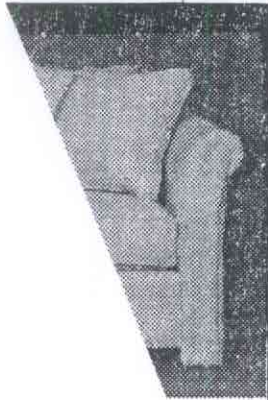


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Oswald scar still marks JFK probes

By EARL GOLZ

The FBI was asking Robert Oswald whether his brother had a mastoidectomy scar six months after Lee Harvey Oswald defected to the Soviet Union in 1959.

But the inquiry in April 1960 concerning any identifiable scars on Lee Harvey Oswald was initiated only after Oswald's mother kept "insisting it couldn't have been her boy" who defected, a source close to the FBI's Oswald investigation said.

THE FBI WAS simply following a "logical lead" from Oswald's mother that was "worth checking out," the source said. It was later proven false, he said.

English author and lawyer Michael Eddowes is trying to exhume the body of the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy to determine whether a Soviet secret agent posing as Oswald returned from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1962.

A hearing involving a temporary injunction sought by Robert Oswald to block disinterment from a grave in Rose Hill Burial Park in Fort Worth has been rescheduled in state district court for Sept. 5.

One of Eddowes' chief claims in the imposture theory is that an autopsy performed on the body in 1963 did not detect a scar resulting from a mastoidectomy operation behind the left ear of Oswald when he was a boy. Eddowes also contends the corpse was 2 inches shorter than Oswald's 5 feet 11 inches — measured when he was discharged from the U.S. Marines in 1959.

To support his suspicion that an imposter is buried in Oswald's grave, Eddowes cites a memorandum that FBI director J. Edgar Hoover wrote in June 1960, two months after the FBI questioned Robert Oswald about his brother's mastoidectomy scar. The Hoover memo said that "since there is a possibility that an imposter is using Oswald's birth certificate, any current information the department of state may have concerning subject will be appreciated."

BUT HOOVER testified before the Warren Commission in May 1964 that the bureau prior to the assassination "looked upon him (Oswald) as an individual who we suspected might become an agent of the Soviet government. There was no proof of

that, and we checked him carefully."

The Central Intelligence Agency at the time was considerably more suspicious of the body buried in Fort Worth, but not because the CIA thought it wasn't Oswald's corpse.

A Warren Commission memorandum in March 1964 said Hoover was reluctant to exhume the body "to examine the alleged scar on his (Oswald's) left wrist, as requested by the CIA." Again, the CIA was not thinking in terms of Eddowes' imposter theory.

"The CIA is interested in the scar on Oswald's left wrist because one of the crucial points in Oswald's experiences in the Soviet Union was an alleged suicide attempt by him when he is supposed to have deeply slashed his left wrist," the memo said. "If the suicide is a fabrication, the time supposedly spent by Oswald in recovering from the suicide (attempt) in a Moscow hospital could have been spent by him in Russian secret police custody being coached, brain washed, etc., for his appearance at the American embassy.

"THIS WHOLE aspect of Oswald's life and especially our attempt to authenticate it are highly secret at this point," the memo said.

One month earlier, in February 1964, Robert Oswald testified before the Warren Commission. He was asked whether the "course of events" and his perception of his brother's changed physical appearance when he returned from the Soviet Union (another major point in Eddowes' imposter theory) "led you to form an opinion as to whether he was or had been an agent of the government of the USSR?"

William A. McKenzie, one of Oswald's attorneys representing him in his current attempt to block exhumation, interrupted to ask Warren Commission counsel William Jenner, "You are asking him . . . to speculate?"

Later during the same session, Jenner asked

Robert Oswald whether FBI agent John Fain in April 1960 inquired about any identifiable scars that might appear on his brother's body.

"The only scar that I was familiar with was the one over the one ear," Robert Oswald said. "I do not recall what ear it was, where he had a mastoid operation performed at an earlier date."

"In that connection, however," Jenner asked, "did Mr. Fain raise with you the subject that if anyone inquired of you as to any items of scars or other possible identification that you would in turn advise the FBI that such an inquiry had been made of you?"

"That is correct, sir," Oswald said. "And I might say it was my further understanding that I did agree if anybody inquired about Lee in such a nature . . . I would inform him (Fain) or his office of this inquiry."

ONE YEAR BEFORE the assassination, Robert Oswald took home movies showing his brother at a Thanksgiving family gathering. The movies, for comparison of Oswald's height or other physical characteristics, have never been shown publicly.

The unending, and still excruciating, suspicion of Oswald's 2½-year existence in the Soviet Union was triggered by his mother years before the assassination. In 1964 she was still telling the Warren Commission "I think my son is an agent" of American intelligence sent to the Soviet Union posing as a defector.

In 1980, Oswald's brother is fighting an attempt by an Englishman to determine whether Oswald is, in fact, buried in Fort Worth.