

WHERE WAS JACK RUBY ON NOVEMBER 21 AND NOVEMBER 22?

by

Martha A. Moyer and R.F. Gallagher

According to the Warren Commission: [1]

Jack Ruby learned of the shooting of President while in the second-floor advertising office of the Dallas Morning News, five blocks from the Texas School Book Depository, where he had come Friday morning to place regular weekend advertising for his two nightclubs. On arriving at the building at about 11:00 or 11:30 a.m., he talked briefly with two newspaper employees concerning some diet pills he had recommended to them. Ruby then went to the office of Morning News columnist, Tony Zoppi, where he states he obtained a brochure on his new master of ceremonies that he wanted to use in preparing copy for his advertisements. Proceeding to the advertising department, he spoke with advertising employee Don Campbell from about noon until 12:25 p.m. when Campbell left the office.

This summary conclusion, by the Commission, was reached almost exclusively from statements made by Jack Ruby, in a deposition to Special Agents of the FBI, C. Ray Hall and Manning Clements, on December 21, 1963 [2] and not from evidence to the contrary.

There is not one bit of credible evidence to support the Warren Commission claim that Jack Ruby was in the Dallas Morning News at 12:30 p.m., November 22, 1963, at the moment President Kennedy was executed in Dealey Plaza. Unquestionably Ruby was in the News offices before and after the shooting event, but a close examination of the testimony of the witnesses, used by the Commission to support their conclusion, does not provide the proof of his presence at 12:30 p.m.

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There is no reason to believe that employees of the Morning News deliberately provided false information about the time of Ruby's presence, but due to the excitement and commotion generated by the event, it is unreasonable to expect accuracy from excited witnesses. It can be seen, when comparing testimony of key witnesses, that there were contradictions in what took place in the advertising office and the reported times that are vital to the proof of Ruby's presence or non-presence. Each of these witnesses must be dealt with separately to provide proof of the unreliability of their testimony, especially involving time of day.

We would argue that Jack Ruby was in the area of the Texas School Book Depository and not in the Dallas Morning News building at 12:30 p.m., the time of the shooting. Even Ruby contradicts the Commission's statement that he arrived at the News at "11 or 11:30 a.m."

Ruby told SA Hall that he drove downtown and stopped at the News at 10:50 a.m. (In his testimony before the Commission, Ruby placed the time of his arrival at "10:30 to 11:00"). [3] He wanted to be there in time to make the 12:00 noon deadline for placing his weekend ads. [4]

First we will deal with Jack's arrival at the Dallas Morning News. According to his own statement to SA Hall, Ruby:

believes he stopped for a moment and talked to two girls employed there, Gladys Craddock and a girl named Connelly or Connell. He thinks he gave them a bottle of Larson's CRD, a food supplement for persons on a diet. He then went to the office of Tony Zoppi, but Tony was not there. Ruby looked over a brochure there about Bill Demar, a Master of Ceremonies at the Carousel Club. Another employee of the News, a Mr. Payne, may have been in Zoppi's office while Ruby was in there. [5]

Jack's statement was not true; he did not have a conversation with Craddock, nor a Connelly or Connell and there was no "Mr. Payne" listed as an advertising employee at the News. [6] (A Darwin Payne was employed at the Dallas Times Herald). [7]

In Gladys Craddock's statement, made on November 27, 1963 to Special Agents Will Hayden Griffin and

James C. Kennedy, she revealed that she had been with the Dallas Morning News since August 29, 1963 and supplemented her income by working as a hostess at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club at night while, at the same time, dating Jack. [8]

In July of 1964, the Commission asked the FBI to reinterview Craddock to determine where and at what time she had seen Jack Ruby at the News and have her explain the conversation she had with him. In the second interview, it was determined that Craddock had terminated her employment with the paper on July 29, 1964 and was now married and living in Gloster, Mississippi. In the interview, Craddock advised the FBI that she had worked on the ground floor of the paper and had seen Ruby at about 11:00 a.m. on November 22, 1963. Craddock, now Mrs. Ivey, stated that she had no conversation with Ruby. At the time she noticed Jack he also observed her and turned to her and raised his voice and said, "Hi, the President is going to be here today." She then lost sight of Ruby and did not know whether he went to the elevator or left the building. [9]

Mrs. Claire Conlon, the woman Ruby later claimed to have talked with about diet pills, worked with Craddock, but was at lunch when Ruby encountered Craddock, who was alone at the time and was waiting for Mrs. Conlon to return from lunch at 11:00 so she (Craddock) could go to lunch herself. [10] Conlon never testified.

The Commission was aware of this testimony; yet, when the Report was published, it was claimed that "He (Ruby) talked briefly with two newspaper employees concerning some diet pills he had recommended to them." [11]

The testimony of other News employees should be reviewed. As we see above, it becomes clear that their testimony does not support the Commission findings.

One of the witnesses, Richard L. Saunders, an advertising salesman at the News, and a man who knew Ruby well, testified that he watched the President's motorcade from a position approximately 100 yards west of the triple underpass at the railroad overpass at Stemmons Freeway. When he was asked if he walked back to the News office, he said, "No; I was in my automobile. My car was parked at the underpass and I was outside my car at the police motorcade barrier." He also testified that he saw the President's car go by on the way to Parkland

Hospital after the shooting. He told the Commission that he got in his car and drove back to his office where he saw Jack Ruby standing by his (Saunders') desk. Saunders estimated that it took him a total of 10 minutes to arrive at his office and he arrived at 12:40 p.m. He was insistent that the trip could be made in 10 minutes; however, he agreed that, with the general confusion around the area, the traffic was somewhat stacked up and waiting for a couple of lights to get to the office did cause a delay [12].

If Saunders was correct and he arrived, as he said, at 12:40 and saw Ruby at his desk, it would be difficult to establish that Ruby was at the TSBD at the time of the shooting. But as stated earlier, this alone does not support the time element testified to. If, for example, Saunders said that he returned to the office, saw Ruby, and punched a time clock, at the same time, the time clock evidence would support the testimony.

There was no time clock at the News for Saunders to punch, but there was other evidence available to discredit Saunders' time claims. The ad salesman told the Commission that while standing next to the car at the triple underpass, he heard a directive over the police radio on one of the traffic motorcycles. From Saunders' testimony: [13]

SAUNDERS: . . . at that moment a directive came over the police radio on one of the motorcycles that the shooting came from — and they directed the personnel — whoever they were talking to over the radio to the given window, which has now been purported that from which the shots of the assassin came. . . . They said — I believe — it was the next to the top floor, an open window — at the far right-hand side, and then there was evidently some communication there which I missed, and they clarified, "No, as you are standing facing the building it would be on the sixth floor."

Since verbatim transcripts of the Dallas Police radio logs were provided to the Commission, a communication such as the one described by Saunders, along with the time, could be checked. If Saunders left the scene immediately and was able to return to his office in 10 minutes, which was doubtful, simply adding 10 minutes to the time posted on the radio log would give the more accurate time of his return.

In checking Channel 1 of the radio logs [14], there is

no such communication, but on Channel 2, a conversation does take place that, no doubt, is the message heard by Saunders. At 12:37 p.m., Officer 22 (Patrolman L.L. Hill) transmits the following message: [15]

Get some men over here to cover this school depository building. It's believed the shot came from, as you see it on Elm Street, looking toward the building, it would be upper right-hand corner, second window from the end.

If Saunders heard the message at 12:37, it would have been impossible for him to return to his office by 12:40 as he testified. If he was able to make the trip in 10 minutes, he would have arrived at 12:47, to see, as he described it, "Ruby wandering around in the office . . . shook up and ashen white, virtually speechless, which is quite unusual for Jack Ruby." [16]

Another employee of the News who testified before the Commission was Billy A. Rea, a nine-year veteran advertising salesman at the paper. The Commission used his testimony to support their contention that Jack Ruby was in the building at the time the President was shot, but on close examination, Rea's testimony does not help the Commission's conclusion.

In Rea's testimony, he reported that he had gone to lunch with a friend of his and returned to his office at "about between 12:30 and 12:40." He added:

I don't recall seeing Jack Ruby at that time. He could have been there but I don't remember seeing him, whether he was in the office at that time or not. About that time - we hadn't been in the office over a couple of minutes until these boys, the men I work with, some of them were actually at the scene of the assassination - they ran up there and told us that President Kennedy had been shot. [17]

Later, Rea said that it was Jim Williams who told him about the shooting and the time was "a quarter to one." Rea had not seen Ruby up until that time. Rea then left the advertising office and went upstairs to the editorial room. He returned to the ad office at 1:00 p.m. to see Jack Ruby "sitting at Don Campbell's desk." From Rea's testimony: [18]

Mr. Hubert. Was Newman there with him?

Mr. Rea. No.

Mr. Hubert. He was alone?

Mr. Rea. He was alone.

Georgia Mayor, an ad secretary often mentioned by researchers, made a statement to the FBI on December 4, 1963. Mayor was employed in the Advertising Division of the Dallas Morning News on November 22, 1963. [19] In her statement, she advised that, on November 22, 1963, she returned from her lunch hour at approximately 12:30 p.m. She said that, at that time, Jack Ruby was sitting in a chair directly in front of her desk. [20] From her deposition to the FBI:

Miss Mayor stated that she had received information as she was returning from her lunch hour that the President had been shot, she stated that Hal Coley had furnished her this information and she said that after stopping briefly downstairs to cash a check, she came directly to the advertising room by the elevator. [21]

Obviously, Miss Mayor was wrong in her judgment of time. She could not have returned to her office at 12:30, the exact time the President was shot. Hal Coley, the man that told her about the shooting, was at Elm and Houston Streets at the time of the shooting [22], five blocks from the Morning News. He was the person who announced the shooting to members of the second floor ad department at approximately 12:45 p.m. or later. He notified Miss Mayor, on the first floor, before his announcement on the second floor. Before she went to her desk, she stopped downstairs to cash a check. Miss Mayor may have seen Ruby when she reached her desk, but it was later than 12:45 p.m.

Mayor told the FBI that she saw Ruby again at 1:00 p.m. at John Newman's desk and at that time he appeared dazed. She also told the FBI that she saw Ruby sitting in Dick Saunders' chair and that he (Saunders) could "verify the above information." [23] Since it has been established that Saunders was 100 yards west of the railroad overpass as late as 12:37, Miss Mayor was totally wrong in her assessment of time and events. Saunders could not verify her information to the FBI. [24]

Another salesman, John Newman, who handled the Ruby accounts, told the FBI, on December 4, 1963, that he had watched the Presidential parade at Austin and Main streets, seven blocks from the Dallas Morning News, which was at Young and Houston streets. (The TSBD was five blocks north of the News). After watching

the parade, Newman walked the seven blocks back to the News office. He estimated that it took about 14 or 15 minutes to get to his second floor office. He said the time was approximately 12:40 p.m. and at the time, Jack Ruby was sitting at his (Newman's) desk. [25]

The one witness who could pose a menace to our initial claim as to Ruby's whereabouts at 12:30 p.m. is Don J. Campbell, the ad salesman who, according to the Commission, was with Ruby "from about noon until 12:25 p.m. when Campbell left the office." [26]

As with previous attestations, a close examination of both Campbell's and Ruby's testimony does not support the 12:00 - 12:25 statements. Ruby does say that "he spent 20 to 25 minutes" with a "fellow", but mentions no time period. Since Ruby arrived, according to his own statements, anywhere from 10:30 a.m. until 11:00, the visit could have been much earlier than 12:00 noon, especially since the deadline for submitting ads was 12:00 noon. In his statement [27], Campbell told the FBI Agents that he returned to the advertising office at 12:00 noon and Jack Ruby was in the office at that time. He claims that he spent some time talking to Ruby and then left the building at approximately 12:25 p.m. to see another customer. There were no known witnesses to the Campbell-Ruby visit. As critical as Campbell's testimony was to establish the presence of Ruby at the News, he was never called to testify before the Commission.

It was Ruby's lawyer, Melvin Belli, who created the "time" alibi for Ruby. At Ruby's trial, Belli examined Campbell, on the stand, and provided the time line.

From the trial transcript: [28]

Belli. Now, what time in Dallas was the President assassinated?

Campbell. According to the newspaper stories about 12:35.

Belli. About 12:35. And Jack was with you from 12:00 to 12:25, is that right?

Campbell. Yes sir.

Belli. And then he left you just before the assassination, is that right?

Campbell. I left him.

Belli. You left him. Well, the two of you departed just before the assassination.

Campbell. I left the building at 12:25.

A curious point: Campbell, when testifying in Ruby's

defense, stated he had known Jack for "approximately four years" and, again "a period of years" [29], yet Ruby never referred to Campbell by name. [30]

Jack Ruby's testimony is so riddled with inconsistencies that a treatise of this nature, restricted to length, cannot adequately justify the point at issue; where was Ruby on November 21 and 22? So asking the indulgence of the reader, we press forward to consider Ruby's activities the evening before the assassination.

According to the summary conclusion of the Warren Report: [31]

Ruby's evening activities on Thursday, November 21, were a combination of business and pleasure. At approximately 7:30 p.m., he drove Larry Crafard to the Vegas Club which Crafard was overseeing because Ruby's sister, Eva Grant, who normally managed the club, was convalescing from a recent illness. Thereafter, Ruby returned to the Carousel Club and conversed with Lawrence Meyers, a Chicago businessman. Between 9:45 and 10:45 p.m. Ruby had dinner with Ralph Paul, his close friend and financial backer. While dining, Ruby spoke briefly with a Dallas Morning News employee, Don Campbell, who suggested that they go to the Castaway Club; but Ruby declined.

On the surface, the Warren Commission has offered its readers a complete and innocent accounting of Ruby's time and activity on Thursday evening. Crafard did testify that Ruby, "at about 7:30 p.m., picked him up and took him to the Vegas Club, and did not see Ruby again until approximately 2:30 a.m., after closing, at which time they again had breakfast at the Lucas B and B, returning to the Carousel at about 3:30 or 4:00 a.m." [32]

It is at the point in the evening - 7:30 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. - that conflicting testimonies cast suspicions on the actual whereabouts of Jack Ruby.

As stated earlier, Ruby allegedly had dinner with his friend, Ralph Paul, and it was Ruby who provided this information to the FBI. According to Ruby, "he (Ruby) stayed around the Carousel Club until about 9:30 p.m., when he and Ralph Paul, who owns part of the Carousel Club, went to the Egyptian Lounge for dinner." [33] In Contract on America, David Scheim describes the event: [34]

As reported by several sources, Ruby stopped in

for about 45 minutes at the Egyptian Lounge, a Dallas underworld hangout. One of its owners was Joseph Campisi, a top ranking Mafioso close to Carlos Marcello and Marcello's Mafia involved brothers. When questioned by the House Assassination Committee in 1978, Campisi said that he was not at the Egyptian Lounge on the night of November 21 and had not known Ruby was there. But on December 7, 1963, Campisi had told the FBI of his "contact with Ruby" that Thursday night, "when Ruby came to the Egyptian Lounge for a steak."

In Ralph Paul's testimony before the Commission, he could not remember if he and Ruby ate at the Egyptian Lounge or Delmonico's after which they returned to the Carousel Club. [35]

Recall the earlier statement from the Warren Report stating that, "While dining Ruby spoke briefly with a Dallas Morning News employee Don Campbell"? (How the Commission concluded that the man's name was Don Campbell is unknown). In his FBI statement, Ruby did not mention Campbell's name. From the FBI statement:

While they were eating at the Egyptian Lounge, a man named Connors, who is a salesman for the Dallas Morning News newspaper came over to the table and invited Ruby over to the Castaway Club. Ruby declined. [36]

Again, when Ruby testified in June of 1964 before the President's Commission, he avoided using Campbell's name when describing his (Ruby's) alleged visit to the Egyptian Lounge the night before the assassination. Ruby described him as "a fellow" who came over to the table and invited him (Ruby) to "the club a couple of doors down and I refused..." [37] When Ruby's friend, Ralph Paul, was deposed before the Commission, he was not asked about the "fellow" coming over to the table to speak to Ruby. [38]

During Ruby's trial, in early 1964, Melvin Belli, Ruby's attorney, cross-examined Don Campbell. It was here that the Thursday night dinner at the Egyptian Lounge became an alibi as to Ruby's activities on November 21. From the court transcript: [39]

Belli. And had you seen him the night before, you had seen him the night before at the Egyptian Club,

and wanted him to go some place, am I right on that, the Egyptian Restaurant?

Campbell. I can't recall whether it was the night before I had seen him, I believe during the week before.

At this point, Belli ignored Campbell's answer and changed the subject. Judging from the testimony, one can assume Campbell cannot verify seeing Ruby and Paul at the Egyptian Lounge on Thursday night.

Lawrence Meyers, the Chicago businessman who visited with Ruby at the Carousel, told the FBI that, on this trip to Dallas, he was accompanied by Miss Jean West, a casual acquaintance from Chicago. Both Miss West, whose correct name was Jean Aase, and Meyers told the FBI that they visited with Ruby on the evening of November 21 at the Carousel for about one hour before returning to the Cabana Motel where they were staying. Meyers estimated this to be at approximately 11:00 p.m. [40]

This testimony is in direct conflict with Ruby's statement to the FBI that he had dinner with his friend Ralph Paul between 9:45 and 10:45 p.m.; and Paul did not remember Meyers or Aase despite the fact that he was with Ruby at the alleged dinner and then at the Carousel. [41] It becomes obvious, based on Paul's dubious testimony, there is not sufficient evidence that Ruby or Paul were ever at the Egyptian Lounge on Thursday night.

Both Aase and Meyers testified that Ruby joined them at the Cabana Motel shortly after 11:00 p.m. According to Meyers, he invited Ruby for a drink while still at the Carousel. He said that Ruby remained at the motel for only a few minutes before he left, saying that he had to return to his club. [42] Ruby does not mention Meyers in his statement to the FBI or his testimony before the Commission. [43] Meyers' apparent close relationship with Ruby was the subject of much probing when he appeared before the Commission, suggesting something more than a casual social contact. [44]

Also staying at the Cabana that Thursday night was "Jim Braden". Braden, whose real name was Eugene Hale Brading, was arrested after the Dealey Plaza shooting for his suspicious presence in the Dal-Tex building facing the President's motorcade. [45] Later research determined that Brading was a Mafia associate with a

long arrest record. [46]

As we have seen, testimony of the witnesses pertaining to Ruby's activities on the night of November 21, 1963, does not conclusively establish his presence at the Egyptian Lounge. If Ruby was not where he claimed to be in the crucial hours prior to the assassination, then speculation and suspicion can only follow.

Close scrutiny of all the testimonies of witnesses associated with Jack Ruby's activities from Thursday night until approximately 1:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon does not support the Warren Report conclusion that Jack was where HE said he was on these two days. Unfortunately, Jack was apparently permitted to establish his own alibi.

We would argue that Ruby may have had an assignment in Dealey Plaza at 12:30 that went awry and that he hurriedly returned to the News to ascertain the results of the ambush on the President. What better place to find out what was going on than a newspaper office where televisions and phones were located? We also believe that Ruby left the News and went directly to Parkland Hospital where he was observed by the reliable and respected national journalist, Seth Kantor, who knew Ruby personally. [47] Indeed, Ruby had an agenda! We suspect that Ruby's picture may have accidentally been taken in front of the Texas School Book Depository by Phillip L. Willis, a witness at the assassination scene. [48] (See Figure 1).

Compare the Willis photo with three pictures of Ruby, taken at police headquarters following the assassination. [49] (See Figures 2, 3, and 4) Ruby was positively identified in these pictures by long-time personal acquaintances, Andrew Armstrong and George Senator. [50]

IF Ruby was at the Book Depository at the time of the shooting, and we believe he was, he could have easily returned to the News before our list of witnesses that

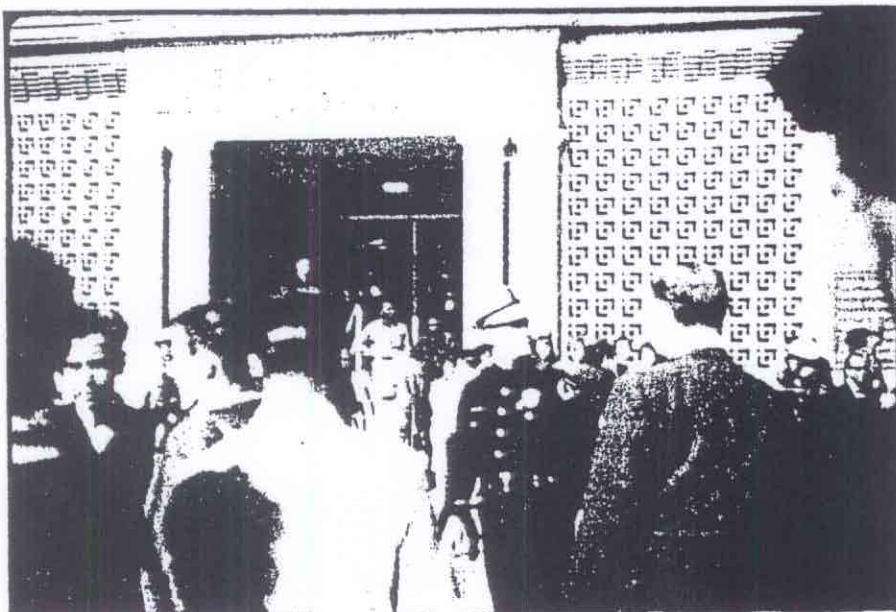


Figure 1

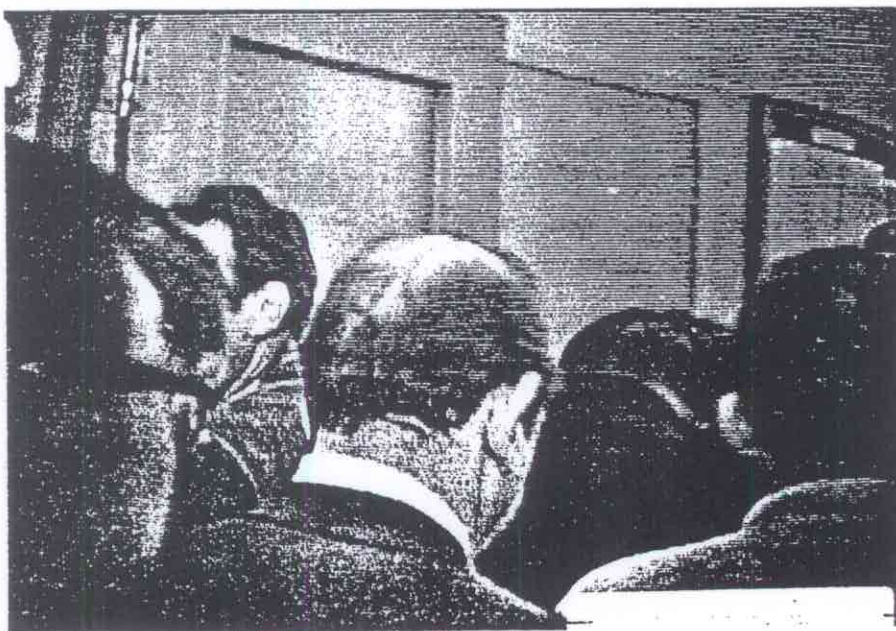


Figure 2

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2441

testified, since he was closer to the newspaper office than the others and because he had a more important agenda.

In conclusion, we hope that this written effort may have provided new and interesting evidence that will inspire additional research into the world of Ruby's Dallas and the Warren Commission's account of the circumstances surrounding the assassination of our President and the subsequent killing of his alleged assassin,



Figure 3

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2442

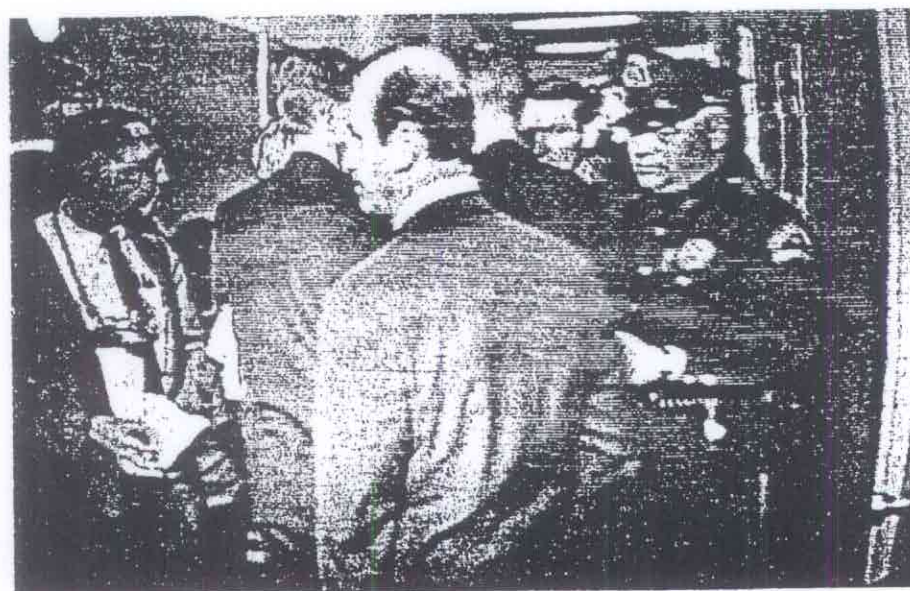


Figure 4

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2423

Lee Harvey Oswald.

Notes

1. The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. Report. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964). Cited hereafter as WR. Here WR 334.
2. U.S. Warren Commission, Hearings before the President's Commission, on the Assassination of President Kennedy. (Washington: Government

Printing Office, 1964). Cited hereafter as H with appropriate Commission Exhibit added, hereafter cited as CE, as in 17 H (CE 737) 511; sometimes with appropriate Deposition Exhibit identified, as in 22H (Stovall Exhibit D) 603. Here 20 H (Hall Ex. 3) 49

3. 5 H 183
4. 20 H (Hall Ex. 3) 49
5. IBID
6. 15 H 537
7. 19 H (Dean Ex. 5137) 448
8. 22 H (CE 1479) 900
9. 25 H (CE 2321) 281-282
10. IBID
11. WR 334
12. 15 H 579
13. 15 H 580
14. 17H (CE 705) 390-485; 23 H (CE 1974) 832-940
15. 23 H (CE 1974) 914
16. 16 H 580-581
17. 15 H 573-574
18. 15 H 574
19. 25 H (CE 2264) 189
20. IBID
21. IBID
22. 15 H 540; 15 H 573; 20 H (Newman Ex. 1) 651
23. 25 H (CE 2264) 189
24. 15 H 579
25. 15 H 539
26. WR 334
27. 25 H (CE 2436) 563
28. 25 H (CE 2405) 387-388
29. 25 H (CE 2405) 387; also see 390
30. 5 H 181-213; 20 H (Hall Ex. 3) 37-62
31. WR 334
32. 19 H (Crafard Ex. 5526) 356
33. 20 H (Hall Ex. 3) 48
34. David Scheim, Contract on America (New York: Shapolsky, 1988, p. 263
35. 15 H 666
36. 20 H (Hall Ex. 3) 48

- 37. 15 H 183
- 38. 15 H 666
- 39. 25 H 391-392
- 40. 25 H (CE 2266 Aase) 190; 25 H *CE 2267 Meyers) 191.
- 41. 15 H 666-667
- 42. 25 H (CE 2267) 191
- 43. 20 H (Hall Ex. 3) 47-62; 5H 181-213
- 44. 15 H 629-639
- 45. 19 H 469, 527
- 46. Scheim, pp. 45047
- 47. 15H 80
- 48. 6 H 386-393; 21 H (Willis Ex. 1, Slide 8) 771
- 49. 25 H (CE 2423) 524; CE 2441 and CE 2442 570
- 50. 25 H (CE 2439) 566 (Armstrong); 25 H (CE 2439) 568 (Senator)

JOE COOPER, P.I.

by
Claude B. Slaton

I first knew of Joe Cooper when Jeff Caufield sent me a memorandum from the files of Jim Garrison during the summer of 1995. [1] At the time, the mention in the memo about the two men who had been offered \$25,000 to fly two mysterious passengers on a "...one-way flight to Mexico City..." two days before the assassination did not ring a bell with me because the names of the parties mentioned were not familiar to me. One of the pilots was not named by name. When I received a TATTLER article (written by John Moulder just after the death of Joe Cooper) that was sent to me by Jeff Caufield on July 3, 1996, the significance of combining the documents was apparent.

First, some background on Joe Cooper himself. He was born in Robertsedale, Alabama on May 2, 1924. His actions in the Pacific in World War II earned him a Presidential Citation when his ship, the USS Smith, was hit by a kamikaze pilot in 1942, killing 58 men. He served as a Baton Rouge City Police officer from 1945-47, was a Ft. Walton, Florida Marshal in 1947-48, and served again on the Baton Rouge force 1955-59. He had received the "Outstanding Officer of 1956, Traffic Division" award from the B.R.P.D. [2] I know a retired Louisiana State Policeman who worked on the Baton Rouge force in 1956, and when I asked him about Joe Cooper, he replied, "Strange guy. But I wouldn't want anyone else beside me going into a tough situation. He was a good cop." He requested his name not be used. [3]

Cooper made news in 1960 when he charged publicly that there were at least two ways of rigging state voting machines—a charge vehemently denied by public officials like Secretary of State Wade O. Martin, Jr. He ran for mayor-president of Baton Rouge in the election of 1960, and finished last in a seven-man Democratic election. In 1963 and again in 1971, he was an unsuccessful candidate for Sheriff of East Baton Rouge Parish. [4]

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date for Sheriff of East Baton Rouge Parish. [4]

A TATTLER article written by John Moulder a year after Cooper's death (1975) [5] credits Cooper with infiltrating the "Feliciano Klan" for the FBI from 1963 to 1964. Moulder, a staff writer, wrote in an article dated June 18, 1975:

I first met Cooper last summer when we tracked down and interviewed two men who said they had been offered a bundle of money (and had it turned down) to fly two men from Dallas to Latin America on Nov. 22, 1963, the day John Kennedy was killed...Cooper, working for government intelligence himself, headed off a plot to assassinate Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

During the time Cooper was undercover, he foiled an assassination plot against Vice President Hubert Humphrey, when Humphrey was invited to speak in Baton Rouge by Victor Bussie, friend of Humphrey and head of the Louisiana AFL/CIO Unions. The date set for the speech was April 9, 1965, at the Jack Tar Capitol House Hotel in Baton Rouge. Cooper served in the Klan's KBI—"The Klan Bureau of Investigation". The article continues:

One day a fellow Klan member came to him and told Cooper of the plan to assassinate Humphrey. The man asked Cooper if he could use his intelligence contacts with the police to find out how much security would be used for Humphrey's visit.

Contacting his FBI people, Cooper received the instruction to tell them that Humphrey's security would be heavy "...along the route of the Vice President's motorcade..." but to suggest it might not be as tight at the Capitol House.

Based on Cooper's information, the Secret Service—directly responsible for the Vice president's safety—urged him to cancel his trip to Baton Rouge.

Humphrey, citing that Louisiana Gov. John J. McKeithen would be with him during the entire trip, refused to cancel.

Cooper had been able to supply the FBI with the names of only two men to be involved in the attempt on Humphrey's life.

Agents, using miniature cameras, obtained pictures

of the two men, but didn't arrest them before Humphrey's visit.

Cooper said the Secret Service obviously feared that others would be sent in their place.

On the night of the Humphrey appearance at the hotel, the ballroom was filled with FBI-Secret Service undercover spies and trusted union men serving as sergeants at arms.

The entrance to the ballroom was arranged so all visitors could be observed [and photographed?]. Therefore, the would-be-triggerman was spotted immediately. He was a union member and had a ticket to get into the ballroom.

Undercover men serving as sergeants-at-arms escorted the man to a seat at the rear of the ballroom. Two FBI agents sat down in front of him. Secret Service men sat on both sides. Two others sat down behind the man.

Humphrey arrived in Baton Rouge and rode with the governor in a limousine to the governor's mansion. Later they rode together to the hotel. Security forces were everywhere on the routes, covering the motorcade with high-powered rifles from the roofs of buildings. Humphrey and McKeithen arrived at the hotel, entered the ballroom and walked onto the speaker's platform. The gunman then stood and reached for the pistol stuck in his belt under his coat. The federal agents grabbed him and pulled him out a kitchen door. The second man on the assassination team was also grabbed and pulled from the room. He had no gun on him, but there was a gun in his car parked outside.

From the men, federal agents learned the name of a third that was in on the scheme. He had been in the convention hall, but backed out and left before Humphrey arrived.

The men were questioned, but were never charged. Cooper said the FBI told him there was not sufficient evidence.

"I know this guy would have killed Humphrey," Cooper said. "He was a crack shot. He could part your hair without touching your scalp."

Cooper said the men had wanted to assassinate Humphrey because he was an integrationist.

Feelings about desegregation were still high in the Deep South in 1965.

Word about the attempt on Humphrey's life was not allowed to leak out until two years later, when the New Orleans States-Item printed part of the story. They described an attempt on Humphrey's life by a "right-wing organization" but did not mention the Klan by name.

Within a few years, all three of the men picked up in the assassination plot were dead. One was shot to death by his wife. Another was killed when a metal door fell on him. The third, a young man, died of a heart attack.

There is absolutely no question in my mind that Joe saved Hubert Humphrey's life," Emile W. Weber, Cooper's attorney, told me (Moulder) after Cooper's death. [6]

By 1966, Joe Cooper was off on his own Kennedy investigation, focusing on Naval Intelligence, not necessarily the Far Right civilian groups. From 1966 to 1975, the detective put together bits and pieces of strange coincidences that he felt pointed to U.S. Naval Intelligence being involved in the Kennedy assassination.

An intensely patriotic man, Cooper felt he had to do whatever he could to help find the truth. "I love my country, but this was not the way to change it—by killing a president," he said.

Cooper was convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald was a Naval Intelligence agent, and was certain that nine mysterious passengers on a cruise on the aircraft carrier Shangra-La sponsored by Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth in August of 1963 had something to do with the assassination. While a policeman in Florida, he made written inquiries to the Navy Department to find out their identities. He first received nine names, but two of them wound up aliases. The seven identified by the Navy Department were all business or political leaders in the New Orleans-Baton Rouge area. One had worked for the same insurance company as Lee's father, another was a close friend of Dallas law enforcement officials who investigated the Kennedy assassination, and another had family connections with a local Nazi Party leader. The two names on the list Cooper couldn't identify were Adolph Vermont, Jr., and William Craver, Jr. This is the theory Cooper was working on when he contacted Jim Garrison's office offering "...definitely

new evidence..." concerning at least three people "...in the Orleans area." [7]

Apparently, Cooper had come across the Billy Kemp story while working as an infiltrator in the Klan for the FBI. The story from Cooper's viewpoint went like this: Two days before the assassination of President Kennedy, Kent Whatley of Garland, Tex., offered Leroy Wheat and "his pilot" Billy Kemp \$25,000 to pilot a small aircraft with two passengers to South America on November 22, no questions asked. Both men, in separate interviews, confirmed the story and added that they had been suspicious of the offer and declined it. [8] The TATTLER article said that Whatley, Wheat, and Kemp were working at the Ling-Temco-Vought "defense plant" in Dallas (another document says the men were "working in Louisiana" when the offer was made. [9])

The astonishing thing about this is that William "Billy" Kemp, the pilot mentioned above, was from Jackson, Louisiana, (the home city of barber, later Voter Registrar, Edwin Lea McGehee, and State Representative Reeves Morgan, two of Garrison's "Clinton Witnesses") and was married to Maxine Kemp in 1963. Mrs. Kemp worked in the records department at East Louisiana State Hospital and supplied information to Garrison investigators about the application for employment supposedly filled out by Lee H. Oswald during his visit in the first week of September 1963, in company with persons identified by Jim Garrison as David Ferrie and Clay Shaw. [10]

Imagine that! Maxine Kemp of the East Louisiana State Hospital supplies information to Garrison's investigators pertaining to Oswald's job-hunting visit to the hospital, while her husband is informing Joe Cooper and other Garrison investigators about a suspicious offer to them for their flying talents. Is it just coincidence? Or could it be that the Kems had both been instructed by someone to provide misleading information to the investigators?

The Billy Kemp story was known to some other East Feliciana Parish residents, such as Tom Williams, who voluntarily furnished information to Garrison's office concerning the Billy Kemp money offer, in addition to a very strange, tangled story involving a Jackson, Louisiana resident named Gladys Palmer, the wife of Matthew Palmer. Williams called Garrison's office and talked to C.J. Navarre. The same day, Navarre wrote a memo to

Louis Ivon giving the following information:

Mr. Williams telephoned from his residence on March 17, 1966, at 1:55 p.m. and was received by C.J. Navarre. Mr. Williams stated that one Matt Palmer of Jackson, Louisiana, told him that Palmer's ex-wife, name unknown [found from newspaper accounts to have been Gladys Fletcher Palmer], was employed for (sic) Jack Ruby in his nightclub in Dallas. Two weeks before the assassination, his ex-wife arrived in Jackson, Louisiana, driving a black Lincoln Continental. She was placed in the Jackson Sanitarium (East Louisiana State Hospital at Jackson, La.) for treatment of alcoholism. Two hours before the assassination she stated "this is the day of the president's assassination." Mr. Williams states that he could show anyone the residence of Matt Palmer, Jr., in Jackson, Louisiana. Mr. Palmer is remarried.

Mr. Williams states that a Billy Kemp of Clinton, Louisiana, is a pilot and a friend of his. Billy Kemp told Williams that a congressman approached him (Kemp) and asked if he would be willing to fly a secret mission. This took place just before the assassination.

Readers knowledgeable about the details of the Jim Garrison investigation will readily notice that the details of Mrs. Palmer's story have apparently been interlaced with the Rose Cheramie (predicting the assassination beforehand, a patient at the hospital) and Oswald visit details (driving a big, black Lincoln). My independent research uncovered no substantiation for the notion that Mrs. Palmer was in any way connected with Jack Ruby or predicted Kennedy's assassination, unless, of course, the locals knew her as Gladys, the wife of Matt Palmer, and others knew her as...Rose Cheramie! During my interviews with local residents over the past two years, several people have mentioned the Gladys Palmer story, with varying details.

Joe Cooper's precise relationship to the Garrison investigation is a little unclear. Despite the claim by Moulder, which said Cooper "...was asked to testify... at the Garrison New Orleans Grand Jury hearing," the Baton Rouge newspaper reported at the time that, "He (Cooper) said he sent a telegram to Garrison this morning informing him of his wish to testify before the grand jury

in connection with the assassination case, but that he had not yet received an answer at noon." [11]

It seems likely that Cooper contacted Garrison's office, but they apparently didn't get around to talking with him until October 14, 1968. [12] Five days after Cooper offered to testify, on July 14, 1968, he and his wife were seriously injured in a wreck in which it was claimed that the "steering post came loose". A photo of the wrecked car is shown in the TATTLER article. [13] I could find no evidence in the Baton Rouge newspapers that Cooper ever testified at the grand jury. In fact, Garrison was very busy with gathering information from European intelligence sources at this time and probably didn't take time to answer Cooper until after the car accident.

Cooper's misadventures of 1968 were to be repeated in the following years. During the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's race of 1971, Cooper's home sustained damage from a bomb. In August, 1972, Cooper was arrested (by deputies of the Sheriff to whom he had lost the election) for aggravated arson, criminal mischief, and possession of explosives with intent to commit a crime. Newly-elected Sheriff Al Amiss said that the first two charges were from the explosion at Cooper's home the year before, while the last allegation was the result of a "tip" to the Sheriff's Department that Cooper planned to assassinate Sheriff Amiss. [14]

In September, 1974, Joe Cooper was indicted by a U.S. Grand Jury in Baton Rouge for "...possessing an explosive device and possession of an unregistered explosive device without a serial number." Cooper's wife, Lillian, and their 19-year-old daughter were also indicted by the same grand jury for "alleged conspiracy to make a false bomb threat." Later, the two women were additionally charged with "conspiring and conveying false information," supposedly telling authorities first, that Cooper possessed a bomb and held them hostage, then changing their stories to say the statements were made because they were mad at Cooper. At the time of his death, these charges were still pending. [15]

Shortly after the indictment, Joe Cooper was dead. At about 7:30 on the morning of Wednesday, October 16, 1974, Cooper and his wife Lillian were just getting out of bed in their apartment. [16] Joe got up and put the coffee on and came back to bed. Lillian then got up to see about the coffee in the kitchen. Living with them was their 19-

year-old daughter and the daughter's 18-month-old child, and a younger teenage daughter, who were still asleep. Mrs. Cooper was in the kitchen when she heard a shot from the bedroom, dashed in and found her husband's body with a bullet wound in the head. The shot from the .38-calibre pistol entered his right cheek and angled upward to the top of the head. Investigators said there were heavy powder burns on the right cheek near the entry wound.

Some materials for cleaning the pistol were found nearby, leading to the speculation that he might have died from an accidental discharge of the pistol during cleaning. But, the ultimate ruling by the Sheriff's department and coroner was suicide. [17]

Suicide seems most probable in this case unless, of course, someone who was in the apartment when he died actually committed the murder, which seems unlikely.

Notes

1. Memorandum from Andrew J. Sciambra, Asst. District Attorney for Orleans Parish, La., to Jim Garrison, D.A. of Orleans Parish dated Oct. 1968, "Re: Interview of Joseph Cooper, Baton Rouge, La. Relative to Lee Harvey Oswald". Photocopy in possession of the author. Referred to hereafter as "Memo 1."
2. Baton Rouge MORNING ADVOCATE newspaper, Thurs., Oct. 17, 1974. Article: "Ex-Lawman, Candidate Found Dead", p. 1-A, cont. 8-A. Photocopy in possession of the writer. Referred to hereafter as "Article 1."
3. Author's interview with (name deleted on request), Sept. 1996.
4. Article 1, p. 8-A.
5. Article by John Moulder "Joe Cooper Saved Vice President From Assassination But Wound Up Dead After Investigating JFK's Murder" NATIONAL TATTLER, June 8, 1975; photocopy in possession of the author. Referred to hereafter as "Article 2."
6. Article 2.
7. STATETIMES (Baton Rouge newspaper, July 9, 1968, p. 1 "BR Man Claims New Evidence in JFK Death Probe"). Photocopy in possession of the author. Referred to hereafter as "Article 3."
8. Article 2.
9. Article 2.
10. Article 2; Other persons at the hospital who identified Lee Oswald as the man who applied for a job there in the summer of 1963 were: Bobbie Dedon, who gave him directions on how to get to the personnel office, and Aline Woodside, who told Reeves Morgan (State Representative) that she had seen the application at the hospital but didn't know what had become of it. (Memorandum from Andrew Sciamba to Jim Garrison, Jan. 29, 1968, Interview with Bobbie Dedon, East Louisiana State Hospital, August 4, 1967; Memorandum of interview with Mrs. Aline Woodside by Robert Buras, HSCA (RG 233); Memorandum of interview with Mrs. Meryal Hudson by Robert Buras, HSCA document)
11. Article 3.
12. Memo 1.
13. Article 2.
14. Article 2.
15. Article 1.
16. Elms Apartments, 12254 Lamargie, Baton Rouge #146; States Times, October 16, 1974.
17. Article 3.

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