

Patrick
Wilkins/Levy

Based in Paris - ←
→ will introduce in Paris

JFK special

ADD A

Souetere, contacted by the NE, in Divonne-Lef-Bains, 10 miles from Geneva,

Switzerland claims the documented U.S. court evidence against him is false.

He asserts

--he was not in the USA on November 22, 1963...his only visit in fact to America taking place in 1974 or 1975 where he passed a weekend, though he refuses to explain why he was there.

--at the time of the killing, he was in Barcelona, Spain as ^{ADJUTANT} ~~adjutant~~ to Gen.

Gardy, one of the OAS senior officers outside France. He says, in response to ^{persistent} ~~questioning~~ questioning, that if before a tribunal, he could - albeit with difficulty because of the long time lapse and the illegality of OAS (Organization of Secret Army) members at that time - produced witnesses to that effect.

--in the 20 years since the killing, he has never been contacted by agents from the FBI, CIA or any other branch of the U.S. government. Until a visit by two men posing as journalists, a little under two years ago that he believes were really FBI agents.
--following inquiries, carried out by what he called his 'friends' in French Intelligence - or as he refers to it 'Special Services,' he is discovered, that another military officer resembling him in physical and facial details, was in fact in Dallas, Texas, on the day of the shooting. This man, claims that Souetere was traveling under his identity.

He knows this man, believed to be still living, but has not seen him for more than 22 years. He has given us his address and a French Intelligence document detailing his career, his criminal record, including murders, ~~prison sentences~~, prison sentences,

expulsion from the army, expulsion from France to Canada in 1961, etc. The man is named Michel Mertz, was born ~~in~~ in Alsace in France in 1915.

--Unlike Mertz, he speaks German fluently and English.

Souetere, a tall, distinguished looking man with grey hair over his ears has a manner of a gentleman.

When I met him, he was wearing a double-breasted high-quality grey-striped suit, and there is no mistaking that he is the director of the plush Divonne Casino.

The Casino is elegant and fitted throughout with electronically-operated doors.

On my first visit, I spoke with him very briefly on the steps of the Casino outside where he refused to allow me to use my tape recorder. He said he was aware of the allegations which I put to him but would not discuss them at that time. He requested a delay of 48 hours and said that if I returned he would provide our newspaper with information that if we were serious about the story, would be of considerable interest to us.

Two days later, I returned for my appointment with Souetere, this time with a concealed miniature tape recorder in a shoulder bag. Again, he refused to allow me to tape our conversation with my visible tape recorder and I agreed, to his request.

He invited me inside the casino and over drinks in the bar by the side of the gaming room, he spoke with me in what appeared to be quite an open and friendly manner about the subject. However, there were many questions concerning French Intelligence sources and details of his life which he refused to answer.

Souetere said:

"My first knowledge of being suspected of involvement in the affair of President Kennedy came a little under two years ago.

"I was telephoned by someone in the U.S., a friend, you could say, who told me I was a suspect in the assassination. He said he had a document that would surely interest me which had come to him ^{from} the FBI. He said I would be interested to read

it and sent it to me by mail.

"When I read it, I could not take it seriously. The allegations were too ~~preposterous~~ preposterous.

"I was unsure of what to do and let it ride for a few days while I thought about it.

"However, my suspicions were aroused much more fully when two weeks later I received a visit by two men in their 50's who said they were journalists writing a book on the assassination and wanted to speak about my possible involvement.

"They had arrived in person in Divonne and I did not want to refuse them. I asked them if they would return in 48 hours, and then said that I would be willing to answer their questions.

"However, my suspicions aroused, I telephoned some friends in Paris in special services -- you could say French Intelligence -- and they sent a female agent to pose as my secretary during my interview.

"During the interview, they covered most of the points in the documents that I had already received. And once they had done that, left abruptly and I have never seen them since. Along with my friends at special services, we came to the conclusion -- or I should say, we are 85 - 90% sure -- that they were FBI agents because if they had been journalists, they would not have been able to repeat word for word what had been contained in a highly confidential FBI document.

"I told them that I am telling you now that I did not know the dentist, Dr. Alder or any of the other people mentioned in the report.

"The only person I did know was Michel Mertz, who was suggested in this report and by the 'journalists' may have traveled to the USA using my identity.

"As a result of that revelation, I asked my friends at special services in Paris to make me a dossier on Mertz and it is a copy of this dossier that I am giving you now.

"From the dossier, I learned that Mertz is in fact a very dangerous man. I knew him in the 1950's when he was a fellow Army officer in Algeria before their independence.

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And then, after the formation of the OAS, when he had tried to infiltrate our organization but was disallowed because we thought he was not capable of membership.

"The last I heard of him, was about 1960.

"However, now I would very much like to ask him what he was doing in Dallas on November 22, 1963 and evidently traveling under my name. The FBI documents say that Michel Mertz was my alias, but it is exactly the other way around -- he used my identity to travel to the USA.

"For an officer in the Army who was involved in Intelligence work, it would not be difficult to obtain a full passport and identity in this way. When he was refused membership to the OAS, I had no idea of what he did, but it is possible that he entered some other organization which among its targets could well have been the OAS and President Kennedy.

"This type of confusion was common at that time. It is known that among the many attempts (23) to assassinate President DeGaulle, many of them were carried out by French secret service, not only to compromise the OAS, but to make DeGaulle look like a walking miracle, or a superhuman being.

"It is no secret that the OAS wanted to assassinate DeGaulle, but we were never successful. At the time of the assassination attempt in Petit-Clamart, I was named in all the French newspapers as being the organizer of that attack. But it was not true because it was the OAS interior branch (in France) which organized it. I was a member of the OAS exterior (outside France).

"I can state categorically that I have never traveled under the name of Michel Mertz. I did use false names as an OAS officer, and during my involvement in various mercenary soldier operations in Africa. But never Michel Mertz. It is he who used my identity.

"In any case, the OAS, of which I was a committed member, have no ambitions to kill President Kennedy. Why should they? They were interested only in France and keeping its territories in Africa.

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"It is possible that there may be other organizations, still in existence today, which were against DeGaulle and Kennedy. It is possible that Mertz may well have been a member of this organization, but if he was in Dallas, I am sure he would have not been there alone. In any case, if he was there, he had gone to a lot of trouble to leave his traces so that if he was discovered, it would look as if it was me.

"The FBI documents says that I speak fluent English and German, but that's not true. I can understand a little English but it's a language that confuses me. Mertz on the other hand, was born in the German border near France, and it's quite possible that he grew up speaking both French and German."

Souetere, speaking to me in French, added:

"I would suggest that you go to see Mertz. But he is a very dangerous man who has a criminal record of murder involvement with drug organizations, and violence. He was thrown out of France in 1961 and went to Canada, although since the amnesty against all OAS and other anti-government terrorists, he has been allowed to live in France.

"He was sent to prison in 1971 in France for drug trafficking and according to my friends in special services, people who have visited him at his home have been known to disappear, never to be seen again.

"Knowing the man and his record as I do, his answer to the question of whether he killed President Kennedy or not would be no comment. But I believe that certainly there is a French Connection to the assassination and that Mertz may well have been involved.

"Though if he was, I am sure, he was not acting alone."

This is more or less the interview that I had with Souetere, half of it is on tape, half of it is not. Because I never anticipated that our conversation would last longer than the length of my tape. He now says that he will ^{try to} find the FBI documents and that he is not sure of its whereabouts because he has just moved homes, but he is sure that he still has it. Says he will let me see it but for the moment will not

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allow photocopy though I suspect I can assure him of our confidentiality, he will change his mind. I may be completely wrong, he may have produced a marvelous confidence trick and to the nature of his real personality. But he struck me as being basically sincere, though I suspect his evasiveness is connected with his enduring connections to French Intelligence. Ostensibly, he is extremely experienced in military matters, still fit, and in good form, and I suspect still active in espionage. Though not on a permanent basis.