

Prospective witnesses- James W. Altgens

1/4/68

Possibly reading or rereading what I have written of Altgens in the two chapters of part three of WHITE WASH II takes more time than you now have. There is more on him in WHITE WASH and PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH. There is a copy of the unpublished index # of WWII in your office. I gave it to Tom.

Using him as a witness can serve a number of purposes. I think those that might not immediately suggest themselves will have a very good effect on the jury and serve historical need.

He was one of the closer eyewitnesses to the assassination. If his camera was a through-the-lens reflex, he had an excellent view at the equivalent of Z255. He gave the most graphic testimony about the spray of brain matter over the left side, which is entirely inconsistent with the right side of the head only having exploded out. Going along with some of my unpublished material in POST MORTEM which is entirely substantiated by the Z film, he can be used to destroy the official explanation of the fatal wound. He can testify to the wind, having gotten a picture of Mrs. Kennedy as the car turned from Main into Houston and as she grabbed her hat to keep the wind from blowing it off.

He challenged Liebler to a reconstruction of where he was standing. Liebler backed off but maintained the wrong position. In fact, Liebler marked the position where Altgens was, not Altgens. I used this and erred, for Liebler put him in the wrong place, therefore, the chart I made based on Liebler's marking of Altgens position when he took his most famous picture locates the car at the wrong place.

Despite the importance of his picture- and any other he might have made- the FBI avoided him until it could no longer, for about eight months. There had to be a very good reason for this. I suggest that in a competent questioning it will come out. I think it is not alone because of the brain spray, although that could be enough. In fact, so little was known about him, although his is the most famous single picture of all and was the first on the wire, that by the time Sprague got to talk to him, Altgens did not recall how many pictures he actually made. I think it is a dozen, from what Sprague told me. The others seem to be of less significance, but they do delay the time he could have gotten onto the grassy knoll to the point where anyone there would have disappeared or merged with the searchers, something Liebler was careful to avoid in his questioning. It was public embarrassment that finally caused the FBI to interview Altgens.

More, as a photographer, he may be assumed to be a bit sharper as an observer than most people. I think that were he led into his exchange with Liebler over how close he was, he might recall things. This entire thing would be very destructive of the official fiction in a most comprehensible way, which I think would be effective with the jury and the judge. Merely showing how he was avoided, then how he was questioned, and then that he had unknown pictures should be very effective. I have twice placed calls to Sprague, but he has not responded. Jaffe wrote a meaningless memo on his interview with Altgens.

Prospective witnesses- Mrs. Donald Baker  
(Virgie Rachley)

1/4/69

Some years ago, when I was what now seems very young, I spent some months in the mountains of Kentucky. Early every morning I went walking in the mountains with an elderly self-educated, very practical lawyer. One of the things I learned from him may be a legal maxim. He said that if the case could not be tried on the facts, it could be tried on the jury or the opposing counsel. In a sense, this is an inherent by-product of the testimony of some of the witnesses I recommend calling. In establishing not only the invalidity of the Warren Report but more, the official intention, design, not to adduce the truth and to frame Oswald, I think an important thing is established and the effect on the jury should be positive.

One of Liebeck's nastier performances is his deposing of Mrs. Donald Baker. I go into this in WHITEWASH II (pp. 129-31)

There is no doubt in my mind that a) bullets beside the one that caused Tague's injury did miss and b) she is among those who actually saw this.

I digress to note that when I was in Dallas, I worked with Matt Herron and John Filger on the story John was doing. In connection with this I took them to the spot (also WWII) Aldredge reported a bullet hit the sidewalk. John now has, or rather Matt took and Black Star has, some very good pictures of this. Matt has contacts. He promised me pictures, but I've not yet gotten them. In the connection in which I recommend Mrs. Baker, I can also recommend Eugene P. Aldredge (WW II, 37). These people can establish that more shots were fired than the government acknowledged and that the government knew and avoided this, the end being an official lie, the Warren Report, and the falsity of Oswald's singular guilt.

Liebeck was so awful that of all the available pictures, the one he selected to show her is one in which it is not possible to see what she described.

If you are interested in this, I suggest that the Dallas City officials be asked for the records of repaving Elm St. It happened, almost immediately. A year ago a radio personality I met promised me the pictures he then took. He has not kept his promise. However, also in WWII I, I have the two different official surveys (not counting the FBI's special version). These show the road stripes are not identical, which can be accounted for by the repaving - which hid where the bullet(s) hit. The street did not need repaving, as the existing pictures show.

There undoubtedly is more that can be elicited from Mrs. Baker, who was standing along the street at the moment of the shooting.

Prospective witnesses- Lt. George Butler

1/4/68

Although not a Dealey Plaza witness, Butler is important in a number of areas. I have never spoken to him but I have some knowledge of some of the things he knows. I am told he has been demoted, to the jail. Interest is especially flagged because, with all the things he did know, of all the areas in which he was important, he was never called by the Commission. Belatedly, I am now searching for the documents on him.

Above all he should have been a witness because it is he who gave the all-clear signal for moving Oswald when it was not clear, when the arrangements had not been completed. This alone made it possible for Ruby to stand in the unobstructed one place from which he had a clear shot. It is the testimony, I think of Dean, perhaps Fritz, that had the car been in the place it was supposed to have been when it was ready to receive Oswald, it would have been where Ruby was.

He was a sort of internal-security chief under the cover of the juvenile bureau, according to some of my local Dallas sources. He was privy to threats to kill the President that I have in my unpublished book COUP D'ETAT.

He was in on a part of the Odie story, of which you have the tape in my Castorr interview with Dick Billings and subsequent memos. When Odie was staying with the Jack Rogerses, she got letters from Lucille Connell, then in Boston, that she left behind. Mrs. Joann Rogers was concerned about these letters and consulted Trudy Castorr, who recommended she take them to Butler. Trudy made the introduction. Also, there was a rather loud woman named Ramos who had a yarn about being offered a large sum of money for her knowledge of the assassination. Trudy took her to Butler also. This led to problems in the Butler household, his wife developing suspicions about Mrs. Ramos who was then, I believe, separated from her husband.

With his internal-security responsibilities, Butler has to have much knowledge of the inside of the police department. He was favorable to and praised the John Birch Society, spoke before the "National Indignation Congress", was and presumably still is a real radical-right extremist.

If I can again return to Texas, he is one of the two of the police involved in the assassination story who I above all other want to interview. The other is Jack Revill.



Prospective witnesses- Jack Revill

1/4/69

If I were to select a single Dallas policeman of 11/22/63 from whom there might be a hope of getting good information, then-Lt. Jack Revill would be the man. His statement that Hosty told him the FBI knew Oswald had the capability but they didn't expect him to do anything is something he stuck to under great pressure and knowing full well the support Hosty would have, knowing that the full power of the FBI and the federal government would be behind Hosty. To me, this means he is no coward. Given a choice between crediting him and Hosty, there really is no problem, especially with the information we have about the federal protection of Hosty and his subsequent punishment and demotion (he is now in Kansas City). Hosty, according to Penn Jones, was also a bridge-playing partner of Surrey, Walker's friend and business associate and the guy who printed the scurrilous handbill.

We now know that the FBI transcription of Oswald's notebook was designed to protect Hosty, to eliminate his appearance in it, and that the page was done over to accomplish this. We have the documents that prove it. None of this can be accidental. It can be no accident that there was more FBI interest in the Oswald's in Dallas than the testimony shows. It is less than an accident that it took Hosty a full month after the assassination to type up his notes and he then had the effrontery to burn his handwritten notes -without criticism or even questions being asked.

*Revill*  
He left the police department, not the most common thing for a man who has risen to lieutenant, and, according to Paul Rothermel, is the number three man in the State Public-Safety Division, I think in Houston. Rothermel has a high opinion of him as a man, believes he is dependable and honest, and thinks he does have assassination information. If he knows what this is, he did not indicate it to me. It may be just his hunch.

One of the more fascinating aspects of Exhibit 709 is that it reveals the police had an address on Oswald, but a wrong one! This adds point to the Commission staff questions about how the police knew to go so promptly to 1026. The official explanation does not survive examination. It is that he told this to "ritz. It did not satisfy the staff lawyers, not at the beginning, anyway. I have their memo on it. Hosty told Revill what is known to be false, that Oswald was a member of the Communist Party. I suggest a careful reading of this exhibit. Note that it is sworn to, was written immediately. The source of Oswald's wrong address could not have been Hosty.

As with Butler (who Bob Castorr told me Rothermel does not like, and in his way Rothermel sort of confirmed this), calling Revill is a stab in the dark. I think it would be worth it. As an alternative, if I go to see Mrs. Tarsikes, which Moo indicated might be desirable, I might include Revill and Butler on the same trip, which needn't take long. If he would fly, we could do all of this in two days. By presarrangement, they could be on a weekend.