



by David Armstrong

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in the early 1960s and received information about the plans of the anti-Castro Cuban community in the wake of Kennedy's death.

## where <sup>was</sup> GEORGE

## The Answer Is Blowin' in the Wind....

Bush's name has also been discovered in the personal phone book of the man who says he kept track of Kennedy's accused killer, Lee Harvey Oswald, for the CIA. Finally, there is the subject of Bush's long-term interest in the murder: As head of the CIA in 1976, Bush was kept informed of ongoing Congressional investigations into the assassination and monitored news reports of new developments in the case.

This is not to suggest that Bush was involved in a plot to kill Kennedy, although this un-

deniable paper trail raises a number of legitimate questions. Bush's interest and involvement (however tangential) in the Kennedy case is part of a disturbing lifelong pattern involving his friends and associates, his business dealings, and his relationship with the CIA prior to assuming its directorship. The President and his staff, however, have displayed remarkably little interest in resolving these issues. On December 5, *The Austin Chronicle* submitted a series of questions to the White House Media Affairs office. Despite repeated assurances that these matters were being investigated, not one question had been answered when the *Chronicle's* deadline passed two weeks later.

The Kennedy assassination has been described as the seminal event in the last 30 years of American history. There's no doubt it profoundly affected an entire generation and remains a festering sore in this nation's psyche. To heal this wound, we must come to grips with the tragic events of November 22, 1963, and demand full disclosure of our leaders' roles, if any, in them.

### The Parrott Document

The earliest appearance of the name George Bush in connection with the assassination is found in an FBI report made public in the late 1970s following a series of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuits. The report, which lay buried among the 98,755 pages of documents released at the time, indicates that within hours of Kennedy's death, a man identifying himself as "George H. W. Bush" telephoned the bureau's Houston office with information about a threat allegedly made against the President's life by a young, right-wing Republican.

The report states that: "On November 22, 1963, Mr. George H. W. Bush, 5525 Briar, Houston, Texas, telephonically advised... that one James Parrott has been talking of killing the President when he comes to Houston." President Kennedy and his entourage had visited Houston the previous day, November 21, before moving on to Ft. Worth for the night. At the time, Bush, whose full name is George Herbert Walker Bush, was the head of a Houston oil company, chair of the Harris County Republican Party, and in the early stages of an ultimately unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate. His home address during that period, according to *Who's Who in America*, was 5525 Briar Drive in Houston.

In response to the phone call from "Bush," the FBI launched an investigation of Parrott. In an interview conducted at his mother's home that afternoon, Parrott denied ever threatening Kennedy's life or knowing anything about the assassination other than what he'd learned through the media, according to the FBI report. Both Parrott's mother and a co-worker vouched for his presence in Houston that day. The report also states that Parrott, who was 24 at the time, was a member of the Young Republicans, a right-wing student organization, and had "been active in picketing members of the current administration who come to Houston."

The FBI inquiry was conducted by special agents William J. Schmidt and Kenneth B. Jackson. Schmidt, who prepared the report, recalls the investigation being short-lived. "My recollection is that we went over there [to the Parrott residence] to find him [Parrott]," explains Schmidt, who is now retired. "We verified that he'd been in Houston and we didn't go any further than that." Schmidt says he doesn't know who took the call from "Bush."

"I didn't receive the call," he says. "We had clerks up there and any one of the clerks could have received it." Schmidt adds that although Bush's name was "recognizable" to him at the time, he doesn't "have any idea" whether it was the President who phoned the bureau that day.

When questioned about the FBI report by the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1988, the then-Vice President's press office originally said Bush hadn't made the call and challenged the document's authenticity. Several days later, an aide told the *Examiner* Bush "does not recall" making the call.

James Parrott has no doubt he was Presi-

dent Bush who placed the call. At the time of the assassination, Parrott, who remains ardently right-wing, served as a volunteer for the Harris County Republican Party, which Bush then chaired. In fact, Parrott claims he was at the party's headquarters when he learned Kennedy had been shot. "I couldn't believe my ears," he remembers. "The whole place was in a state of shock."

Parrott does not recall seeing Bush at the headquarters that day. "He could have been around, he most likely was, but I didn't run into him that day," Parrott says.

After hearing news of the shooting, Parrott says he returned home, only to find the FBI already there waiting for him. "They said an allegation had been made against me," Parrott recalls. "I was not told at the time that George Bush was the guy who made the allegation, but since then it doesn't surprise me."

Parrott believes the charge was political in nature. In the early 1960s, the Texas Republican Party was torn by a bitter power struggle between conservatives, including members of the John Birch Society, and so-called moderates, such as Bush. "Because I was active politically in the picketing of some people I was convinced were trying to sell this country out, a lot of allegations were made against me," Parrott explains. "I wasn't the only person who had these kind of allegations made [against them]. It was my opinion at the time they [moderate Republicans] were trying to find some conservative to lay it [the assassination] on to."

Although Parrott acknowledges his active involvement in right-wing groups, including Young Americans for Freedom, he insists he did not threaten Kennedy's life. "I wasn't out threatening anyone," he says. "That was not my mentality at all." However a separate FBI report prepared by the Dallas office states that "Secret Service at Houston, Texas revealed that agency had a report that Parrott stated in 1961 he would kill President Kennedy if he got near him." No further information is given. Parrott says some of his comments during that period may have been "misunderstood." Despite his belief he'd been wrongly accused of threatening Kennedy, Parrott continued his dealings with Bush and the Harris County Republican Party. The subject of the alleged threat, he says, "never came up."

### CIA Agent 'George Bush'

The so-called "Parrott document" was not the last place the name George Bush

The substance of the foregoing information was orally furnished to Mr. George Bush of the Central Intelligence Agency on October 23, 1963, by Mr. W. T. Torrey of this Agency. 11 21 91  
Director of Central Intelligence  
J. Edgar Hoover  
FBI  
DO NOT WRITE  
REC'D

From a memo from J. Edgar Hoover to the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence & Research. If "Mr. George Bush of the C.I.A." wasn't the future President, who was it?



10 62-2115.  
JS/Jn

On November 22, 1963, Mr. GEORGE H. W. BUSH, 5525 Briar, Houston, Texas, telephonically advised that he wanted to relate some hear say that he had heard in recent weeks, date and source unknown. He advised that one JAMES PARROTT has been talking of killing the President when he comes to Houston.

On the day Kennedy was assassinated, this FBI report says, President Bush called the bureau to report that a Houston acquaintance had been talking about killing the President. Now Bush aides say he "does not recall" the incident.

would surface in connection with the assassination. On November 29, 1963, exactly one week after Kennedy was gunned down, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover sent a memorandum to the State Department concerning the reaction of Miami's anti-Castro Cuban community to the tragedy. In it, Hoover reports that on the day after the assassination "Mr. George Bush of the Central Intelligence Agency" was informed of the substance of the bureau's findings.

Hoover's memo, addressed to the director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, was written in response to the department's concerns that "some misguided anti-Castro Cuban group might try to capitalize on the present situation and undertake an unauthorized raid against Cuba, believing that the assassination of President John F. Kennedy might herald a change in U.S. policy, which is not true." Hoover went on to report that "Our sources and informants familiar with Cuban matters in the Miami area advise that the general feeling in the anti-Castro Cuban community is one of stunned disbelief and, even among those who did not entirely agree with the President's policy concerning Cuba, the feeling is that the President's death represents a great loss not only to the U.S. but to all of Latin America. These sources know of no plans for unauthorized action against Cuba." The memorandum closes by noting that, "The substance of the foregoing information was orally furnished to Mr. George Bush of the Central Intelligence Agency and Captain William Edwards of the Defense Intelligence Agency on November 23, 1963, by Mr. W.T. Forsyth of this Bureau."

This intriguing memo, originally released in the same mass of FBI files as the Parrott document, first came to public attention in an article published in *The Nation* magazine during the 1988 Presidential campaign. Questioned about the memo by *The Nation* at the time, then-Vice President (and Presidential candidate) George Bush responded through a spokesman: "I was in Houston, Texas, at the time and involved in the independent oil drilling business. And I was running for Senate in late '63."

Disputed with this seeming "non-denial denial," Joseph McBride, the author of *The Nation* article, asked whether Bush had worked for the CIA before becoming its director in 1976. "The answer is no," Vice Presidential spokesman Stephen Hart replied. Asked whether Bush had been informed by

the FBI of anti-Castro Cuban activities in the wake of Kennedy's assassination, Hart repeated the Vice President's original answer, but added that his boss had also said, "I don't have any idea what he's talking about."

Others questioned about the Vice President's possible involvement with the CIA in the early 1960s gave equally oblique responses. Then-CIA spokesman Bill Devine told McBride, "we just have a standard policy of not confirming that anyone is involved with the CIA." Former CIA Director Richard Helms, who was the agency's deputy director for plans in 1963 and, according to Hoover's memo, was scheduled to receive a copy of the document, said,

"I don't recall anyone by that name [George Bush] working for the agency... He certainly never worked for me."

McBride, however, cites an unnamed source "with close connections to the intelligence community" who "confirms that Bush started working for the agency in 1960 or 1961, using his oil business as a cover for clandestine activities." This source, who McBride says worked with the CIA from the late 1950s through the 1960s, said of then-Vice President Bush: "I know he was involved in the Caribbean. I know he was involved in the suppression of things after the Kennedy assassination. There was a very definite worry that some Cuban groups were going to move against Castro and attempt to blame it on the CIA."

In fact, in the early 1960s, Bush's oil rig business, Zapata Off-Shore, was "a multi-million dollar concern with operations in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Japan, Australia and Western Europe," according to *Current Biography*. Moreover, in reflecting on his 1976 appointment as Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), Bush states in his 1987 autobiography, *Looking Forward*, "I'd come to the CIA with some general knowledge of how it operated."

Despite this body of circumstantial evidence, McBride's 1988 efforts to interview other individuals named in Hoover's memo were frustrated. Hoover himself, of course, was dead, as was William T. Forsyth, the man who'd briefed "Bush" and Captain Edwards. (Forsyth, it turns out, would later be identified as the agent in charge of the FBI's investigation of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. as part of the bureau's subversive control program.) McBride was unable to locate Captain Edwards.

Shortly after McBride's article appeared in *The Nation*, the CIA began circulating a story that the George Bush named in the memorandum

was not the Vice President, but "apparently" referred to George William Bush, who had worked for the agency at the time of the assassination. Then-CIA spokeswoman Sharon Basso told the Associated Press that in 1963 George William Bush had been assigned to the night desk at the agency's headquarters, which, she said, "would have been the appropriate place to have received such an FBI report." Basso added that George William Bush left the CIA in 1964 and went to work for the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).

McBride tracked down George William Bush in Alexandria, Virginia, where he then worked for the Social Security Administration. Bush told McBride he'd been employed by the CIA for about six months between 1963 and 1964, but never received interagency briefings because he was "just a lowly researcher and analyst" and worked only with photographs and documents. Bush flatly denied he was the person named in the memorandum.

George William Bush's statements did not resolve the question of whether or not Hoover's memo referred to President Bush, however. But new light was shed on the issue recently when the *Chronicle* located Captain Edwards.

In 1963, Edwards, who requested that his current whereabouts not be disclosed, was an army officer assigned to DIA headquarters in Washington, D.C. Edwards says that on November 23, the day of the Forsyth briefing, he did not participate in any face-to-face meetings but was "sitting at my desk answering phone calls." Asked whether he was briefed that day in any manner by the FBI about anti-Castro Cuban activities, Edwards said, "I don't recall information of that nature," but added that "it sounded like the sort of thing that might have been called into my desk because I was the guy who took these phone calls that came in from other agencies."

"This was the kind of call we were receiving that morning," Edwards said. "I believe... the FBI had some report, a raw report of some sort, and as a matter of routine, the fellow picked up the phone, got some guy at the CIA who identified himself as George Bush on the phone and the duty officer at DIA, which apparently was me, on the phone and read [us] the substance of this report."

Edwards said he could not identify the George Bush named in the FBI memo. "All I know is it was a George Bush," he said. "I don't know if it was the President." He also indicated he did not know George William Bush when he worked for the DIA.

When contacted by the *Chronicle*, George William Bush would not comment on the Hoover memo except to say, "I have nothing to do with that." The *Chronicle* did, however, obtain a copy of a notarized affidavit George William Bush prepared in 1988 at the request of the Assassination Archives and Research Center in Washington, D.C. as part of an FOIA suit against the CIA. In the affidavit, Bush states: "I do not recognize the contents of the [Hoover] memorandum as information furnished to me orally or otherwise during my time at the CIA. In fact, during my time at the CIA, I did not receive any oral communications

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# where GEORGE

George Bush of the Central Intelligence Agency referred to in the memorandum.

The CIA refused to comment on George William Bush's statement, except to say that the person referred to in the memo is not the President. "The President of the United States had no connection with the CIA before he was appointed its director in 1976," CIA spokesman Mark Mansfield, told the *Chronicle*. "The George Bush referred to in the FBI document is not George Herbert Walker Bush, the President of the United States," Mansfield would not say who the memo does refer to.

## Little Black Book

One place President Bush's name crops up about which there can be no doubt is in the personal phone book of George de Mohrenschildt, one of the most mysterious figures associated with the Kennedy assassination. A Russian-born nobleman with close ties to the oil industry and intelligence community, de Mohrenschildt is best known as the CIA "babysitter" of Lee Harvey Oswald.

A globe-trotting socialite fluent in six languages, de Mohrenschildt's involvement with the CIA and its forerunner, the Office of Strategic Services, began during World War II when he worked for the French underground in the United States. In 1944, he received his master's degree in petroleum engineering from the University of Texas, a qualification that launched his career in the oil business. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, de Mohrenschildt developed close relations with some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals in the country, including oil tycoons H. L. Hunt, Clint Murchison Sr. and John W. Mecom.

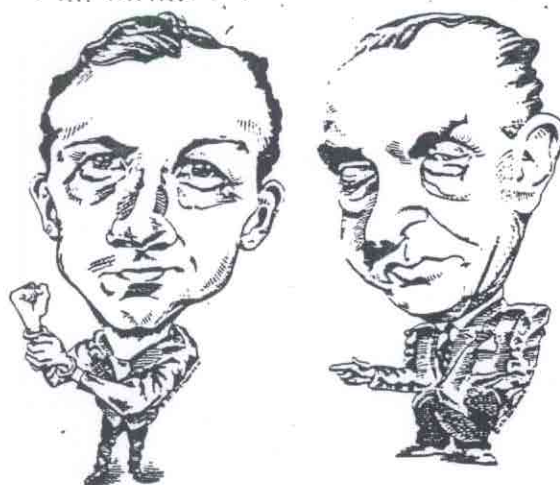
Another Texas oilman de Mohrenschildt apparently counted among his acquaintances was President Bush. De Mohrenschildt's phone book, now on file at the National Archives, contains the listing:

Bush, George H. W. (Poppy) 1412 W. Ohio also Zapata Petroleum Midland 4-6355

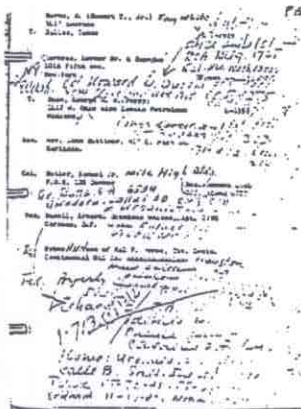
"Poppy" was President Bush's family nickname, one that stuck with him during his days at Yale. The address is the same as that listed as Bush's residence in the corporate records of Zapata Petroleum, the Midland, Texas, oil company he founded and ran before moving to Houston in the late 1950s to set up Zapata Off-Shore. According to the 1956 Midland phone directory, the telephone number is that of the Walker-Bush Corporation, one of Bush's early oil ventures that eventually merged with Zapata.

De Mohrenschildt's social relations were not strictly limited to the Oil Patch, however. He was frequently seen, for example, on the tennis courts at the Long Island estate of Jack and Janet Bouvier, the parents of the then Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy. The enormous irony of this association would not become clear until another of de Mohrenschildt's "friends," Lee Harvey Oswald, burst into notoriety.

Following a mysterious 32-month "defection" to the Soviet Union, Oswald returned to the United States in 1962 with his Russian-born bride, Marina. The Oswalds settled in Fort Worth, where they quickly fell in with the burgeoning Russian-emigre community, of which the de Mohrenschildts were prominent figures. The aristocratic de Mohrenschildt and the down-and-out Oswald soon became close, if unlikely,



**One place President Bush's name crops up is in the personal phone book of George de Mohrenschildt, a Russian-born nobleman with close ties to the oil industry and intelligence community, best known as the CIA "babysitter" of Lee Harvey Oswald.**



companions. In October 1962, de Mohrenschildt convinced the Oswalds to move to Dallas, 30 miles away, and for the next six months Lee and George cultivated their unusual friendship. "Whatever his [de Mohrenschildt's] suggestions were, Lee grabbed them and took them, whether it was what time to go to bed or where to stay," de Mohrenschildt's son-in-law would later tell the Warren Commission during its investigation of Kennedy's assassination.

Oswald and de Mohrenschildt parted company in April 1963. Oswald returned to the city of his youth, New Orleans, where he founded (and was the only member of) the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee. De Mohrenschildt traveled to Haiti, ostensibly on oil-related business, stopping en route, according to CIA records, in Washington, D.C. for a meeting with a known CIA agent and the Assistant Director of Army Intelligence. Seven months later, de Mohrenschildt was having a drink in a Port-au-Prince bar when he heard the news of Kennedy's death. He immediately asked

if the suspect's name was Lee Oswald. "It was subconscious," he later told the *Dallas Times-Herald*, "a sort of flash that came probably from knowing that Oswald had a gun." When Oswald was arrested, a piece of paper was found in his pocket containing the unlisted phone number of de Mohrenschildt's last residence before leaving Dallas.

"I personally have always felt that George was a CIA agent," de Mohrenschildt's Dallas lawyer and close personal friend, Patrick Russell told Anthony Summers, author of the book *Conspiracy*. "It has always seemed most plausible to me that he was an agent, that he did have an assignment, that his association with Lee Harvey Oswald went a little deeper than friendship." De Mohrenschildt himself validated his friend's suspicions in an interview with a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*. In 1977, de Mohrenschildt told the *Journal* that the CIA asked him "to keep tabs on Oswald."

Shortly after making that statement, de Mohrenschildt agreed to another interview — this one with the House Select Committee on Assassinations which was then investigating Kennedy's death. Within hours after making arrangements to testify before the committee, de Mohrenschildt was found dead — shot through the mouth. A 20-gauge shotgun lay near the body. The coroner ruled the death a suicide.

Nine months earlier, de Mohrenschildt had spoken with a journalist about the infamous young man he'd befriended. "They made a moron out of him," de Mohrenschildt said, according to the book *The Fish Is Red*, "but he was really smart as hell.... And I will tell you this — I am sure he did not shoot the President." In the months before his death, de Mohrenschildt and his wife wrote a manuscript about Oswald entitled *I'm a Patsy*.

## Media Monitor

The establishment in the mid-1970s of the House Assassinations Committee, which

had hoped to hear testimony from George Bush's old acquaintance George de Mohrenschildt, brought renewed attention to the Kennedy case. One of those who demonstrated a keen interest in the matter was George Bush himself. Documents obtained as a result of the Assassination Archives' FOIA suit show that Bush was regularly informed of media reports on matters related to Kennedy's murder throughout his term as DCI.

Although the CIA deemed certain materials reviewed by Bush too sensitive for public disclosure, the available documents provide a vivid glimpse of the agency's concerns in this matter. Many of the known articles and reports concerning the assassination that apparently crossed Bush's desk at CIA headquarters focus on Cuba. These range from newspaper accounts of alleged meetings between Oswald-assassin Jack Ruby and Cuban leader Fidel Castro to detailed reports of how U.S. policy toward the island nation during the Eisenhower-Nixon administration "inevitably lead to the death of John F. Kennedy." A *Washington Post* article on the CIA's alleged suppression of information of a possible Cuban role in the assassination drew particular scrutiny from Bush. Handwritten across the bottom of the page are notes from Bush requesting additional information about certain aspects of the story. Within days, Bush received memoranda responding to his inquiry and providing detailed analysis of the *Post* story. While this apparent interest in the Cuban angle to the assassination may simply reflect the media coverage of that period, it is nevertheless thought-provoking, given the speculation about Bush's possible operational role in the Caribbean during the early 1960s.

Other assassination-related documents routed to Bush during his tenure as CIA chief pertain to damage control. These include: a recommendation on how best to approach the pending publication of a Congressional report on the assassination that would cast the agency in an unfavorable light; and various correspondence concerning possible damage to the reputation of former CIA Director Richard Helms following publication of an article refuting his testimony that the CIA had never considered using Oswald as a source of intelligence. Another article is marked with a note from Bush requesting clarification on charges the CIA withheld information concerning Oswald's activities in Mexico shortly before the assassination.

It must be reemphasized that there is no evidence to suggest President Bush's involvement in a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. Nevertheless, many questions remain about Bush's activities during that period. Specifically: Where was George Bush on November 22, 1963? Did he call the FBI to report and alleged threat against Kennedy's life? Was he briefed by the FBI about anti-Castro Cuban activities following Kennedy's assassination? And what was his relationship with George de Mohrenschildt?

These are serious matters that deserve clear and unambiguous answers. These issues, and Bush's refusal to confront them squarely, would be troubling if the subject were any citizen of the United States. They are of special concern when they pertain to the President. If President Bush has knowledge of the events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy, it is his duty to disclose it to the American people. If he does not, then he need only say so.