bans' friend believes Oswald contacted exid

Staff Writer of The New JUN 10 W

ABILENE, Texas — A friend of Cuban exiles in Abilene in 1963 thinks Lee Harvey Oswald contacted an exile leader there less than a week before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas:

The House Assastinations Committee stated in a preliminary report that certain unidentified anti-Castro Cuban refugees may have been involved in an assassination conspiracy. The Warren Commission, which depicted Oswald as a pro-Castro sympathizer, stated it could find no contacts between Oswald and anti-Castro Cubans.

Harold Reynolds, who had befriended anti-Castro Cuban refugees in

In 1964, two months after the assassination of Kennedy, Conxalex "just disappeared" from Abilene, according to a fellow school custodian.

Abilene in 1963, thinks the Abilene contact may answer the mystery of Oswald's whereabouts on the Sunday before the assassination.

REYNOLDS SAID he read a note left on that Sunday, Nov. 17, 1963, in the mailbox of Pedro Valeriano Gonzalez, leader of the Cuban refugees in Abilene. The handwritten note directed Gonzalez to call Oswald "immediately" at one of two Dallas telephone numbers.

Reynolds, then a commercial photographer, said he saw Gonzalez calling grapher, said he saw Gonzalez calling from a pay phone booth shortly after he got the message, even though Gonzalez had a phone in his garage apartment several blocks away.

Sunday, six days before the assassi-

Sunday, six days before the assassination, was the only day the Warren
Commission could not determine
where Oswald was. He was not visiting
his wife and children in Irving, as he
did on other weekends, and he was not
seen in his Davias rooming house at

Reynolds also thinks Oswald may have been one of two Anglos attending a closed meeting of Cuban refugees at Gonzalez' apartment several months before the assassination.

Shortly before the meeting, Oswald was seen in Dalias with an intelligence agent known only by the alias of "Maurice Bishop," according to testimony given the House Assasinations Committee by Antonio Veciana of Miami. Veciana, a founder of the Alpha 66 anti-Castro group, told committee investigators that Bishop, an American, was "the man behind the scenes" in the Cuban extre group's attempts to assassinate

REYNOLDS TRIED twice to tell the FBH about the Gonzalez incident in the months after the assessination. Both times, he said, federal agents showed no interest because no pro-Castro Cuban was involved.

Gonzalez, then 38, was president of the refugees' Cuban Liberation Committee in Abilene. He had a "lot of connections" in Cuba and was "very anti-Castro," according to other expatriates who knew him in 1963.

Forced to leave Cube in 1961 after President Fidel Castro seized the equipment of his Begompe Construction Co. in Colon, Matenzas Province, Gonzalez was one of a number of Cuban refugees hired to work in the maintenance department of the Abilene public school system.

His \$200-a-month school custodian's job and his other work at Abilene's Gooch Packing Co. represented a tremendous change for the former \$500-a-month head of a Cuban construction company

counpany.

Gonzalez, however, maintained important contacts with Cuban exile leaders in the United States and abroad.

At the organizational meeting of his Cuban Liberation Committee in December 1961, Gonzalez read a letter from his friend in Mismi, Manuel A. (Tony) de Varona. The letter indicated Varona wanted to visit Abilene, Gonzalez said, but his busy schedule would not permit it.

AT THE TIME, Varona — former prime minister under Cuban President Prio Socarras — had a key role in the CIA-Mafia secret plot to kill Castro with polson pills. He was given the pills by Johnny Roselli, a Las Vegas Mafia figure whose mutilated body was found stuffed in an oil drum floating in a bay off Miami in 1976. Two weeks earlier, Roselli had testified secretly before the Senate intelligence Committee's sub-

committee investigating the Kennedy

Verona also was coordinator of the umbrella exile organization, the Cuban Revolutionary Council, a political front created by the CIA in 1960.

Headquartered in Mismi, the CRC had an active branch in New Orleans, located at 544 Camp St. The News obtained copies of letters sent from the owner of the 544 Camp St. building to Varona asking for help in paying the rent for the CRC offices.

The New Orleans address has emerged as one of the big mysteries of the Warren Commission investigation

"In handwriting it said something like 'call me immediately, urgent' and had two Dallas numbers written on it. I noticed the name 'Lee Oswald' and asked Gonzalez who he was. Seems like he said, 'some attorney from Dallas.' "

of Oswald's activities. Some of the pro-Castro literature Oswald was circulating on a busy New Orleans street when he was arrested in August 1963 was stamped with the Camp Street address.

The FBI informed the Warren Commission after a sloppy effort that it could find no connection between Osweld and the address.

The News recently interviewed a secretary who worked at the New Ornleans address in 1963. Mrs. Delphin Roberts was employed by former Chicago FBI chief W. Guy Banister, she said, when he helped locate space for Oswald as an "undercover agent" in an office above Banister's at \$44 Camp.

Banister ran a private detective agency but also worked closely with the CRC and was head of the Anti-Communism League of the Caribbean.

GONZALEZ TOLD other refugees in Abilene in 1961 that Varona would be elected president of Cuba if and when Castro was overthrown.

since there are people now in Cuba who are fighting in small bands doing sabotage work and other things until we can return."

In 1964, two months after the assassination of Kennedy, Gonzalez "just disappeared" from Abilene, according to a fellow school custodian, Simon G. Gonzalez.

"Pedro borrowed money from the school credit union to buy a car and hadn't finished paying when he left," said Simon Gonzalez, who is no relation to Pedro.

Records at the Abilene Teachery Federal Credit Union show Gonzales' last payroll deduction on an 8800 losin was withdrawn Feb. 4, 1964. He received the loan about two years earlier to buy the car. He continued to pay off the loan from Los Angeles until June 24, 1964. Gonzalez stopped paying when he owed \$40.06; the credit union charged it off.

Friends say Gonzalez left the United States in the summer of 1964 — months before the Warren Commission had concluded Oswald was a lone assassin — to join the anti-Castro movement in Venezuela and work in a sugar factory. A check of federal immigration records failed to show his departure.

Pedro Pompa, godfather of Gonzalez' daughter born in March 1963, sald he and his wife have not heard from Gonzalez since they received a letter from him in Venezuela about 10 years ago.

GONZALE? FRIEND Reynolds was out of town on a business trip to Del Rio. Texas, at the time of the assassination. Reynolds, a frequent guest of Gonzalez at open meetings of his Cuban Liberation Committee and a dinner and drinking companion, never saw him after the assassination.

"I figured he left town right then,"
Reynolds said recently after learning
Gonzalez was in Abilene for two more
months.

Reynolds' wife remembers that Gonzalez and his refugee friend, Raul Alfonso, came by the house several times before and after the assassination inquiring about her husband's whereabouts and when he would return. She thought this "uncharacteristic."

On the Sunday after the assassina tion, when Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby shot Oswald to death in the

(it) is possible to overthrow Castro,"

"If you (the United States) help us,

basement of Dallas police headquarters, Gonzalez and Alfonso called again at the Reynolds home.

"He (Gonzalez) wanted all the photos of his baby and all the party shots

Harold had taken of them," Mrs. Reynolds said. "He also asked for all the neg atives. When I told him Harold usually released only the prints, Pedro reseased See EXILE on Page 7AA.

Exile 'looked nervous' after receiving message

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posted very firmly, I want the negatives, too.' I figured he really meant it, so I gave them to him."

MRS. REYNOLDS mid Gonzalez then put his arm around me and said something as though he was leaving for good." Waiting in the car for Gonzalez and Alfonso was another man whose face was hidden behind a newspaper, Mrs. Reynolds said.

Alionso, now living in Downey, Selif, said, "It could be possible that I was with him (Gonzalez), but I can't bemember."

Gonzalez, last known to be in San Pelipe, Venezuela, was not listed in the salephone directory there and could not otherwise be reached for comment.

Reynolds' son, Reginald, said his lather's story "seems to remain constant" since he first heard it "so he's been carrying this with him for 15 - years."

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"As far as the note (from Oswald), I don't know," Reynolds' son said. "I do know there was a shift in tone. I could feel that something was going on. We didn't see Pedro much any more about this time. Then at one point, he was

The elder Reynolds said he learned of the Oswald note when the landlady of Gonzalez' apartment knocked on the door as he was showing baby photo proofs to Gonzalez, who was esting lanch. He said he opened the door and took a small card from the landlady who said she first saw it wedged in Gonzalez' mailbox two or three days earlier.

"In handwriting it said something like 'call me immediately, urgent' and had two Dallas numbers written on it," Reynolds said. "I noticed the name 'Lee Oswald' and asked Gonzalez who he was. Seems like he said, 'some attorney from Dallas.'

"He looked nervous and sweat started appearing on his forehead. So I left to go up the street and deliver some photos. As I was coming back I noticed his car a few blocks from his house and him standing in a pay phone booth."

REYNOLDS ASSUMED Oswald left the card in Gonzalez mailbox about two days earlier when Gonzalez and other Cuban refugees were at Reynolds house for Sunday dinner.

Gonzalez best friend, Alionso, said Gonzalez "used to talk to me about everything and he never mentioned anything like that (Oswald note)."

Asked whether Gonzalez ever mentioned Kennedy, Alfonso said he didn't "think he was too much involved in politics. In Cuba he was... real big but not that much. Not here he wasn't involved that much at all."

The Rev. Antonio Rodriguez, at whose house Gonzales organized the Cuban Liberation Committee in 1961, said "as far as I knew, he (Gonzalez) never had any relationship with Oswald or any kind of people like this. But he did with organized (Cuban refugee) politicians like Varona and some others who are responsible persons."

Gonzalez was "very anti-Castro and

had a great desire to go back to Cuba, Rodriguez said.

Gonzalez was "very enthusiastic that Kennedy ordered the blockade around Cuba" during the missile crisis in 1962, Rodriguez said.

However, Reynolds said Gonzalez grew increasingly impatient with the Kennedy administration after the president warned in the spring of 1963 that he would not tolerate continued training by Cuben militants in the United States for commando raids on Castro installations.

"This is when Gonzales' group here started macting more and famings grew pretty strong toward Kennedy," Reynolds said.

REYNOLDS RECALLS when Gonzalez and several other refugees were at his house for dinner the Sunday before the assassination. He showed Gonzalez a story on the front page of The News headlined, "Incident-Free Day

Urged for JFK Visit."

"Pedro got quite excited," Reynolds said, "and although he wasn't supposed to have much knowledge of English, he went into the other room and translated the article into Spanish for four or five other Cubans. They also got excited. He came back waving the newspaper and whistling Bridge over the River Kwai."

Reynolds also remembered a trip in Gonzalez' car that he, L.K. Brandon — a former fishing companion of Reynolds — and another Abilene friend took to West Texas in the summer of 1963.

"At Sweetwater the fan belt went out and we were sitting there waiting for a service truck when Brandon asked Gonzalez about Kennedy," he said

"Somebody is going to kill him."
Reynolds recalls Gonzalez answering bitterly.

Brandon couldn't remember the trip but said he once had a similar conversation with Gonzalez. He said he thinks it occurred at a service station in Abilene when Reynolds introduced him to Gonzalez.

"I saked him then, I says, What do you think of Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs?" Brandon said. "And I believe he said, That son-of-a-bitch,' like that. You would have to take it that he didn't like Kennedy. But you would have to feel that after the Bay of Pigs, there would be a lot of people who didn't like him."

BRANDON SAID Reynolds also told him he thought he saw Oswald coming down the stairs after one of the closed meetings of the Cuban Liberation Committee at Gonzalez' apartment in Abilene.

"He was a white man and he (Reynolds) was wondering why he was upstairs anyway in a closed meeting when he always said before no one but Cubans could go to those meetings. Brandon said. "They had open meetings, two or three times a week. And Harold went to those open meetings. He would go to the closed meetings and stay downstairs until it was over with."

Reynolds said he saw two white men attending a closed meeting about two months before the assassination. One man resembled the Oswald he later saw on television, he said, but he wasn't certain it was him. The other man "was a little dried-up Anglo from New Orleans, about 5 feet 8 inches tall, not dark-complexioned but a weathered complexion, about 55."

Some of the people who attended the meeting, he said, drove cars with Louisiana and Florida plates.