying to learn if the Cuban or Russian governments were implicated in the assassination. The stakes could be global war — or they might be the lives and safety of innocent Cuban refugees who could become the victims of American mob fury, if it were known in those days of national sorrow that an agent of Castro was Kennedy's killer. The argument was logical; we desisted.

However, when the recent sensational stories broke out of DA Jim Garrison's office in New Orleans, I learned, through a tip, that Gongora was not in Cuba, nor even in Spain, but had been salted away in Creedmore State Hospital in New York City, and that he is no more crazy than his paranoid boss, Fidel Castro, or his ex-colleague, Lee Harvey Oswald.

And, as we felt the national interest was no longer at stake, we decided that the time had finally come to reveal what "El Tiempo" knew about Gongora.

Together with Edward Donnelly, a public-spirited citizen, and young attorney James Egan, "El Tiempo" secured a writ of habeas corpus, and served it on a startled staff of doctors at Creedmore, on Sunday, March 5, 1967.

When we did so, one of the doctors in charge protested strongly, saying: "You can't touch that man."

"He is here at the hospital under the jurisdiction of the FBI."

Nevertheless, on Tuesday, March 7, in the presence of N.Y. State Supreme Court Justice



DICTATOR FIDEL CASTRO
Behind JFK's assassination

James J. Crisona, in the library of Building Number 40 in the giant Creedmore complex, Pascual Gongora for the first time in 3½ years, met people from the outside world, including a reporter from "El Tiempo."

The meeting was authorized by the Supreme Court and took place after Eagan told Judge Crisona that Gongora was being held incommunicado and without legal advice, in violation of the law.

He requested that Gongora be transferred from Creedmore State Hospital to the jurisdiction of Queens County DA Thomas Mackel.

At first the medical aspects of the case were examined.

Dr. John McKnight, the supervisor of the Psychiatric Division at Creedmore, said that Gongora's condition did not suggest that he should be released from the institution as cured.

Judge Crisona then authorized another hearing at the hospital for March 21 so that Gongora's medical records could be studied and an independent psychiatric examination set up to see if the Cuban should stay in Creedmore.

A hospital spokesman, when asked when Gongora's commitment status had been changed to involuntarily, said:

"We have been instructed by the Supreme Court to reveal nothing whatsoever about the facts surrounding this case."

After the brief hearing, Gongora was interviewed by "El Tiempo." He is about 45, has white hair, and his expression is serene. He expressed a strong desire to be released. He spoke coherently and showed no sign of mental unbalance.

"I had long ago given up any hope of ever seeing anyone but my jailors," he said.

"I am glad this meeting took place for it could finally mean my release from this place. I die before I could clarify the facts of this case."

"I think I am being held because of certain



JUDGE JAMES CRISONA
Sets hearing for Cuban agent

have a heart ailment and have been afraid I would die before I could clarify the facts of this case.

"I think I am being held because of certain



MENTAL HOSPITAL: Talk with Pascual Gongora was held in this building of Creedmore.

statements I made about the liquidation of the former President. I am ready to subject myself to any examination to prove that I am sane."

We asked him what he knew about a Castro plot to assassinate Kennedy and he replied: "Something . . . something — but I will not tell anything more of what I know about Castro's plot to kill Kennedy until I am released from here."

"The last time I talked, I was put away and I have not spoken Spanish for three years."

Gongora appeared anxious to furnish information concerning the assassination of President Kennedy but refuses to discuss it with anyone while he is in Creedmore.

If the petition to have Gongora transferred from Creedmore is granted — possibly by mid-April — the nation may have one of the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle surrounding the death of JFK.

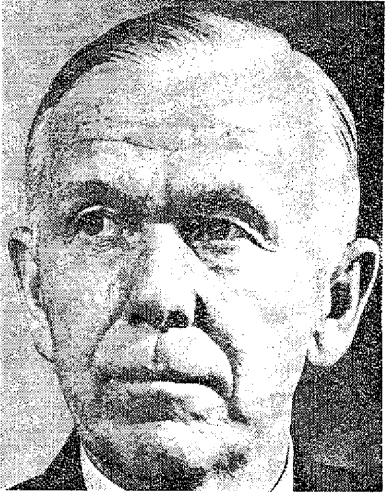
Jim Garrison, the New Orleans DA who claims that Kennedy's assassination was the result of a plot, is watching the Gongora case very closely for future developments.

James Alcock, DA Garrison's executive assistant, told me that they had been looking for Gongora for a long time, but — until we broke the story about him — had been unable to find him.

But Alcock would not say if the Gongora case had any bearing on Garrison's case against New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw who was accused of conspiring with Lee Harvey Oswald and former airlines pilot David Ferrie to assassinate President Kennedy.

After a four-day hearing, a panel of three judges ruled on March 17 that Garrison had enough evidence to bring Shaw to trial. There was no indication when the trial would begin.

A day earlier, Richard Cardinal Cushing — the



GENERAL GEORGE MARSHALL

Almost assassinated by Castro-inspired mob

Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston and a close friend and advisor of the Kennedy family — said that he never believed President Kennedy's assassination was the deed of one man.

He said Garrison's investigation should be continued and "followed through."

Whether or not Lee Harvey Oswald was an agent of Fidel Castro when he fired one or all of the fatal bullets that November 22, the pattern is typically Castroite.

On April 9, 1948, during the Pan American Conference in Bogota, irate mobs destroyed much of Colombia's capital city and came close to assassinating U.S. Secretary of State Gen. George Marshall who was there during the three days of rioting.

The "Bogotazo," as Latins call it, was sparked by the murder of Joyce Eliecer Gaitan, a Colombian politician who was worshipped as a hero by the impoverished millions of Colombian Indians. His assassin was an illiterate Indian called Roa Sierra.

But, for three hours just before Roa Sierra walked up to Gaitan and shot him dead, the killer was seen in intense conversation with three Cuban Communists — later arrested by Colombian secret police as Soviet agents. Their names: Alfredo Guevara, Rafael del Pino — and Fidel Castro.



DONNELLY
Public-spirited citizen

"He is here at the hospital under the jurisdiction of the FBI."

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