

"All the News That's UNFIT to Print"

Joachim Joesten's

TRUTH LETTER

An Antidote to Official Mendacity and Newsfaking in the Press

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Editorial: The Unamericans are those who made the U.S. a super-banana republic

THE DALAS COUP D'ETAT (ctd.)

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The Other Picture That Shocked the New Orleans Jury

"'Mystery' Photo Barred to Press" protested in bold, black type the headline of a story in the New Orleans States-Item of Feb. 15, 1969. The text underneath read in part:

"A mystery photograph taken in Dealey Plaza the day of the assassination of President Kennedy was introduced in evidence at the trial of Clay L. Shaw today over defense objections.

"District Attorney Jim Garrison, making one of his rare courtroom appearances, refused to show the picture to newsmen and testimony about what it showed was barred....

"The picture was taken by Mrs. Mary Moorman of Dallas, who was the state's final witness today before the trial recessed for the weekend....

"Chief defense counsel F. Irvin Dymond objected to Mrs. Moorman's testimony and the introduction of her photograph as irrelevant, but was overruled by Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr.

"Mrs. Moorman and her photo were subpoenaed Jan. 23. She was not mentioned in the Warren Commission Report on the assassination, but in Mark Lane's book 'Rush to Judgment', Lane reports Mrs. Moorman snapped a picture of the presidential motorcade while standing across the street from the Texas School Book Depository. Lane says the sixth-floor window of the depository, from where the Warren Report says Lee Harvey Oswald fired all three shots at Kennedy, is clearly visible in Mrs. Moorman's photo."...

Let's stop here for a moment to add that Mr. Lane's book contains other references to the Moorman picture that are of great significance. He wrote, among other things:

"Since Mrs. Moorman had used a Polaroid camera, the consequences were twofold: she was able to see the picture before it was taken from her by the police; she was not able to retain a negative. She told the FBI that the picture showed the book Depository in the background, a fact confirmed by the two deputy sheriffs (elsewhere identified in the book as John Wiseman and Allan Sweatt) who also saw it.

"Mrs. Moorman was a witness with inordinately pertinent evidence to offer. Pictures of her in the act of photographing the motorcade appear in the volumes of evidence published by the Commission and in the Warren Commission Report itself..."

To revert for a moment to the States-Item story, this is confirmed by the following paragraphs:

"During Mrs. Moorman's testimony this morning, one frame of the film of the assassination taken by Dallas dress manufacturer Abraham Zapruder was shown, over defense objections, in order that Mrs. Moorman could point ~~xxx~~ herself out and specify where she was standing.

"Mrs. Moorman identified the picture she says she took with an instant-developing camera. It was introduced and is available to be viewed by the jury, but Dymond objected to Mrs. Moorman's testifying about what it showed and was sustained. Neither side had any further questions for Mrs. Moorman and she was excused..."

Now back to Mark Lane. He continues: "Yet the Report makes no mention of her or of her photograph; her name does not appear in the index to the Report. Although the Commission published many photographs, some of ~~xxx~~ doubtful pertinency, it refused to publish the picture that possibly constituted the single most important item of evidence in establishing Oswald's innocence or guilt.

"If the photograph depicted Oswald and his rifle at the window, may we not confidently presume that it would have been published? The Commission stated that it refrained from publishing certain exhibits only if they were 'of negligible relevance' and 'because of their length or for reasons of taste.' A photograph of the sixth-floor window was quite obviously of relevance and was not too long. Nor could it be held to be offensive to 'taste'..."

"...If Oswald was not at the window as the motorcade passed the building, how could he have fired from there? Evidently either this Commission conclusion was in error - or Brennan, its main witness, was..."

Before we proceed with the curious and extraordinarily illuminating story of the Moorman picture's display at the Clay Shaw trial, let me quote what I myself had written in the second edition of Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy? which came out in January 1965 and contained both the first critical evaluation of the Warren Report and the first mention of Mary Moorman between book covers:

"The two witnesses closest to the limousine (outside of the motorcycle escort) were two women, Mrs. Jean Hill, a school teacher, and Mrs. Mary Moorman, a housewife. They were on the south side of the limousine... The Dallas Times-Herald reported that 'Both women claim they were directly in the path of the bullet,' i.e. in the line of fire from the grassy knoll. Mrs. Moorman was not called at all by the Commission, although she took a Polaroid snapshot of the President the instant he was shot. The snapshot was confiscated by the FBI and is not mentioned in the Report (neither is Mrs. Moorman)..."

Now, the diligent reader will perhaps already have observed that Mr. Lane and I are not talking about the same Moorman picture. I had stated that the woman took a photo the instant the President was shot and that, according to her own testimony, she had been at that moment "directly in the path of the bullet." Mark Lane, on the other hand, claimed that the Moorman picture showed the sixth-floor window of the TSB (which would have been impossible with her camera focussed closely on the presidential limousine the instant Kennedy was shot) and wondered whether Oswald was, or was not at that window.

As a matter of fact, Mary Moorman took two pictures in quick succession, a fact I was unaware of when I wrote my first book on the subject, and Mr. Lane apparently was, too, when he wrote his.

Harold Weisberg has in his third book about the assassination, titled "Photographic Whitewash" a long chapter "Mary Moorman Didn't Make It!" (i.e. she didn't qualify as a witness before the Warren Commission) which gives a detailed account of what happened to Mrs. Moorman and her friend, Mrs. Hill. It results from this work, published in 1967, that Mrs. Moorman took at least two, possibly even three or more pictures as she watched the motorcade approach and finally pass ^{certain} within a few feet from her, at the moment of the fatal head shot.

Of the two pictures Mrs. Moorman took, the first (referred to by Mark Lane in his book) has never been published and it is not clear what happened to it. It was at one time in the possession of the Secret Service, which displayed little interest in it, as did the Warren Commission.

Her second picture, however, (the one referred to in my book) is certainly destined to make history; it has, in fact, already made history at the Clay Shaw trial. According to the States-Item of Feb. 28, 1969:

"Just before the testimony ended today, each juror was handed a portion of a photograph enlarged to the extreme. According to the witness, Peter Schuster, a photographer and investigator for the Orleans Parish Coroner's Office, he claimed it showed a man holding something, but he testified he could not say whether the man was holding a gun.

"Nevertheless, each juror received a copy of the picture and the effect was instantaneous. For five minutes their eyes were glued on the picture and they began talking to each other..."

Why were the jurors' eyes "glued" on the picture for five minutes and why did they get so excited about it, Judge Maggerty had to instruct them, not to discuss the picture in the courtroom? The summarized account of the matter, quoted from the above-cited story "FILM SHOCKS SHAW TRIAL", which also deals with the effect of the Zapruder film showing on the jury, is not very illuminating on this point, but the full transcript of the Schuster testimony on p. 6 of the same issue of the States-Item, is.

In yet another article which appeared in the same issue of that paper, it is stated: "Schuster testified about two mysterious photographs given him Jan. 20 by the DA's office. He said he examined them until Feb. 23.

"There was no testimony to indicate where or when the photos were taken, but chief prosecutor James L. Alcock said they were intended to rebut testimony that Kennedy was shot from behind. They were introduced over the strenuous objections of chief defense counsel F. Irvin Dymond...

"The photos were not shown to newsmen. However, courtroom sources said the key picture shows the grassy knoll in Dealey Plaza from where Garrison contends shots were fired at Kennedy. In the upper right is a figure which the state contends is a man..."

There can be no question but that the "mystery photograph" referred to above is the second Moorman picture, snapped the instant the President was struck by the fatal head shot. For, as has been noted above, Garrison, in his opening statement to the jury on Feb. 6, 1969, had drawn up a list of photographs and motion picture films other than the Zapruder Film which, he said, the state would offer as evidence, among them, as No. 1 "The Moorman picture" which is a polaroid photograph taken by Mary Moorman in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963. In addition to this picture, but in connection with it, the state will offer various blow-up prints of this photograph. And the Schuster testimony, which will be described below in detail, centers precisely on an examination and discussion of such blow-up prints. Moreover, it will be noted that Schuster had worked on these prints until Feb. 13 and that two days later a picture specifically described as having been taken by Mary Moorman was introduced in evidence over defense objections, as has been stated above. (to be continued in next issue)

Where Garrison Went Wrong (conclusion)

Garrison's baffling on-again-off-again trial tactics were oddly at variance with the masterful presentation of his case in the famous Playboy interview and on other occasions (for details, see my books "The Garrison Enquiry" and "How Kennedy Was Killed.")

For instance, he first announced with fanfare that he would call Gov. and Mrs. Connally as witnesses, and then dropped them both without explanation. It is true that Connally had indicated in press interviews that he would not be a cooperative witness, but a merciless cross-examination could certainly have forced the reluctant witness to admit in court and under oath what he had already affirmed in a dozen or so published statements and even had told the Warren Commission: to wit, that he was absolutely sure he had been hit by a different bullet from the one that had struck Kennedy. Connally single-handedly ruined the single-bullet theory, kingpin of the Warren Report, which did not stop the Governor, who seems to be deprived of even the most rudimentary form of logic, from endorsing that report. What a poor figure this man would have made in the courtroom and how anything he might say in defense of the Warren Report could have been ripped to pieces by a clever state attorney! What a lost occasion to strike a tremendous blow for the truth!

Garrison's flipflop on the crucial issue of the autopsy materials was stupendous and had disastrous consequences. After Judge Charles Halleck Jr. in Washington had turned down Garrison's request for immediate release of the autopsy photos and X-rays - this matter will be further discussed in "The Kennedy Autopsy Fraud" section - the DA's office first announced, on January 17, 1969, that the State could not proceed with the trial on account of the federal government's interference with vitally important evidence - only to proceed with the trial a few days later, with that "must" evidence still not available.

Why didn't Garrison see to it that his key witnesses got adequate protection, although he had plenty of experience concerning the threats, assaults and even murders to which practically all witnesses who failed to back up the official line have been constantly subjected since the Kennedy assassination?

At least two important witnesses who were to testify for the State at the Clay Shaw trial, namely James F. Hicks and the Rev. Clyde Johnson, were severely beaten up while in New Orleans, which Garrison could have prevented, and later suffered a far worse fate, he probably could not have done anything about. Hicks wound up in an insane asylum (See TL, Vol.I, No. 2 - "The Hicks Scandal") and Johnson was murdered on July 23, 1969 (see TL, Vol.II, No. 2).

For some strange reason, Garrison did not personally prosecute the most important case of his career, but left its presentation and the examination of witnesses to his aides James L. Alcock as chief counsel for the State, Alvin Oser, Andrew Sciambra and William Alford as assistants - none of whom enjoyed his authority and prestige. Garrison himself made only rare and intermittent courtroom appearances, as though he didn't know or care that his place in history was at stake.

He rested his case much too early, with at least a dozen witnesses, who had been subpoenaed, still waiting to be called. In the last analysis, it must be said that he left his case against Clay Shaw hanging in the air.

His unforgivable sins, however, were his puzzling about-face on Oswald's role in the plot and his softness towards the CIA which contrasted so markedly with the fierce oratory that had gone before. Under these circumstances, I am sorry to say, the possibility of a silent accommodation between Garrison and the CIA - maybe for "patriotic reasons" - can no longer be excluded.

The new book by Joachim Joesten TRILOGY OF MURDER,
 An analysis and interpretation of the John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and
 Dr. Martin Luther King assassinations. - Copyright by J. Joesten, 1968-1969.

If the prosecutors "huddled daily," the reason was that, with Mayor Yorty breathing hard down their necks, they had to labor hard - again the same as their colleagues in Dallas in 1963 - to wipe out the obtrusively conspicuous traces of conspiracy. If they valiantly struggled to "plug the holes" of the case, truth was not an ingredient of their plugging material.

I have already dwelt at considerable length on some of the primary aspects of falsification, the most important being without question the whitewashing of the veteran CIA agent Sirhan B. Sirhan into a befuddled Jordanian immigrant who never left the country of his choice. The preposterous "motive" that was fabricated for him by Yorty and his cohorts, with the eager assistance of the news-fakers, ranks second in importance. The huddling prosecutors' benign glossing over the fact that Sirhan could not possibly know, and indeed had no reason to assume as likely that Sen. Kennedy would come his way, since kitchen pantries are not normal exists from ballrooms, indicating that he was only one of several snipers posted in the hotel, comes third. Disregarding the telltale traces of conspiracy dug up by the National Enquirer was almost routine, as is the handling of the matter we must now concern ourselves with, The Case of the Girl in the Polka Dot Dress.

The girl first made her appearance in the above-quoted AP dispatch of June 10 which went on to say: "Although Sirhan was arrested at the scene of the fatal shooting early Wednesday, and identified by several witnesses as the New York senator's assailant, the case presents unanswered questions. Not the least of them is whether there was a conspiracy behind the shooting."

This is the usual sop thrown to the public, in all three of the Great Assassinations, evidently with the consent of the powers-that-be. The notion of possible conspiracy is not dismissed out of hand, for the Public has "a right to know." So the question is posed, only to be later disposed of with a lot of specious arguments, false information and the inevitable "no evidence of conspiracy could be found etc." The scheme has worked perfectly so far because of the public's inherent, if utterly misplaced, trust in the integrity of those who run this country.

The hint of possibly conspiracy in the case was further developed in this dispatch as follows: "Police haven't been able to produce the dark-haired "girl in the polka-dot dress." Sandy Serrano, 20, a Youth for Kennedy worker, reported seeing the girl run from the Ambassador Hotel after the shooting and say, "We shot him."¹¹

This last sentence is, of course, incredible per se. Nobody runs out into the street, after a sensational murder has been committed, saying "We shot him." If Miss Serrano's statement is otherwise correct, what she had heard was undoubtedly "They shot him."

That is also apparent from the next paragraph of the dispatch which, however, also confuses the issue further. Since the reporter obviously got his information from the investigating authorities, that may have been intentional:

"Three young women, the latest a 19-year-old belly dancer, have claimed to be the girl in the polka-dot dress, all saying Miss Serrano misunderstood their words as they ran from the hotel. But Miss Serrano says none is the girl she saw." (to be continued in the next issue)