

# Lee Oswald—the link

By STEVE PARKS

In the months after the Cuban missile crisis, it became painfully clear to the White House that the Central Intelligence Agency, having made a pact with the devil in letting the mob "help" with Cuba, could no longer control its own revolution.

Bobby Kennedy had ordered the FBI to infiltrate Carlos Brinquier's Cuban Student Directorate in New Orleans. A raid on a home less than a mile from the exiles' covert training camp had yielded more than a ton of dynamite. The home was owned by William Julius McLaney, a mob gambling figure in Las Vegas and Havana. But Kennedy wanted the FBI to track the arms to their source. Who was helping the Directorate make illegal war on Castro?

The FBI had an informer in Dallas who was a native of New Orleans. He was experienced in "penetration" and held one of the highest security clearances possible.

His name was Lee Harvey Oswald, and from September, 1962, until his death, November 24, 1963, he was on retainer for \$200 a month as FBI informer No. S-179. He was recruited by Special Agent John W. Fain, but his contact in Dallas was Agent John B. Hosty, Jr., whose name, phone number and license-plate number appeared in Oswald's notebook.

At the same time, Oswald was serving as an Army intelligence informer—No. 110669.

In fact, Oswald had been an agent of one kind or another for the United States since 1958, when he served as a radar technician for U-2 flights over Communist China. In 1959, Oswald penetrated the Soviet Union, renounced his U.S. citizenship and announced he was defecting with the intention of offering the Russians everything he knew about U-2. Seven months later, Francis Gary Powers's spy plane was shot down over Soviet airspace and the U.S.-Soviet summit conference collapsed.

Had it not been for the political misadventure of Watergate, the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald was an FBI informer at the time of President Kennedy's assassination might still be classified "Top Secret."

A Frederick man, Harold Weisberg, who has been investigating the JFK assas-

sination from the day it occurred, filed for the release of transcripts of Warren Commission sessions from January 21 through March 4, all of which had been given the blanket "Top Secret" classification. Mr. Weisberg correctly surmised that those sessions concerned Oswald. He argued that classification already had been broken when Gerald R. Ford, a member of the commission, used a portion of the transcripts in his book, "Portrait of an Assassin." The United States District Court ruled against Mr. Weisberg's petition.

The Supreme Court upheld the decision May 13, 1974. At the same time, John D. Ehrlichman, former White House domestic counsel, had threatened to testify before the House Judiciary Committee, which eventually recommended Mr. Nixon's impeachment, if the White House did not let him use presidential files for his defense in a criminal case.

Suddenly the White House ordered the General Services Administration, regardless of the Supreme Court ruling, to send Mr. Weisberg the Warren Commission transcripts he had sought.

It showed that Oswald had been hired by the FBI in September, 1962, and that in November, 1963, he had threatened to "blow up" the FBI headquarters in Dallas if the bureau didn't stop "harassing" Oswald's wife.

The sudden White House release of this formerly top secret information was interpreted by investigators as an attempt to justify covert "plumbers" operations—including Watergate. By tattling on the FBI for having hired Oswald, Mr. Nixon may have hoped to establish a legitimate need for White House intelligence.

Also contained in those transcripts was testimony from Marina Oswald that her husband had "fired shots" at former Vice President Nixon in March, 1963 (Mr. Nixon was not in Dallas in March), and at Gen. Edwin A. Walker.

Oswald was first contacted by the FBI when he returned to the United States in June, 1962, with a Russian-born daughter and a Russian-born wife, who was the niece of a KGB official and member of Komsomol, the Soviet youth organization. The Oswald family was greeted in Hoboken, N.J., by Spas T. Raikin, of the American Friends of Anti-Bolshevik Nations. He saw to it that the Oswalds were comforta-

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bly settled in the White Russian community of Dallas-Fort Worth.

The Oswalds were befriended by George and Jeanne DeMohrenschildt (a couple of CIA spooks and friends of the President's in-laws, the Bouviers), and by Michael and Ruth Paine. (Mr. Paine, a descendant of Thomas Paine, the Revolutionary War's literary hero, worked for Bell Helicopter where he had a high security clearance.) Mrs. Paine later got Oswald his job at the Texas School Book Depository.

The FBI contacted Oswald again August 16, 1962, to question him about a "lie" on Marina's immigration papers. She had denied belonging to any Soviet political organizations, omitting her fling with Komsomol.

Oswald agreed to become an FBI informer after this meeting. In the meantime, he left his wife and child in the home of Michael and Ruth Paine and moved to Dallas, where DeMohrenschildt got him a job with a photographic company. There Oswald learned the art of micro-dotting.

Steve Parks, the editor of The Sun's feature section, is writing a book about the Kennedy assassination.

Several sophisticated cameras were recovered from his apartment after Kennedy's assassination.

Oswald also took a postal box for his FBI transactions—No. 2915.

In April, 1963, Lee and Marina Oswald returned to his hometown, New Orleans, where he got a job greasing coffee machines at the William T. Reily Company. There Oswald was approached by Richard Case Nagell, a CIA contact who said he knew of Oswald's espionage background and invited him to meet with a group called the Bravo Club which was looking for soldiers to join the Cuban underground.

During this period, Oswald, according to the barkeep at the Habana Bar & Lounge on Decatur street, met regularly with FBI agent Warren C. DeBruys.

After Oswald introduced himself to Brinquier (got into a fight with him and wound up in jail), he opened an office for the New Orleans chapter of the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee, of which he was the only member. Fair Play for Cuba's office was in the same second-story space at 544 Camp street occupied by Brinquier and Guy Banister and the Free Cuba Committee, the *anti*-Castro group.

Oswald was fired by the Reily firm for disappearing from work for hours at a time, and on September 26, he boarded a bus in Houston bound for Mexico City in the company of William C. Gaudet, a CIA agent.

On the night of September 26, while Oswald was en route to Mexico City, Sylvia Odio and her sister, both Cuban emigres, received three visitors in Dallas. They claimed to be members of a left-wing exile group formed when Manolo Ray ("Castroismo sin Fidel") left the Cuban Revolutionary Council. One of the men, whom Mrs. Odio would later recognize on television, called himself "Leon" Oswald. The others called themselves "Leopoldo" and "Angelo." they wanted money to help get Oswald into the Cuban underground. Mrs. Odio's millionaire parents were in a Cuban prison at the time. The man who called himself Leopoldo said Oswald believed that the true enemy of the Cuban cause was Kennedy and that the Cubans should have assassinated him after the Bay of Pigs.

About that time, the "other" Oswald was checking into a \$1.28-a-day room at the Hotel del Comercio, a Cuban exile hangout in Mexico City. He visited the Cuban Embassy that day and demanded a tourist visa to Havana. He used his Fair Play for Cuba membership card and New Orleans press clippings as credentials but was told that he had never obtained an exit visa from the Soviet Union.

He went to the Soviet Embassy, but the Russians refused to help, whereupon Os-

wald returned to the Cuban Embassy and caused such a scene that the consul said, "As far as I'm concerned you'll never get into Cuba."

Finally, Oswald checked in with the American Embassy and asked to see the CIA station chief, who at that time was E. Howard Hunt.

Earlier, Hunt had met with Bernard Barker, James W. McCord, Jr. (later a Watergate burglar), and a Nicaraguan intelligence agent, Gilberto Alvarado, then a leader of the covert Cuban invasion operation dubbed Second Naval Guerrilla. Alvarado stopped in Mexico City on his way to the United States, where he hoped to recruit more soldiers, money and arms for Second Naval Guerrilla.

One of the names he picked up from Hunt's friend, Barker, was Manuel Rodriguez, of the right-wing Alpha 66, another of the splinter groups formed in the rubble left by the Bay of Pigs. Rodriguez, a former ally of Castro, had, according to FBI information, volunteered to go underground for the Bravo Club in New Orleans. The code name in Dallas was Delta Club, which by now also had been infiltrated by

the CIA's Richard Nagell.

Oswald returned to Dallas-Fort Worth October 4, 1963. A reconciliation with his wife having failed, Oswald got a job at the Texas School Book Depository and got a room (through Jack Ruby's sister) under the name O. H. Lee.

The Oswalds' second child was born October 10.

Lee, meanwhile, stayed in Dallas where, according to a cab driver and a nightclub entertainer, he visited Jack Ruby's Carousel Club at least three times. Other witnesses place Oswald at the headquarters of Alpha 66 on Harlandale street in Dallas, an area patrolled by Officer J. D. Tippit, whom Oswald was accused of murdering along with President Kennedy.

But it is impossible to trace Oswald's movements with any certainty after his return to Dallas, seven weeks before the assassination. Too many "second Oswalds" appeared to be doing their best to call attention to him—like the Oswald who shot at other people's targets on a Dallas shooting range, or the Oswald who took a car for a 70-mile-an-hour test spin and, after credit was denied, shouted that he was going back "to Russia where they treat workers like men."

The real Oswald appears to have been at work in the first instance and at Ruth Paine's house writing a letter to the Soviet Embassy in the second.

Approximately six weeks after Oswald took the book depository job, Secret Service agent Winton Lawson contacted Capt. W. P. Gannaway, chief of special services of the Dallas Police Department, and Earle Cabell, mayor of Dallas, to set up the President's motorcade route. Gannaway, a member of the Army Intelligence Reserve, as was Lawson, later testified that Jack Ruby was a paid informer to his special services bureau. Mayor Cabell is the brother of Gen. Charles P. Cabell, an associate of Colonel Cushman. General Cabell was deputy director of the CIA. Agent Hosty, Oswald's FBI contact, was an Army intelligence officer.

Early in the morning of November 22, 1963, Richard Nixon boarded a plane at Love Field in Dallas, bound for New York. He had attended the Carbonated Beverages Convention with his client Don Kendall, of Pepsi-Cola. Upon arriving in New York that day, Mr. Nixon learned that President Kennedy had been assassinated, though he failed to mention the trip to Dallas to the Warren Commission.

For the life of him, Howard Hunt couldn't remember where he was November 22, 1963, either. But shortly after the assassination, the CIA shipped Hunt back to Madrid, where his presence was not even known to the CIA station chief or to the American Embassy.

Jimmy Hoffa was in Miami, where he is said to have remarked upon learning of John Kennedy's death, "Bobby Kennedy's just another lawyer now."

Carlos Marcello was in a New Orleans courtroom, being acquitted of an illegal-emigration charge arising from his summary deportation by Bobby Kennedy.

And Jack Ruby? He was in the office of the Dallas *Morning Herald* buying an ad for his nightclub. When he heard Kennedy had been shot, he walked to his car and drove to Parkland Hospital where he as-

certained the President's death from a Dallas reporter.

Later that night, when Henry Wade, Dallas district attorney, called a press conference, he would refer to the prisoner, Lee Oswald, as a member of the "Free Cuba Committee," the right-wing group which Bobby Kennedy had ordered the FBI to infiltrate. From the back of the room came a correction, "That's Fair Play for Cuba, Henry," Jack Ruby said.

Oswald's CIA contact during the "Free Cuba" infiltrations, Richard Nagell, was in jail at the time, just where he wanted to be. He had given himself up after firing shots into the ceiling of an El Paso bank in late September, 1963. He said he wanted to be in jail to have an alibi. "I don't want to be charged with treason," he told his jailers. Nagell was subsequently judged mentally incompetent and he was sent to a mental hospital where his condition steadily deteriorated. Sources within the CIA believe Nagell was given heavy doses of LSD.

As for Oswald, "approximately 30 seconds" after the shooting, a Secret Service agent trailing the motorcade spotted Oswald at the Coke machine in the second-floor cafeteria. But which "Oswald" was it? Fifteen minutes after the shooting, the Dallas "policeman of the year," Roger Craig, saw a man he later identified as Oswald emerge from the grassy-knoll area. (About 80 witnesses said they heard shots come from that direction, and one, a former marine, said he heard a bullet whiz past his head.) This "Oswald" got into a tan Rambler station wagon with a luggage rack and drove off in the direction of the Texas Theatre, where Oswald was arrested and Tippit was shot. Ruth Paine owned just such a station wagon.

Within minutes after the assassination, police sealed off the depository building and searched it. They found three persons

who were not employed there—two were reporters and the third was Capt. James W. Powell, an officer of the 112th Army Intelligence Group of Texas. Police also found that 11 employees had left the premises, including "Harvey Lee Oswald," who was listed among Army Intelligence's then-active informers. Immediately after interviewing Powell, police put out a bulletin naming Oswald as the suspected assassin.

On the evening of November 22, 1963, a secret cable was sent from the 4th Army Command in Texas to the U.S. Strike Command in Florida. It read: "... Intelligence Section, Dallas Police Department, notified 112th Intelligence Group . . . that information obtained from Oswald revealed that he had defected to Cuba in 1959 and is a card-carrying member of the Communist party."

None of which was true. But at the time, the nation was on Red Alert.

On the morning of November 24, according to his roommate, Jack Ruby got up late. He called one of his strippers to tell her she needn't come to work that day; the Carousel would remain closed. She asked Ruby if he could send some money. After fixing himself some breakfast, Ruby put his dachschund on a leash and left his apartment at 11 o'clock.

Ruby drove to the Western Union office, next door to the Dallas police headquarters, where Oswald was waiting in an elevator to be transferred to County Jail. Ruby made out a \$25 money order and had it sent to his stripper in Fort Worth. He left Western Union at 11.17 and walked past his car in which he had left his dachschund and more than \$2,000 in cash. In less than four minutes, Lieutenant Butler would signal to the Dallas police chief that all systems were go—and Jack Ruby stepped forward and shot Lee Oswald to death.



President Kennedy in Dallas minutes before he was shot.

