

SEASON'S
GREETINGS!
Paul

FBI finds HSC acoustical analysis "invalid":

- * 512. 1 Dec 80 Justice Department press release [1 p.]
- ** 513. 1 Dec 80 [1 p.] JD (Keuch) letter to Stokes, transmitting the report. Copies are also going to the NAS and the NSF. Stokes' "continued cooperation" is "appreciated."
- *** 514. 19 Nov 80 [ii + 22 pp.] Review prepared by the FBI's Technical Services Division. [If you want only the guts of the report - the critique of the HSC analysis, and the recommendations requested by the JD - ask for #514X (10 pp., namely pp. 13-22). The remaining pages are mainly a summary of the HSC analysis.]
- * 515. 1 Dec 80 Transcription (by PLH) of some of the radio & TV coverage [2 pp.] Includes comments by Stokes, Blakey, and McKinney.
- ** 516. 2 Dec 80 LA Times (Bob Jackson) "FBI Disputes Theory of 4 Rifle Shots in JFK's Slaying" Very hostile: "The Times disclosed in January 1978 that committee staff officials had withheld acoustical evidence from congressmen that ran counter to a conspiracy finding... Blakey, who has written a forthcoming book.... Justice Department spokesman Dean St. Dennis said the FBI had sought copies of the committee's detailed acoustical reports since early last year but did not receive them until November 1979."
- * 517. 2 Dec 80 DMN (Barbara Strong) "JFK panel's report wrong, FBI says"
- *** 518. 2 Dec 80 DMN (Scott Parks) "FBI finding doesn't surprise policeman" Bowles says "he was interviewed extensively by the FBI" and that "the agents believed his story." He won't publicly name the officer at the Trade Mart whose motorcycle Bowles can prove made the recording.
- * 519. 2 Dec 80 NYT (Robert Pear) A page-one story. Barger had no immediate comment; Weiss said he had not known the FBI was doing an analysis "and had not been asked to explain his findings."
- 520. 2 Dec 80 UPI in OT "FBI says Oswald alone killed JFK"
- 521. 2 Dec 80 UPI in SFC (Slightly shorter and different version)
- 522. 2 Dec 80 WP (p. 6) (Lardner) "FBI disputes panel on JFK gunmen"
- *** 523. 3 Dec 80 OT "Federal report on JFK killing sparks scorn"; interview by Blakey with Gannett News Service. "'It's a cheap shot ... outrageous... reasoning that even a sophomore in physics wouldn't engage in.' Blakey was surprised by the report Monday, and on Tuesday unleashed a counter-attack on the FBI rare for its intensity. 'The FBI usually does unbiased, good work,' raged Blakey ... 'but this cheap, sophomoric, 22-page report is little more than an armchair analysis of what we did, and it disheartens me.... For reasons wholly inexplicable to me, they waited two years to produce a document that they could have put together in six weeks....'"
- ** 524. 3 Dec 80 SFC; a typically silly editorial. "... endlessly-investigated ... We share the Bureau's conclusion... suppositious [sic] contention that four ... shots were fired... Let this suffice. Too much time has passed... a detective trail grown far too cold... put the sad, divisive tragedy behind us, particularly insofar as public funds are concerned."

For my analysis of the FBI report, see below, page 9.

FOIA matters:

- * 525. 12 Nov 80 [14 pp.] Decision of the US Court of Appeals in Mark Allen's suit (with Jim Lesar) against the CIA for CD 347, the initial CIA report to the WC on LHO in Mexico. A rather good decision: the court ordered the release of certain filing and routing instructions, and ordered in camera inspection of other material the CIA has withheld. Good work, guys. (The low rating here - just one star - is for the decision itself, which is longer than CD 347 but less interesting.)
- 526. 4 Dec 80 [1 p.] My summary (giving dates per section) of the inventory worksheets for two newly reviewed FBI files. I was after pre-assassination material, but nothing new was released. I have the 16 pages of worksheets

for the Dallas file on Marina under the SOBIR [Soviet birth, presumably] program, plus the 144 pages of worksheets for the Mexico City Oswald file. The identifiable pre-assassination material is on the first two worksheets of each file. There is probably some good stuff in the Mexico 1A file - there are lots of photos and classified enclosures. The worksheets include cross-references to HQ files for previously processed items. I didn't see anything I wanted to pursue, but I'm sure these files would be worth a few hours of the time of someone in Washington.

Fonzi's article:

- ** 527. 25 Nov 80 [2 pp.] Blakey's letter to The Washingtonian; he didn't like Fonzi's article. Blakey denies initially believing that organized crime did it: "In fact, I personally thought it highly unlikely that a conspiracy had led to the assassination and that if it had, it would not have included organized crime ... too risky of a venture for the mob.... The Committee's investigation failed to find Fonzi's 'Great White Whale,' not because we - Fonzi and I - did not try, but because the evidence was not there. Mr. Fonzi's article, in short, is not the truth about the Committee's investigation, but a sad self-revelation of a single man's monomania."
528. 22 Nov 80 [2 pp.] My handwritten notes on roughly the middle hour of Fonzi's appearance on the Larry King show. (I also have the partial tape.) Fonzi seemed generally much less interested in making an issue of Blakey's good faith, and that of the entire Committee investigation, than you would think from the article.

Additional items of interest:

529. Press release [2 pp.] and excerpt [1 p., annotated map of New Orleans] re the Guth-Wrone bibliography, previously noted. Can any of you who have actually seen it tell me if it is worth \$37.50? For 498 pages, that's a lot.
- * 530. FBI 97-4196-857 [4 pp.] Letter of June 29, 1963 from Rafael Aznarez of New Orleans, forwarding a handbill he had obtained from a "young American" on Canal Street. There is no name or local address on the handbill, so it does not seem odd that FBIHQ didn't forward this to New Orleans. This appears to be from an early, perhaps previously unknown, Oswald literature distribution. After the assassination, Aznarez reminded the FBI of this previous letter. (I asked for this under the FOIA at Tony Summers' request, and got it with no trouble.)
531. "A Skeleton Key to the Gemstone File" [24 pp.] Pure crap.

Forthcoming documentary:

Taft International Pictures of Salt Lake City has been working on a film; the December TCI will provide more details. They've talked to a lot of people, including critics, and I expect them to take a reasonable, generally pro-HSC, position. Watch the theater listings.

Forthcoming books:

I expect Blakey's book to be out any time now. (Later info: p. 8 infra.) Lifton's book should be available before I put together another newsletter. The official publication date is, I believe, January 27. Copies may well not be available pre-publication, but keep your eyes open. When the book is out, I'll be glad to discuss it with any of you, and hear your opinions.

Clippings:

532. Winter 1980 [16 pp.] Michael L. Kurtz, in "Louisiana History"; "Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans: A Reappraisal" Kurtz is in the History Dept. at Southeastern Louisiana University. Basically a B- paper; mostly superficial, and sloppy in spots. Some sources are "confidential interviews." A report (pp. 16-17) of a Baton Rouge sighting of Oswald with a couple of segregationists was new to me, but not particularly persuasive.
- ** 533. 17 Aug 80 [2 pp.] Dallas Times-Herald; anti-conspiracy piece by Bedell and Aynesworth. Very bad. [#479 was a reprint of this article.]
534. 17 Aug 80 [1 p.] Accompanying piece on Eddowes (background)
535. 17 Aug 80 (DTH) [2 pp.] Accompanying anti-conspiracy drawing, featuring Lane and Garrison. (Not bad, really. Lane is saying "blah blah blah.")

536. 17 Aug 80 DTH [3 pp.] Accompanying photos (Eddowes, grave) (Routine)
- * 537. 21 Oct 79 LA Herald-Examiner; Bill Schorr cartoon: LHO's casket is opened, and "It's Jimmy Hoffa."
538. 22 Oct 80 UPI in SFC "Watergate on the networks: Tuck plays the tapes" "He said his copy [of the 18-minute gap tape] appears to reveal talk dealing with the CIA and the Bay of Pigs invasion...."
539. 22 Oct 80 Jack Anderson in SFC; "[Terpil] School for Terror"
540. 22 Oct 80 SFC; Judy Stone review of French documentary on politicians' diseases. "Clay Blair, plugging his book ..., explained that the cortisone JFK was taking ... acted as an aphrodisiac and made him 'very virile,' causing many ladies to succumb. Blair afterthought: 'He was also handsome and rich.'" (Yes, this is I.F. Stone's sister.)
541. 23 Oct 80 LAT in SFC [2 pp.] "Ex-CIA agent (Barnett) probed as spy for Russians" I suppose that in ten years Epstein will tell us what all this is really about - how many people Barnett was working for at various times, and why the story (with its emphasis on the infiltration on Congressional staffs) surfaced now.
542. 23 Oct 80 (AP in SFC) "Informer [Fратианно] says Mafia families 'run the Teamsters Union'"
543. 25 Oct 80 (UPI in SFC) "Ex-CIA agent (Barnett) indicted"
544. 25 Oct 80 (LAT in SFC) "Startling testimony in Mafia trial" (FBI agent says Dragna admitted being temporary boss of a Mafia family.)
545. 26 Oct 80 PLH notes (1 p.) on "In Search of Lee Harvey Oswald" (shown on Channel 5). (I also have an audio tape.) Started with the acoustics, but then went to Nosenko, Epstein's handwriting analysis and the diary "anachronisms," and finally Eddowes. Really very bad.
546. 26 Oct 80 [2 pp.] Tom Powers' review of Cord Meyer's book
547. 29 Oct 80 (LAT in SFC) "Attorneys General [Mitchell, Kleindienst, Clark] testify they didn't OK break-ins" (Felt trial)
548. 29 Oct 80 (AP & UPI in SFC) Ledeen testimony on sources for story that Billy Carter met with Arafat
549. 30 Oct 80 (NYT in SFC) "Ex-CIA agent admits he sold US secrets" [3 pp.]
- ** 597. 30 Oct 80 (AP in SFC) "GAO for ending [systematic] review of 'secrets'" [sic] Current system costs \$11 million per year; Archives supports regular review of old classified documents.
598. 30 Oct 80 (AP in SFC) "\$1 million bond" for suspect in V. Jordan shooting
599. 31 Oct 80 (AP in SFC) "Mob suspects [in LA trial] pin hopes on [incriminating] notes found in [Bonanno's] trash"
600. 31 Oct 80 (UP in SFC) "Katzenbach 'never knew' of break-ins" Hoover favored taps and microphones, he said, especially in organized crime cases.
- *** 601. Nov. 1980 (Boston) "Growing doubts about Dallas," by Carl Oglesby. A good wrapup piece, with an account of the confrontation with Tom Wicker at the Summers evening at Mailer's place. Includes comments by Blakey on the presumed demise of the second gunman, the LHO-Kostikov meeting, Summers' perspective, etc. Blakey: "And even if a few CIA people were corrupted, that only raises the question of who corrupted them." Also: "Did you know ... that Ruby was with the #2 guy in the Dallas mob the night before the assassination?" (No, I didn't. Who?) [3 pp.]
- This is the best of the anniversary articles, I think. There wasn't a whole lot of coverage; please send me anything good I missed. (Including articles from sleazy tabloids - I won't mention your name!)
- ** 602. Nov. 1980 (Denver) "Fear and Loathing on the Assassination Trail," by Peter Boyles [7 pp.] Pilot William Pearson thinks he flew the hit team to Dallas. ("Pearson" is a pseudonym; Ted Rubinstein wonders if he might be Julian Busnedo, who was a pilot, knew Ferrie, and (in 1967) lived in Denver. [Source: "Plot or Politics?"])
- The gonzo journalism is a bit off-putting, as are the obvious factual errors (e.g., calling Fensterwald an HSCA investigator). What makes this story ultimately provocative to me is that Pearson is not just giving us Oswald, Ferrie, Allen Dulles, and Clay Shaw on a plane together. Pearson's passengers didn't brag about the assassination;

he just found the circumstances of the trip suspicious. Two of the passengers were said to be Enrico Martez and [Reinaldo] Martinez; not well-known names, but said to be pilots and bodyguards for Trafficante. Sounds like it's worth checking out, anyhow.

603. Nov. 1980 [2 pp.] Accompanying drawing, and cover photo of author.
- * 604. Nov. 1980 [9 pp.] "Le Couvert Blown: William Colby en Français," by Joseph Nocera (Washington Monthly) What the CIA cut out of the US edition - but not the French edition - of Colby's book. Of special interest to me: in French, Des Fitzgerald "died of a heart attack while on the job;" in English, "cause of death unexplained." Anyone who wants to hear my paranoid fantasies about Fitzgerald has to buy me a couple of drinks first. [These quotes are from Nocera, not Colby.]
605. 1 Nov 80 WP (Sinclair) "Senate race in Pa.: a lackluster story, promising suspense" Specter is called highly organized, "glib and bright." He won. (Of our HSC friends, Fithian squeaked through, Devine and Preyer lost, and Dodd made it to the Senate.)
606. 2 Nov 80 (NYT) "Tierl trial provides a rare look at 'la Cosa Nostra'"
607. 3 Nov 80 (Perlman, SFC) "Scientists fear misuse of voice analysis devices" (PSE) [2 pp.] The author is a good science reporter.
608. 4 Nov 80 (Jack Anderson in SFC) "[Mob] Muscling In" on Teamsters funds
609. 6 Nov 80 (JA in SFC) "Another 'mole'?" The DIA is concerned.
610. 7 Nov 80 (AP & UPI in SFC) "Former FBI officials [Felt, Miller] found guilty"
- ** 611. 9 Nov 80 (WP) "Rise and fall of a bureaucrat," by Phil McCombs [4 pp.] A profile of Deanne Siemer. Interesting in itself; also perhaps relevant to the question of HSC-Defense Department relations (which are not mentioned here). This tends to argue against the hypothesis that Siemer was so nasty to the HSC because she knew something special - either something in the DoD files, or private information from her husband, Howard Willens. The catch is that she seems to have been that nasty to just about everyone. Nonetheless, let's try out this paranoid hypothesis again after January 27.
612. 9 Nov 80 (SFC) "Blind Trust: an innocent abroad in the corridors of power," by Wm. Turner, a S.F. lawyer. Life with the Billy Carter investigation. Anecdotal; interesting. [4 pp.]
613. 11 Nov 80 (SFC) "The man who sold secrets" (Profile of Barnett) [2 pp.]
614. 12 Nov 80 (SFC) M. Moskowitz, "All eyes are on the big book publishers" Good summary of recent reports on the problems of the book business.
- * 615. 13 Nov 80 (Boston Globe) "Cambridge firm fined \$706,000" Notes that some of the dispute was over disguised - i.e., not charged for - cost overruns (and not overcharges). I don't think we'll see any BB&N people doing free work for the government - including the Ramsey panel.
- *** 616. 16 Nov 80 (Parade) [3 pp.] "The Plot to Kill the President - an Expert's Theory" By Blakey and Billings, "adapted from" their book. With a self-congratulatory introduction by Jack Anderson.
- I've been urged not to judge the book by this adaptation, so I won't. I find it hard to believe that Blakey would say that "Roselli could not; in short, have been aware of the fact of a shot from the knoll unless he had inside information." Where does that leave Mark Lane, and the millions of people in his audiences who were persuaded that a knoll shot was a proven fact? Don't Mafiosi attend Mark Lane lectures?
- There is the interesting suggestion that by accepting women from Sinatra, JFK compromised himself in the mob's eyes, and may have made himself a target by subsequently going after the mob.
617. 16 Nov 80 (Parade) [4 pp.] Graphics (including cover) for #616.
- * 618. 16 Nov 80 (UPI in LAT & SFX) "JFK wrote amendment to ban import of firearms like one that killed him" In just-released 1958 Senate hearings, JFK specifically mentioned Italian Carcanos. (Strange story - this is for real, isn't it?) This item is just ironic, but I still have a hunch that it might be relevant that the Feds were specifically investigating mail-order sales of guns by the two companies from whom Oswald ordered

his weapons - leaving a good and presumably unnecessary trail. That is, if Oswald was in fact doing little jobs for anyone, he may have thought that he was helping with this investigation.

550. 16 Nov 80 (SF Examiner) "The double-accursed tapes," a strange little [sic] editorial comment on BBN's troubles (referring back to Nixon's). "Moral: Time is a great legalizer as well as a peddler of all things." You figure it out; Hearst must have written that himself.
- * 551. 16 Nov 80 Lardner (WP) [2 pp.] "Intelligence Community Can Look Forward to a New Era of Secrecy" A good but depressing article. Get your FOIA requests in now, while there still is an FOIA.
- * 552. 16 Nov 80 NYT; Von Hoffman review of "The Cola Wars." Sort of negative, but seems to like the idea of the book (and he spells the authors' names right). When someone gives me an official version of the rumor explaining the absence of certain JFK-assassination-"related" info from the book, I'll pass it on.
553. 16 Nov 80 (SFC) Ad for "The Roswell Incident," about an alleged UFO crash. Listed only because I'm amused by the blurb: "This may be [my emphasis] the news story of the century. Even now the CIA is being sued for the truth about the Roswell incident." What will we do without the FOIA?!
554. 17 Nov 80 (UPI in SFC) "[Cleveland Press] Publisher [Joseph Cole] Linked to Alleged Crime Figures" including Moe Dalitz
555. 18 Nov 80 (AP in SFX) The lawyer for the family of one of four blacks killed by N.O. police is Mark Lane, who said he could prove conclusively that at least two of the killings were unnecessary.
556. 19 Nov 80 Brief mention, in Liz Smith column, of forthcoming book of FBI and CIA documents on Paul Robeson.
557. 19 Nov 80 Daily Cal; "CIA recruiters return to Berkeley campus"
558. 20 Nov 80 SFC; "Hell's Angel witness [in RICO case] says agents paid him [\$60,000]" The judge is unhappy.
559. 21 Nov 80 (SFC) "US Attorney Defends Paying a Hell's Angel Witness"
560. 22 Nov 80 (SFC) "Kristin Shot J.R. - And Dropped a Bombshell" This AP story was on the back page of the main news section. A free subscription to this newsletter for the best paranoid explanation of how a fantasy shooting on Dallas got to be big news on 11/22! In this context only, references to Dan Rather and the Zapruder film are allowed.
561. 22 Nov 80 Flyer for some sort of new-wave art exhibit related to the assassination. Flyer includes LIES magazine cover - the LIFE cover with JFK's head instead of LHO's. All very punk, I guess; not much of an anniversary event, but that's the way it was.
- *** 562. 22 Nov 80 (UPI in LAT) "Widow 99% Sure Oswald Body is Gone" [3 pp.] Interview of Marina by Dan Carmichael. She thinks the body may have been removed in 1964, after she signed some papers. She wants help from the public in getting the exhumation. She is very upset with Robert Oswald.
- * 563. 23 Nov 80 (Golz, DMN) "Doubts on Oswald termed ridiculous" by Cornwell
564. 23 Nov 80 The annual Arlington Cemetery photo
565. 23 Nov 80 (SFC) [2 pp.] "Dear Abby" column - readers' stories of where they were on 11/22/63. She got 16,000 responses to her request.
- * 566. 23 Nov 80 (North Shore: Sunday) [5 pp.] An anniversary wrapup by our Bob Katz. Includes comments by local attorney John Wall, ex-JD, who tangled with Garrison in 1971.
567. 23 Nov 80 Photo accompanying #566
- * 568. 24 Nov 80 (Daily Cal, probably from AP) In a speech at a party for the publication of a music book, Leonard Bernstein complained of the lack of press attention to the anniversary; said there was a conspiracy involving a "powerful high force" and "we don't dare confront the implications." I wonder what he's been reading, and who he's been talking to? (Not the Kennedys, I suppose.)
569. 24 Nov 80 (UPI in SFC) "A new clue in Texas murders;" the first death (in 1969) may have been toxic shock. This is what got about 5 minutes on CBS Evening News on 11/22.

- * 570. 24 Nov 80 (Inquiry) "J. Edgar's man in the Klan," by Charles Lewis, of ABC-TV. [3 pp.] Re Gary Rowe, and the unreleased JD report.
- * 571. 24 Nov 80 (Inquiry) "The friends of Michael Hand," by Jonathan Marshall. [4 pp.] The Nugan Hand Bank and its links to drug and intelligence operations. Strange stuff.
- 572. 24 Nov 80 (Inquiry) "Naked came the agent, and other stories the CIA doesn't want you to read," by Warren Hinckle [4 pp.] Re Col. George White, the CIA's position on Freedom of Information, and all that. "The Fish Is Red," Hinckle's book with Bill Turner on the "secret war against Castro," will supposedly be published soon by Times Books.
- 573. 27 Nov 80 (SFC) Letter from a citizen, "appalled" by the non-coverage of the 11/22 anniversary and the coverage of "who shot J.R."
- 574. 27 Nov 80 (SFC, from UPI) "Two ABSCAM convictions overturned" Score one for (Counsel) Richard Sprague, attorney for Philadelphia City Council President George Schwartz.
- * 575. 27 Nov 80 (UPI in SFC) "Two Scientology Leaders Convicted" for aiding burglaries to obtain government documents. Make your own FOIA?
- * 576. 27 Nov 80 (AP in SFC) Text in full: "Nashville: The state Paroles Board has turned down a request by James Earl Ray for a pardon hearing."
- 577. 27 Nov 80 (AP in SFC) "9-Digit ZIP Plan Has Cost 7 Figures" (Isn't it fun to keep track of what the Feds are willing to spend a million dollars for? E.g., this business, and fixing the Kennedy Center roof.)
- 578. 2 Dec 80 (JA in WP) "Project Aquarium: Tapping the Tappers" (NSA and CIA versus the KGB; indirect taps of U.S. citizens' calls.)
- 579. 6 Dec 80 (WP) "Senate [Judiciary Committee] Republicans will abolish antitrust unit, probe terrorism" (SISS lives!)
- 580. 8 Dec 80 (NYT) "Reagan Committee on CIA Urges Reorganization of US Intelligence"
- *** 581. 8 Dec 80 (Golz, DMN) "After 17 years of silence, FBI Oswald agent speaks up" [4 pp.] Hosty's "bombshell" revealed: documents on Oswald's Mexico trip "were secretly removed by the FBI from Oswald's internal security file in Dallas hours after Kennedy was shot."

Very interesting stuff, even if you can't draw any firm conclusions from the facts in this article. Two caveats: first, all Hosty can testify to is that the documents in question were kept from him; that might have been done for non-sinister reasons. (Hosty says that Belmont admitted in 1964 that "they" were not supposed to let Hosty see certain Mexico material, apparently on Belmont's orders.) The more sinister scenario - that someone was trying to downplay the LHO-Kostikov connection - cannot be established simply from the way Hosty was treated. Second, the Warren Commission reported the CIA's statement that Kostikov would normally carry out the duties of his cover position - in this case, processing visa applications. (To be precise, that was said to be standard KGB procedure.) Is this statement really in doubt? Everyone from Mark Lane to Blakey has suggested that the Kostikov contact really looked sinister, but I've never been persuaded. If he was setting up assassinations, would Kostikov meet with the triggerman at the heavily surveilled Embassy?

Those cautions aside, there is something going on here. Interestingly, Blakey told Golz that he "cannot acknowledge to you anything about Mexico City," and that he "simply [is] not free" to deny or confirm Hosty's story. One gets the firm impression that both the HSC and the Schweiker Committee pursued the Hosty story in some detail, and found interesting things that could not be published. (Maybe not quite what Hosty expected them to find, but something nonetheless.)

Golz' article seems to focus on the question - first raised, I think, by Epstein - of the motives behind the FBI's alleged attempt to play down the LHO-KGB link. Legend is quite unfair to Hoover (no mean feat) by playing down what the initial FBI reports did say about Oswald's Russian connections, and by suggesting that Hoover was concerned solely with protecting his reputation. I wonder if there is another side to the story - was someone, perhaps Angleton, overplaying the significance of the Kostikov meeting in such a way as to make it necessary for other investigators to take a contrary position? Blakey may know the whole story behind Hosty's "bombshell"; I certainly don't.

This article also suggests that there is something strange about the way the Mexico information did not reach Hosty promptly before the assassination. Hosty testified that he learned from the New Orleans FBI that "another agency" (the CIA) had learned of Oswald's Soviet Embassy contact (4 WH 447). Unfortunately, the relevant part of Hosty's message to Washington is still withheld. (105-82555-39) But the FBI's own description of this item (17 WH 811, #57) says that Hosty indicated to HQ that INS, Dallas had heard from the CIA about Oswald's Mexico trip. (One speculative explanation for this discrepancy is that when he testified Hosty may have figured out (or been told) that it would embarrass the Bureau to say that he first got this information from outside the FBI.) Whichever way it happened, it is peculiar enough to check out, and Hosty seems to have been concerned about not being informed even before the assassination. I'm sure this is all explained in the withheld 300-page HSC report, right?!

582. 8 Dec 80 Photo of Hosty (accompanying #581)

* 583. 9 Dec 80 (The Globe) [5 pp.] Headline on the cover: "CIA probe as vice queen reveals she was -- JFK'S LOVE SLAVE - tells of orgies with Jack and Bobby at the UN" The story itself has nothing about orgies - just plain old one-on-one stuff. No kinky "love slave" business; in fact, Jack liked to keep his shirt on. (She preferred Bobby.) The lady in question, Mariella Novotny, "understand[s] the diary is in the hands of the CIA" - so much for the CIA probe. As for the "vice queen" bit, she says that as far as she knows, no money changed hands - she was just having a good time. Nonetheless, there is a serious angle & some potential scandal: she thinks she was introduced to JFK as part of a plot to discredit him; she claims the CIA and FBI have photos and other records; and she thinks JFK or someone else in high places intervened for her after she was charged with being a wayward minor. (She was 18 in 1960.)

** 584. Jan. 1981 (Playboy) Letter from (our) Bill Turner, based on FOIA material, on how his 1965 article on "The FBI and Organized Crime" was refereed by a reporter who turned out to be an FBI collaborator. The reporter gave the article to the FBI and dinged it for Playboy. What is interesting is that the reporter was Sandy Smith; as Turner says, "No wonder that ... he was able to authoritatively quote 'Justice Department sources' in his crime articles (in 1963, he scooped everyone in reporting the Mafia-CIA alliance against Castro)." I'm not taking the time to dig up what we know about the 1963 article in question, but I think this might be significant. Can anyone fill me in? (See, for starters, p. 107 of the Church Comm. Ass'n report.)

585. Jan 1981 (Playboy) "Exhuming the Spooks," by Peter Ross Range; on the revival of the CIA (especially the Snapp case).

The following are in "The Continuing Inquiry":

586. DMN cartoon (Epsteinian-Eddowsian, 9/10) and FWST editorial (pro-exhumation, 9/2)

587. 14 Aug 80 Early UPI dispatch, explaining their prior knowledge

588. "Just a little piece of grass," by Todd Vaughan [2 pp.] Supposedly, Blakey's (unsatisfactory) explanation for the Walthers-manhole "bullet" photos.

589. LA Times review (favorable) of Dave Martin's book

590. Intro, by Jack White, to his forthcoming articles, disputing the HSC on the LHO impostor hypothesis, the backyard photos, and the multiple-rifle photos.

* 591. [4 pp.] Excerpts of interviews by Harrison Livingstone with Parkland doctors. Not very persuasive; the doctors tend to say mostly "Yeah," "No," and so on - lots of leading questions, unfortunately.

592. [4 pp.] Reprints of Livingstone's 3 previous articles

* 593. [3 pp.] "Neutron Activation Analysis Update," by Edgar Tatro. Includes drawings by Nurse Bell depicting some fairly large Connally fragments.

594. A very silly review of the Summers book by Critic Sprague. "The trouble with hedgers in the JFK case is that they help feed the guns of the CIA writers [e.g. Tom Powers] who supply book reviews to ... the NYT." Let's all blame the PCG.

595. (The Globe) Story on Nugan Hand, based on the London Times story

596. 19 Oct 80 (Winston-Salem Journal) Blakey interviewed. (The mob did it.)

[#586-590 are from the 9/22/80 issue; #591-594, 10/22; 595-6, 11/22]

[Credits: Thanks to Allen (#525), Blakey (513-4, 527), Cohen (537), CPR (579-80), Ewing (516, 551, 566, 578, 605, 611); Fensterwald (602-3), Ferrell (533-6), Goldberg (512, 514, 522, 601), Kostman (615), Lambert (516, 562, 618), Lifton (611), Owens (532, 606), Ranftel (552, 555), Rubinstein (528, 545), Shaw (517-8, 563, 581-2), and TCI (586-596).]

A plug for TCI: I recommend that you all subscribe - even though, as you know, TCI publishes some stuff which I consider quite silly. They have a press run of 1000, but a circulation of only 257 (according to the figures in the 10/22/80 issue.) There is a half-price student subscription rate of \$12, and any serious student of the case who is short of funds can ask about that rate. For that price, it's a real bargain - even if you think Dan Rather is a good guy!

Does anyone get any other newsletters on the case which I should know about?

Queries:

I would like the date and author of the New Times article of early 1976 which included the "extra" backyard photo. A copy would be nice, but only if it is convenient for you; I'm sure I have a copy, but I can't find it offhand.

Can anyone provide a concise summary of the Gaudet story, with citations (and, preferably, copies of documents)? I'm interested in the basic stuff - his Mexico trip, tourist card, etc. - rather than recent, more speculative, material. Accuracy counts!

What's this about Benny Binion having died recently? Any clippings? Or a confirmation?

Has anyone heard anything recently about Hale Boggs' death, or any attempt to reinvestigate it? (Other than item 65 in my 11/29/79 newsletter.)

A year or so ago there was a new biography of the Dulles family, entitled "Dulles." Anything on the Warren Commission or the JFK case?

Is anyone familiar with "The Klan," a 1978 book by Patsy Sims? There are reportedly some references to the JFK case; I would like copies.

Does anyone have the material on Del Valle cited on p. 606 of the Summers book, or any basic documents or clippings on Del Valle?

Filler: The new Congressman from the 12th District of Florida is Republican Clay Shaw, 41. Now if anyone can prove that he was meeting with Prime Minister Maurice Bishop of Granada....

Another plug: FOIA, Inc. (36 W 44th St., NYC 10019) is soliciting tax-deductible contributions to defend the FOIA. A worthy cause.

John Lennon, 1940-1980: In an interview about ten years ago, Lennon said that he and Yoko were the Laurel and Hardy of the peace movement; he said he thought they had a better chance in that guise, since everyone who was serious about it - the Kennedys, King, Gandhi - ended up getting shot.

Late word on the Blakey-Billings book: This is hearsay, but I am told that copies may well be out towards the end of January, with official publication early in February.

And now for something completely different: There's a Monty Python bit which seems relevant to the acoustics. It goes roughly like this:

Grant applicant: I've come up with a silly walk, and I want help in developing it. [Demonstrates walk.]

High-ranking official of the Ministry of Silly Walks (John Cleese): Well, it's not really very silly, is it? I mean, the left leg just does a half-turn and lift every alternate step.

Applicant: Well, it's not very silly now, but I feel that with a grant from the government, I could make it very silly indeed.

The Bureau Strikes Back: A Critique of the FBI Review of the Acoustical Evidence

There are two parts to the FBI's basic argument that the HSC's analysis is "invalid." The FBI report says that the HSC experts failed to prove either that the recorded sounds are gunshots or that they came from Dealey Plaza.

The FBI claims that Weiss and Aschkenasy contradicted themselves on the method they used to distinguish gunshots from other signals. The report alleges that "it is not possible to determine" whether Weiss and Aschkenasy relied on the presence of a shock wave, or on the sequence of echoes (p. 17). I have no trouble in understanding what Weiss did, and find no contradiction. The presence of an echo pattern is what distinguishes a shot from random electrical noise or some other non-acoustical source. Obviously, distinguishing a grassy-knoll shot from an equally loud noise coming from the same place is more difficult, but the presence of an apparent shock wave indicates a shot with a supersonic bullet.

The FBI notes that a stick hitting an object in the 1979 Greensboro shooting [GREENKIL] produced a set of echoes, and that "scientific literature also reflects that all sounds, especially impulsive, produce diffractions and reflections or echoes off hard surfaces" (p. 17). This is, of course, obvious and irrelevant; the author seems perversely insistent on implying that Weiss thinks that the mere presence of a sequence of echoes, rather than the timing of the pulses, is meaningful. Such arguments make me wonder how much of the report was written by people other than the FBI's technical experts.

On the question of using a shock wave to identify a gunshot, the FBI notes Barger's estimate that there is a 75% to 80% chance that the observed apparent shock wave - a peak preceding the muzzle blast - is not random noise. Without any detailed explanation, the FBI says that "the distorted waveform examined on the DPD recording cannot support even this lower percentage estimate" (p. 17).

The other half of the FBI's argument has to be taken more seriously. The report notes that neither eyewitness evidence nor the presence of additional sounds on the dictabelt provides firm proof that sounds from Dealey Plaza were being recorded. That's true enough, but the evidence does not actually disprove the HSC result either. The key to the FBI's argument is the claim that the Bureau has disproved "the uniqueness assumption, as applied by" the HSC experts (p. 16) - that is, the claim that (beyond a reasonable doubt) the recorded echo pattern originated in Dealey Plaza and nowhere else. The FBI's case rests on the fact that they found a match between the grassy-knoll shot on the DPD tape and a shot from the GREENKIL incident.

I have seen no reason to believe that the FBI has disproved the "uniqueness assumption." In fact, from a close reading of the FBI report and the HSC material, I believe that the GREENKIL match is not as good as the report suggests. (I will give this argument later - it involves some technical details.)

First, consider what the FBI report does not say. This is a useful exercise because there is much less of substance in the body of the report than one would expect from the FBI's findings. These findings are strong and unequivocal: the HSC's findings were "invalid."

It is noteworthy that the FBI report does not explicitly claim that the HSC's 95% calculation is wrong. The report does say that "A probability of 95% or better was found that this [GREENKIL] gunshot ... also represents the same impulsive pattern found in the DPD recording..." (p. 15) With a rhetorical flourish, the report notes that "The residential area in Greensboro, N.C. is definitely not a replica of Dealey Plaza" - I think we would all stipulate that. This analysis is supposed to "clearly disprove" the uniqueness assumption.

I would think that the uniqueness of the echo pattern in any single location is a metaphysical question, like the uniqueness of a fingerprint or a snowflake, and not really in dispute here; any finite description of the pattern has to be approximate (e.g., due to noise in the system recording the pattern) and there will be a nonzero probability that a different pattern will produce a match. The gist of the HSC argument is not uniqueness but probability, and one can not

invalidate a probability argument simply by producing a single counterexample, as the FBI has done.

Is the FBI claiming that the HSC's calculation was done incorrectly? Not in so many words, at least. Does the GREENKIL match provide a reason for disbelieving the HSC's calculation? I don't think so, but to pursue this possibility, one needs more details about the FBI's match. The report as released fails to give even such basic details as the number of peaks in the GREENKIL pattern, the total time span looked at, and the number of matches found.

Also, I am not certain how many GREENKIL shots were looked at. This number, of course, determines how unlikely the reported match is. The report says that "one of the known [GREENKIL] gunshots" was compared. If this were a 1964 FBI report, I would certainly suspect "Bureauspeak" - that is, since the report does not explicitly say that only one shot was compared, I would not simply assume that. Presumably the raw FBI lab reports would indicate whether the one shot which matched was chosen strictly at random. (Even if a detailed comparison was made with only one GREENKIL shot, the FBI's procedure might have been the equivalent of comparisons with all the shots - for example, if this one shot was the one which looked the most like the DPD pattern.)

The FBI's failure to show the details of its work on the GREENKIL match is sufficient reason for the Ramsey panel to press for the release of the raw lab reports. (Any readers who think they could shake this material loose with a FOIA request should give it a try. I suspect that only a request from the press has any chance of getting anything within a couple of months - that is, before the Ramsey panel finishes its work.)

Another reason for trying to get the underlying data is the contrast between the strong anti-HSC tone of the findings and the absence of any specific claims of major technical errors in the HSC's work. Prior to the release of the FBI report, there was one (unconfirmed) leak, to the effect that the critics would not be disappointed. I wonder whether the FBI analysts who actually did the work feel that they have invalidated the HSC's analysis. It seems quite possible that the tone of the final report reflects writing done by non-technical people.

The FBI report is dated November 19, 1980, evidently the date it was "prepared by the Technical Services Division" of the FBI. But Keuch's covering letter of December 1 to Stokes says that "the FBI released its report ... to my office today." I would like to know the reason for the delay. If it turns out that there was significant rewriting of the report, that would raise questions about the motives of the Justice Department in releasing the report (but not the raw data) to the press while the Ramsey panel is still working.

Keuch did send copies of the report to the NSF and the NAS, so the Ramsey panel will probably feel obligated to evaluate the FBI report. The good news, therefore, is that the Ramsey panel might end up being critical of the FBI's no-conspiracy position. (I'm pretty sure the panel will have some critical things to say about the HSC's position as well - as Blakey noted some weeks ago, that's the way scientists work.)

It is striking to me that the FBI did not suggest analyzing the other 3 shots using Weiss' method. As I discussed in my 1979 critique of the acoustics (which most of you have already seen), this seems to be an obvious suggestion, and I haven't heard anyone say it should not be done. There is a complication - introduced by the elevation of the location of the presumed gunman - but it may not turn out to be a serious one. (It means that one can't just work with a map of Dealey Plaza and pieces of string.) Also, a useful check on Weiss' work might be to process the third shot with a wider range of rifle and microphone locations. The FBI seems to have focused on a large-scale, million-dollar review as the next step to consider. I guess I shouldn't be suspicious of this, since the Washington atmosphere is not conducive to looking for the cheapest and simplest way to get the job done. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the FBI report criticizes the HSC experts for not having microscopically examined the dictabelt (p. 20), while the dictabelt has supposedly been in the possession of the Justice Department since about January 1979 - why not just have the FBI do the examination?

The FBI's point about a microscopic examination is made in a section of the report which claims that "numerous other problem areas and inconsistencies were noted" in the HSC report. None of the five points discussed suggest to me that there is a fundamental error in the work of the HSC experts, but some of them will have to be dealt with. For example, the table at 8 HSC 27 shows 26 impulses, with one pair less than 1 msec apart. For the comparison, peaks less than 1 msec apart were considered to be part of the same impulse (8 HSC 14). The FBI report suggests that there is a contradiction here, but that need not be the case: presumably, when 15 impulses were selected for the comparison, the two which were close were combined. We should, of course, see a table identifying the 15 selected impulses.

It is true that the criteria used to eliminate some of the "false alarms" in the BBN analysis were not logically consistent with the ultimate conclusion that there was a conspiracy. For example, a second shot within 1.05 seconds certainly cannot be ruled out because the Mannlicher-Carcano could not be fired that fast. The appropriate response, of course, is not to dismiss the HSC work but to refine it.

The FBI objects to Weiss' use of a 4.3% correction to the time scale, to take into account uncertainty in the temperature and the recorder speed. It does not bother me that they decided on this correction because it gave the best match. The correction was within the independently calculated uncertainty, and one could hardly expect Weiss to assume that the recorder was running at exactly its nominal speed. Of course, it would be better if the time scale could be found from some other source - perhaps one of the other shots, or even the sound of the bell (if its actual frequency could be determined).

I do find it objectionable that the FBI says that "to list and document all of the numerous errors found [in the Barger-Weiss reports] would require a considerable amount of time beyond that presently available to Technical Services Division personnel." (P. 21) Look, if these alleged errors haven't already been listed and documented, they haven't been found!

In connection with the hypothesis that the conclusions in the FBI report have been strengthened for non-technical reasons, I think it is noteworthy that the report does not really accept the Bowles-Pellicano arguments - that is, the arguments that there is definite proof that the open mike was not in Dealey Plaza. The FBI report concludes (p. 14) that examination of other sounds on the tape "does not show that the designated patterns originated from Dealey Plaza, and in fact, reflects contrary information." The first part of this conclusion is unobjectionable; the second part is vague but too strong. I suspect it comes from the generally anti-HSC sentiments of the author, since the only facts set out in the report on this point are old ones: there is a non-Dealey-Plaza bell sound, and there are heterodyne signals indicating competing transmissions. This information is not really "contrary" to the hypothesis that Dealey Plaza shots were picked up. (I would certainly like to know more about the number and spacing of these heterodyne signals.) My point is that whatever work the FBI did to pursue the question of non-Dealey-Plaza sounds on the tape apparently did not produce any new or conclusive information.

Captain Bowles, by the way, told Scott Parks of the Dallas Morning News that he was "interviewed extensively" by the FBI, and he said "the agents believed his story." He claims he can prove that the recording came from a motorcycle at the Trade Mart; he will not publicly reveal the name of the officer, now retired. The raw FBI reports should show why Bowles' proof - whatever it was - was not used in the final report.

If the FBI looked at motorcade photos, I gather that they were not able to prove that McLain was not in the right place at the right time.

In summary, the evidence in the FBI report is not at all as persuasive as the findings suggest; the Bureau failed to come up with an anti-HSC "smoking gun." Although the FBI's GREENKIL match must be dealt with, not even the FBI report claims that the HSC's 95% calculation has been proven wrong.

At the moment, I don't think that the GREENKIL match indicates a real problem in the HSC analysis. Of course, I want to see the details of the FBI's work, and my inferences about how good this match is might be wrong or incomplete. To understand what this match means, we first have to look in some detail at the HSC's 95% calculation.

The HSC's experts asked this question: given the observed match between the test shot (that is, the echo pattern calculated by Weiss) and the pattern on the DPD tape, what is the probability that a match this good would occur by chance if the impulses on the tape are random noise? The answer is 5% or less.

This calculation appears in Barger's report (8 HSC 115), and is cited in the Weiss report (8 HSC 32). Barger's calculation was clearly based on a comparison over a time span of about 300 msec. To be conservative, Barger looked only at the 90-msec interval in which loud echoes were predicted. He used the numbers given in Weiss' testimony for matches and calculated loud echoes, and came up with a probability of 0.000313 per comparison for a chance match. (According to the tables I used, the correct number is 0.000330, which really doesn't make much difference. But consider this a clue: if this is a simple error, the fact that the FBI report does not mention it suggests that the Bureau experts did not get into detailed calculations using the hypergeometric probability distribution, as Barger did.)

Barger then assumed that the 180 comparisons made by Weiss and Aschkenasy as they varied the rifle and microphone locations were statistically independent. (I wonder if this assumption is more conservative than necessary.) Thus, Barger found a probability of about 5% that Weiss' result had come from a chance match to random noise.

Weiss apparently refined his results after he testified, since his report describes one additional match, and 26 (not 22) calculated echo paths. The HSC material does not include a probability calculation for this later data. (From the hypergeometric probability distribution, I get a probability of only 0.8% or less in 180 independent tries.) However, Weiss does report the binary correlation coefficient corresponding to this later data, which is 0.79 (8 HSC 31).

Weiss also reports a correlation coefficient of 0.75 for the first 50 msec of data (using a different amplitude threshold, for reasons he explains). It is obvious from the Weiss and Barger reports together that the 50-msec data was not the basis for the 95% result. In fact, I was quickly able to determine (using Barger's method) that the chance of a match as good as the reported one over the first 50 msec (i.e., 10 or more matches) is 7.6% in a single comparison. This result is not surprising, since (as the FBI report points out) the 18 windows span 72% of the 50-msec interval, so you would expect a fair number of matches by chance.

[The 7.6% probability comes from $P(N=25, n=18, k=11, x=9)$, the hypergeometric probability function for 9 or fewer matches in 25 intervals, with 11 predicted echoes and 18 impulses, which has the value 0.924. I hope I'm not losing any of my audience by getting this technical; you don't have to worry about why this distribution is called hypergeometric [I don't know] or how it is calculated. The point is that there is a well-understood distribution applicable to this situation, just as there is (a simpler one) for the distribution of heads when you flip two coins. The canonical application of the hypergeometric probability distribution is in sampling: if you have k defective widgets in a lot of N , how many defective ones do you expect to find in a sample of n ? Of course, I'm willing to talk about the details of these calculations with anyone who calls me, but the details are not essential to the argument I am making.]

When several independent 50-msec comparisons are made, the probability of at least one match this good goes up quite rapidly - it is 96% or more for 40 or more comparisons.

My hunch is that the FBI's GREENKIL match spanned only a 50-msec interval. If so, and if they made comparisons to all 39 GREENKIL shots, one match would be no surprise at all.

So, why does the FBI report claim, in essence, that their match is as good

as the one found by the HSC - specifically, that they found a "95% match"? My hunch is that the FBI did not calculate the probability of the match they found; at least, no such calculation is mentioned in the report.

The FBI's claim to have found a 95% match may in fact be based simply on their calculation of a correlation coefficient. (The report does not even give this correlation coefficient for the GREENKIL match!) The FBI report does not discuss the method used for the match, other than to note that the comparison was made "using the same correlation method advocated by BBN, Weiss and Aschkenasy" (p. 15). In other words, they got as good a correlation as the HSC.

But, as we have seen, the HSC's 50-msec correlation does not enter into the calculated 95% result; in fact, a fit that good is to be expected in 40 or more independent tries. It is only when you look at a longer time span that the HSC's result becomes significant.

As noted, the FBI report does not spell out the calculation of the 95% probability claimed for the GREENKIL match. An earlier section of the FBI report (p. 11) quotes a sentence from the HSC material which erroneously indicates that a correlation coefficient about 0.7 gives a probability of 95% or more, even if a time span of only 50 msec is involved. ["In both of the comparisons described above [i.e., the full time span and 50 msec], the coincidence window was set at ± 1 msec.... For sequences that correlated at levels greater than 0.7 with a coincidence window of ± 1 msec, the statistical probability was 95% or more that the sequences represented the same source...." (8 HSC 10)] My suspicion is that the FBI relied on this statement.

In summary, at this time I have no reason to believe that the FBI's GREENKIL match was any better than a match with a correlation coefficient of 0.7 over an interval of 50 msec. Such a match was not, and could not have been, the basis for the HSC's 95% result. (My opinion is of course tentative, pending the release of the details of the FBI's work.)

If you read the Barger and Weiss reports carefully, it is clear that the 50-msec comparison was not used in the probability calculation. It is unfortunate that an erroneous statement indicating that it could have been appears in the introductory section of the Weiss report. (That report, by the way, was "compiled" by Gary Cornwell from "materials submitted ... by the committee's acoustics panel" (8 HSC 3). That's a possible explanation, not an excuse.) The Weiss report fails to make it clear that the significance of a correlation coefficient very much depends on the number of windows. (If Barger had not conservatively looked at only 90 msec, the chance of a coincidental match would have been well under 0.1%, but the correlation coefficient would not change much.)

It appears that the FBI experts did not get into these probability calculations in detail; at the very least, they failed to mention the apparent error in the Weiss report in their own report. The resulting confusion about the FBI's GREENKIL match and its significance is unfortunate, particularly in light of the FBI's strong conclusions about the HSC's analysis. We can hope that the Ramsey panel will clarify the situation, and that they will evaluate the FBI's analysis as well as that of the HSC's experts. (Yes, I have passed on the substance of this argument to Ramsey.)

Mr. Blakey goes to Washington??? The following item, quoted in full, is from "Transition Notes," a column of political news and gossip by Cass Peterson (Washington Post, 14 Dec 80): "A potential candidate for a top Justice Department job, maybe head of the criminal division: Cornell University [sic] professor G. Robert Blakey, who was chief counsel for the House Assassinations Committee during its investigations of the murders of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." My impression is that "a potential candidate" should not be taken to mean more than it says. [This clipping, pointed out by Mike Ewing, is #619.]

Sinatra and JFK: Isn't it a bit peculiar that the Blakey-Billings article (#616) makes quite a bit of the fact that Sinatra introduced Exner to JFK, while ELSUR's mentioning the women Sinatra had provided were physically removed from the press handouts at the HSC hearings? (See 4/28/79 newsletter.) Anyone know the story of these ELSURS - who suppressed them and why?