

Shade of Oswald visits friend in Britain

The latest investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy, which suggests a conspiracy by organised crime, has brought renewed fear to a former US marine who now lives in Cheshire.

Nelson Delgado was a corporal in the marine corps in charge of Private Lee Harvey Oswald who was considered by the Warren Commission to have acted alone in killing the President.

In a report published earlier this month, however, the House of Representatives' assassination committee criticised the Commission for neglecting the evidence of a possible conspiracy and the indications that Oswald's shots that day in November 1963 might not have been the only ones.

Mr Delgado, a Puerto Rican who considers himself to have been Oswald's closest friend in the army, has always maintained that Oswald was an unlikely assassin and too poor a shot to have fired possibly six rounds in rapid succession on that day.

"We all had to qualify as marksmen in the marines," he said yesterday. "Oswald only just scraped through in the marksmen category when we were tested on the range. Many others of us got better ratings as sharpshooters or experts. In our last test, when I watched him from behind Oswald scored 192 to my 234."

Mr Delgado told all this to the Warren Commission but his evidence and that of 26 other marine colleagues, appeared not to influence the Commission's final report. Most of the other 26 are now dead. Many were killed in Vietnam but others have died in mysterious circumstances.

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So Mr Delgado, who came to live with his English born wife in Warrington when he left the marines in 1977, feels threatened. "If they're now saying that the assassination was a conspiracy after all the whole thing could start up again. I believe I could be seen as a threat once again. If the CIA or the FBI had any part in the conspiracy they would want nothing in their way to destroy their cover."

When the FBI interviewed Mr Delgado after the assassination, he says pressure was applied to try to make him change his testimony about Oswald. "They attacked my competence to judge his character and shooting ability and criticised my efforts to teach him Spanish."

In the early 1960s both men were interested in Cuba and Mr Delgado says that mail from the Cuban Consulate in Los Angeles used to be addressed to Oswald at the radar-scanning unit in California where they were both stationed.

Mr Delgado admits that he has no evidence beyond that of Oswald's character and his well-known incompetence with firearms. "But the conspirators may think I know more than I do." So he has made a sworn affidavit of that information and of the events that have happened to him since. "That is my insurance policy. If anything should happen to me now, people will know."

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