

Mysteries linger in Kennedy

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Despite the work of the Warren Commission and the House Assassination Committee, many mysteries remain about the slaying of John Kennedy. Consider these examples:

- John Aleman, a Miami Cuban businessman, told the committee the boss of the Florida Syndicate, Santos Trafficante Jr., told him in the summer of 1963 that Kennedy was going to be "hit." Aleman, perhaps

terrified of a mob reprisal, later changed his story, but Rep. Floyd Fithian, a committee member, believes the original version.

"Aleman is such a reputable person that I believe he heard or interpreted that phrasing," Fithian said, "but it seems unlikely that Trafficante would so casually toss this off to someone who was not part of the underworld."

- A 1967 National Enquirer article stated that Castro knew of an Oswald

plan to kill the president. Castro strongly denied the charge to the committee, but the panel's chief counsel has said "a highly confidential but reliable source available to the U.S. government" supports the substance of the story.

- Although Oswald made several visits to the the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City, according to the Warren Commission, and the CIA regularly took photographs of visitors to the embassies, they don't

have any pictures of Oswald. One picture identifies a man as Lee Harvey Oswald, but it clearly isn't Oswald.

- Then there's the Cuban consul in Mexico City at the time of Oswald's visits, who has maintained the man he knew as Oswald was not the same man killed by Jack Ruby. However, other consulate workers have identified the Oswald they saw as the alleged assassin.

Some conspiracy theorists have argued that some group — perhaps anti-Castro refugees — was trying to frame Oswald, a Castro supporter.

- The day after President Kennedy was slain, a Cuban-American went from Texas to Mexico and then flew to Havana as the only passenger on a Cubana Airlines plane. Later the CIA received a report from a source that the Cuban-American was somehow involved in the assassination.

There are no indications the CIA energetically followed up this mystery, according to a Senate Intelligence committee. Fithian said the his committee could not learn anything new about the flight.

- What is in the KGB files on Oswald? A defector, Yuri Nosenko, testified the KGB never even conducted an interview with the American defector. Fithian said he didn't believe Nosenko, "but I have no reason to believe that Oswald, who acted a bit nutty in Russia, would be looked upon as a very stable

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element by a group as sophisticated as the KGB."

- When he was arrested in August 1963 for fighting anti-Castro Cubans in New Orleans, Oswald was interviewed by an FBI agent, at his own request.

- Perhaps the most troubling unanswered question is this: How could the Dallas police let Ruby get into the basement of the city jail and close enough to Oswald to shoot him?

Fithian said some of these tantalizing threads of evidence will have to remain threads, because there's not much more the committee could have done.

"If you intensely put any criminal case under a magnifying glass, I'm sure you'd find little threads remaining," Fithian said. "This case is just more sensational because it involves the president."