

NEW ADDRESS: Rt. 7, Frederick, Md. 21701:::473-8186

12/26/67

Dear Mr. Davidson,

Just returned from N.O. and further than ever behind. Many thanks for yours of 12/8.

You may be right on Betty Parent (whose name turns out to be Parrot. How accurate can one FBI man or bureau be ?)

I disagree with you about the meaning of 1444 re Congora, who is a certified paranoid in competent US institutions. He interest was not in JFK. What we have is not his story but a version of it. I have nothing against this sick man but much against those who tried to use him for a CIA-type diversion when the Garrison case broke. He can no more help his disease than another can a broken leg.

I didn't print the photos I located because I could not buy them. I turned this aspect over to those who could-and did. What they have and what they have brought I really do not know, for I turned this over to them and devote my time to other things no one else seems to be working on. I believe they do have some such pictures, but the clarity I know nothing about. Dick Sprague is the best one.

Wrote this two hours ago and was interrupted. It is almost 1 a.m. and I have no more time.

Best regards,

Harold Weisberg

# LEON DAVIDSON

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December 8, 1967

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Mr. Harold Weisberg  
Route 7  
Frederick, Md. 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

I have just finished reading "Oswald in New Orleans", and want to compliment you on the sheer magnitude, as well as the bravery, of your effort. I am waiting with interest for the next book to appear, which I have already placed an order with you, for.

May I point out one place in the book where you seem to have misled yourself, in a minor way. On page 220 you devote most of the space to Betty Parent, and the apparent reason is your belief that the FBI had given her two names to identify. If it weren't for this, her story would be unworthy of so much space in your book.

Now, it seems clear to me, and would also seem obvious to you on reconsideration, that what Miss Parent meant when she said that, about associating an individual with either name, was that the only individual she could associate with the name "CLAY" or the name "BERTRAND" was Clay Gould, and this only because of the first-name equality. She evidently knew no-one who had "Bertrand" as a name, and this innocent statement of hers referred to "name" as being either given name or surname, whereas you construed "name" to mean legal name, consisting of both given name and surname.

So much for that minor point.

More of interest to me is to find out just what you mean on p.256 when you say "The Commission printed the disproof..." of Gongora's story. Your only citation to the commission's files is to exhibit 1444, and I find no shred of disproof in that.

In fact, I don't even find the usual Weisberg approach in your pages on this episode (pp.256--259). You seem almost vituperative in making Gongoras out to be utterly without a possible shred of truth to his story. You refer to him as a "certified madman", etc. Isn't there anything to his story that might be investigated and found true, such as the address in Miami he gave for Balart, or the fate of Tony Varona's daughter at the hands of "Batistianos" dogs?

On pp. 383 ff. of "Oswald in New Orleans" you describe stories of right-wing plots, Mafia "contracts", Minutemen, etc., as tape-recorded or overheard by presumably knowledgeable people, and you present them, as stories, fairly, and without denigrating the people involved and influencing the reader to believe or disbelieve. Why is it that in the Gongora story you are so one-sided in your presentation? I hasten to say that I don't believe for a moment that Castro wanted or was involved in the assassination of Pres. Kennedy. However, there are anti-Castro Cubans who might have been involved, aren't there, and could not Gongora's story hang together if one assumes that it was anti-Castro elements within Cuba who were involved?

The connection between Ferrie and the Mafia ought to be explored more in depth than you have done so far. On p. 321 you say Ferrie worked for the Mafia's lawyer in the trial of Marcello. On p. 386 the Mafia is mentioned as the source of hired assassins, possibly.

I suggest that the three men who are the subject of the enclosed copy of a letter I wrote to one of your "photograph analysts" recently, might have been "hired hands" of the conspirators, although not themselves trigger men. In this letter, I discuss the photographs in the Life and Post articles of a few weeks ago. How come these photos haven't been available in the Archives? Or published in books such as yours?

I'd appreciate a note from you, if you have time, as to how things are going, and whether your "photograph" crew has come up with bystander photos showing the right-hand curb between TSBD and Stemmons sign in more detail than those published by these two magazines, during the moments before the first shot.

Best wishes,

*Leon*

Leon Davidson

December 4, 1967

Mr. Richard S. Sprague  
The University Club  
1 West 45th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Dick:

I have been studying your enlargement of the little Cuban (how do we know his nationality; not from this photo alone, I assume), and it would appear that he may be holding a long-barreled pistol or revolver or other object with a horizontal component. The important thing is that you have established that the line of the first shot passed through this man's position and the President's position at the time of the first shot. If you extend the line further back toward the concrete (low) wall adjacent to the head of the steps down toward the road, where does your line cross this wall?

In the last few weeks, of course, the Post (Dec. 2) and Life (Nov. 24) issues have come out, with color photos of the scene just before the shots and just after. (Are they holding the scenes taken during the shooting for next year's version of this "strip-tease"?) In Life, p. 93, is the Willis color photo from which your enlargement of the Cuban was taken. He is just under the S in the Stearns Freeway sign. It would seem to me that a line drawn from the President's position in this photo (just before the first shot, presumably) through the Cuban's "gun" hand, would not be in line with the "barrel" of his gun. If ~~xxxxxx~~ the shot had occurred a fraction of a second earlier, he might have been in line, but the intersection of the line with the concrete wall would have been more toward the street end of the concrete low wall. (In the Willis photo, the line between President and Cuban cuts the wall fairly close to the colonnade corner structure.)

Your monograph discusses the men numbered 2 through 5. In trying to relate them to the men shown in the Post and Life photos referred to above, am I correct in saying that #2 is the man at the end of the concrete wall seen in the Betzner photo (Life, p. 92), visible just over the right shoulder of the man directly in front of the camera. If so, then on p. 93 Life discusses this man (#2) and says he had come down the steps to join two men standing "behind a lamppost". One of these men has a red jacket. Man #2 came down by the time of the fatal shot.

Is the following account of these men consistent with your statements about ~~xxx~~ these men? You first identify the men in your

paragraph 13, [The Martin Film], which starts discussing them at about 8 seconds after the fatal shot. I would like to discuss what I see of these men before that time.

I note on page 28 of the Post (top left photo, probably Muchmore Frame 42 (18H34)), which is mislabeled by the Post as "Just before the firing began", the man in the red jacket and the two other men standing on those steps. Since this is just before the fatal shot, the third man in the group must be the one who has come down from the low concrete wall in the preceding few seconds, after being photographed there about the time of the first shot, as discussed above.

It is interesting to watch the behavior of these three men during the important few seconds before John Martin's movie apparently started. The men appear in the first three photos on pages 28 and 29 in the Post, and in all three photos on p. 95 of Life, as well as the lower left photo (Towner) of p. 94 of Life. From a behavioral-psychology viewpoint, these men appear to be reacting quite differently from most other spectators. They were standing in Muchmore frame 42, then start to crouch in Muchmore frame 55 (18H35) when they obviously can see ~~an~~ the Secret Service man jumping from the follow-up car to the President's car. They decide to sit down by the time of Wilma Bond's photo (Life, top of p. 95), and stay seated until at least Wilma Bond's later photo (Life, bottom right, p. 95), by which time the parents and little child at right of Bond picture (lady in red and white dress) are already up and dusting themselves. They sit calmly and hold tight while the onlookers run past them up to the railroad overpass.

These men are the ones I presume you call #s 2, 3, and 4. One of them (your #3 or #4, which?) has the red jacket, and the other two can be distinguished by their pants. According to Muchmore frame 28, one has light pants, a light cap or hat, and possibly a dark face. The other has dark or black pants. Since the Willis photo (Life, p. 93) shows the man with dark pants standing with "Red-Jacket" while your #2 is still up at the concrete wall, then your #2 must have the white pants. Does this agree with your identification of the men in your monograph?

You say (paragraph 14) that #2 has a dark black cloak or coat. This corresponds to what "White-Pants" is wearing in Muchmore frame 42 (Post p. 28, first photo, and also 18H34.)

It is too tempting to speculate, so I will. On the principle that exposure is the best concealment (cf. "The Purloined Letter") these three culprits sit tight rather than run for it, until enough other people are running so that they won't be noticed. Assuming that these men (or at least two of them) are "observers", placed at the planned location of the President's car at the time of the fatal shot so that the actual events could be reported to the "field director" for the conspirators, in time to permit the correct type of planting of evidence at Parkland Hospital and elsewhere.

The function of #2, then, could have been to observe from the higher vantage point of the concrete wall, exactly what was happening at the time of the first shot, which the other two men down nearer the road, could not see so well. I would doubt that man #2 had or fired any weapon, although he might have tossed the squib or firecracker to provide the timed "noise" of simulated gunfire to go along with the first shot from a silent secret weapon in the crowd along the curb. He would have had to have a clear view of the progress of the motorcade, and its speed, to judge when to set off the squib, at the prearranged and rehearsed time at which the weapon would be fired at the President's throat. (Give or take a fraction of a second, or more, so long as the noise occurred at a sufficiently close time so that people could later associate it with the first shot.)

The interesting thing about a "team" of three men, such as these three seen to be, is that the intelligence agencies usually like to send three men on certain missions, where they have to be absolutely sure that there is no chance for defection or slip-up. There are always two to watch one, no matter who might be the weak sister. They also can provide "lookout service" for each other. That the three men are associated would seem probable from their similarity of behavior in ~~xxx~~ each photograph in which they appear. (They stand together, they sit together, and, you say, they run away together.)

Now, after all this, your paragraph 20 discusses a different set of men #s 3 and 4. (Behind the fence, between wall and fence.) Or was this Moorman photo taken a few seconds earlier than any of the photos discussed above? Where is a copy of the Moorman photo published?

By the way, it is not only an antenna from a motorcade in front of the Cuban's hand. It is also the post supporting the Stearns freeway sign, I would think, looking at the full Willis photo. (p. 93, Life).

I'd be interested in your confirmation or correction of my assignment of your numbers 2,3,4 to the three men sitting and standing on the steps (as in Muchmore photos).

Do the descriptions of these men, from photos, (egg, red jacket, tan jacket, light cap, black pants, white pants, etc.) tie them in with other descriptions by witnesses or other sets of photos?

I hope all is going well with your work, and would appreciate receiving new editions of your monograph, plus your comments on the "ide bullet" concept. Are any good copies of the key photos available, for a reasonable price, at this time? Do you have photos of curbside bystanders with eye-level movie cameras, along route between TSB and the Cuban's location?

Sincerely yours,

Leon Davidson

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