

FRONTLINE

125 Western Avenue
Boston
Massachusetts 02134
617 783 3500
Fax 617 254 0243

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PRESS CONTACTS: Jim Bracciale
Stephanie Murphy
Kevin Huffman

(617) 783-3500

WASHINGTON, D.C.--FRONTLINE, the PBS documentary series, released significant new information about the assassination of John F. Kennedy at a news conference today in Washington, D.C.

The new revelations include a reexamination of fingerprint evidence by a nationally known fingerprint expert who, for the first time, identifies Lee Harvey Oswald's fingerprints on the trigger guard of the rifle used to kill John Kennedy.

FRONTLINE also revealed a newly discovered photograph of Oswald and David Ferrie, the right-wing New Orleans pilot who many students of the assassination believe was the link between Oswald and a Mafia plot to kill the president. The photograph is the first hard evidence ever found that links Oswald and Ferrie.

FRONTLINE investigators also released documents that apparently confirm the allegation that the CIA did question Oswald on his return from the Soviet Union in 1962. The CIA has maintained it never had any contact with Oswald.

The new revelations surfaced during a year-long FRONTLINE investigation of the man at the center of the assassination. "Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?" a three-hour FRONTLINE special report will be broadcast Tuesday, November 16, at 9 P.M. on PBS.

"These discoveries add new hard evidence to the historical record of this case," says FRONTLINE senior producer Michael Sullivan. "They deepen our understanding of Oswald's role in the assassination, his mysterious right-wing connections, and his contact with the CIA."

THE FINGERPRINTS

On November 22, 1963, soon after the assassination of John Kennedy, Dallas police discovered a 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano rifle on the sixth floor of the Texas school book depository. The weapon was dusted for fingerprints and revealed some faint prints on the rifle's trigger guard. Later, after disassembling the rifle, police discovered a palm print on the barrel. The trigger guard prints were photographed and the palm print was lifted from the barrel on a piece of tape.

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That night, the rifle was flown to Washington to be examined by the FBI. FBI fingerprint analysts examined the trigger guard and decided those prints were too faint to be of any value in making an identification. And the FBI found no palm print on the rifle. It was only days later that the FBI finally discovered the Dallas police had a palm print. The palm print was identified as that of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Over the years, a controversy has endured about the palm print on the rifle, with many accusations leveled that the Dallas police had planted it. Meanwhile, the faint fingerprints on the trigger guard have been largely ignored.

But this year, those prints have been reexamined with dramatic new results.

The reexamination began in Monroe, Louisiana, with photographs of the trigger guard prints that were taken by the Dallas police on November 22, 1963. Former Dallas police officer Rusty Livingston, who was working in the Dallas crime lab in 1963, had kept a full set of evidence photographs from the Kennedy assassination for his personal archives, including several photographs of the fingerprints on the trigger guard of Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle.

When Livingston began working with his nephew, Gary Savage, on a book about the assassination called *JFK: First Day Evidence*, they decided to have the fingerprints reexamined. They turned to Captain Jerry Powdrill of the West Monroe, Louisiana, Police Department, a qualified fingerprint examiner.

Powdrill found three points of identity between the trigger guard prints and Oswald's know prints and three possible points of identity. Six to ten points of identity are normally required in the U.S. to make a positive identification. Powdrill told FRONTLINE, "I cannot say that sufficient evidence exists to conclude that the latent print [in the photograph] is in fact that of Lee Harvey Oswald; however, there are enough similarities to suggest that it is possible they are one in the same."

FRONTLINE asked George Bonebrake, a former supervisor of the FBI latent fingerprint division to examine copies of the fingerprint photographs. Bonebrake told FRONTLINE the prints were not clear enough to make an identification of anyone. "They lack enough characteristic ridge detail to be of value for identification purposes," said Bonebrake.

FRONTLINE also asked Vincent Scalice, former head of the New York City Police latent fingerprint unit to examine the trigger guard prints. In 1978, Scalice had examined all the prints in the Kennedy case for the House Select Committee on Assassinations. At that time, he concluded that the trigger guard prints were "of no value for identification purposes."

But after examining Rusty Livingston's original fingerprint photographs in Louisiana, Scalice reversed his 1978 assessment. Scalice told FRONTLINE:

"I took the photographs. There were a total of four photographs in all. I began to examine them. I saw two faint prints, and as I examined them, I realized that the prints had been taken at different exposures, and it was necessary for me to utilize all of the photographs to compare against the inked prints. As I examined them, I found that by maneuvering the photographs in different positions, I was able to pick up some details on one photograph and some details on another photograph. Using all the photographs at different contrasts...I was able to find in the neighborhood of about eighteen points of identity in the two prints.

"I feel that this is a major breakthrough in this investigation, because we are able for the first time to actually say that these are definitely the fingerprints of Lee Harvey Oswald and that they are on the rifle. There is no doubt about it."

How could Scalice have missed an identification in 1978 that he was able to make in 1993? The answer appears to lie in the number of photographs of the prints that were available for experts like Scalice to examine.

Sebastian Latona, the head of the FBI fingerprint division in 1963, told FRONTLINE that the FBI examined only the rifle itself in making its determination that the trigger guard prints were of no value. Latona said the FBI never looked at the Dallas Police photographs of the trigger guard fingerprints.

Although the record is not precise on this point, it appears that only one or two of the Dallas Police photographs of the trigger guard prints were forwarded to the Warren Commission, where they were examined by Arthur Mandella, a consultant to the commission. Mandella came to the same conclusion as the FBI, that the trigger guard prints were of no value.

When Vincent Scalice examined photographs of the trigger guard prints in 1978 for the House Select Committee on Assassinations, he apparently only had the one or two Dallas police photographs that were part of the Warren Commission files.

"I have to assume," says Scalice, "that my original examination and comparison was carried out in all probability on one photograph. And that photograph was apparently a poor quality photograph, and the latent prints did not contain a sufficient amount of detail in order to effect an identification. I know for a fact that I did not see all these four photographs in 1978, because if I had, I would have been able to make an identification at that point in time. So where these photographs were, I don't know. But after this reexamination, I definitely conclude these are Oswald's prints."

After consultations with Scalice, Captain Jerry Powdrill told FRONTLINE that he also now agrees with Scalice's judgement--that the trigger guard prints are those of Lee Harvey Oswald.

“Vincent Scalice’s identification of the trigger guard fingerprints is a significant development in our understanding of the Kennedy assassination,” says FRONTLINE senior producer Sullivan. “But clearly the experts do disagree on this matter. We hope that this story will spark a proper professional debate among the nation’s leading fingerprint experts that will lead to a more definitive conclusion to the question.”

THE FERRIE--OSWALD PHOTOGRAPH

Since New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison’s ill-fated investigation of the Kennedy assassination in the late 1960s, one of the most intriguing suspects in a possible conspiracy to kill Kennedy has been David Ferrie. Ferrie was an eccentric New Orleans pilot who had strong ties to Cuban exile guerillas fighting against Castro. In 1963, Ferrie was hired by attorneys for Carlos Marcello, the Mafia chieftain of New Orleans. Marcello was then fighting a deportation order issued on instructions of Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Ferrie was hired to help investigate the case on Marcello’s behalf.

Marcello reportedly harbored a deep hatred for the Kennedy brothers, and there is testimony that he talked of killing the president and of hiring a “nut” to do it.

Over the years, many eyewitnesses of varying degrees of credibility have stepped forward to say they saw David Ferrie and Oswald together in the summer of 1963. But there has never been any hard documentary evidence that the two men knew each other.

But in the 1950s, David Ferrie commanded a New Orleans squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, a youth auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. In the 1950s, Lee Oswald was a cadet in the Civil Air Patrol, and several of Oswald’s fellow cadets have said that Ferrie was one of Oswald’s squadron leaders. But again, there has never been any hard evidence that put Oswald and Ferrie together in the C.A.P.

But in its research for its investigative biography of Oswald, FRONTLINE uncovered the first hard evidence that links Oswald and Ferrie--a photograph taken in 1955 at an overnight encampment of a C.A.P. search-and-rescue squadron. The photo, a group shot of several men and teenage boys around a campfire, clearly shows a young Lee Harvey Oswald on one side of the frame and David Ferrie, wearing a military helmet, on the other side of the frame.

FRONTLINE obtained the photograph from John B. Ciravolo, Jr., of New Orleans, who was also a C.A.P. member in 1955 and who says he was in the same unit with Oswald. Ciravolo said he was also in the picture, standing right in front of Lee Oswald. Ciravolo identified David Ferrie. Former C.A.P. cadet Tony Atzenhoffer, of New Orleans, also

identified Oswald and Ferrie in the photograph. Collin Hammer, who says he served with both Oswald and Ferrie in the C.A.P., identified both men in the photograph.

FRONTLINE located the photographer, Chuck Francis, who says he took the picture for the C.A.P. Francis also said that when he was interviewed by the FBI, he told them Oswald and Ferrie knew each other, but he did not tell them about the photograph.

The executor of Ferrie's estate, Alan Beauboeuf, identified Ferrie in the photograph. Morris Brownlee, Ferrie's godson, also picked out Ferrie.

After the Kennedy assassination, David Ferrie told investigators he never knew Lee Oswald. "I never heard David Ferrie mention Lee Harvey Oswald," said Layton Martens, a former C.A.P. cadet and a close friend to Ferrie until Ferrie's death in 1967.

But when FRONTLINE showed Martens the photograph, he identified Ferrie. "It does indicate the possibility of an association," said Martens, "but if and to what extent is another question. Of course we've all been photographed with people, and we could be presented with photographs later and asked, 'Well, do you know this person? Obviously, you must because you've been photographed with them.' Well no, it's just a photograph, and I don't know that person. It's just someone who happened to be in the picture."

"As dramatic as the discovery of this photograph is after thirty years," says Sullivan, "one should be cautious in ascribing its meaning. The photograph does give much support to the eyewitnesses who say they saw Ferrie and Oswald together in the C.A.P., and it makes Ferrie's denials that he ever knew Oswald less credible. But it does not prove that the two men were with each other in 1963, nor that they were involved in a conspiracy to kill the president."

THE CIA CONTACT WITH OSWALD

One of the enduring mysteries of Oswald's story is why the CIA did not question him when Oswald returned to the U.S. in 1962 after two and one-half years in the Soviet Union.

Various CIA directors since the time of the assassination have emphatically denied, frequently under oath, that the CIA ever had any form of "contact" with Lee Harvey Oswald. Former CIA director Richard Helms has said, "Lee Harvey Oswald was certainly never an agent or had any connection whatever with the Central Intelligence Agency."

But FRONTLINE has uncovered documents and other evidence that make it virtually certain that the CIA did debrief Oswald in 1962, and that they have covered up that contact for more than thirty years.

The first serious, official allegation that a debriefing may have occurred came with the publication of the House Select Committee on Assassinations report in 1979. The HSCA

reported that one former unnamed CIA officer said he had read a debriefing report in 1962 about the Minsk radio factory (where Oswald worked during his stay in the USSR) that must have originated with Oswald. Yet, the HSCA could not locate the actual report and subsequently concluded that their review "failed to result in any evidence suggesting that Oswald had been contacted at any time by the CIA."

In his first broadcast interview, that previously unidentified CIA officer, Donald E. Deneselya, told FRONTLINE:

"I received across my desk a debriefing report. It was a debriefing of a Marine redefector. He was returning with his family from the Soviet Union and was back in the United States. The report was approximately four to five pages in length. It gave a lot of details about the organization of the Minsk Radio Plant."

Immediately after Oswald was identified as the alleged assassin, Deneselya, like other CIA officials FRONTLINE talked with, assumed the contact report was quietly turned over to the Warren Commission. It was not.

In a memorandum written three days after the Kennedy assassination, the former chief of the "Six Branch" of the CIA's Soviet Russia Division (SR-6) wrote that: "I remember that Oswald's unusual behavior in the USSR struck me from the moment I read their first dispatch on him." The recently declassified CIA documents show the SR-6 branch had indeed been tracking Oswald's attempts to return to the U.S. from Minsk.

The November 26 memo continues: "I had discussed...the laying on of interview(s)" with Oswald through the CIA's Domestic Contacts Division. "We were particularly interested in the [operational intelligence] Oswald might provide on the Minsk factory in which he had been employed."

That was precisely the kind of information contained in the contact report Deneselya said he had read more than a year earlier. When Deneselya was first contacted by FRONTLINE in the spring of 1993, he added one additional clue about the contact report. "It was signed off on by a CIA officer by the name of Anderson," he said.

Then, in June, while examining the first of twenty-two boxes of original CIA assassination documents quietly released this summer, FRONTLINE consultant, Dr. John M. Newman, came across a scratchy, handwritten notation. "We were interested in the marginalia and the handwritten notes on these files," Newman said. "And one day, I picked up a piece of paper and turned it over and could see through the back, I could read handwriting that said, 'Andy Anderson OO on Oswald.'"

Apparently through a fluke of photocopying, the "Andy Anderson OO on Oswald" notation was recorded on the back of the document next to it in the file, an otherwise innocuous document written by CIA officer Birch O'Neal. O'Neal, who headed the secret unit

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that first opened a CIA file on Oswald, declined comment to FRONTLINE about the document.

Subsequent reporting by Newman and FRONTLINE reporter Scott Malone established that "OO" was the CIA's symbol for its Domestic Contacts Division, the unit charged with debriefing Americans returning from abroad. And the name "Andy Anderson" matched Donald Deneselya's recollection that the debriefing he read was prepared by a CIA officer named Anderson.

FRONTLINE showed the document containing the "Andy Anderson OO on Oswald" to former CIA director Richard Helms, and in subsequent questioning he seemed less firm in his denial that the CIA had ever debriefed Oswald. "I know of no contact that was made by the CIA with Oswald when he returned to the United States," Helms told FRONTLINE. "There may have been one, but I'm not aware of it, and I'm not able to shed any light on who it may have been...and that document doesn't change my mind in the slightest."

But in interviews with more than thirty former CIA officers, FRONTLINE was able to further confirm the existence of an "Andy Anderson" and the debriefing of Oswald.

A retired deputy chief of the CIA's Domestic Contacts Division told FRONTLINE:

"After the assassination, we searched everything, every record, including the field offices. They had a contact [report on Oswald, but] it was just a routine contact....It was sort of a casual thing. You know, here's somebody that came through on a list that had done some travelling and might have had something. My recollection is that it certainly wasn't significant at the time."

Two other CIA officers interviewed by FRONTLINE also recalled a "routine" debriefing of Lee Harvey Oswald. But the debriefing report has yet to surface in the newly declassified files at the National Archives.

"My feeling at this point is the report is buried somewhere," says Donald Deneselya. "I don't know where it is, but I'm sure it is probably in the Contacts Division...or in one of the other filing systems at the agency."

Approximately ten thousand agency documents related to the Kennedy assassination are still being withheld from public scrutiny by the CIA.

The one person who could possibly shed more light on the debriefing of Oswald is "Andy Anderson." FRONTLINE spent several months trying to find out more about Anderson.

The former deputy chief of the Domestic Contacts Division told FRONTLINE:

"I remember Andy Anderson. He was one of the military people that used to work with us. [He] was Air Force--a captain or maybe major....He was seconded to OO." When the former CIA officer was asked whether Anderson conducted the debriefing of Oswald, he replied,

"You're right. Maybe when he was in the field, he did [debrief Oswald]. I think it [occurred] in the South, in New Orleans or Texas."

Several other CIA officers interviewed by FRONTLINE also recall an Andy Anderson who worked for Domestic Contacts in the early 1960s, a man who did debriefings for the CIA.

FRONTLINE was able to identify several "Andy Andersons" who worked for the CIA. Several had already died. None of the Andersons tracked by FRONTLINE appear to be the man recalled by the CIA officers or the man who debriefed Lee Oswald.

The search has been complicated because the name Anderson is so common, by an inability of anyone thirty years later to remember his correct first name, and by the possibility that Andy Anderson could have been an internal CIA "cover name."

FRONTLINE asked the CIA to identify Anderson. So far, the CIA has not responded to that request.

"While we are still missing the debriefing report and the actual debriefer," says FRONTLINE senior producer Michael Sullivan, "there is now an overwhelming amount of evidence that the CIA did have a contact with Lee Harvey Oswald. Although that evidence also suggests the contact was only a routine debriefing, until the CIA reveals fully the details of that contact, it cannot erase suspicions that there was something more than routine in their relationship with Lee Harvey Oswald."