

THE FIVE JFK MURDER WITNESSES WHO FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES

Pages 16 and 17

'I saw Ruby
Jack Ruby
at death
scene'

'I kept
photo of
JFK's fatal
head wound'

'I've been
warned to
keep my
mouth shut'

In hiding
— and too
scared
to talk

'My murder
film was
confiscated
by FBI'

Midnight

VOL. 23 — NO. 51 (R) JUNE 7, 1977 \$ 30¢

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There are five people still alive who can shed light on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. They are the lucky witnesses who got away.

Since JFK was cut down in Dallas' Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963, 76 people who had knowledge of the assassination or its cover-up have died under mysterious circumstances.

In one bloody week, from March 29 to April 5, three met violent ends — Oswald's friend George de Mohrenschildt, former Cuban President Carlos Prío Socarras, and Charles Nicoletti, a Mafia hitman used by the CIA in a plot to kill Castro.

It's small wonder that five men and women who saw and heard too much in Dallas 13 years ago have been running for their lives. Or that four of the five refuse to come forward to talk to the House Assassinations Committee — no matter what the security guarantees.

For, as Mark Lane, the pioneer critic of the Warren Commission says, "While the major American news media reject a conspiracy to kill witnesses, there is one group of people who believe there is a conspiracy. This group is the surviving witnesses, whose number grows smaller each month of the year.

"The mysterious and unsolved deaths of so many witnesses has been the main factor in paralyzing and frightening the surviving witnesses."

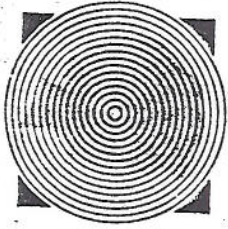
The five frightened survivors are Julia Ann Mercer, Richard Randolph Carr, Warren Reynolds, Mary Moorman and the now famous mystery witness, known only as the "Babushka Lady."

"Something ugly has happened to these people and they have real reason to fear for their lives," says Dallas assassination research expert Mary Farrell. "But, despite that, it will take these people to get to the truth."

What do these people know? What "ugly" things have happened to them? Will they ever speak out? Investigators Mark Lane, Mary Farrell, Richard Sprague and Garry Shaw have all been hot on their trail.

Here now is an exclusive MIDNIGHT up-date on five men and women on the run. The five witnesses who got away.

THE JFK KILLING



**Julia
Ann
Mercer
Identified
Jack Ruby**

A few hours before John F. Kennedy was shot, Julia Ann Mercer was caught in heavy traffic just west of the Texas School Book Depository.

While stopped behind an illegally parked pickup truck, she watched "a white male in his late twenties or early thirties wearing a plaid shirt get out of the truck, carrying a rifle up the grassy embankment toward the wooden fence there." Another man, older and heavier-set, was driving the truck.

This, of course, is the famous "Grassy Knoll" area where a great many people believe an assassin fired the fatal shots from a vantage point behind the wooden fence at the top of the knoll. Duffally, Miss Mercer went to the FBI the next day (after the assassination) and reported what she had seen.

Two agents showed her two dozen mug shots. She couldn't identify the man in the plaid shirt but she did pick out the driver of the truck.

"When the FBI agent turned the photo over, I saw the man's name written on the back," Miss Mercer noted in a sworn statement. "That name was Jack Ruby."

Ruby's name meant nothing on November 23, 1963. But the next day, before 40 million shocked Americans, that same Jack Ruby gunned down Lee Harvey Oswald.

"Apparently my identifying Ruby would be embarrassing or damaging to whatever the FBI was trying to

FIVE WHO LIVE IN FEAR

do. Miss Mercer reasoned in a later interview. This was her sad conclusion because three major changes were made in the sworn testimony she gave to the FBI.

Without her consent or knowledge, her positive identification of Jack Ruby was changed to read that she was unable to recognize the driver of the truck. That was number one.

Her statement about the color of the truck was altered from "a plain green pick-up" to a green pick-up truck with "air conditioning" printed on

its side in black. That was change number two.

Alteration number three was the changing of the date of her interview with the FBI from November 23, the day before Ruby killed Oswald, to November 29, five days after Ruby killed Oswald. A rather significant change.

But that's not all that was done. Miss Mercer has

charged that a phony affidavit to the Dallas Sheriff's office was drawn up to correspond to the FBI's altered report. The affidavit was allegedly signed by Julia Ann Mercer herself.

But she claims it's a forgery. "I never signed any such document. That affidavit is a crude forgery. That is not my signature."

Miss Mercer made this denial in 1968, when she finally got to see the document with her alleged signature on it. She then signed a witnessed statement denying that it was her handwriting.

Where is Julia Mercer today? "In hiding," says investigator Mary Farrell. "She has remarried and is living totally away from all the action, at last word."



'The Babushka Lady'

One amateur photographer who was accidentally in the "wrong place at the wrong time taking pictures of the wrong things," according to Sprague, has become known as the "Babushka Lady," because of the large scarf she is seen wearing in many assassination scene photos taken by other people. Researcher Gary Shaw was the first person to locate and interview her. "She used a very good camera, a Yashica with a zoom lens," he said, "so she had a much better view of the entire assassination."

But that's only educated speculation, because no one outside of the government has ever seen her movie. Shortly after the assassination, two FBI agents seized her film.

"My film was taken from me with the promise it would be developed as evidence and returned in 10 days," she said in a later interview. "I have never yet seen that film."

The "Babushka Lady" first surfaced as a live and very valuable witness this past April when press leaks named her as the "mystery witness" of the House Assassinations Committee. She is alleged to have "a fantastic, but documented inside story to tell."

According to Gary Shaw, who was responsible for bringing this "mystery witness" and the House investigators together, "She's the one who was introduced by Jack Ruby to Lee Oswald of the CIA" in Ruby's nightclub."

THE FAMOUS "Babushka Lady" (see arrow) was a witness to the JFK assassination. She is seen here just before the fatal moment.



Mary Moorman
Took Two Polaroid Shots

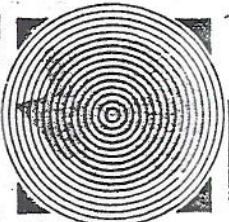
Mary Moorman, armed with her Polaroid camera, was part of the crowd at Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963. She was unlucky enough to take two snapshots.

One showed the President's fatal head wound. The other, taken seconds before the assassination, showed the southeast corner of the Texas School Book Depository, including the sixth floor window from where Oswald allegedly fired the shots that killed JFK.

"I kept the one of the President being killed, but turned the other one over to Dallas Deputy Sheriff John Wiseman. He said it went to the Secret Service," Miss Moorman told researcher Richard E. Sprague.

"The Secret Service cut-off the portion of the photo which showed the upper floors of the building, then returned the picture to Mary Moorman," Sprague says.

Now the picture and Miss Moorman are both missing. "Right now, this poor lady is probably scared literally to death, especially with the recent demise of the other witnesses," researcher Richard Sprague concludes.



Richard Carr

FBI: Keep Your Mouth Shut

These five people hold the answer to the most tragic story of our time

Richard Carr has had it rough. For almost 14 years, he has lived just a step ahead of death. A steelworker, Carr was standing on a stairwell outside the seventh floor of Dallas' new courthouse building in Dealey Plaza, a perfect vantage point for surveying the whole assassination site.

Carr claims that there were at least two assassination teams. And he says he saw one of them before the murder, during the murder and fleeing afterwards.

"I had a clear view of the whole proceedings from about 220 yards away," Carr said in a sworn statement.

"The first shot was muffled, like it was inside. But, the volley of shots that followed came from the front, over by the grassy knoll and that picket fence in front of the parade."

Carr's story of what he saw and heard has been consistent since he first gave it to the FBI nearly 14 years ago.

"Just before the shooting, I saw a heavyset man wearing a hat, tan sportcoat and horn-rimmed glasses standing on the sixth floor of the Depository.

"Just after the President was shot I saw a Rambler station wagon come alongside the eastern side of the book building and two men raced out from behind the building and got into the car. It left in a hurry with one of its doors open.

you didn't see anything." Carr also claims that one of the FBI agents told him, "You'd better keep your mouth shut."

But Carr didn't keep his mouth shut. And here's what's happened to him since.

On January 2, 1964, police, claiming to have a search warrant, barged into his house and turned the place upside down. Two shotguns were pointed at Carr and his wife.

The policemen, Carr claims, dared them to move.

Carr and his son were taken to the police station, where Carr was detained overnight.

The following day, his family started receiving anonymous telephone calls threatening death if they didn't get out of Texas.

Terrified, Carr moved his family to Montana. Within weeks, three men, one of them matching the description of the man Carr saw leaving the School Book Depository, came knocking for him at his home while he was at work.

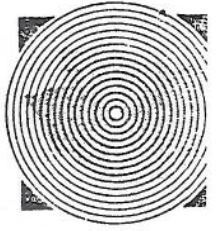
Suspicious, Carr started checking his automobile. Once he found three sticks of dynamite wired to the ignition.

In 1968, Carr agreed to appear as a witness at the Clay Shaw hearings in New Orleans. But 15 days before he was scheduled to appear, police in Billings, Montana, arrested a man just as he was about to shoot Carr.

In July of 1969, while visiting relatives in Atlanta, Georgia, Carr was attacked on a city street and stabbed in the back and arm by two men. Carr, who was carrying a gun by this time, shot one of his assailants three times.

The threats on his life continued and in 1975 his marriage fell apart. Then Carr disappeared.

However, an independent Kennedy assassination researcher found him recently. He had changed his name and remarried. But he was still suffering the wounds of his ordeal, both physical and mental.



Warren Reynolds

Witnessed Murder Of Officer Tippit

Dallas car salesman Warren Reynolds witnessed at close range the murder of police officer J.D. Tippit. He told the FBI that the killer was not Lee Harvey Oswald.

Two days after his interview with the FBI, on January 23, 1964, a rifleman shot Reynolds through the head. There was no motive, just a shooting.

A suspect, Darrell Wayne Garner, was captured but released after an alibi was quickly provided by Betty Mooney MacDonald, a former dancer at Jack Ruby's nightclub.

Soon afterwards Garner disappeared and was later found mysteriously dead.

As for Miss MacDonald, she was arrested and placed alone in a cell. Two hours later she was found dead, hanging by her own toreador pants.

Reynolds, miraculously, survived his head wounds. But the harassment continued. After someone tried to lure his 10 year-old daughter into a car, Reynolds changed his story. He told the Warren Commission that Oswald was indeed the man he saw kill Officer Tippit.

Warren Reynolds lives openly today but he will not talk with reporters or Kennedy assassination researchers.



June 7, 1977