

BOBBY BROWN AND "OSWALD'S GHOST(S)"

by
John J. Johnson

The TV Show A Current Affair, February 24, 1993, revealed a recently-discovered copy of what appeared to be the backyard photo with the figure of Oswald cut out to produce a white silhouette that became known as "Oswald's Ghost."

(See back cover illustration, this issue.) The matte was discovered by Mary La Fontaine in the Dallas police records which were stored at the Dallas Municipal Archives and Record Center. This led to speculation that the reason for making such a matte was to frame Oswald by superimposing his figure, together with the incriminating evidence of a rifle, revolver and a Communist and a Marxist newspaper, on the background of the Neely Street rooming house where Oswald had lived.

The "cutout" had been made by Dallas police officer Bobby Brown, who claims it was done at the direction of the Secret Service several days after the assassination. Brown offers an innocent explanation, claiming that the Secret Service wanted a reenactment of the backyard photos to demonstrate where and how they had been made. He says that Forrest Sorrels of the Dallas Secret Service had called Captain Fritz and requested that someone from the Crime Lab go to the Neely residence

and take some pictures. Brown and Fritz, together with some Dallas detectives and a couple of Secret Service agents, went to the house and made the photos. (see figure 1) Brown was selected to pose because he was the youngest of the men present. He was given a rifle that Fritz had in his car and the Secret Service instructed him which hand should hold the rifle, how he should stand, how he was to hold the newspapers, etc. Brown claims that he later cut his figure from the photo because he did not want to be identified with it. Gary Savage interviewed Brown:



I asked Bobby very specifically what would possess him to cut out his silhouette from the reenacted photographs. He was adamant to me that he only wanted to take himself out of the photograph since it was the background that was the subject, and not himself. He said that he did this entirely on his own, and that no one told him to do so. He said he cut his image out of a developed photograph and placed a white piece of paper behind it and re-photographed the reenactment. [1]

As will be seen, the silhouette is not a cutout and it is not of Brown. Furthermore, there exist two ghost photographs with the same silhouette but slightly different

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backgrounds. (For the second "ghost" photograph, see figure 2.)



could have studied one of the 5 different photos that the Dallas Police Department had made of the background alone. (See figure 3 for one of these) In any case, the white silhouette is that of Oswald, not Brown. This should be obvious from a comparison of the photo of Brown and the Oswald figure in CE 133-C. (See figure 4) If it is not readily apparent to the reader that the silhouette figure is that of Oswald and not Brown, a simple experiment will demonstrate this: (a) Make same size copies of the Brown photo, the white silhouette and CE 133-C. (b) Cut out the silhouette and see whether it is congruent with the figures of Oswald or Brown. Although Brown assumed a pose which is generally similar to that of Oswald, it is the Oswald figure that matches perfectly, not that of Brown.

Brown later offered another version of how the ghost photo was made, this time with Oswald being cut out of the picture. He says that, after he posed for the reenactment, the FBI brought the 133-C photo to him at the Dallas crime lab and Brown cut Oswald out of the picture. He then photographed the 133-C print against a white background to make the matte.

Brown did not deny that the matting was intended to accommodate a cutout of Oswald's image—to allow, that is, the insertion of Oswald into an empty backyard. He insisted, however, that the dark room manipulation had an innocent purpose. His reason for constructing this matte was "just to show him [Oswald] in that backyard," Brown stated.

"That part [making the matte] was my own idea. I just did it to be doing something." [3]

But Brown's description of the making of the matte print appears oddly confused. Cutting Oswald from a photograph—in this case, a copy of 133-C—and shooting the cutout "against a white background" would ultimately have reproduced the identical background of 133-C. The matte print, however, shows the backyard photographed in the Secret Service-sponsored reenactment on November 29 [Figure 3], not the seasonally different

Brown told author Gary Savage that the La Fontaines: *...just found some of my cuttings. Mary [La Fontaine] showed Savage a copy of the matte photo. "Why, that's Oswald," Savage responded, surprised that the matte silhouette was the same as Oswald's in [Gary's uncle, Detective] Livingston's copy of the 133-C print. But, though admitting Brown had lied to him, Savage went on to publish the same version he recounted from Brown in his 1993, Day One. (sic) [2]*

If Brown were only interested in the background, he

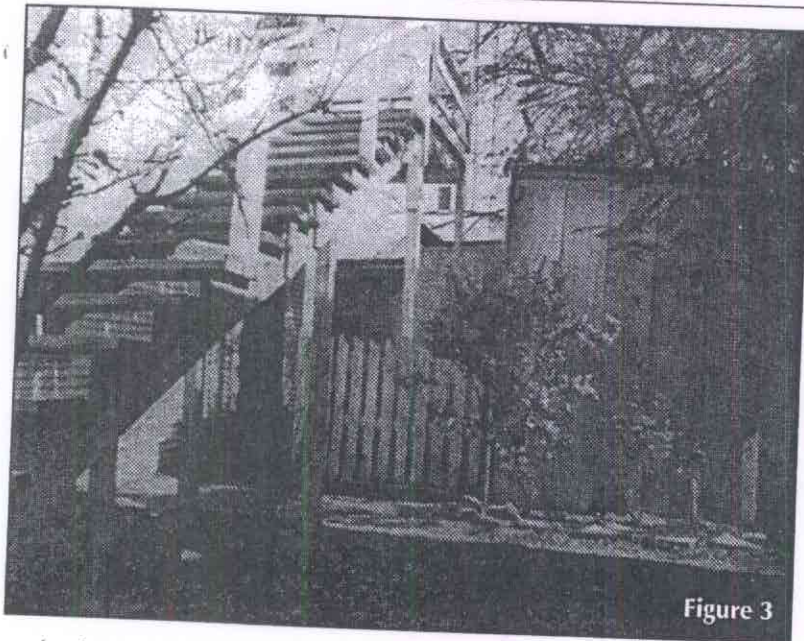


Figure 3

background of the "true" Oswald backyard photos (shot eight months earlier, on March 31, 1963): 133-A, 133-B and 133-C

The detective's explanation of two vertical white lines on either side of the silhouette was similarly inadequate. These lines, he claimed, were "cut lines...where it [Oswald's image] was cut out, I guess." A far more likely possibility is that the two vertical lines were produced by an acetate overlay. In a typical step for creating each composite images, an acetate sheet with a cutout of the figure to be inserted—here, Oswald—would be placed over the picture of the empty backyard and shot with a copy camera. This procedure (demonstrated in [Oliver] Stone's *JFK* could leave "tracks" from the edges of the overlay in the form of thin white lines similar to those in the silhouette print. [4]

What is interesting about the photo in question is that the pose selected by the Secret Service for Brown does not match the two photos the Warren Commission was aware of (known as 133-A and 133-B). The photo of Oswald in the new pose (HSCA F180, now known as 133-C) was discovered after the silhouette was found in the Dallas Police archives and twelve years after the first two backyard photos were made public. This matted photograph, one of two photos showing the same "ghost" against two slightly different backgrounds, which was

discovered by Mary La Fontaine in the Dallas Police files, combines a silhouette of Lee Harvey Oswald taken from 133-C with the backyard at 214 Neely Street as it appeared on Friday, November 29. Although the Secret Service and Dallas Police obviously had a copy of 133-C at the time of the reenactment, the photo disappeared from 1963 to 1975, only to turn up when produced by none other than the widow of Dallas Police Officer Roscoe White—a man who some suspect of actually shooting the President and/or Officer Tippit.

Hershel Womack, a photo expert and major researcher of the Waggoner Carr Collection of Kennedy materials at Texas Tech University, told Mary [La Fontaine] in a 1992 interview for the *Houston Post*:

"The fact that the matte photograph was worked up from the precise



Figure 4

backyard photo that was withheld from the Warren Commission makes me suspect that the 'ghost' photo, the withheld 133-C photo, and Brown's demonstration photo may all have been part of the same trial series. Once the 'practice' was over and the the actual forgery completed, the incriminating materials were discarded—or so they thought." [5]

The trouble with this theory is that the shrubs and trees show growth since the police pictures were taken several months after the "Oswald" backyard photos were supposedly made. The branches of the tree above the ghost silhouette are bare, whereas the ones in the Oswald photos have leaves. An expert with an airbrush can do wonders with such things, but there may be a rather innocent explanation of this after all. The Secret Service or FBI may have suspected that the backyard photos were fakes (just as stated by Oswald himself, according to Captain Fritz) and had the Dallas police take photos of

the yard and superimpose a silhouette of Oswald so they could try to replicate the incriminating photos, just to see if, in fact, it could be done.

It is significant that there are two ghost photographs, using the same silhouette but slightly different backgrounds (as evidenced most notably by the relative position of chimney and staircase). One photo has the edges of the acetate overlay visible as white lines. The other has the silhouette positioned differently and has the lines removed, indicating that somebody had gone through quite a bit of trouble with an airbrush. As far as is known, the ghost photo without the acetate overlay lines has never been published until now. The La Fontaines mention it in their book, but only printed the first photo.

Many years ago Gary Shaw and Larry Harris published a photograph of an FBI agent posing like "Oswald" holding a rifle. [6] (See Figure 5) The photo was taken on the rooftop of a building—possibly the FBI building in



Washington—and the head of the agent had been removed. This photo may or may not have had something to do with the ghost mystery.

The importance of the backyard photos cannot be overstated. As the House Select Committee on Assassinations reported:

If the backyard photographs are valid, they are highly incriminating of Oswald because they link him with the murder weapon. If they are fakes, how they were produced poses far-reaching questions in the area of conspiracy. "Fake" backyard photographs would indicate of a degree of conspiratorial sophistication that would almost necessarily raise the possibility that a highly organized group had conspired to kill the President and make Oswald a "patsy." [7]

Readers can obtain copies of the photos taken by the Dallas Police—2 different ones of "Oswald's Ghost," 2 different views of Bobby Brown, and the 5 slightly different Neely Street backyard background photos. Clear glossy 8x10 photos of "Oswald's Ghost" are guaranteed to make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. Contact: Cindy C. Smolovik, CA, City Archivist/Manager, Dallas Municipal Archives and Record Center, City Hall, Dallas TX 75201, telephone 214-670-3738. You will find that Cindy is very helpful. She has a photo album of perhaps a hundred or more photos taken by the Dallas Police relating to the assassination. You can view this album in her office and make selections.

Notes

1. Gary Savage, *JFK: First Day Evidence* (Monroe LA: The Shoppe Press, 1993), p. 140.
2. Ray and Mary La Fontaine, *Oswald Talked; The Evidence in the JFK Assassination* (Gretna LA: Pelican, 1996), p. 440.
3. La Fontaine and La Fontaine, *Oswald Talked*, pp. 381, 386.
4. La Fontaine and La Fontaine, *Oswald Talked*, p. 386.
5. La Fontaine and La Fontaine, *Oswald Talked*, p. 386.
6. J. Gary Shaw and Larry R. Harris, *Cover-Up*, self published, 1976, p. 48.
7. House Select Committee on Assassinations, Hearings, vol. VI, p. 139.

THE COZY EIGHT APARTMENTS

by
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There is no doubt that the Warren Commission left little to be known about the public life of Lee Harvey Oswald. Despite the fact that he was personally a secretive young man, the FBI and the Warren researchers were able to compile fairly thorough records of his places of employment, his wages, his travels, and his residences. However, there was short period, in October of 1962, that the FBI was not able to establish where Oswald had made his home or, if they found it, they did not convey the information to the Commission. From the Warren Report:

Oswald moved into the YMCA on October 15, and stayed there until October 19, paying \$2.25 a night. He used the Taylors' address and telephone number as a place where he could be reached, but on October 9 had also rented post office box 2915 under his own name at the main post office on Ervay Street...On October 16, Mrs. Hall brought Marina and June to Dallas to have June baptized...Two days later, Mrs. Hall had an automobile accident and went to the hospital, where she remained until October 26; Marina remained in the Hall house...After Oswald left the YMCA on October 19, he moved to a room or apartment somewhere in Dallas, which has not been located. [1]

At the time, in 1962, Gary and Alexandra Taylor, who were the son-in-law of George De Mohrenschildt, had an apartment in Dallas where they lived with a baby son. The couple had met the Oswalds earlier in the month through a meeting arranged by De Mohrenschildt.

Norman Mailer, in his book, *Oswald's Tale*, deals with this period in the lives of the Oswalds:

Lee and Marina will be staying in separate places for the rest of October and the first few days of November—four weeks in all. She will camp out a few days with Gary and Alexandra Taylor in their small apartment in Dallas and then move over to Elana Hall's house in Fort Worth, where Lee will go out to visit June and Marina a couple of times

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a week, then ostensibly travel back to his room at the YMCA in Dallas, where everyone, including Marina, believes he was staying.

The difficulty, however, is that Lee was registered at the Y for but five days, from October 15 through October 19. In the previous week, and in the two weeks following October 19, no one knew or was ready to admit that he or she knew where Oswald lived. This gap is present despite the best efforts of the FBI and the Warren Commission to answer that question. [2]

In reading the testimony of Gary Taylor this writer found:

Mr. Taylor. I went to—uh—and looked for a place where Lee was staying in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas and tried to locate him...It had to be sometime between September and November, because my wife and I separated after that. Anyway, at some point during this period, I do remember going to an area in Oak Cliff looking for Lee. I don't think I found him. At least, not on the occasion I remember. All I had was some vague directions that...I went back to this area within the last few weeks and located a building that stuck—or I had a recollection of the building in the area and found it and gave that information to agent Yelchek of the FBI. I don't know what he—

Mr. Jenner. What location was that?

Mr. Taylor. I gave him the exact street address—but it seems to me like it was—well, the name of the apartment building was Coz-I-Eight (spelling) C-O-Z-I-E-I-G-H-T apartments and I thing (sic) they were located at 1404 North Beckley. But the address I could be off on; but the name I do remember. [3]

This is a good example of the lack of communication between the investigators and the Commission. Even after the above information was available, in the Taylor testimony, the commissioners failed to relate the information to the missing period in the life of Lee Oswald. Although Taylor was vague in pinpointing the exact date of his Oak Cliff odyssey, it had to be during the questionable gap alluded to, since the balance of the period was accounted for.

Well, for what it's worth, fans: there was a Cozy-Eight apartment building in Oak Cliff and it was on North Beckley; Taylor was correct. He was "off on the address." The correct address (as shown in City Directories

of that period) was 1306 North Beckley, not 1404. A Mrs. Ruth Walker lived at 1404 North Beckley.

In 1962, the building consisted of eight apartments, lettered from A-H, and was managed by Mr. Russ Davis. The annual census, taken in the winter of 1961 for the Polks City Directory and published early in 1962, shows four of the apartments (D-E-F-H) empty; not a good year for rentals at the Cozy-Eight. 1963 was a better year. When the poll was taken in the winter of 1962 (at about the time Lee was hiding out), there was only one apartment (C) empty.

Could it have been the vagabond Marxist who vacated apartment C? Did he pay the rent, or did he "stiff" the landlord, like he did in New Orleans? Who knows? And does anyone care?

Notes

1. Warren Report, pp. 719-720.
2. Norman Mailer, *Oswald's Tale*, pp. 452-453.
3. Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 9, pp. 88-89.

WILLIAM AVERY HYDE

by
Barbara LaMonica

Previous articles [1] by Carol Hewett, Steve Jones and myself have attempted to draw a more complete picture of Ruth and Michael Paine, the Dallas couple who housed Marina Oswald in the fall of 1963. Our research, based primarily on released FBI documents, led us to conclude the Paines were more than just a hapless, charitable couple who had the misfortune of befriending LHO. The State Department, the Agency for International Development (AID), the CIA, and the defense industry all form a web of connections to the Paines through their respective immediate families. This confirms that the Paines' natural habitat, like that of their erstwhile friend Lee Harvey Oswald, was a warren of government agencies and businesses, where overt and covert information gathering was conducted on behalf of the intelligence community.

The following information concerning the career of Ruth Paine's father, William Avery Hyde, is another

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