

CIA-Oswald Link Probed

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Washington Star

Washington — Senate investigators are trying to untangle a perplexing coincidence that links Lee Harvey Oswald with a longtime Central Intelligence Agency agent who published a Latin-American newsletter as a "cover" for his intelligence work.

The former agent, William George Gaudet, received a Mexican tourist permit with a serial number just preceding one issued to Oswald on Sept. 17, 1963, about two months before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In a telephone interview this week, Gaudet, who is now living in retirement in Waveland, Miss., said he knew Oswald by sight at the time, although he cannot recall if Oswald was with him in the Mexican consulate in New Orleans.

Asked if he was sent by the CIA to the consulate to keep track of Oswald, Gaudet responded, "I was not."

Studied by Schweiker

The Gaudet matter is under study by Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.), a member of a two-man subcommittee of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Schweiker says new evidence has been discovered since the Warren Commission concluded that Oswald, acting alone, murdered Mr. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas. Oswald was slain by Jack Ruby two days later.

Schweiker also says his own investigation has found curious "intelligence fingerprints" on the case.

The Gaudet matter seems to be one

more of the puzzles that have added to the controversy that surrounds the Kennedy assassination. The Warren Commission was told that Oswald went to Mexico City in October 1963. While there, he contacted the Cuban and Soviet embassies in an apparent effort to obtain permission to go to Cuba.

There is evidence that the CIA had Oswald under surveillance while he was in Mexico, although many of the details of his trip are still being disputed.

Questions Raised

Despite Gaudet's insistence that his trip to Mexico had nothing to do with Oswald's, the coincidence of numbers raises questions that the commission apparently did not ask or decided not to answer.

Evidence supplied to the commission concerning Gaudet is confusing unless several widely separated reports are brought together. It is impossible to tell from the face of the documents whether the FBI, which served as the investigative arm of the commission, made the necessary connections.

Schweiker has complained that the FBI often submitted documents to the commission without helping the members determine the significance of the papers.

The commission apparently has informed that Gaudet had received the tourist card issue just before Oswald's. But the published report gives no indication that the information has given more than passing consideration. Working only from the originally published materials, it was impossible to learn of the coincidence in serial numbers.

The report included the full text of a letter from the Mexican government listing the names, addresses and as much other information as possible about the people who received cards numbered 324032, 324,033, 324036 and 324037. Oswald received a card numbered 324035. No mention was made of 324034.

An FBI report submitted to the commission but not made public until later said "no record of 324034 located." But a recently declassified document lists Gaudet as the holder of card number 324034, something that Gaudet readily confirmed.

Another FBI report made public earlier said Gaudet received a tourist card on the same day as Oswald, but it made no mention of the similarity in serial numbers. That document said Gaudet "indicated that he has in the past been an employe of the CIA."

Bitter About It

In a telephone interview, Gaudet was bitter about that FBI report, which he said should never have been declassified. He said that he only reluctantly told the FBI about his CIA background after the bureau had agreed to protect his cover.

"If the CIA needed me to do a job, now that my cover's been revealed, I couldn't be of any help to them, even if I wanted to," Gaudet said. "I'm useless to them. I couldn't go back to Central America."

At 67, Gaudet is unlikely to be called out of retirement. He now talks freely about an intelligence career that he said spanned 25 years beginning during World War II, when he served in a special Latin American unit headed by now-Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Phila Bulletin B 11/16/76