

DEAD JFK WITNESS SURFACES THE MAN WHO KNEW

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When the House Committee investigating the Kennedy and King assassinations begins calling witnesses it will be unable to call Dallas Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig. One of the most important witnesses in Kennedy case, Craig died of an apparent suicide in May, 1975, at the age of 39.

Fortunately, Craig's testimony has been preserved in a videotape documentary co-produced by Mark Lane and narrated by John Henry Faulk. Entitled "Footnote to the Assassination," the 90-minute documentary is based on lengthy interviews with Craig recorded in his last year. It premiered this September at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles.

The producers hope to syndicate Footnote on TV early next year, but they are not overly optimistic. If aired, it would be the first documentary on TV that didn't accept the Warren Report's lone assassin conclusion.

The film is composed of segments from the Craig interview intercut with support from the Warren Commission documents and other witnesses. Craig was standing in front of the Sheriff's office a half block from Dealey Plaza when the shots rang out on November 22, 1963. He ran into the Plaza and quickly bumped into an important eyewitness, Arnold Rowland, and his wife. Rowland told Craig

that he saw two men on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, including one man who stood with a rifle in the southwest corner window 15 minutes before the first shot was fired.

If the statement Rowland made spontaneously to Craig in the aftermath of the event and which Rowland repeated to the FBI and the Warren Commission-

IN NEW FILM TOO MUCH

is correct, then the Warren Report is not. Oswald's alleged perch was the southeast corner window--on the other end of the building. At about 12:15 pm, when Rowland observed the gunman on the sixth floor, Oswald was seen by another witness on the first floor.

Fifteen minutes after the assassination, Dep. Sheriff Craig was standing in Dealey Plaza when he heard a shrill whistle, turned, and (along with a corroborating witness) saw a man run down the grassy knoll to join a "dark-complected" driver waiting in a Rambler station wagon.

The Rambler proceeded down Elm Street past the Triple Underpass before Craig could get across the street to stop the vehicle. Later that day, Craig identified Lee Harvey Oswald as the man who ran down the knoll. But at the time Craig saw his "running Oswald," the Warren Report placed Oswald in a cab riding to his rooming house.

Who did Craig see fleeing the scene, if not Oswald? Roger Craig was just one of many eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen Oswald at a place in time when the Warren Report established Oswald to be somewhere else. This pattern has given rise to speculation in numerous articles and a book about the "second Oswald." For years, Warren Commission critics have speculated that an Oswald look-alike may have been used by conspirators to imper-

sonate and possibly help frame Oswald--blazing a trail of misleading evidence to implicate him as a lone assassin.

A recent Village Voice article "Is the Second Oswald Alive in Dallas?" (Aug 23, 1976) quoted a Treasury agent who admitted that he had arrested (and released) an Oswald look-alike in Dallas on a firearms violation charge just days before the assassination.

The Oswald double was an activist in the right-wing Minutemen organization, an association of anti-Castro Cuban exiles, had travelled in and out of Mexico, and had practiced constantly at a Dallas rifle range in November, 1963, where witnesses had mistaken him for Oswald. The agent described the Minuteman as an "absolute dead ringer for Oswald-- identical build, weight, coloring, facial features, hair. They were identical twins; they could have passed for each other."

Craig's chronicle picks up again on the steps of the School Book Depository. There, Craig says he ran into a man who identified himself as a Secret Service agent. After the "agent" took Craig's rushed report about the fleeing man in the Rambler, Craig went his way hunting for more evidence.

Craig would later learn two disturbing facts: 1) At the time he talked to the 'agent' there were no Secret Service personnel in Dealey Plaza. None had been assigned. 2) When Dallas police officer Joseph Smith confronted a man in a business suit behind the grassy knoll, the suspect produced Secret Service credentials. Two other Dallas cops, Harkness and Weitzman, claim to have conversed with Secret Service agents in Dealey Plaza when none were there.

Craig was one of the first officers to arrive at the sixth floor of the depository. Beneath the "Oswald window" on the floor, Craig noted three spent shells which he described as lying neatly in a row all pointing in the same

direction. Since shells eject from a rifle haphazardly, Craig speculated that someone had to have planted the shells in that fashion. The FBI would easily link the shells to Oswald's 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano Rifle.

But according to Craig, the rifle found on the floor was not Oswald's Carcano. Craig and another deputy discovered a rifle behind some boxes, and they were soon joined by homicide Chief Will Fritz and Dep. Constable Seymour Weitzman. According to Craig, "We all saw stamped on the rifle-- '7.65 MM MAUSER.'"

Craig's claim is supported by the affidavit of Weitzman, who worked part-time in a sporting goods store and was very familiar with weapons. Weitzman's affidavit states in no uncertain terms: "This rifle was a 7.65 Mauser bolt action equipped with a 4/18 scope, a thick leather brownish-black sling on it."

Two recently declassified CIA memos raise more questions about the weapon found on the sixth floor. A November 25, 1963 CIA report states that the murder weapon was a Mauser, and a Nov 28 CIA memo says the murder weapon was incorrectly reported to be a Carcano.

Although Craig turned out to be one of the more alert Dallas police officers that day, he stated that deputy sheriffs were instructed to be spectators along the motorcade and to take no part in security. Craig says he was puzzled when Sheriff Bill Decker gave those orders on the morning of the assassination.

"Footnote to the Assassination" goes beyond the Craig allegations to raise questions about the FBI's role in the JFK case. For instance, why is there no transcript of the 12-hour interrogation of Oswald that 7 FBI agents took part in? If the FBI had an active Lee Oswald file in connection with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and the FBI had admitted it conducted intensive coverage of that



How much is that Oswald in the window?

group, why was Oswald not on the Secret Service list of one million potential threats to the President? Could this be because Oswald was a FBI employee?

Footnote contains revealing TV footage, never featured on network news, from the House judiciary subcommittee hearings that probed the FBI's destruction (Nov 24, 1963) of an Oswald. FBI agent James Hosty, whose name and unlisted phone number appeared in Oswald's address book, testified that Dallas bureau Chief J. Gordon Shanklin ordered him to destroy the note: "Oswald is dead now. There can be no trial. Get rid of this note."

Hosty further testified that he did not tell the Warren Commission about the destruction of evidence because three FBI officials, Shanklin, his assistant Robert Gemberling and

Assistant Director Alan Belmont, instructed him only to answer questions and not to volunteer information.

If the Oswald note contained a violent threat against the FBI, wouldn't the FBI have saved it as evidence in its case that Oswald was the lone and violence prone assassin? Could the note instead have revealed an Oswald-FBI relationship?

The documentary also presents an important interview with a new witness, Bob Price, an ex-night-club owner in Houston who was an acquaintance of Dallas club owner Jack Ruby. In April, 1963, Price claims that he, Ruby, Lee Oswald, and two Louisiana men had a lengthy chat in Price's club.

Although Price indicates that matters like JFK and murder never came up during the four-hour confab, his

statement is significant in view of several witnesses who were on record 12 years ago as having seen Oswald and Ruby together. Price offers no explanation as to why he waited 12 years to speak out.

Footnote to the Assassination winds down with Roger Craig chronicling a series of misadventures that befell him after the assassination, seemingly related to his eyewitness testimony. Because of Craig's allegations, especially concerning Oswald fleeing in the Rambler, he had been hounded by journalists. Dallas Sheriff Bill Decker eventually ordered Craig to stop answering questions about the case: "You didn't hear anything, you didn't see anything."

Craig ignored the advice and was subsequently fired on July 4, 1967.

The one-time decorated deputy sheriff had trouble finding work in his last years, and for a while, labored at a \$1.60-per-hour job. Craig says he encountered numerous death threats and narrowly escaped a couple of attempts on his life.

From his Nov 22 statement for the Sheriff's department to his testimony before a Warren Commission attorney to his last comments before the videotape camera, Roger Craig refused to change his story about what he saw and heard. Because it has taken Congress 13 years to respond to the desire of the American people for a serious investigation, Craig and many other witnesses are no longer around to testify.

---Jeff Cohen, LNS