

—Douglas R. Caldwell

—ERIC JACOB I think

More Unfounded Theories About Lee Harvey Oswald

After reading your Aug. 7 article "The Fourth Tramp: Oswald's Last Cellmate and the Gunmen of Dallas" [Outlook], in which my name is mentioned, I found it to be a case of deia vu. I have been involved in the Kennedy assassination investigation since its inception. First, as a Marine officer, I was assigned to assist the FBI while it was conducting a detailed inquiry into Lee Harvey Oswald's military background at the Marine Corps Air Facility, New River, N.C.

Many years later, as FBI assistant director in charge of criminal investigations, it was my responsibility to follow up and take appropriate action on the findings and recommendations of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, I recommended to then-Director William Webster and the Department of Justice that we seek a third opinion from the National Academy of Sciences regarding the disputed acoustical evidence of an alleged fourth shot. The National Academy of Sciences' study concurred with the findings of the FBI's technical staff that there was no fourth shot recorded in the questioned Dallas Police Department radio tape.

Since May 1991, I have been the special agent in charge of the FBI's Dallas division, and it has been my responsibility to conduct any additional investigation warranted in the Kennedy case, as alleged evidence or new documents have been brought to light. For instance, when the Dallas Police Department records were moved from police headquarters to the Dallas City Archives, arrest records on "the three tramps" were discovered. I ordered a search for these three individuals. We found and interviewed two of the men and verified the death of the third. Our investigation showed no link between "the three tramps" and the Kennedy assassination. We also inter-

viewed Dr. Charles Crenshaw, co-author of the book " JFK—Conspiracy of Silence," published in 1992, and found that he had a minuscule role in the treatment of President Kennedy at Parkland Hospital and had no pertinent facts to add in the case.

Much of what Ray and Mary La Fontaine report never occurred. A review of public documents easily refutes many key aspects of their story.

The La Fontaines quote John Ertod in their article as saying he had a brief conversation with Lee Harvey Oswald in the Dallas City Jail late on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963. According to the La Fontaines, Ertod told the same story to the FBI 30 years ago in August 1964.

But it was a different story he told the FBI eight months after the Kennedy assassination. At the time Ertod was incarcerated in a Tennessee jail, a sergeant in the Memphis sheriff's office wrote the FBI that Ertod had come to his office claiming that he had information about the assassination, but when the FBI interviewed Ertod, his story was vague and contradictory.

Ertod, a self-professed alcoholic, told the FBI that he had been troubled by the events that occurred after the Kennedy assassination. Ertod recounted being arrested by the Dallas Police Department shortly after the assassination and placed in cell 10 in the Dallas City Jail with a cellmate whose name he could not recall. Ertod told the agents that his cellmate saw and recognized another inmate in the jail hallway. The inmate whom Ertod's cellmate recognized was someone the cellmate had met at a meeting at a motel. According to Ertod's 1964 account, his cellmate had witnessed, at that motel meeting, several men receiving money, and one of the men was driving a Thunderbird Bluel

[?] [Maybe NOT!] [Time will tell!]

with guns. The inmate in the jail hallway was that man. Ertod also vaguely recalled the cellmate mentioning, sometime during their time together, that one of the men at the motel meeting was Jack Ruby. But he couldn't identify his cellmate, and he told FBI agents he couldn't remember much because of his excessive use of alcohol. Miraculously, 30 years later, he now can identify his mystery cellmate as Lee Harvey Oswald.

The new Ertod story, as told by the La Fontaines, is inaccurate. Had the La Fontaines examined public documents, they would have found that Oswald was never placed in the general jail population. Oswald was placed in cell number F-2, one of three maximum security cells, at approximately 12:20 a.m. on Nov. 23, 1963. More important, one of Oswald's ever-present police escorts while in the Dallas City Jail has recently confirmed that he was under strict orders to see that Oswald was never placed in a cell with any other prisoners. Prisoner telephone records during Oswald's stay in the Dallas City Jail also confirm F-2 as Oswald's cell. Therefore, it is clear that Ertod, in cell 10, was not in a cell with Oswald and certainly not on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963.

Most misleading is the La Fontaines' question, "Is it possible that Lee Oswald was the informant who tipped off the FBI about the gun deal on Nov. 18, 1963?" There is no evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald was an informant for the FBI, nor is there any evidence that Oswald knew anything about a gun-running operation in Dallas during that time.

—Oliver "Buck" Revell
Special Agent in Charge of the Dallas Division of the FBI.

8/27/94 post
[More FBI LIES!]

P.S. - Pelican Books is the Publisher of La Fontaine. Is that a subsidiary of Doubleday? Jackie Kennedy's imprint?

Selective Memory About Oswald

I read with interest the Aug. 27 contribution to your paper [More Unfounded Theories About Lee Harvey Oswald, Free for All] by former FBI special agent in charge (Dallas Division) Oliver Revell, written in response to our Outlook article of Aug. 7 ["The Fourth Tramp: Oswald's Lost Cellmate and the Gunrunners of Dallas"]. Despite a 33-year career in which he was "involved in the Kennedy assassination investigation since its inception," Revell evidently suffers from a selective grasp of the facts.

Revell suggests that John Elrod changed his story over time—that "miraculously, 30 years later, he [Elrod] now can identify his mystery cellmate as being Lee Harvey Oswald"—and that Elrod never mentioned his cellmate's identity to the FBI in Memphis in August 1964. As our story noted, however, Elrod told members of his family from the day he was released from jail that he had been confined with Oswald, and when he showed up at the Memphis sheriff's office eight months later he was still talking about the accused presidential assassin (and Jack Ruby): He claimed to have information "on the murder of Lee Oswald[,] as a sheriff's deputy wrote to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Whether Elrod told the Memphis bureau agents who were immediately summoned to the sheriff's office that his Dallas cellmate was Oswald, or only that the cellmate knew of a motel room meeting with Ruby, must remain conjectured in view of the fact that the agents insisted in their report—repeatedly—that the cellmate

was "unknown." Their report itself is not definitive, however, because it also contained the information that Elrod had not been arrested at all in Dallas the day President Kennedy was murdered.

Revell said, "Had the La Fontaines examined public documents, they would have found that Oswald was never placed in the general jail population. Oswald was placed in cell number F-2, one of three maximum security cells, at approximately 12:20 a.m. on Nov. 23, 1963."

Oswald was indeed placed in cell F-2 but not only on Nov. 23. Telephone logs clearly show he was in F-2 on the day of the assassination, Nov. 22. The logs also show that on the same day Elrod, moreover, was in an adjacent cell on the same day. Elrod, moreover, was able to describe—correctly—this Oswald neighbor as a "bad from Tennessee who had stolen a car in Memphis." All of this information was included in our article; all of it was ignored by Revell's response.

Revell clings to the fallacy that John Elrod was placed in a "cell 10," although three decades ago the FBI insisted Elrod was not in any cell in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963. There is no "cell 10" in the Dallas jail, regardless of what the Memphis bureau report claims Elrod said. Elrod was arrested as a suspect in the assassination of President Kennedy after police received reports of a man with a gun near the spot where Elrod was found. Douglas was arrested as a suspect in the murder of Officer J. D. Tippit.

According to Dallas Police Sgt. James Chandler, callbook F (where Oswald, Elrod and Douglas were placed) was reserved for "the most serious felons." Thus the three suspects in the murders of President Kennedy and Officer Tippit were all assigned to the same cramped three-cell block F in accordance with police procedure.

Revell professes alarm at a question posed in our story: "Is it possible that Lee Oswald was the informant who tipped off the FBI about the gun deal of Nov. 18, 1963?" Evidence suggests that Oswald had a special relationship with the FBI. Since former agent Revell has officially denied the existence of Dallas bureau reports on the arrests of Lawrence Miller and Donnell Whitler (despite the fact that FBI agent Joe Abernathy was present at the arrests and later became the prosecution's star witness), the identity of the bureau's informant on the arrests must, at the least, remain an open question.

Revell was accurate in claiming that when the long-lost arrest records of the three Tramps "were discovered," his Dallas field office "found and interviewed two of the men and verified the death of the third." He failed only to mention that it was we who made the discovery of the records and that the bureau's seminal detective work consisted of reading our front-page story on the finds in the Houston Post of Feb. 9, 1992.

—Ray La Fontaine

Orientalism.

9/3/94
PAST

CAUTION

SPECIAL FILMING INSTRUCTIONS

HANDLE WITH

CARE!



9-4-94

Mr. Weisberg,

This controversy will continue on & on until all marginal & peripheral facts and allegations are weighed and considered. In general, I think we should salute the Les Fontaines for their footwork. Hope it breaks more ground. Ditto any new views on Dorothy Killgallen. Yes!
JMS

