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EUGENE HALE BRADING; SUSPECT

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Continued from last week

Permission for Brading to make the 10-day business trip to Houston "in connection with Tidewater Oil Co. litigation" was asked the U. S. Parole Board on Sept. 11, 1963, one day after the California Department of Motor Vehicles had changed the name on his license from Eugene Hale Brading to Jim Braden for "business reasons."

On Sept. 13, the day a Dallas newspaper first printed an unofficial report that Kennedy would visit Dallas in November, Brading was given permission to go from Los Angeles to Houston on Sept. 15 "to discuss business with a Mr. D. D. Ford, land man with Tidewater Oil Co. (now Getty Oil)."

The Warren Report states that Oswald, on his mysterious trip to Mexico from New Orleans to visit the Cuban Embassy, was to have left Houston by bus about 2 a.m. on Sept. 25, the last day of Brading's visit to that city.

Ford told this reporter a check of his daily reminder book for 1963 shows that "the only time I have in any way shown him (Brading) here in Houston was Nov. 26." He said he was dealing directly with Dallas oil promoter Roger L. Bauman in Sept., 1963, on the possible purchase of production rights by Tidewater of a gas field near Opelousas. Bauman was the liaison for some Californians, Brading included, who owned the leases.

Ford said his daily reminder had a note that Bauman "called me and will come by on Sept. 17." He couldn't find a subsequent note that Bauman had come by on Sept. 17 so "he may have been in contact with Braden at that time and may not have followed up - may not have come by."

Brading seemed to be deceiving his Los Angeles parole officer on trips to Texas in late 1963. Why? If he was not involved in an assassination plot, did he have other reasons? Who was the real Brading Braden?

For one thing, he was a natural born swindler accustomed to living high off the hog, thanks at least in part to the rich women he married. Some women whom he stung, however, stung back. For this, after serving almost five years of a 12-year sentence, he was paroled from a federal prison in 1959. He and his partner, Victor Periera, both went to prison for embezzling \$50,000 from a wealthy Roswell, N. M., widow after she was conned into marrying Periera. Their 1951 convictions were appealed all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court before they lost in 1954.

In retrospect, Brading got tougher treatment in Dallas County for being a vagrant than he did when sheriff's deputies encountered him 11 years later near the assassination site. In 1952, after Periera paid Brading's \$50 vagrancy fine, Dallas Sheriff Bill Decker refused to release either man unless they both left Dallas County in 48 hours.

This was the usual treatment Decker gave sus-

pected organized crime emissaries caught roosting in Dallas County. Brading complained that he and Periera were being harassed and Decker shot back, "You're in my county now."

The vagrancy rap stemmed from Brading's lingering presence, without any apparant effort to earn his take, at the Dallas area mansion of Mrs. D. A. Little, widow of the president of Magnolia Oil Co. Her husband died and Mrs. Little quickly became Periera's sixth wife after a whirlwind courtship.

The Decker ultimatum got front page play and made Brading a public figure in Dallas.

Yet 11 years later, Brading was to tell the FBI during his assassination interview that he was "not familiar with Dallas." He said from his California home that he "had been in Dallas twice before, but that was over 10 years ago." the FBI report stated.

Despite his lavish style of living, Brading never lost his touch for groveling for loot. About three months after the assassination, he pleaded guilty

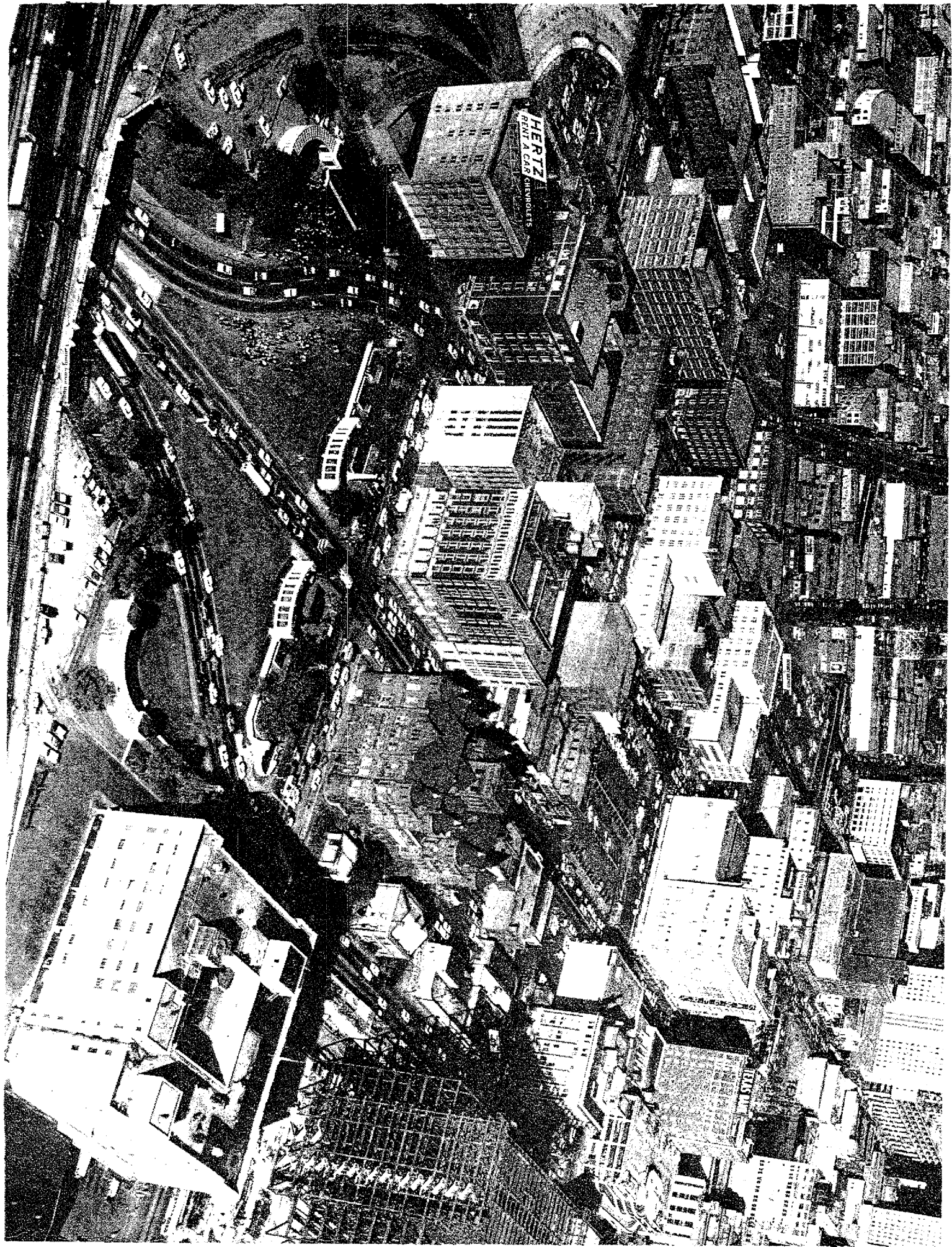
to shoplifting. He had pushed a cart full of groceries out the door of a Safeway store in West Hollywood, Calif., without stopping to pay at the check-out counter. He paid a fine of \$56 for trying to get away with \$20.14 in food.

An acquaintance of Brading was not surprised about the shoplifting: "He's got a fuse on his temper about a half inch long. And if they had a line of people waiting to check out, he would be just the guy who would walk around the crowd and push that cart right out the front door and say 'to hell with this.'"

"I mean the guy is amoral to the core. He is not guilty of anything unless he's caught. And walking out of that grocery store is as natural an act for this man as stealing \$25,000 . . . because the man knows no immorality. There's no such word to him because there's no such thing as being immoral."

Brading's first taste of prison came in 1934 when, at the age of 19, he was sentenced to state prison in Kansas for burglary. He got out on parole in 1938 and three years later was arrested in Miami for operating a gambling house. He was arrested three times for selling World War II gas ration Coupons on the black market and was sentenced to one year in jail the third time. He was arrested in 1948 in Camden, N. J., where organized crime flourishes, as a material witness in a criminal case.

In addition to his underworld connections on the west coast, Brading seems to have had an affinity with the Teamsters Union during the past 15 years. Fresh out of prison in 1960, he married a wealthy widow of a Teamsters official from Chicago who accidentally shot himself with a .45 -- twice in the stomach. Brading lived with this wife in what was once Bing Crosby's luxurious home on the 18th hole of the Thunderbird Country Club in Palm Springs, Calif.



This photo was taken by Squire Haskins of Dallas on November 23, 1963. It is still for sale by Haskins of 2014 1/2 Commerce St. at \$10. per copy. It gives a good overall view of the scene at that time. The short piece of railroad track just behind the grassy knoll has been removed. There were more than 30 witnesses working on the steel framework of the new courthouse, at lower right of picture, and none of them were ever called as witnesses.