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From Dallas to Watergate: The Longest Cover-Up

The discovery of the Watergate break-in on June 17, 1972, has led slowly but irreversibly to wider revelations about the government's use of crime, past and present. At first glance, it might seem the burglars' long record of covert activities would have made such revelations inevitable. Most of those arrested in the Democratic National Committee offices had been employed by the CIA in anti-Castro activities, and one of them—Eugenio Martinez—was still on a CIA retainer. Another, Frank Sturgis *alias* Fiorini, had defied President Kennedy's ban on U.S.-based raids against Cuba, and continued them with the support of former Havana casino operators with strong links to organized crime. His activities immediately before and after the Kennedy assassination had made Sturgis suspicious in the eyes of some private assassination buffs, long before Watergate made him a public figure.

E. Howard Hunt, the man chosen by Nixon's re-election team to master-

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mind the Watergate break-in, had served as political officer in the CIA's Bay of Pigs operation, which Richard Nixon had almost single-handedly pressed on the Eisenhower Administration, and for which Nixon was the White House Action Officer. In connection with the Bay of Pigs, Hunt had proposed the assassination of Castro to his CIA superiors, and, according to some sources, continued to propose similar assassination projects, the latest of these against the President of Panama in 1971.

Yet the Watergate cover-up almost succeeded—not despite the exotic records of the defendants, but precisely because of them. Complicity in their past crimes, such as the burglary against Dan Ellsberg's psychiatrist—and who knows what others—left the Nixon Administration with little alternative but to obstruct justice in the case of the Watergate Seven. By 1972 the chain leading from crime to cover-up to new crime was becoming a major preoccupation at the White House. But the establishment consensus necessary for a successful cover-up had been so eroded during the past ten years that the cold warriors could no longer keep their conspiracies secure.

In my opinion it is no coincidence

that the key figures in Watergate—Liddy, Hunt, Sturgis, Krogh, Caulfield—had been drawn from the conspiratorial world of government narcotics enforcement, a shady realm in which the operations of organized crime, counterrevolution, and government intelligence have traditionally overlapped. Nor is it a coincidence that one of these men—Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis—played a minor role in the cover-up of the Dallas assassination ten years ago. On the contrary, I believe that a full exposure of the Watergate conspiracy will help us to understand what happened in Dallas, and also to understand the covert forces which later mired America in a criminal war in Southeast Asia. Conversely, an analysis of the cover-up in Dallas will do much to illuminate Watergate and its ramifications, including that Miami demi-monde of exiles, Teamster investments, and Syndicate real estate deals with which Nixon and his friend Bebe Rebozo have been involved.

I hope to show that what makes this Miami connection so dangerous, and what links the scandal of Watergate to the assassination in Dallas, is the increasingly ominous symbiosis between U.S. intelligence networks and the forces of organized crime.

by Peter Dale Scott

[COVER-UP IN DALLAS]

The experience of the Ervin Committee suggests a new approach to the Kennedy assassination: to focus on the cover-up rather than on the crime itself. Although many vital records of the Watergate break-in were successfully destroyed, the cover-up actions themselves became new evidence of an on-going conspiracy. Thus the Ervin Committee has learned more about the mechanics of the cover-up than of the original break-in. In Dallas, too, the actual circumstances of the three shootings—of Kennedy, Oswald and Officer Tippit—have been largely obliterated. But if we focus only on the ensuing Dallas cover-up, the evidence of conspiracy, and the identity of some of the principals, are unmistakable—as is the central presence of criminal and intelligence networks also evident in the politics of Watergate and Vietnam.

The Watergate investigations revealed that many men in government will conspire against the law when two justifications are offered—whether or not these justifications are credible or are actually believed. The first is the possibility of a national security threat (as when Ellsberg's revelation of the Pentagon Papers was alleged to have threatened current truce negotiations, or to have involved a leak to the Soviet Embassy). The second is the alleged involvement of a governmental intelligence network or operation (as when on May 22, Nixon justified his participation in the cover-up by explaining that he had believed, erroneously, that the CIA was implicated).

The second justification flows from the first. E. Howard Hunt was no fool when he used a CIA Minox camera to photograph G. Gordon Liddy in front of the office building of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. Although the photograph was irrelevant to the ensuing burglary, by implying CIA involvement it insured that Hunt and Liddy would be protected by an Administration cover-up and that, if the cover-up ever collapsed, it could be credited to national security instead of political expediency. By the same logic it was not thought, but foresight, that Bernard Barker had CIA-veteran Hunt's name in his White House phone number in his notebook at the time of the break-in

(*New York Times*, June 24, 1972, p. 24), and that Frank Sturgis was allegedly "carrying a false passport prepared by the CIA at Hunt's request" (*NYT*, January 14, 1973, p. 38).

In Dallas, allegations both of a security threat and an intelligence involvement were available to justify federal intervention into the investigation, and thus also to justify a massive *ex post facto* cover-up. Following the assassination, a large number of rumors linked Oswald (and sometimes Ruby) in a left-wing conspiracy extending to Castro's Cuba and possibly the Soviet Union. Some of these rumors seemed to be backed by evidence; one, interestingly enough, was "corroborated" by Frank Sturgis.

The Secret Service in Dallas intercepted a letter to Oswald, postmarked Havana, November 28, 1963, and signed by Pedro Charles. The letter indicated that "Oswald had been paid by Charles to carry out an unidentified mission which involved accurate shooting" (CE 2763, 26 H 148).* Meanwhile the FBI possessed a letter from Havana to Robert Kennedy, "written by one Mario del Rosario Molina [which] alleged that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy at the direction of Pedro Charles, a Cuban agent. . . . According to the writer, Oswald met with Charles in Miami, Florida, several months ago [i.e. in early 1963] and was paid \$7,000 by Charles" (26 H 148).

By now this story seems absurd: the elaborate FBI chronology of Oswald's movements gave no indication that he ever visited Miami. But at the time the letters arrived, a reporter in the Miami area named James Buchanan was publishing stories (attributed to Frank Sturgis alias Fiorini) that Oswald had been in Miami and also had been in contact with Cuban intelligence (CD 59.2-3, CD 395.2; cf. CD 1020).* Later reports from James Buchanan's brother Jerry placed Oswald in Miami in March 1963 (CD 1020.7). These concatenating pieces of misinformation from Miami and Havana suggest, in retrospect, a conspiracy to mislead.

* Citations to the Warren Commission's 26 volumes of Hearings (H) and one-volume Report (R) follow the Commission's format: in this instance, to Commission Exhibit 2763, *Hearings*, Vol. 26, p. 148.

The stories today are much less important than Buchanan's sources for them, all of whom came from two Miami-based anti-Castro groups. The first group (CD 49.26), the DRE (Student Revolutionary Directorate), was Cuban, and the CIA used it to infiltrate Cuba in connection with the Bay of Pigs; the DRE was named in Oswald's notebook (16 H 67), since Oswald had been in contact with them in New Orleans (R 728), and perhaps in Dallas (CD 205.646). The second, American, group—which included both James Buchanan and his brother Jerry—was the International Anti-Communist Brigade. It was a small band of mercenaries headed by a named source of Buchanan's articles—Frank Sturgis alias Fiorini, the future burglar of Watergate.

Sturgis, like the DRE, had been employed by the CIA in connection with the Bay of Pigs invasion. But after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, Kennedy had begun to crack down on anti-Castro raids launched from the continental United States. Jerry Buchanan had been arrested by the British in the Bahamas in April 1963, on board a boat formerly used in CIA missions, and now being used (with presidential authorization) for an intended raid against a Soviet tanker (*NYT*, April 2, 1963, pp. 1, 9; April 3, 1963, p. 3). In September, the Federal Government had issued "strong warnings" to six Americans for their anti-Castro activities, including Frank Fiorini (Sturgis) and Alexander Rorke, the owner of Jerry Buchanan's boat (*NYT*, Sept. 16, 1963, p. 39). As for James Buchanan, the Brigade's secretary and propaganda director, Sturgis allegedly broke with him in December 1963 because of his "excessive" attacks on the FBI and the CIA, "even going so far as to describe former President John F. Kennedy as a communist" (CD 1020.6).

Similar anti-Kennedy sentiments were allegedly expressed by Carlos Bringuier, Oswald's contact with the DRE in New Orleans, and a right-winger who later headed up the Cuban-Americans for Nixon-Agnew. Another witness told the Warren Commission

* Citations from the Warren Commission's unpublished documents, available in the U.S. National Archives, Washington, will follow this format: in this instance, Commission Documents 59, pp. 2-3, 395, p. 2; cf. Commission Document 1020.



that Bringuier, because "the United States didn't help to overthrow Castro . . . hates the United States almost as much as he hates Russia" (11 H 353). Because these sentiments were so widely held among Cuban exiles, many students of the Dallas assassination have theorized that a group of anti-Castro terrorists (Cuban and/or American) may have killed Kennedy in revenge for having been abandoned by the CIA in 1963.

[MURDER, INCORPORATED]

According to an article in the July 1973 issue of *The Atlantic*, former President Lyndon Johnson also had doubts about the findings of the Warren Commission despite his public support of its "lone assassin" hypothesis. Interviewed not long before his death, Johnson expressed his belief that the assassination in Dallas had been part of a

conspiracy. . . . Johnson said that when he had taken office he found that "we had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean." A year or so before Kennedy's death a CIA-backed assassination team had been picked up in Havana. Johnson speculated that Dallas had been a retaliation for this thwarted attempt (p. 39).

Johnson's recollection is corroborated by E. Howard Hunt in his soon-to-be-

published memoir on the Bay of Pigs. Hunt admits to having personally proposed an attempt to assassinate Castro. And although he claims that nothing came of his proposal, this is not true. The CIA's assassins nearly succeeded, but were caught and executed in Havana on the day of the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Another detail suppressed by Hunt is that the CIA's assassination plan involved giving the legal green light (and other aid) to a Cuban conspiracy against Castro sponsored by Las Vegas mobster Johnny Roselli and his organized crime allies in gambling—who wanted back their old Havana casinos. A detailed account of the assassination attempt by Andrew St. George—himself a one-time U.S. intelligence agent—suppresses the Mafia angle but confirms that this attempt was but one of a series, in which a prominent role was played by Frank Sturgis' co-conspirator, Alexander Rorke (*Parade*, April 12, 1964, p. 4). In fact Rorke, according to St. George, died in an assassination attempt when his plane crashed in the Caribbean in September 1963 (cf. CD 1020.29). Rorke's 1963 attorney, Hans Tanner, had already published an account of his own assassination attempt in July 1961. His book gave several informed details about the International Anti-Communist Brigade of Frank Sturgis, which he considered to be "financed by dispossessed hotel and gambling room owners who operated under Batista" (Hans Tanner, *Counter-Revolutionary Agents*, G. T. Foulis, 1972, p. 127).

Hunt is said by an authoritative source to have been the CIA's contact for an assassination conspiracy against Castro in 1966, involving Rolando Cubela Secades, who confessed after being captured in Havana. Cubela, a former military leader of the DRE in Batista days, admitted that he had planned, with help from the CIA and Bay of Pigs leader Manuel Artime, "to shoot Premier Castro with a high-powered telescopic rifle and later share the top posts of a counter-revolutionary regime with Mr. Artime" (*NYT*, March 6, 1966, p. 25). These facts help explain why Artime—for whose child Hunt is a godfather—organized a defense fund for the Watergate burglars, whom he has since continued to

visit regularly in prison (*NYT*, July 9, 1973, p. 25, cf. June 19, 1972, p. 20). The same facts may also help us to understand what was being covered up in Dallas.

Bernard Barker testified that he carried out two burglaries for Hunt in the expectation that this would eventually help to depose Castro. He also claimed that up to ten minutes before the Ellsberg break-in he knew only that he was working on a case involving espionage by a Soviet embassy. Such exploitation of anti-Castro militants had long ago been offered as an hypothesis for the Dallas assassination. According to this theory, evidence involving Oswald in a left-wing conspiracy had in fact been planted by militant anti-Communists, to make a case for a retaliatory U.S. invasion of Cuba. This would, for example, explain the oddly self-incriminating letter from "Pedro Charles," which the FBI quickly exposed as fraudulent, having been written on the same typewriter as the second warning letter from Havana (26 H 148).

According to a more sophisticated version of this hypothesis (involving a "two-tier conspiracy"), the clumsy fraud was meant to be exposed. Having first served as a pretext to engage the services of anti-Castro Cubans, its ultimate intention was to justify not an invasion but a massive federal de-bunking of all traces of conspiracy—the false and also the true.

We know at any rate that the direct result of such stories was to justify the creation of the Warren Commission. As Lyndon Johnson wrote in his memoirs, *The Vantage Point*:

We were aware of stories that Castro . . . only lately accusing us of sending CIA agents into the country to assassinate him, was the perpetrator of the Oswald assassination plot. These rumors were another compelling reason that a thorough study had to be made of the Dallas tragedy at once. Out of the nation's suspicions, out of the nation's need for facts, the Warren Commission was born (p. 26).

[THE OSWALD NEXUS]

As the Commission's investigative arm, the FBI, with little other legal authorization, proceeded

to expose Buchanan's stories of conspiracy, and others like them. For demonstrating that Oswald was not a Castro agent, but "acted alone," the FBI and the Warren Commission drew applause not only from liberals but even from left-wing critics such as I. F. Stone. Yet in their efforts to establish the "lone assassin" hypotheses for Oswald and Ruby, both the FBI and the Warren Commission were guilty of covering up much evidence to the contrary.

A seemingly minor but significant example is the cover-up of Oswald's relationship (still unclear) to the FBI. On January 24, 1964, the Warren Commission first heard from Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade and Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr of a rumor that Oswald had been an FBI informant since September 1962. Wade's evidence included hearsay that the name, phone and license-plate number of FBI agent Hosty (who was responsible for surveillance of pro- and anti-Castro Cubans) were in Oswald's address book (just as Hunt's phone was in Barker's), and also that Oswald had a government voucher for \$200 at the time of his arrest (5 H 242). The first piece of hearsay turned out to be true (16 H 64), but the Commission did not learn this easily: the FBI had supplied it with an itemized list of names in Oswald's notebook, from which Hosty's had been omitted (5 H 112).

You will look in vain for any of this information in the Warren Report. Instead, the Commission concluded from the sworn testimony of two CIA and five FBI officials, "corroborated by the Commission's independent review of the Bureau files," that "there was absolutely no type of informant or undercover relationship between an agency of the U.S. Government and Lee Harvey Oswald" (R 327). In fact, Chief Justice Warren declined on security grounds to inspect the FBI file on Oswald noting that others "would also demand . . . to see it, and if it is security matters we can't let them see it" (5 H 13). According to the Commission lawyer in charge of this matter, no "independent review" was ever made of the file (Edward Epstein, *Inquest*, New York, Viking, 1969, p. 38).

In any case, the question of

Oswald's FBI links is only one part of the puzzle. There is considerably more evidence to indicate Oswald's involvement with U.S. intelligence—evidence that is obscured rather than laid to rest by the Commission Report.

Let us look at a few of the instances in which this "intelligence angle" was covered up. Oswald's mother, trying vainly to convince the Commission her son was "an agent of the government" (1 H 142, cf. 1 H 191), cited his "special work" in the Philippines (apparently in connection with the CIA military interven-

tion in Indonesia) and in the Taiwan crisis (1 H 233, cf. 22 H 723). The Warren Report, without directly refuting this last claim, implied that Oswald had only been in Taiwan for a day or so around September 30, 1958 (R 684); it relied on Oswald's personnel file, and a related Pentagon memo, which placed Oswald's Marine Air Group 11 in Atsugi, Japan (23 H 796, cf. 19 H 658). In reality, MAG-11 had moved from Atsugi to Taiwan, in response to the Quemoy crisis, for an extended period beginning September 8 (Department of Defense Annual

Report, 1958-59, pp. 228-29).

This change of status is noted in Oswald's pay records, which only reached the Commission nine days before its report went to press (26 H 709, 715). The pay records also show, in contradiction to the personnel file, that on returning to Atsugi (the base for CIA U-2 and covert commando operations in the Far East), Oswald left MAG-11 (now in Taiwan) and was attached to its replacement MAG-13 (26 H 715). That Oswald's personnel file could put him in one unit, while his pay records put him in another, suggests that Oswald, at least in 1958-59, was engaged in some kind of activity so sensitive that some of his records were altered to conceal it.

There are also discrepancies with regard to Oswald's "hardship discharge" from active duty in September 1959 to support his mother. The Warren Report cites affidavits that Mrs. Oswald "had been injured at work in December 1958, and was unable to support herself" (R 688). In fact, both Mrs. Oswald's regular doctor (CD 5.298) and an Industrial Accident Board denied that she had suffered a loss of wage-earning capacity. Nevertheless, Oswald received his release with an ease and rapidity that surprised some of his colleagues (8 H 257).

In Oswald's group at Santa Ana, Calif., where a "secret clearance . . . was a minimum requirement" (8 H 298, cf. 232), the basic function was "to train both enlisted [men] and officers for later assignment overseas" (8 H 290). The swift handling of Oswald's release suggests that it was a cover: Oswald was being "sheep-dipped," just as U-2 pilot Gary Powers before him had been "released" from the Air Force for assignment to a covert intelligence role. Oswald's immediate application for a passport on September 4 "to attend the Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland and the University of Turku in Finland" (22 H 78) suggests that that role concerned his "defection" in October to the Soviet Union.

Here, too, the Warren Commission chose to overlook discrepancies. How was the trip paid for? The Report blandly repeats Oswald's own story that he had saved \$1,500 from his

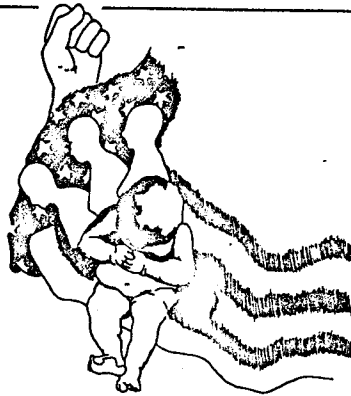
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Marine Corps salary (R 256), ignoring the fact that his only known bank account contained a total of \$203 (22 H 180). How did Oswald fly to Finland from London Airport, where his passport was stamped "Embarked 10 Oct. 1959" (18 H 162)? If he had taken the only commercial flight, he would have arrived too late to register before midnight (as claimed) at his Helsinki Hotel (26 H 32). The Report's solution was to conclude that Oswald had departed from London October 9, ignoring both the evidence of the conflicting date stamp and the possibility that his flight was not a commercial one at all (R 690, cf. Sylvia Meagher, *Accessories After the Fact*, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1967, p. 331).

The desire of U.S. intelligence agencies to interview even casual visitors to the Soviet Union is well known. In June 1962, Lee Harvey Oswald was a returning Marine defector who had once served at a CIA base and had told the U.S. Embassy in Moscow of his intention to pass information to Soviet officials (18 H 98). For two years he had worked in a sensitive Soviet factory and was now married to the niece of a colonel in Soviet intelligence. Yet the Report tells us that the returning Oswalds were met in New York City, not by the FBI or CIA, but by "Spas T. Raikin, a representative of the Traveler's Aid Society" (R 713).

The FBI interviews did not point out that Spas T. Raikin was also the Secretary-General of the American Friends of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, a small but vigorous group of right-wing revanchiste East Europeans in direct touch with the FBI and Army Intelligence—and also with the Gehlen spy organization in West Germany, the Kuomintang in Taiwan, the mother of Madame Nhu, right-wing Cubans like Oswald's DRE contact Carlos Bringuier, and other elements of a shadowy "World Anti-Communist League." This WACL had contacts with U.S. anti-communists in New Orleans, in the building with the Camp St. address used by Oswald on his pro-Castro literature, and also by the CIA's Cuban Revolutionary Council of which Bringuier had once been press secretary. As I have indicated in my book, *The War Conspir-*

acy, Mr. Raikin's personal correspondents in Taiwan (the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League) were intelligence agents involved in the Kuomintang's narcotics traffic—a fact dramatically illustrated by the 1971 arrest in Paris of the Chief Laotian Delegate to the APACL, whose suitcase containing 60 kilos of highgrade heroin would have been worth \$13.5 million on the streets of New York.

Unfortunately, there has not been space to show the ways in which many if not most of the Commission's staff, like most of the FBI agents involved, did attempt an honest and thorough investigation. I have focused narrowly on some of the indications that there was a cover-up where security and intelligence matters were involved. And, as we have learned from the Watergate and "plumbers" break-ins, the cover-up of an intelligence matter can become a priority, thereby protecting perpetrators of crimes which have no intelligence justification.

[THE RUBY CONNECTION]

Jack Ruby, the second "lone assassin," was a more difficult subject for a cover-up; his personal and

business ties with the police and underworld in Dallas were widely known, and there is evidence they extended considerably beyond Texas. Nevertheless, the Commission went to great lengths to argue that Ruby, like Oswald, "acted independently" (R 373), and in particular to downplay his close links to the Dallas police and also to organized crime. According to a brief and unconsciously humorous section of the Report, "the evidence indicates that Ruby was keenly interested in policemen and their work" (R 800). Nothing is said of the testimony of Detective Eberhardt, a veteran of the Special Services Bureau (SSB), "that he regarded Jack Ruby as a source of information in connection with his investigatory activities" (13 H 183)—i.e., as a police informant, specifically in the area of narcotics.

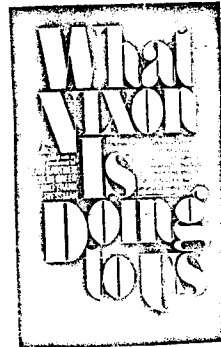
A word must be interpolated here about the SSB of the Dallas Police. Like similar "Special Units" in other police forces across the country (all of which work with one another), the Dallas SSB had a consolidated responsibility, in collaboration with the FBI and other agencies, for investigating subversive activities (allegedly the



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world of Lee Harvey Oswald), and also organized crime (the world of Jack Ruby). It also had responsibility for the area of vice, and particularly for supervising night-clubs such as Jack Ruby's. Thus SSB Vice Chief Gilmore, a "close friend" of Ruby (23 H 78, 25 H 290), was said to visit his clubs "every night they are open" (23 H 207). SSB also had a Narcotics Unit. Last but not least, the SSB was given the responsibility of protective intelligence for the visits of important government officials—such as President Kennedy—who visited Dallas (5 H 48).

Ruby's status as a high-level police informant would explain the repeated stories, from sources inside and outside Dallas, "that Ruby is the payoff man for the Dallas Police Department" (CD 4.529) and "had the 'fix' with the county authorities" (23 H 372). One of these reports is particularly credible, inasmuch as it was received by the FBI seven years before the assassination. According to a Mrs. James Breen, who with her husband acted "as informants for the Federal Narcotics Bureau," her husband "had made connection with large narcotics setup operating between Mexico, Texas and the East. . . . In some fashion James got the okay to operate through Jack Ruby of Dallas" (23 H 369).

The Warren Report discounted the even more numerous stories (one of them from a former Dallas County Sheriff) that Ruby was linked to organized crime. Commission Exhibit 1268 (22 H 372) is a typical example of the FBI's and Commission's reluctance to explore more deeply Ruby's underworld connections. In it a Dave Yaras (unidentified) "claims 'Sparky' [i.e. Ruby] 'knew Lenny Patrick 'like he knows him' but was 'positively on his own and not outfit connected.'" Yaras further described "Sparky" as a "'romeo' who was most successful in picking up girls." In the Report only the trivial part of this testimony remains: "one friend regarded him as a 'Romeo,' who was quite successful in attracting young women" (R 792).

We must turn to the Kefauver and McClellan Crime Hearings to learn (in answer to the obvious question not asked by the FBI) that the link between Yaras and Patrick (and hence,

inferentially, Ruby) was intimate. Both men were top Syndicate gambling figures on Chicago's Jewish West Side. They had been arrested and indicted together for the syndicate murder in 1946 of wire service king James Ragen, an indictment dropped after the murder of a key witness. The police captain most active in the investigation was himself subsequently murdered, right after he reported to the Kefauver Committee (through his lawyer Luis Kutner) that he had a "hot new witness who will . . . name Leonard Patrick, Dave Yaras, and Willie Block as the killers" (*Newsweek*, October 9, 1950, p. 37). In 1963 news stories that Luis Kutner had intervened for Ruby with the Kefauver Committee, also noted (correctly, it would appear), that Ruby was "linked" to Dave Yaras, Lennie Patrick and Willie Block" (*Washington Post*, November 26, 1963, A6).

Dave Yaras himself should have particularly interested the Warren Commission, since the McClellan Committee's counsel, Robert F. Kennedy, had charged him with the same connections later attributed to Ruby: corrupt Teamster interests, and "some gambling in Cuba" (McClellan Hearings, pp. 7416, 12522). Yet it asked no questions about Yaras and instead misspelled his name (as Yeres) when Ruby's sister began spontaneously to reminisce about him and Patrick (14 H 444).

This studied disinterest in Ruby's alleged Teamster connections appears to have been systematic. The Commission asked no questions about Ruby's two telephone calls in November 1963 with Barney Baker (25 H 244), a convicted Teamster hoodlum who phoned Dave Yaras on the eve of the assassination (25 H 295). Nor about Ruby's call to top Teamster bondsman Irwin Weiner (25 H 246)—an organized crime associate of narcotics overlord Sam Battaglia. When Ruby himself began to talk about his phone call to Dusty Miller, head of the Teamsters Southern Conference (25 H 244), this was transcribed in the Warren Hearings as a call to "Deutsch I. Maylor" (5 H 200).

It is of course quite possible that all these calls were innocent, but the Commission did not bother to find out. None of those called were wit-

nesses, and their names will not be found in the Report. Instead the Report claims that Ruby's friendships with criminals "throughout his life . . . were limited largely to professional gamblers," and adds, even more astonishingly, that "there is no credible evidence that Ruby, himself, gambled on other than a social basis" (R 370). The Commission had received numerous disinterested reports to the contrary (e.g. 23 H 48, 23 H 363, CD 360.115). One of these, from a south Texas businessman, recalled Ruby saying in 1960 that "he had recently been to Cuba, as he and some associates were trying to get some gambling concessions at a casino there but it did not work out" (22 H 858).

The Commission knew that Ruby in fact had visited Cuba in 1959, probably twice. Its Report mentions the eight-day August 1959 trip on one page (R 802), the two-day September trip (22 H 859) on another (R 370), and treats the two trips as one: "Ruby traveled to Havana as a guest of a close friend and known gambler, Lewis J. McWillie. Both Ruby and McWillie state the trip was purely social" (R 370). This covers up several facts which were known to the Commission: a 1959 police report called McWillie (whom Ruby "idolized," 5 H 201) a "gambler and murderer" (23 H 166); he was a former employee of big-time gambler Benny Binion, the power behind the Delois Green gang who was now in Las Vegas (23 H 163, CD 1193.249); in 1959 he was manager of the Tropicana Casino in Havana, a syndicate operation (23 H 166); both in Havana (The Capri) and in Las Vegas (The Thunderbird), McWillie worked at casinos where a cut went to top Syndicate financier Meyer Lansky.

Today this story of a Ruby involvement in Havana gambling has a renewed interest, for in 1959 Castro's supervisor of gambling concessions is said to have been Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis *alias* Fiorini, a gun-runner to Castro before the overthrow of Batista. The owner of the Havana Tropicana (where McWillie worked and Ruby visited) was Norman Rothman, a gun-runner to Castro who in 1959 was indicted on other charges with *mafioso* Samuel Mannarino

(continued on page 53)

COVER-UP (From page 20)

(another Havana gun-runner and casino operator) and Giuseppe Cotroni, identified in the Senate Narcotics Hearings (p. 1002) as "head of the largest and most notorious narcotics syndicate on the North American continent."

[OVERLAPPING CONSPIRACIES]

In this dark area of gun-running to Cuba, the careers of Sturgis, of Ruby, and of Oswald begin to overlap. First-hand accounts linked Ruby himself to Cuban gun-running (14 H 330-64), and to Robert McKeown, arrested in 1958 for gun-running with his friend, former Cuban President Carlos Prio Socarras. (Prio Socarras helped organize the Cuban exile demonstrations at the party conventions in 1972, when his Miami office was only two doors away from Bernard Barker's.) And Carlos Bringuier claimed he suspected Oswald of trying to infiltrate—as an informant either for Castro or for the FBI—the Louisiana training camp of the Christian Democratic Movement, a Miami-based exile group close to the DRE, which the Kennedy Administration was cracking down on in late 1963 (10 H 35, 43). Bringuier noted that five days before Oswald's first contact with him, the FBI had raided an illicit arms depot one mile from the camp. These arms were stashed in the home of one of the McLaney brothers, prominent casino operators in Las Vegas, the Bahamas, and in pre-Castro Havana.

Since 1963, U.S. narcotics officials have referred to the existence in Miami of a small but tightly organized "Cuban Mafia" in narcotics, "for the most part previously little-known underworld members employed and trained in pre-Castro Cuba by the American Mafia, which then controlled gambling in Havana" (*NYT*, February 1, 1970, p. 57). Certain U.S. business interests collaborated for decades with the narcotics-linked American Mafia in Cuba—as they did with similar criminal networks in China and later in Vietnam—for the Mafia supplied the necessary local intelligence, cash and muscle against the threat of Communist take-over. Some

of those Cuban-Americans recruited by the CIA (presumably from the Cuban-American Mafia) are now suspected by federal and city authorities to be "involved in everything from narcotics trafficking to extortion rackets and bombings" (*NYT Magazine*, June 3, 1973, p. 46).

And behind the bureaucratic screens of "security" and "intelligence" there appear signs of a more sinister overlapping of conspiracies: in the gun-running and gambling background of Frank Sturgis and his allies, and the common responsibility for narcotics intelligence of E. Howard Hunt and John Caulfield in the White House, G. Gordon Liddy in the Treasury Department, and Egil Krogh (supervisor of the White House "plumbers") as Director in 1972 of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control.

The grey alliance in pre-Castro Cuba between business, intelligence and Mafia led to a central role in the post-war heroin traffic of the Havana connection, which later became the Miami connection. This Miami connection is typified by Bebe Rebozo's business associate "Big Al" Polizzi, who was named in the 1964 Senate Narcotics Hearings as "one of the most influential figures of the underworld in the United States" and "associated with international narcotic traffickers . . . and illicit gambling activities" (p. 1049). Polizzi and Rebozo collaborated in the construction of a Miami shopping center, where Rebozo also employed a former Mayor of Havana under Batista who headed up "Cubans for Nixon" in 1968. In addition, Polizzi and the Rebozo family have been recorded as signing legal petitions in support of each other, in 1952 and again in 1965 (*Newsday*, October 7, 1971; *Village Voice*, Aug. 31-Sept. 6, 1973).

Another piece in the puzzle is provided by the Keyes Realty Company, a Miami business with underworld connections, which has helped both Rebozo and Nixon in various land deals, including the Winter White House. Keyes Realty and its lawyers were named in the Kefauver Crime Hearings (Part 1, p. 716) for their role on behalf of organized crime in bribing Dade County's Sheriff Sullivan to run Miami as a wide-open gambling town.

In 1948, Keyes Realty, and its lawyers, with the help of a wealthy Cuban banker called Agustin Batista (a cousin of the dictator), collaborated in the transfer of southern Key Biscayne to a shadowy Cuban investment group (the Ansan Corp.) in which an Internal Revenue investigator suspected the presence of funds belonging "to Luciano or other underworld characters" (IRS Report of Feb. 20, 1948, cited by Jeff Gerth in the November-December *Sundance*, p. 38). The visible partners were former Cuban President Prio's investment ally and Education Minister Jose Aleman, who had defrauded his government of tens of millions of dollars (*NYT*, March 26, 1950, p. 92), his wife Elena Santiero, daughter of Luciano's Cuban attorney, and Batista's Finance Minister and investment ally, Anselmo Alliegro.

Later control of this Key Biscayne real estate passed to men near Hoffa and the Teamsters' Pension Fund, and Meyer Lansky's conduit, the Miami National Bank. In 1967, some of this land was sold at bargain rates to Nixon and Rebozo, by a man named Donald Berg; after Nixon became President, the Secret Service advised him to stop associating with Berg because of his background. Nixon delayed registering the purchase of one lot for four years, until the final payment had been made on a mortgage to Arthur Desser, associate of both Jimmy Hoffa and Meyer Lansky.

Recently, Nixon's links with Desser, Keyes Realty *et al.* have been less prominent. But one of the Watergate burglars, Eugenio Martinez, was a vice-president of Keyes Realty until 1971, when he and Bernard Barker set up their own realty office, Ameritas, in the same office building. Some of Barker's real estate ventures, according to Jack Anderson's column (June 26, 1972), have involved Bebe Rebozo. Funds for the Watergate operation were channeled through Barker's bank account in a Cuban-owned Miami bank, Republic National, whose president had formerly worked for Agustin Batista's bank in Cuba. (The first president of this bank had earlier chaired the board of the Miami National Bank and another director was from the law firm of Keyes Realty.)

In 1961, Agustin Batista and his

brother Laureano, leader of the Cuban Christian Democratic Movement (CDM), employed Sturgis' friend Hans Tanner in the CDM's "Project 26"—yet another effort to assassinate Castro (Tanner, p. 143). Tanner's account also describes how Nixon himself, out cruising in the Miami River, shouted "Good luck" to a boatload of CDM guerrillas training, supposedly in secrecy, for their diversionary role in the Bay of Pigs (p. 2). In 1965, Nixon intervened legally on behalf of the CDM's imprisoned political leader, Mario Garcia Kohly, who had been arrested by the Kennedy Administration for his anti-Castro activities in October 1963 (William Turner, *Power on the Right*, Ramparts Press, 1971, p. 156).

The Ervin Committee has yet to call Hunt and Sturgis as witnesses, to hear about their alleged illegal activities over the last decade. Some Congressional committee should learn more about these men's Cuban activities, such as those which in September 1963 brought strong U.S. government warnings to Sturgis and death to his friend Rorke. It is almost certain that a full inquiry in this direction would uncover past alliances between intelligence networks and organized crime for mutually advantageous operations

—including the attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. And the disturbing evidence of a cover-up in Dallas suggests that such assassination efforts have not all been aimed abroad. ■

SUPERPOWERS

(From page 36)

new directions—toward China and Southeast Asia.

This is a specter which haunts the Pentagon, and which makes Japan a U.S. military-planning priority. For the Pentagon recognizes the military potential inherent in Japan's formidable economy. And if the Japanese embark upon a vigorous policy of rapprochement with mainland China, and if China responds favorably, the U.S. will find its military position throughout Asia subject to grave question.

Does this mean that the Pentagon is expecting Japan to revert back to the militarism of the 1930s? Of course not. But it does mean that no strategic planning by the U.S. can afford to ignore that long-range possibility, especially with the growing economic discord between the two countries. There is, moreover, another factor which the U.S. cannot control: namely, Sino-Soviet disharmony.

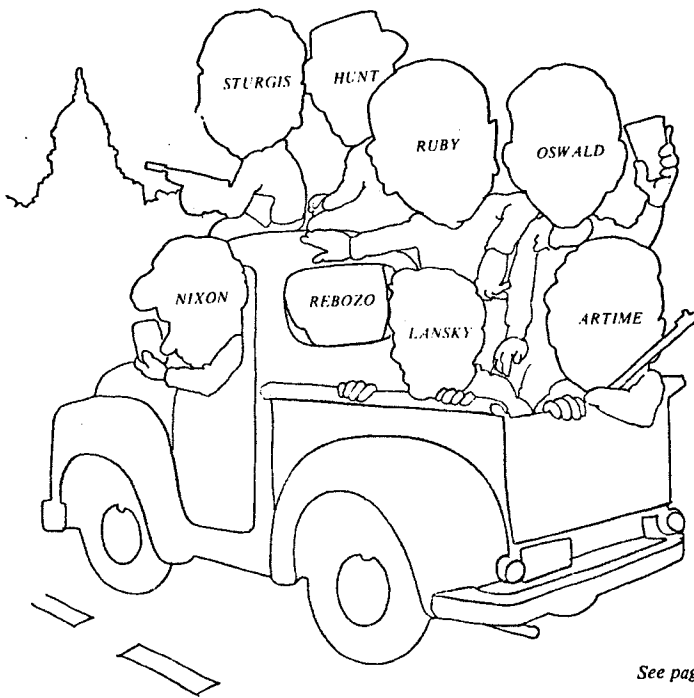
It was China's decision to embark

on an independent nuclear path which originally fomented the dispute between the two Communist giants, and now China not only possesses a nuclear capability but on June 27 detonated its first hydrogen device. Russian pronouncements, meanwhile, have taken on an ominous tone. In a major position paper in *Pravda* on August 26, the Soviet Union directly accused China of having nuclear ambitions for the sole purpose of dominating all Asia. Moreover, the tenor of the *Pravda* piece was that China was moving toward an understanding with the U.S. to isolate and threaten the Soviet Union. In my opinion, the *Pravda* position could just as well have been aimed at the U.S. as at China, for a U.S.-China entente would be directed at containing both Russia-in-Asia and Japan. The *Pravda* statement added, "The longings of the Maoists for hegemony are suggested particularly by the activities in Southeast and South Asia, such as their old idea of creating a military-political grouping of Southeast Asian countries under the aegis of Peking."

Indeed, the statement may even have been calculated to exacerbate the strained relations between the U.S. and Japan, for it suggests that the U.S. may not deter China from such ambitions, with obvious effects for Japan. Exacerbate relations, that is, unless the U.S.—to compensate Japan for loss of Southeast Asian markets—were to desist from measures which Japan believes hinder its industrial growth.

Can the U.S. have friendship with both Communist powers without forcing Japan into one or another camp? Judging by the August 26 statement in *Pravda*, the Russian leadership is in no mood to regard any friend of China as a friend of the Soviet Union—least of all the U.S. But then if the U.S. cannot have detente with both, it must have it with one or with neither. If with neither, Washington will be forced to go far toward accepting the Japanese position. But if with one, Japan will have to make accommodations.

Suppose, for example, that the U.S. were to conclude a detente with Russia. China would then have inducement to reach an understanding with Japan—at least after China has hardened hydrogen weapons bases and



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