

Lee Harvey Oswald: Just a hired gun?



CLARE BOOTH LUCE
She worked with Cubans

S.F. Examiner
Nov. 15, 1975
P. 11

'Oswald said he'd be happy to shoot Castro . . . the Cubans thought he was a kook . . . at the Communist cell he was handing out the same line . . . then President Kennedy was dead.'

By Betty Beale

WASHINGTON — Clare Luce told a fascinating tale during dinner in her Watergate apartment the other evening. She said Sen. Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.), chairman of the subcommittee investigating the Warren Commission report, asked her to persuade some Cubans she had known to testify before the committee.

Mrs. Luce's efforts to find the Cubans led to a bloodcurdling warning all Americans should know.

Former Ambassador Luce was one of the American citizens who helped finance a fact-finding fleet of motorboats after the Bay of Pigs. Mrs. Luce met several times with the three young Cubans who manned the boat she helped finance.

They secretly visited Cuba and came out with some accurate information that was fed to the late Sen. Kenneth Keating, then passed on to the White House. But after the U.S. missile showdown with

Russia such efforts were halted.

Two years later, the night of President Kennedy's assassination, Mrs. Luce received a midnight phone call from one of the Cubans, a young law student.

He said, "Mrs. Luce, I want to tell you about Oswald."

He said that after the missile showdown the FBI had told the Cubans in Miami to break up all resistance groups and disperse. So he and the two other crew members moved to New Orleans and started another "Free Cuba" group.

They had been there a year and a half when Lee Harvey Oswald got in touch with them.

Oswald bragged about having been in Russia, said he was an ex-Marine and would be happy to

shoot Castro. He had no money, was living with his wife in New Orleans and seemed to be offering himself as a hired gun.

The Cubans thought he was a kook, so they tailed him to a Fair Play for Cuba Communist cell where he was handing out the same line.

Then suddenly Oswald had money and began making trips to Mexico. The Cubans continued to penetrate the Communist cell, made tape recordings of some of Oswald's meetings and photographed him distributing handbills for the Fair Play unit.

Then President Kennedy was shot.

"The young Cuban who called me," Mrs. Luce continued, "said there was a Cuban Communist assassination team working somewhere — in Dallas, New Orleans, or wherever, I don't remember.

"He said Oswald was their hired gun. He said Oswald had tried to report the Communist plans to the FBI sometime before the assassination. But because he was out for the dough, the FBI didn't believe him. I suppose they must hear from a thousand such crackpots a week.

When the young Cuban asked Mrs. Luce what he should do with the tape recordings and photos, she told him to take them to the FBI and report everything. Then she forgot all about it until New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison made headlines by saying the assassination was a conspiracy.

Mrs. Luce wondered whether the Warren Commission had all the facts, so she found the young Cuban in Miami to see what happened when they went to the FBI.

The Cuban told her: "We turned over copies of everything. We were then told to keep our trans shut

and that we would be deported if we said anything publicly."

He said one of the crew went to Guatemala, one was murdered, and their information never appeared in the Warren Commission report.

He said he was married now and didn't want "to get involved in it ever again."

When Sen. Schweiker called Mrs. Luce last month, she phoned another Cuban friend to see whether he could persuade the young man to testify behind closed doors.

The older Cuban said that if the testimony was behind 13 closed doors it would still become public. He said:

"Americans think they're playing games. They don't know they are involved in a life-and-death business. No, I won't tell you where he can be found.

"The people working for a free Cuba would lose their lives. A lot of them have already. They are not interested in making headlines for politicians.



Lee Harvey Oswald: A hit man

"You think the Bay of Pigs, the nuclear missiles, the assassination of the President was the end of the story? I tell you, it is just the beginning. What you Americans don't understand is, there are trained Communist terrorist, assassination, kidnaping, bombing and sabotage teams all over the country and the world."

The day after that conversation, Mrs. Luce said, bombs went off at the State Department in Washington, the U.S. mission to the U.N. and four banks in New York, and three places in Chicago. And at about the time Mrs. Luce was recalling the episode, a Cuban anti-Communist leader was exploded into bits in his car in Miami.