

Washington Merry-go-round

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By Jack Anderson & Les Whitten

WASHINGTON — The secret files of the House Assassination Committee contain reports of strange CIA activities in Dallas on the eve of the John F. Kennedy assassination.

Credible witnesses have confirmed our past reports that the accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was in touch with anti-Castro Cubans in Dallas. One confidential report states that "in 1963, Oswald was seen leaving the Dallas office of Alpha 66." This was a Cuban commando group trained by the CIA.

A Cuban CIA operative, Antonio Veciana, also told investigators that he had been summoned to Dallas in August 1963 by his CIA contact — a mysterious man who went by the name of Morris Bishop. States a confidential summary: "When (Veciana) arrived, Bishop was accompanied by another man, Lee Harvey Oswald."

Another witness who impressed the investigators, Sylvia Odio, told them that two anti-Castro Cubans had introduced her to an American by the name of Leon Oswald. She was told that Oswald was trying "to convince anti-Castro Cuban groups ... to kill President Kennedy." After the assassination, she recognized this American as Lee Harvey Oswald.

The House investigators don't really believe that the CIA had any part in the murder of President Kennedy. More likely, they suspect the CIA may have tried to cover up some embarrassing contacts with Oswald in Dallas.

In any case, the CIA took pains to give the impression that Oswald was in Mexico City at the time that witnesses claimed he was dealing with the CIA-guided Cubans in Dallas. Veciana, for example, told of a strange call he received from his CIA contact after Kennedy was killed.

The CIA man, Morris Bishop, asked Veciana to contact his cousin, Guillermo Ruiz, who worked for the Cuban embassy in Mexico City. Relates a confidential report: "Veciana was to relay Bishop's offer to pay Ruiz and his wife to say that they had met with Oswald in Mexico City."

This not only would have placed Oswald out of Dallas but would have thrown suspicion on the Castro government. The ruse was later called off. Instead, the CIA cited secret tapes and photographs as evidence that Oswald had been in touch with both the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City.

The CIA kept tapes of all phone calls going in and out of the two embassies.

Photographs were also taken of everyone entering and leaving these embassies. On Oct. 1, 1963, the CIA notified other U.S. embassies that "an American male, who identified himself as Lee Oswald, contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City."

Oswald was described in the cable as "approximately 35 years old, with an athletic build, about six feet tall, with a receding hairline." The committee files note that this "in no way physically resembles the Lee Harvey Oswald accused of assassinating President Kennedy."

The CIA sought photographs from the Navy to compare with its photographs of Oswald at the Soviet embassy. Declares a committee report: "These photographs, though obviously not of the correct Lee Harvey Oswald, became the Warren Commission's exhibit 237. The CIA admitted that there had been a mix-up but never cleared the matter up."

A CIA witness has told committee investigators, meanwhile, that the CIA's monitoring camera happened to break down on the day that Oswald allegedly visited the Soviet embassy. But the CIA tap on the Soviet embassy's phone produced an alleged telephone call from someone who identified himself as "Lee Henry Oswald."

The CIA witness claimed that the actual voice recording of the telephone conversation "was destroyed in routine destruction procedures approximately one week after it was received." Yet more than seven weeks later, the FBI claimed to have heard the telephone conversation that the CIA said had been destroyed. The FBI's judgment was that the voice did not belong to Oswald.

Wrote late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover on Nov. 23, 1963: "The Central Intelligence Agency advised that on Oct. 1, 1963, an extremely sensitive source had reported that an individual identified himself as Lee Oswald, who contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City inquiring as to any messages."

"Special Agents of this Bureau, who have conversed with Oswald in Dallas, Texas, have observed photographs of the individual referred to above and have listened to a recording of his voice. These Special Agents are of the opinion

that the above-referred-to individual was not Lee Harvey Oswald."

The House investigators are beginning to wonder whether the CIA concocted the whole Oswald adventure in Mexico City in an attempt to conceal his real activities in Dallas. It is worth mentioning that the CIA, at White House instigation, began to create another Mexico cover story nine years later to obstruct the FBI investigation of Watergate.

Footnote: The CIA had no comment.

SMOKING HAZARD — Future aviation disasters may be averted if pilots stop flying in smoke-filled cockpits. Medical experts have found that

cigarette smoking in small cockpits reduces the physical ability of pilots to respond in emergencies. The carbon monoxide produced by smoking causes significant impairment in their vision, coordination, response time, concentration, manual dexterity and ability to make judgments under stress.

While passengers are forbidden to smoke during take-offs and landings for fear of fire, the crew and stewardesses sometimes puff away in the crowded cockpit. Even nonsmoking pilots are affected by the smoke around them, suffering from eye and throat irritation, headaches and nausea, scientists say.

Oswald's twin found in Dallas

Send to Howard Weisberg

HHS

By DICK RUSSELL
Pacific News Service

DALLAS — The existence of an "identical twin" for Lee Harvey Oswald—living here and arrested and released on a federal gun charge shortly before the assassination of John F. Kennedy—has been confirmed by a former agent for the Treasury Department's Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms unit.

With a congressional probe of the JFK assassination in the offing, Frank Ellsworth, now a Regional Public Affairs officer in that agency's Dallas bureau, broke a 12-year official silence to describe "an absolute dead-ringer for Oswald" active at that time with the rightwing Minuteman organization.

"I have a vague recollection that this man was questioned about the assassination, but not by me," Ellsworth told PNS. "Possibly nobody paid much attention because Oswald was in custody. We weren't looking for a fugitive."

While refusing to divulge the individual's name and passing off the incident as probably "sheer coincidence," Ellsworth admitted that the look-alike still resides in Dallas.

He also said that a number of state, federal and local officials had been aware of the man's existence after the assassination. Yet no mention of him appears in the Warren Report or any of the unclassified file material at the National Archives.

Almost from the moment of Oswald's arrest, numerous witnesses claimed to have seen the alleged assassin driving a car, though Oswald didn't drive. They had also seen him in a gun shop, at a rifle range and cashing a check in a grocery store.

But while the person they saw gave his name as "Oswald" and apparently matched the description perfectly, the Warren Com-

mission concluded there was overwhelming evidence that the real Oswald was elsewhere at those times. The witnesses were discounted as "confused" or "mistaken."

For years, the commission's critics have speculated that an Oswald look-alike may have been used by conspirators to impersonate and possibly help frame Oswald—blazing a trail of misleading evidence to implicate him as a lone assassin.

A Dallas deputy sheriff, for example, gave chase to a man who ran from the Texas School Book Depository and climbed into a Rambler station wagon a few minutes after the assassination, later positively identifying him as Oswald. But according to police sources cited in the Warren Report, Oswald was already far way, riding a bus toward his home.

Now Ellsworth confirms that witnesses who believed they saw Oswald target-practicing at a Dallas rifle range—some of the more incriminating sightings—were actually seeing his "twin."

"I do remember two instances where Oswald was supposed to have been at someone's house in North Dallas, and I was able to ascertain after the assassination that it was actually the look-alike," Ellsworth said. "These were times where witnesses thought they saw Oswald in the company of several Minutemen."

"One of these times did involve a group of Minutemen at a rifle range. Several of their names came up in my conversations with him, and I'd noted at the time that he was out shooting with them."

DOUBLE-TAKE

The Oswald look-alike first came to Ellsworth's attention "sometime in the summer of 1963," when the agent began tracking him to try to determine his connection with local arms smugglers. That fall, Ellsworth arrested him on "one of the gun violations," then released him on

bond a short time before the fateful Kennedy trip to Dallas.

Immediately after the assassination, when Ellsworth was called to a police interrogation room to question Oswald about the rifle found in his supposed assassin's nest, the agent first believed that it was the same man.

"Oswald was sitting in a chair about 10 feet from the doorway when I entered," Ellsworth remembered. "All I could see was headlines that I'd just turned loose the man who killed the President."

"When Oswald spoke, I realized they were two different people. But they had identical build, weight, coloring, facial features and hair. They could have passed for each other."

Ellsworth refused to speculate on whether the man he'd arrested might have known or known of Oswald. He did say the fellow "claimed to have done some arms smuggling in and out of Mexico," where Oswald reportedly traveled in September 1965.

While the real Oswald was apparently a leftist and member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, his "twin" was an equally committed right-winger.

In a Warren Commission interview with Ellsworth dated April 16, 1964, there is no mention of the look-alike. But the interview does credit Ellsworth with several revelations "of value":

—"At the time of the assassination of the President, there was almost no information available to the government concerning the activities of Dallas Cubans and other groups in illegal armaments."

—"An organization known as the Minutemen is the right-wing group in Dallas most likely to have been associated with any effort of assassinate the President."

—"The Minutemen are closely tied to Gen. (Edwin) Walker and H.L. Hunt."

(Dick Russell is a staff writer for the New York Village Voice.)

MOUNTAIN EAGLE

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