

Ms. Jodi Allen
Editor, Outlook
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

8/18/94

Dear Ms. Allen,

When I saw and then read the La Fontaine piece published on the seventh I was aghast. I was also quite surprised first that the Post had published it and given it so much space and then that it had not done the obvious checking. I do not recall the Post ever going with a single-source piece on anything controversial and this piece has only a single source who is both an alcoholic and a man with a five-item rap sheet.

I enclose what I wrote about it rather in haste, despite the time that has passed, not in the expectation you would welcome some kind of correction but to inform you. Not that I would object if you were to edit and publish it.

As Jeffrey ^{Frank}Allen of your staff, whom I met once, and a number of others on the Post can tell you, I'm 81, lucky to survive as many serious health problems as I have and, because I have ^{extensive} knowledge of the JFK assassination and its investigations, some years ago decided to use what time remains for me ⁱⁿ by perfecting the record for history to the degree possible for me.

I realize how this can seem and that you do not know me.

In one of the dozen or so FOIA lawsuits by means of which I obtained about a third of a million pages of previously-withheld assassination records, CA 75-226, the Department of Justice told that court that I know more about the JFK assassination and its investigations than anyone working for the FBI.

(That was its successful defense against my undenied allegations of perjury by FBI SA John Hilty! I made and proved such allegations in a number of these cases, making myself subject to a perjury charge if I lied. In this case in which I was the plaintiff, its exact words are, "plaintiff could make such claims ad infinitum since he is perhaps more familiar with events surrounding the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination than anyone now employed by the F.B.I." What a defense of proven perjury!)

Mine is the only writing on these subjects that is 100% factual, with no conspiracy theories or non-conspiracies of any kind. I've published seven books on the JFK assassination (the delayed eighth is now due to be published in March, 1995) ^{and} not a single person of the very large number I used in that writing has written or phoned me to complain about my treatment of him or to allege error.

Currently this includes Gerald Posner and his publisher, Random House, in response to my Case Open. It says and proves that his is a fraudulent formula book to exploit and commercialize that great national tragedy and the market he thought he saw for that approach as a response to the Oliver Stone movie JFK. For which, as George Lardner re-

ported ~~on~~ an Outlook article, I began the criticism of it because ^{Stone} ~~he~~ described it as non-fiction, as it is not. I proposed it to ^{Lardner} ~~him~~ and provided him with his information for it.

Posner and RH, it ~~may~~ interest you to know, when confronted with my book that refers to him as, among other things, a shyster, a plagiarist and so dedicated a liar he has trouble telling the truth even by accident, ~~they~~ were mute in the New York litigation in which they made it relevant. I am told that in his Doubleday/Anchor reprint that has not yet reached Frederick, he fails to refute what Case Open says.

While my work is on the assassinations and their official investigations, it is also a study of how our basic institutions worked in those times of great stress and since then. The media is one of our basic institutions and the Post is a major part of the major media, deservedly.

Because I believe that the Post's record on these subjects, while anything but what I would have expected in my reporting days of the dim past and not at all what as a former reporter, Senate investigator and editor and wartime intelligence analyst, ~~is~~ interested in publishing the hard fact on these subjects with a very few exceptions for all of which I believe I was responsible, is the best in the major media, I regret what you have just done very much.

In addition to misinforming and misleading your readers, ~~which~~ ^{who} include our most important decision-makers, you have launched a new assassination mythology when there was no shortage of them to do this misleading and misinforming.

And given it such exceptional attention at that. If it was not also syndicated.

Please excuse me for not rewriting and editing and for the fact that my wife's typing now ^{can} ~~is~~ be no better. She is impaired by an accident and I believe it would be better if I devoted that time to other work I've begun in this effort to perfect the record for history.

However, if you have any questions, I will be glad to respond to them.

The Post is, of course, a very large institution. But I cannot help noting that it found all this space for such simply awful stuff that is not even reasonable while not finding the book that should start one of the major book-publishing scandals of years worth any mention at all.

This is to say that the outdated policy of the past is the dead hand still on today's reporting, regardless of the national need of the people to know so that for all the odds against it representative society might function as it should, by the people being informed about major issues.

Respectfully, *Harold Weisberg*

Sorry my typing cannot be any better. We are both past 80 and I am limited in what I can do. I must keep my legs elevated when I type.

Harold Weisberg

JFK ASSASSINATION MYTHOLOGY ENSHRINED

In publishing the fantasy of the La Fontaines (The Fourth Tramp) on more than one of the two full pages it has added to its Outlook section, the Washington Post competes strongly with the super-market tabloids.

In common with most of those who make up the JFK assassination industry, the La Fontaines are ignorant of the established basic fact of the assassination and its investigations and when all of ^a ~~tht~~ is freely available to them they know too much to contaminate their wisdom and omniscience with mere fact. They all regard themselves as Dick Tracys or Perry Masons and, aside from having in common a yearning for fame if not also fortune, they share in their contempt for and the degree of the profundity of their ignorance of the established and readily available official fact.

Their fairy tale - and all the innumerable tramp stories are fairy tales - is that the accused Presidential assassin, Leo Harvey Oswald, and the man who killed him, Jack Ruby, knew each other and met with others in a scheme to run guns to Cuba, that "Oswald Talked," the title of the book the La Fontaines are to publish on it this winter, and, although they do not go so far as to say it, that because Oswald allegedly talked Ruby killed him.

There is so much they do not say!

Their story, and it is really only a contrived conjecture that has but a single and most dubious source, falls short of saying that this alleged gun-running scheme also led to the assassination. But with both Ruby and Oswald allegedly involved in both, the reader has

no reason not to believe they intend to suggest this.

There have been innumerable tales about Ruby and Oswald knowing each other but there is no substance to any of them. ^aTht of the La Fontaines is but a new twist on the old bull.

There not only is no reason to believe any of these never-proven stories, there is ample reason not to believe any were possible.

While we do not know all there is to know about Oswald - and none of those who dream up this ticket to fame and fortune had made any effort at all to learn what is known - certainly not a single one has made any effort to read the large files of this information that I have - what is known is that Oswald had no interest at all in any such adventure.

There likewise is no reason to believe, nor even to suspect, that he had any interests tht would have led him to seek out or have anything at all to do with a man like Ruby or that he shared any of Ruby's interests.

The Warren Commisison made no effort to learn what Oswald did with the five evenings a week he was in Dallas for the month and a half he was there before the assassination. It was told by the only person who knew and had any way of knowing about the first of those weeks^hhis landlady, Mrs. Mary Bledsoe, that he sat in his room and read every night.

Oswald does have a record of being a heavy reader. This is referred to in his Marines record and in what is known of his conversations with others. For his few years and scanty education, he was well informed.

There is nothing in Oswald's record indicating he was ever engaged in any kind of shady deal to make money. There is no indication he ever had any such interests or money from any such endeavors. This is an abundance of evidence that he was always short of money. So he had no money from any such shenanigans. This is pretty clear evidence that he was not engaged in any.

What role he could serve in any is something none of those ^{many} men who write fictions about him and it and palm ^{them} it off as nonfiction has never been suggested. Nor has any ever come up with even a fancied role he could serve in any of these innumerable fictions.

Including the La Fontaines.

He had neither skills nor connections of any use in those imagined deals. If his role was to be that of a messenger, there is little likelihood that those whose deals they allegedly were would prefer an unknown quantity, a stranger, to someone they knew and could trust.

Crooked, illegal businesses do not thrive on weak links, and any unknowns with any involvement in this are a weak link, those they would have to wonder might be police informers.

From the time Oswald returned from his short trip to Mexico until the time of the assassination, nobody who could have been involved in any gun-running scheme, Jack Ruby included, had the time to get to know Oswald well enough to be able to trust him. The one possible exception might be some of those who, like him, filled orders for school books at the Texas School Book Depository where he worked those four months. The evidence is that even there he got close to nobody and nobody got close to him. If any of them had any connection with any gunrunning or any other crooked deal. The evidence is that, other than one of those employees who had a record of drug use, none had any criminal connections of any kind.

The one thing which seems to be readily publishable about the assassination is fairy tales. The one thing in which there seems to be no publisher interest of any kind is fact about the assassination.

How the reputable and usually careful Post came to print such nonsense and, more, give it such extraordinary space is not easily understood. It certainly did no checking at all. This, too, is typical of the publishable assassination

fantasies: they are liked and are never checked out.

Anyone doing any serious work in the field, and this includes newcomers if they are engaged in serious work rather than Perry Masonry, knows that, aside from what I began to rescue from official oblivion in the Warren Commission files in 1966 after they were ~~fter they were~~ transferred to the National Archives, I obtained about a third of a million once-withheld official pages on assassinations by a series of Freedom of Information (FOIA) lawsuits. It is also known to all doing serious work and to many who do not that, as a matter of principle and of practice, I give free and unsupervised access to all those records to anyone working in the field. They also have unsupervised access to our copier.

I have not only the FBI's files on Oswald and his wife Marina and information about them from many other sources, for the use of others I made a special file of duplicates of all Oswald's writings for anyone to study and to copy. For a young man with so little education, he wrote quite a bit.

Almost all of it is political. No dreams of sudden riches through nefarious schemes. No stories about crime. No interest in it or in getting money, which he always needed, that way.

There is nothing in them congenial to these innumerable fantasies.

But without looking at them, those who dream up these fantasies have no way of knowing that.

And not a single one has ever looked at them.

Central in this particular La Fontaine fantasy is their mythology of the many mythologies about three tramps arrested in Dallas the day of the assassination.

Oblivious of or indifferent to their own ignorance, they say correctly about the news pictures taken of those tramps that "Over the years conspiracy theorists claimed the men were actually assassination conspirators in the employ of the CIA or organized crime."

The truth is even worse but they do not know it.

They also say that the Dallas police say they had no records of those arrests and that they were the first to "debunk" those stories "in our front-page story for the Houston Post of Feb. 9, 1992."

My first public debunking of those many careers invented for those three innocent winos began in, as I now recall, early 1968 when Jim Garrison devoted his fertile imagination to them. He "identified" the tallest of the three as one Edgar Eugene Bradley who was then the west-coast representative of the east coast Cape May, New Jersey, radio preacher of the far-right fringes, the Rev. Carl McIntire. To him, we were for some years indebted for the FCC's "fairness doctrine".

Mark Lane, among others, devoted his not inconsiderable talents to proving Garrison was right. When he wasn't.

Don't laugh - except at those who without thought or checking published this La Fontaine fantasy and at those making a book of it - without peer review. No less a personage in the JFK assassination industry than Gerald Posner, author

of the knowingly mistitled Case Closed, has those tramps in his exalted work. Posner refers to the tallest of the three and the one most fantasized about as "Charles 'Buddy' Harrelson." That Harrelson was a star major-league ballplayer, a Mets second baseman as I recall. He is not one of the trio.

It was some years after I believed that no further ^{public} debunking would be needed that the Harrelson "identification" was made. That Harrelson, also named Charles as the Post itself reported December 15, 1982, was described as a "professional hit man" ^{He was} ~~who~~ convicted the day before of knocking off U.S. District Judge John H. Wood, Jr., for a quarter of a million dollars from a drug dealer ^{Judge Wood} ~~that~~ judge had ^{Harrelson} sent to jail.

The first official debunking for which I was responsible was in May 1968.

I made it necessary for the FBI to investigate those tramp pictures when I spotted the sketch of one; the shortest, in the papers as a drawing of the man wanted for killing Martin Luther King, Jr. I gave the Baltimore FBI office a set of those pictures. It got the Dallas FBI to investigate.

I have two files of duplicates of these FBI investigative reports on the tramps for the use of others. Many have examined them and perhaps many mythologies about them were aborted in the minds of some.

When it was possible for me, ^{when asked} I made copies of those and other records and mailed them to those who asked for them. When that became imposible, I arranged for students at local Hood College to do the copying.

I never heard from the La Fontaines.

Without going into all the records I caused to be generated and the FBI disclosed to me and then put into its public reading room in response to my 1978 lawsuit, at Baltimore's request Dallas made an investigation the result of which it also reported to the Memphis office on May 21, 1968. Its sources were Bill Bass, of the Dallas police identification division, and arresting officers marvin Wise and Roy Vaughn. Bass identified them as the arresting officers.

They informed the FBI that they had found these three men in a parked railroad boxcar about a mile south of the tripple underpass. That is the western end of the scene of the assassination, Dealey Plaza.

Also in my files available to all are the results of two investigations made for me privately later in 1968, when I did not yet have the results of the FBI's investigation. I then needed a dependable investigation because Jim Garrison was about to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the JFK assassination by, among other things, going back to his Bradley "identification". On that basis alone he was going to charge Bradley with being one of the Grassy Knoll assassins.

His other to-be-announced-and-charged Grassy Knoll assassin was easier to

deal with. That was Robert Lee Perrin. Perrin had killed himself in New Orleans in 1962, 15 months before JFK was assassinated.

I had been asked by two of Garrison's staff to see if I could block Garrison's planned "commemoration" because they had not been able to. I asked one, his chief investigator, Louis Ivon, for two sets of those pictures as I was leaving for home after being away for a month. I mailed one to a former FBI agent who owed me a favor, Paul Rothermel, Jr., then the late H. L. Hunt's chief of security. I sent the other to my friend, then the Dallas district attorney, Henry Wade. Paul made the investigation personally. Wade sent one of his staff investigators. Both, working independently, neither knowing of the other, reported identical results.

Those men were ^{transient} winos who were picked up when an area search was made. They were drinking away in that boxcar ^{it} which was parked not a mile to the south, as the FBI had been told but directly behind the Central Annex Post Office. Its address is 217 South Main Street. The only way to take the men into custody without heisting them the considerable height of the railroad loading dock and taking them through that post office was to walk them off. The only way for that was ^{the tracks and} over ~~the~~ triple overpass and in front of the Texas School Book Depository Building. There the news photographers were snapping pictures of anything that moved. It then was about an hour and a half after the assassination.

Even Garrison was not about to allege that the CIA had invented sights that could turn right angles or rifles that could fire bullets for more than two city blocks and then also have them turn at right angles and impact on what was in sight that did not exist.

When I gave the other of Garrison's staff who had asked my help, his junior-most assistant district attorney, Andrew Sciambra, the typed report of my investigation, with exhibits that included the morgue book and the hospital admission record on Perrin, he confronted Garrison with it. Garrison forgot about charging

Bradley and Perrin. Instead, he fired an innocent member of his staff, alleging he was a CIA agent sent to infiltrate and misdirect his "assassination" probe.

This is entirely unrecognizable in Garrison's On the Trail of the Assassins, the one trail Garrison never took. But tragically, it is true. I have a copy of my report and some of its exhibits.

Also an official and a public debunking was long before the La Fontaines claimed first of 1992. It was the official one by the Ford administration's Rockefeller Commission. Its official 1975 debunking, well reported, was by cultural anthropologists who reported on their scientific examination of those pictures.

After their less than accurate tramps story reporting, the La Fontaines got to 1992. Then, they say, Elrod's name "piqued the curiosity of Bill Adams, a computer programmer and assassination researcher." That led him to file a Freedom of Information request. When Adams obtained that "28-year-old FBI report," the La Fontaines say, he "discovered a story that was hard to believe - and harder to prove."

Adams "discovered" it like Lafayette discovered America. And the La Fontaine interpretation is closer to impossible to believe than harder.

What Adams "discovered" is in a vast 90,000 pages of FBI records I got from it in a 1977 FOIA lawsuit, records that since then have always been available to all writing in the field, both in my home and in the FBI's public reading room. Others, like me, ignored it because it does not have the meaning the La Fontaines were paid for by the Post and will be paid for in their winter's book. If it is now published by Pelican, as the Post says it is to be.

And rather than the La Fontaines' single report, my files hold at least seven, here identified by their FBI Headquarters file numbers:

Jack Ruby files in Dallas: File No. 44-1639, Serials, or individual reports, 5999, 6000, 6068, 6088 and 6144.

¹⁰⁰⁻¹⁰⁶⁶¹
The Dallas Oswald File No. ~~1061~~, Serials 7705 and 7715.

These are duplicated in the Headquarters files where the Ruby file is numbered 44-24016 and the Oswald file is numbered 105-82555. *Both are in the FBI's public reading room.* Memphis FBI files also hold some of these records.

What Adams resorted to FOIA to obtain had been publicly available ~~in part~~ for 15 years. The La Fontaines' word "discovered" is hardly true of what was public for 15 years.

Neither skill in computer programming nor an active imagination is an adequate or proper preparation for dependable assassination research or accurate writing about it.

This newest of the La Fontaine contributions to assassination mythology, without which there was no shortage, is largely based on conjecture and a few of the more dubious interpretations of what one of the more dubious of alleged sources allegedly said. One source at that.

John Franklin Elrod said that "on the afternoon of the assassination he was arrested for 'investigation of conspiracy to commit murder.'" The murder of whom they do not say. If of the President, they cite none of the Dallas police records of which they say that in 1992 "the Dallas City Council ... voted to make public all city records concerning the assassination," including all "arrest records."

When no question should exist for either a newspaper article or a book, the La Fontaine writing can be interpreted as suggesting the "conspiracy" to "murder" was to the President.

"Elrod now says," they continue, "he was in the same cell block as Oswald. The (emphasis added) FBI report on the incident doesn't mention Oswald's name."

"Cell block" is not the same as what this writing is written to make it mean, the same cell. Cell blocks consist of individual cells the number of which

can vary with the jail and within any jail.

They also say that Elrod was in a "cell" with "two other men." They saw a man "with a badly battered face being led by the jail guards." Then, this "cell-mate, Elrod recalled (much later, I add) said he had seen the battered man previously in a motel room with four other men." There "money" had been "advanced under some kind of contract."

One of those men was the man who killed Oswald, Jack Ruby, according to the La Fontaines' at least thirdhand account. For which they have only this one dubious source.

This leads them to the conclusion that "Lee Harvey Oswald, it seems, had gotten a glimpse of a glimpse of a right-wing gun-running operation."

Hardly a mere "glimpse." As they begin their sensation by saying, "the accused presidential assassin knew about the inner working of a gunrunning network that was under investigation by federal agents in Dallas in the fall of 1963."

Later they say that Elrod's cellmate "had seen" Oswald with "four other men ... in a motel room" where "money had been advanced unde some type of contract."

That "contract" jazz is merely assumed. Makes a better story, anyway. Seems more gang-like. Realism. "Gangs" and "contracts."

But "knowing the inner workins of a gunrunning network" is a bit more than merely having a "glimpse" of it. And in their imaginative writing they have Oswald actually part of it, not merely knowing about it.

There is not even a legitimate basis for suspicion of any such Oswald involvement in the enormous over-writing and stretched meanings in this La Fontaine Dick Tracery.

The sole basis for this melodramatic sensation is that on an unspecified day "in August, 1964" Elrod wanted, in the words of a Shelby County, Tennessee, deputy sheriff, "The deputies in Memphis to know that he had information 'on the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald [sic].'"

This supposed information is supposed to be the supposed story of the probably not supposed "battered face" on the jailed man of those supposed five of the supposed contract for running guns to Cuba.

With Jack Ruby allegedly meeting with fellow contractors along with Oswald, the La Fontaines say, they seem not to have asked how anyone knew about any "contract." They just say there was one.

Most of their assassination mythology is based on what takes up most of their article, an account of official investigations of gunrunning to Cuba.

That makes good copy any time. Especially with all these assassination conspiracy theories allegedly involving Cubans of both sides, government and anti-government

James Patrick Hosty, Jr., ^{was /} ^{FBI's} ~~is~~ the Oswald Dallas case agent who is never fully identified by the La Fontaines. They omit his middle name, Patrick, that he and the FBI always used, and he had a father and a son of the same name. They say he was "aware of the intelligence reports on Dallas gunrunning." With no more than this, with no indication at all that he was involved in any investigation of that alleged gunrunning, as ⁱⁿ his FBI "internal security" role in Dallas he ordinarily would not have been, the La Fontaines make a big jump to say what is well known, that in his address book Oswald had "Hosty's address and license plate number. This notation, moreover, appeared in the notebook under the date of 'Nov. 1, 1963.' That was the same day that the Dallas FBI office received an interoffice communication" on someone allegedly involved in that alleged gunrunning.

They do not even know ^{whether} and they do not say that Hosty was in the office that day.

But they infer, through this date in Oswald's address book, that he was connected with that gunrunning one way or another.

November 1 was one of the days Hosty went to see Marina Oswald and to

question her. He gave her his office address and phone number and she noted his license number. She gave this information to Lee. They were worried about the FBI and they had cause to be.

And so, according to the La Fontaines, Ruby and Oswald were connected and Ruby was connected to that alleged gunrunning and through Ruby Oswald knew about it and had been at that motel meeting on it.

What a world of blabbermouths the La Fontaines imagined the underworld to be!

It was on August 11, 1964, according to the two FBI agents who interviewed John Franklin Elrod, that he was jailed in Memphis. As they say at the outset of their report (44-1639, page 116), "Elrod stated that he, himself, is an alcoholic." The most probative of sources, naturally, is an alcoholic who himself says that on the morning he was arrested and spoke to the deputies he had loaded up on beer and vodka and "was in possession of an illegal weapon, a sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun which had a pistol grip."

De regueur for probative witnesses.

So the drunken Elrod went to the sheriff's office instead of killing his wife.

This is what the FBI agents say he told them in their August 11 report.

That is not what the La Fontaines say about their sole source, that he was going to kill his wife, this man whose FBI rap sheet already held five earlier charges. They say that "after drinking an unknown amount of beer and vodka, he wound up in the Shelby County Sheriff's office in downtown Memphis." His reason, according to the La Fontaines, is "that something was preying on his mind. It had happened nine months before" or at the time of the assassination, when he was in the Dallas jail.

With that FBI report on which they base their article and their book before them and they read in it Elrod went to the sheriff voluntarily while "in possession

of a sawed-off shotgun" because "He stated that he had begun to think of the possibility of killing his wife from whom he is now separated."

It is not that Elrod just "wound up" in the sheriff's office, as they say. He went there to keep himself from killing his estranged wife.

The words of the FBI report following what I quote above are:

"Inasmuch as he had the sawed-off shotgun and the desire to kill her was known to him, he decided he should go to the Sheriff's office and talk, which he did."

It was not that anything at all about the assassination "was preying on on his mind."

He feared that if he were not confined he would kill his estranged wife.

But that makes neither a sensational article nor a book.

Where the La Fontaines say that Elrod was arrested in Dallas on suspicion of conspiring to murder, suggesting that of the President, he told the FBI that "his arrest had nothing to do with the assassination and he knew nothing concerning the assassination of the President."

That is the exact opposite of what the La Fontaines say in the Post article and the ^Post's identification of them under it: "Ray and Mary La Fontaine are authors of Oswald Talked: The New Evidence in the Kennedy Assassination" to be published this winter by Pelican."

The La Fontaines are not yet finished with their assassination mystery thriller.

"Available documents," unspecified and in their writing limited to this single FBI report, "support the remainder of Elrod's claims."

His first ^{claim} with which they follow this statement is that in the Dallas jail the day of the assassination was this "man with a 'smashed up' face" they conjecture is one of those arrested November 18 when that planned gunrunning scheme ended in a police chase and an auto accident.

Then with admirable and for them exceptional understatement they say "The claim that Oswald and Miller (one of the other supposed gunrunners) were in a meeting with Jack Ruby is the least substantiated aspect of his story. Elrod didn't recount that story to the FBI until August 1964."

Least substantiated? It has no substantiation!

According to the FBI's report, this is a complete fabrication.

Agents Francis B. Cole and Norman L. Casey say nothing about Oswald being at any meeting.

They do not even mention Miller's name.

If Elrod had said a word involving Oswald in anything at all, no FBI agent would have expected to survive J. Edgar Hoover's wrath if he made no mention of it.

Nor would they if it turned out they lied in reporting that Elrod told them "he knew nothing concerning the assassination of the President."

If Elrod knew anything at all about Oswald that would have been "concern^ding the assassination of the President."

There is no doubt at all that Cole and Casey would have reported it.

Elrod did not tell the agents that he had spoken to Oswald or that Oswald had spoken to him despite the title to that La Fontaine book, "Oswald Talked." He said he was placed in Cell 10 and not with Oswald for Oswald to talk to him but with a "man whose identity he does not recall." It was this man who was the source of that five-man motel meeting story. That stranger allegedly told Elrod, the stranger to him, that Ruby was one of those five. The La Fontaine version is fourth-hand.

Prior to its description of Elrod, this report reemphasizes his stout claim to have no relevant knowledge at all and his "difficulty remembering due to his extreme use of alcohol."

Can there be a better possible source for a lengthy newspaper article and of a book?

The La Fontaine version of why and how Elrod got himself arrested is not exactly as those FBI agents reported.

Sergeant Alton C. Gilles, Jr., of the Sheriff's bureau of identification did write the FBI that Elrod had said what the La Fontaines say, that "he walked into the Sheriff's office ... and indicated he had information concerning the murder of 'Lee Oswald' ..." But the sheriff's purpose was not to report anything about the assassination. As Headquarters noted in writing its Memphis office on August 27, 1964, in reporting "No information identifiable with John Franklin Elrod could be located in" its files, "Sergeant Gillies primarily wrote to obtain a criminal check on Elrod." (105-82555-4706)

This one of the La Fontaines' story about Ruby sashaying around in Dallas with gunrunners is far from the only such cock-and-bull story of that nature. He did have an acquaintance who had had such a record and who did not live in Dallas. But there were people who enjoyed making up exciting stories and they did. Not one checked out.

The La Fontaines have in this article what is their most solid case that "Oswald Talked" and it is no case at all.

They assume that the Dallas police had all those many prisoners with records of violence having unrestricted access to Oswald who is supposed to have killed a policeman and the President, without worrying about a prisoner killing him before he could be tried, while he was in their jail.

If that had happened, what sensation, what a scandal that would have been!

But with the La Fontaines let us assume that is what the Dallas police did.

If we put two parts of this La Fontaine article together, they actually say what means that Elrod and Oswald were cellmates. Not just in the same block of cells. In the same cell. And not just at one point.

First they say that "Elrod recalled being in a cell with two other men" when "in the corridor outside the cell, the cellmates saw an inmate with a battered face being led by the guards. Elrod said that he heard one of his cellmates say he recognized the injured man despite his 'smashed up' face."

This is the origin of the motel meeting on that "contract" to run guns.

Later they say, "The cellmate on Nov 22, Oswald, had seen a man with a 'smashed up' face in the corridor outside their cell."

"Cell," note; not "cell block."

The only cell to which the La Fontaines refer anywhere is the one in which they say Elrod was. There is no other interpretation possible from this article.

And if "Oswald Talked" and gave that gunrunning deal away, how else could he have learned about it other than from Elrod and his other "cellmate," the one who allegedly came up with that motel-meeting story when he saw the man with the battered face that the La Fontaines infer got battered in the auto accident at the end of the police chase of those the La Fontaines say were running guns?

Later they say that "John Elrod's story indicates that Lee Oswald knew about the deal involving a Thunderbird full of guns," the car that crashed in that police chase.

In saying that this Thunderbird was "full of guns" the La Fontaines forget to say that it was a convertible. They also forget to say those undescribed "guns" other than as rifles and shotguns were stolen.

Even in gun-happy Dallas, nobody would hope to escape detection in traffic with guns visible as for that convertible to be "full of guns" they would have to be.

They also do not report any guns flying around when that convertible hit a utility pole to end that high-speed chase. Had they been loose in the body of the convertible, they would have been all over the street and sticking out of the

car. The La Fontaines' exaggeration seems apparent. More likely the guns that Thunderbolt held were hiding in the trunk. That could be "full" without holding many.

Certainly not enough to require at least five conspirators.

In their account these guns were destined for a local gun dealer.

Thence to the CIA's Miami station for a "massive invasion of Cuba."

At a time when not only had JFK ordered all such operations ended but also when those merely freelancers, like Loran Hall and Larry Howard in the Commission's evidence, were arrested by the feds for doing that:

The CIA needed stolen rifles for any Cuban invasion?

With all the supplies of all the many gun dealers in the country?

It needs lunkheads who transfer stolen rifles and shotguns from one car to another inside a major city to be seen and caught doing it?

None of this makes any sense at all. But then none of this La Fontaine childish concoction makes any sense.

^{However,}
But they give no other possible explanation of how Oswald could allegedly have known about the alleged gunrunning scheme other than by being in the same cell with Elrod and the man he did not know who Elrod says is the origin of that story.

Instead of then saying that Oswald was the police informer, they put it as a question which then they stretch a bit, even for these breakers of journalistic stretching records:

"Is it possible that Lee Oswald was the informant who tipped off the FBI about the gun deal of Nov. 18, 1963?"

Absolutely not, as we see later.

They do regret that Ruby's killing Oswald made an answer impossible, all the time hinting that Ruby, allegedly part of that alleged gun deal, allegedly killed Oswald because he allegedly snitched on it.

Here is how they seek to give this credibility:

"But if Oswald told the story to Elrod, why didn't he tell the FBI and the Secret Service agents who interrogated him after the assassination? Oswald might have done that, but if so no one wrote it down."

Of the records made of Oswald's interrogations, they write they "are, to put it charitably, incomplete."

Here, for the one and only place in this, their long article, there are on solid ground. No ifs, buts, or perhapses or all the other dodges of reality without which they would have had no article and no book. There is no condemnation of those interrogation reports that can be too severe.

But it is hardly relevant.

There were quite a few from the FBI and the police who questioned Oswald in addition to what the La Fontaines do not mention, a postal inspector. Inspector Tom Kelley of the Secret Service they mention later.

For all those men to have kept such a secret is not at all likely. Particularly not when the most sensational leaking was by the Dallas FBI. Other than by its Headquarters, that is. But that is another story! Having nothing to do with gunrunning.

The leaking of the fact that before the assassination Oswald wrote Hosty of the FBI a letter that had been kept secret and then was destroyed, also in secrecy, was from inside the Dallas FBI office. It was not leaked until the retirement of its then special agent in charge, Gordon Shanklin, was secure. That was more than a decade after the assassination, but it was leaked and it was leaked by someone in the Dallas FBI.

In their very next paragraph, the La Fontaines say that "Five months later (than the assassination), though, a senior Secret Service official named Thomas J. Kelley, received reports from a Texas law enforcement official" of this gun-smuggling deal."

Not only did Kelley have ^{after questioning him} no snitched word from Oswald but, as the La Fontaines write, "he discretely" sought to learn who that snitch was.

While I did not know Kelley well, I did know him. It is not conceivable to me that he would be part of keeping secret any knowledge of any gunrunning conspiracy.

What some people won't do for a book and for what they regard as fame!

The La Fontaines even extend this fairy tale to have Oswald meeting with Ruby on that gunrunning caper. But they admit that is "the least substantiated aspect" of their yarn.

^{in this}
They do not exaggerate.

Like all the rest, it has no substantiation. None at all!

They say also that "Elrod did not tell this story to the FBI until August, 1964," when the FBI records quoted above do not include any such thing as an Oswald-Ruby meeting of any kind, anywhere.

Of the men in that cellblock supposedly blabbing away the La Fontaines say, their italics: "Elrod knew who the other man in Oswald's cellblock was." Cellblock, where there were many men, not only this "other man," not "cell."

So what? It means nothing, especially not among criminals and jailbirds

Then, with what Elrod himself told the FBI making that impossible, they say, in the form of a question, "But, if Oswald told the story to Elrod, why didn't he tell it to the FBI and the Secret Service agents who interrogated him after the assassination?"

The most obvious answer is the one they do not consider.

If they had, they'd have had no sensational article and no book at all.

The obvious answer is that none of this is true and that from what is known none of it is at all possible.

The La Fontaines ring in a few other semantics with their usual lack of

concern for strict factuality.

They even conjecture that in the note Oswald left at the FBI office for Hosty "that Oswald was the informant who tipped off the FBI about the gun deals" of their mythology.

Oswald addressed that note to Hosty. He was not the FBI person to whom a gunrunning tip would be given. Moreover, Oswald did not bother to seal that envelope, so anybody in the FBI office could read it. And many did.

The La Fontaines try to give their concoction some semblance of reality by attempting to undermine Hosty's version of it - far from the only one or the most dependable of the several versions - that Oswald complained about the "harassment of his wife." They say that "within minutes" of the time Ruby killed Oswald Hosty destroyed it "on orders from his boss." It was hours and it was not at all that simple. The Dallas Special Agent in Charge first had to be in communication with Headquarters and the decision to have that note destroyed was made in and relayed by Washington. *I have the FBI's disclosed records on this.*

To give their fabrication more semblance of reality, the La Fontaines say that Hosty's "credibility on the subject" was "seriously impeached" by the House assassins committee in 1978. It was not on this part of Hosty's testimony.

And if the La Fontaines were not intent upon exploiting their subject-matter ignorance, they would have known that there was an earlier Congressional investigation, in 1975, and that before then there was an FBI internal investigation the results of which I got in another of those FOIA lawsuits and are available to all writing in the field. The La Fontaines did not look at them. If they knew of their existence.

That FBI internal investigation included all then in the Dallas office. It includes all accounts by those who saw the note of what it says. What the La Fontaines want to be there is not and could not possibly have been.

Of those who saw the note and recall it, Oswald threatened to bomb either the FBI office, the police station or both, and it was over what he referred to as harassment of his wife.

How this confused and confusing penny-dreadful mishmash got editorial approval in any substantial newspaper, one like the Post in particular, is not easy to see or to understand. Aside from the fact that if anything at all were seen in it, that is only conjecture at best and thus not news. Outlook is the paper's weekly editorial section. It is the place for opinion and for articles reflecting thought and that on serious issues. Not for imagined claptrap.

How nobody spotted the inherent unreasonableness and the self-contradictions^d that alone should have disqualified it for the Post and for a book I simply cannot understand.

The entire unintended spoof of responsible journalism and investigative reporting and, one presumes, the coming book, is based on their "Fourth Tramp." He came into the La Fontaines' scenario the afternoon of the day of the assassination. When he did, in this La Fontaine fantasy, Oswald had nothing on his mind but jailhouse gossip. Not having been arrested for killing a policeman. Nor the reports that he would be accused of killing the President. Not those tough and dangerous police interrogations that had already begun and were frequent and long-lasting, giving him not that much time in his cell for jailhouse gossip. Not *not* having a lawyer in facing at least one murder charge. None of these matters occupied Oswald's mind at all in this La Fontaine version.

Instead, he reveled in jailhouse gossip and from it allegedly got his first knowledge of the gunrunning plot.

After he was arrested for the killing or killings of November 22, 1963.

At one and the same time these star reporters, these investigative geniuses, the La Fontaines, have him snitching on it before he - in their very own version - even knew about it!

In his note to Hosty, they say. ^{But} It was written and delivered about two weeks earlier. When, according to the La Fontaines, their "Fourth Tramp" had not appeared and Oswald knew nothing about it at all.

They have it both ways at the same time when obviously it could not be both.

It is neither, if not also impossible,
One is impossible, The other is unreasonable.

Moreover, once he knew about it in jail, in the La Fontaine version itself, there was nothing for him to snitch about!

The plot had already exposed itself in the auto accident at the end of that chase four days earlier!

Before Oswald was in jail

Before Elrod was in jail. That was on the twenty-second.

The whole thing exposed itself in that auto accident at the end of the chase on November 18!

"Oswald Talked," the name of their coming book? About what? What was already in the papers and police records?

And nobody at either the Post or at Pelican book publishers caught any of this? Amazing!

The rest of their article is similarly flawed and reflects street information rather than the existing official information.

It is inaccurate and it has nothing to do with "Oswald Talked," which he did not do in any event, except in the imaginations of those who are Perry Mason, Dick Tracy or both and who want to sell a book. And newspaper articles for pay and to promote their book.

In the post-John F. Kennedy United States it is this kind of hurtful drive that finds the ready market that does not exist for factual stories in newspapers and magazines or in book publishing.

Publishers do not give a damn about our precious history or that terrible crime, its consequences and its costs. All that matters is paying for and publishing what is untrue, impossible and confusing^{ed} the people even more.

How else could such a travesty as this La Fontaine rubbish be published without even minimal checking on it, checking the Post knew it could get free and by only a phone call?

Checking that it knew it could send its own researchers to do as in the past. Or it could have phoned the FBI.

Publishing this kind of perfumed rot also undermines legitimate criticism of what for nine out of ten Americans as of the last poll is the official assassination mythology.

Looking down from their imagined Olympus on all others and to give their contribution to the endless corruptions of our history some semblance of critical thinking and writing, under the subhead The Legend of the Three Tramps, in bold-face type and underscored, they^{La Fontaines} write:

"John Elrod might be called the fourth tramp of Dallas. His story is the legitimate offspring of a bastard parent, i.e., the tale of 'three tramps'. This trio of Dallas hobos inspired some of the most imaginative scenarios in the often-bizarre Kennedy assassination literature. They were photographed in the company of a Dallas policeman shortly after the assassination. ... (they) achieved pop icon status ..."

Aside from describing their own entry in the "often-bizarre Kennedy assassination literature" rather well in their condemnation of all the others, all of which deserve condemnation, the La Fontaines here underscore their ignorance of the established fact, their journalistic carelessness or both.

If in their account the Elrod story is "legitimate," then there is nothing that can be illegitimate.

None of those men was a Dallasite, so they were not a "trio of Dallas hobos."

They were not "photographed in the company of a Dallas policeman." They were being taken to jail by two Dallas policemen, identified above.

Sublime in their ignorance and wanting to be ~~critical~~ of the government for its continued withholding of JFK assassination records, of which they know nothing and they had no interest in those long disclosed, they go after one agency in particular, one with the scantiest of records and one that is not relevant in their Elrod fantasy at all, Army Intelligence.

Of course, they take a snipe at others, the FBI in particular.

They say that "In 1978, it was learned that there had been an Army Intelligence file on Oswald even before the assassination. The file, according to the Army, had been 'routinely destroyed' in 1973."

The file they are talking about was that of a since-disbanded Texas unit.

What is unusual about any intelligence component having a file on an American who at the cold war time at least went through the motions of defecting to the USSR as Oswald did? Especially when he did possess what was regarded as military secrets?

And as I learned and have since confirmed with official records, and published in 1967, before the La Fontaines were attracted to the JFK assassination industry, when he had a very high security clearance, "CRUPTO," which required "TOP SECRET" clearance?

But the truth is worse than they say. It was not that one file, "an Army Intelligence file on Oswald," and it was not just "learned", It was published.

I had filed an FOIA request of the Army for all its files on or about Oswald. I got nothing. I continued correspondence in an effort to get compliance. I got nothing at all. Then, just before he was to retire, a man whose name I continue to withhold phoned me. He told me that he felt safe in doing it because

he was retiring and that all the Army's files on the JFK assassination - not only those on Oswald, of which he said there were three - had been shipped to its depot near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, at Indiantown Gap, and all had been destroyed there.

If these self-portrayed experts, the La Fontaines, were not as ignorant of the subject about which they write with such pretended authority, they could have made both an accurate and a meaningful criticism. The destruction of any such records without the approval of the National Archives was and is strictly prohibited. The Army did not ask for or have that permission. The Archives could~~not~~ have given it for any historical records without examining them.

When I learned this, I phoned my friend, Les Whitten, then Jack Anderson's associate on the Washington Merry-Go-Round column.

It then published the correct account, not what the La Fontaines refer to, what they say was "learned."

The La Fontaines have earned their own "pop icon status" with their invention of "The Fourth Tramp."