

THAT DAMNED TROUBLESOME BULLET...AGAIN!

by
Walt Cakebread

The hospital corridor was jammed with federal agents, plain clothes Dallas police officers, uniformed officers, elected government officials, and hospital personnel. The corridor was hot and crowded as the federal agents, some of whom were brandishing nasty looking automatic weapons, attempted to push the funeral truck carrying the heavy, ornate, bronze casket containing the body of the slain president out of trauma room #1 and into the crowded corridor. They were having a difficult time making any progress, because the Coroner stopped them every time they attempted to move it. The atmosphere was getting uglier by the minute. The cursing and threats were becoming more and more vicious.

The federal agents wanted to get the body out of the hospital and aboard the President's plane while the newspaper reporters were occupied at the press conference, which was being held by Mac Kilduff in another section of the hospital complex. The dead president had arrived at the hospital only forty minutes previously. He had been shot and killed in Dealey Plaza at 12:33, [1] and had arrived at the hospital at 12:38, though he wasn't officially pronounced dead until one o'clock.

Now, less than an hour after the deadly volley of shots, the federal agents were desperately trying to escape the chaos in the corridor that had followed the coup d'etat. "Stop! A violent death requires a post! It's the Law!" yelled Dr. Earl Rose, the Dallas County Coroner.

This was the scene in the Parkland Hospital corridor at about 1:20 on the afternoon of the coup d'etat. A big fight erupted about who had the legal jurisdiction over President Kennedy's body. The fight erupted when Dr. Earl Rose, the Dallas County Coroner, told the FBI and Secret Service agents that they could not remove President Kennedy's body from his jurisdiction until he had performed an autopsy and released the body. The

federal agents were attempting to remove President Kennedy's body from Parkland Hospital before an autopsy had been performed. The state of Texas had legal jurisdiction, and Earl Rose, the coroner, knew the laws concerning the handling of the body of a murder victim. He jumped in front of the federal agents who were trying to wheel the casket containing the dead president out of the hospital, and would not allow them passage.

When Dr. Earl Rose refused to allow the federal agents to remove the body from the hospital, the federal agents attempted to circumvent the law by going over the coroner's head. Theron Ward, a Texas justice of the peace, (judge) was summoned, but Ward would not allow the laws of the state of Texas to be violated under his aegis. He said he would call Henry Wade, the Dallas District Attorney, for advice. According to page 104 of Dr. Charles Crenshaw's JFK *Conspiracy of Silence*, during the telephone call, Henry Wade told Judge Ward that it was his (Wade's) understanding that a bullet must be taken into evidence, and Police Chief Jesse Curry should be queried about the bullet. Henry Wade told Judge Ward that he would call Chief Curry and see what Curry had to say about it, and he would call him back. Wade returned Ward's call a few minutes later and said that Curry had confirmed his (Wade's) understanding that a bullet must be taken into evidence before the body could be released.

There is little doubt that the call was made, because Theron Ward told William Manchester about the call when Manchester interviewed him on 9/21/64, and Manchester mentions it in *The Death of a President*. [pages 298-304] Since Ward made this phone call from Parkland Hospital, it had to have been made sometime between 1:24 (Ward's time of arrival) and 1:55, (the time Secret Service agent Richard E. Johnsen took possession of the bullet). We can deduce that the calls occurred about 1:30-1:35, because the primary reason that the J.P. had been called was because the federal agents wanted someone with legal authority to override Dr. Rose. Since he would not take it upon himself to violate what he knew to be the law, he wouldn't have vacillated long in making a decision about calling the D.A. There is a record that agent Johnsen had CE 399 in his possession at 1:55, and the casket started moving from Trauma Room #1 at about this same time. Since the bullet had

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been "found" by Darrell Tomlinson about ten minutes earlier, it is apparent that the bullet was discovered at approximately 1:45.

The telephone call and the time frame raise a host of intriguing questions and shed some valuable light on this episode, and the light further illuminates more of the conspiracy. The most obvious questions are: (a) How could Henry Wade tell Theron Ward that a bullet had to be taken into evidence before the body could be released? There was no way he could be sure that a bullet would be recovered during an autopsy. For all he knew, the bullets may have passed clear through the victims and ricocheted out of the car. Since CE 399 wasn't found until 1:45, the only way he could have had prior knowledge about a bullet to be taken into evidence was because he was one of the conspirators, and he knew that the bullet was a key part of the plot. (b) Why would Wade say that Chief Curry should be asked about a bullet to be taken into evidence? The bullet (CE 399) had not yet been found when Curry had chauffeured LBJ from Parkland at 1:26, so he could not have known about the "discovery" of the bullet before he drove the fleeing LBJ to Love Field, and yet when Wade returned Judge Ward's call, he said that Curry had confirmed his opinion. Like Wade, there was no way Curry could know whether a bullet would be recovered during an autopsy.

Dr. Rose relented (albeit, with grudging affectation) and allowed the body to be removed after it became known that a bullet had been "found". Was the original plan of "finding the bullet in the president's body" foiled when the Secret Service men heard that Jackie wanted to return to her children in Washington as soon as possible, and they started using their muscle, and intimidating demeanor to please her, which necessitated the improvisation of a hasty plan in its place?

Notes

- [1] Most accounts give the time of the shooting as 12:30, and perhaps the clock on top of the TSBD actually did read 12:30, but if it did it must have been off by nearly four minutes, because the radio/telephone transmissions from Merriman Smith in the van following the President's Lincoln convertible record the time as 12:34. Merriman Smith grabbed the radio phone immediately after hearing the shots and reported to the UPI Dallas office that "Three shots

were fired at President Kennedy's motorcade today in downtown Dallas." The message was immediately transmitted to the N.Y. headquarters of UPI and was followed by the signature...JT1234PCS. (J— international time zone in which Dallas Texas is located). If the shooting occurred at 12:30 it would not have taken four minutes for Smith to react and report the event, and in fact the reporters said that Smith had grabbed the phone and reported the "shots fired" message immediately while the van was still on Elm Street in front of the TSBD. Merriman Smith and Jack Bell fought over the use of the radio/telephone, and Smith would not relinquish it to Bell. If the shooting occurred at 12:33 and Merriman's transmission was recorded one minute later, then Oswald's "escape schedule" is clipped by three minutes, and serious doubt is cast on the probability of Oswald being in either Cecil McWatter's bus or William Whaley's taxi.

The 12:33-12:34 time of the shooting is further supported by the speed of the president's Lincoln and the distance to Parkland Hospital. The Hospital is slightly less than three miles from Dealey Plaza. If the shooting had occurred at 12:30 and the car arrived at Parkland at 12:37, it is apparent that it took the car seven minutes to travel three miles, which is a pavement blistering average speed of 24 MPH. If the shooting occurred at 12:34 and the car arrived at Parkland at 12:37, it took the car three minutes to travel three miles or an average of 60 MPH.

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OSWALD TALKED: A REVIEW

by
Tom DeVries

Perhaps a more appropriate title for this book would be "Oswald, Gun-running, and the DRE." [1] This web-like story demonstrates that Oswald fostered an overtly hostile but covertly cooperative relationship with the anti-Castro DRE (Student Revolutionary Directorate), while at the same time serving as DRE informant for the FBI. However, because of the volume, diversity, and complexity of the La Fontaines' new information, this purpose is somewhat difficult to bring into focus during the early chapters and in chapter 10. [2] Nevertheless Oswald Talked is a well written and important book which every serious JFK assassination researcher and student should read. It features a host of important newly released documents discovered by Mary La Fontaine and Bill Adams since 1992, as well as new interpretations of old evidence, all covering a variety of different fronts primarily regarding who Oswald really was and who was controlling him.

The essence of the "Oswald Talked" title is that released documents show that a man named John Elrod, who was imprisoned with Oswald for about four hours on 11/22/63, heard Oswald identify a man paraded past them as someone he had met in a motel room during an illegal arms transaction with Jack Ruby. Other details indicate that Oswald not only knew Ruby and was working as an FBI informant infiltrating the DRE, but that on a different level he was also cooperating with the DRE in spreading anti-Castro propaganda, particularly in attempting to destroy the Fair Play For Cuba Committee. Ancillary to this is the matter of the timing of Oswald's various meetings with FBI agent James Hosty, and new information about Oswald's suppressed Department of Defense ID card with a suspicious photo [3] and post marks, all of which indicate that Oswald received special privileges from U.S. intelligence.

Chapter four contains 48 informative pages of slightly

new interpretations of old evidence regarding George de Mohrenschildt. It focuses on his strange relationship with Dutch journalist Willem Oltmans and also on his unpublished manuscript printed in full by the House Select Committee in Volume XII. Highlighted are the stark differences between de Mohrenschildt's Warren Commission testimony and his important manuscript version of who Oswald really was, reinforcing the "de Mohrenschildt as Oswald intelligence handler" scenario. [4]

Chapters five through eight further establish the DRE-Oswald-FBI connection, particularly in terms of Oswald reporting to the FBI on the DRE's gun-running activities and their upcoming invasion of Cuba, planned for late November, 1963. Oswald's cooperation with the DRE is highlighted by revelations such as the fact that New Orleans DRE leader Carlos Bringuier's "spy," Carlos Quiroga, was, according to what landlady Jesse Garner told Warren Commission attorney Wesley Liebeler, carrying a large stack of FPCC pamphlets when he visited Oswald, not just several picked up from the street scuffle as Bringuier and Quiroga had said in their Warren Commission testimonies. [5] In other words, he was making a delivery, not trying to infiltrate Oswald's FPCC activities. [6] Chapter six focuses primarily on attempting to reconcile the differences between Oswald's anti-Castro associations and what the authors describe as his genuinely Marxist soul.

Chapter nine, titled "It Takes a Woman to Know," is most interesting. Based on largely ignored evidence, the La Fontaines contend that Silvia Odio, in order to protect the DRE, made up her infamous hallway story of two Cubans and Oswald coming to her door on September 26 or 27, 1963. Despite approaching this very skeptically, I am now convinced that they are correct. Documents show that Odio had mentioned to at least three people right after the assassination that she had seen Oswald at anti-Castro meetings that fall. According to an FBI memo, she considered him "brilliant and clever" and was also aware that Oswald had tried to infiltrate the DRE in New Orleans and that they were on to him. Odio also told Liebeler that she was involved in arranging gun-running deals. [7] This was independently confirmed to the Secret Service by JURE's Rogelio Cisneros, who was involved in gun-running with Odio. Her JURE "Oswald

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in the hallway" story was concocted out of fear that the DRE, the organization with which the La Fontaines show that Odio's sympathies lay, would be implicated in the framing of Oswald. The fact that her sister Annie had supposedly corroborated the visit is, I believe, adequately explained. Highlighted are Odio's affair with and statements to Father Machann, statements to psychiatrist Dr. Einspruch and benefactor Lucille Connell, along with the story of her love rival, Marianne Sullivan, who wrote a book about their mutual love for Father Machann, who disappeared in early October 1963.

Chapter Ten attempts to bring the DRE - gun running - Oswald-as-informant web all together with the help of the November 17 William Walter teletype assassination warning, which occurred immediately after Oswald's little known November 16 meeting with Hosty (reported in the Nov. 24 Dallas Morning News) who specialized in monitoring right-wing radical groups. According to a recent La Fontaine interview of Walter, he had seen Oswald's FBI informant file which identified him as the informant on the DRE's Lake Pontchartrain arms cache raided by the FBI in July, 1963. This is indeed important new information. But this chapter is sometimes difficult to follow because it exposes a multi-layered web of relationships and cause and effect. This and other chapters could use helpful summaries such as those in Marr's Crossfile and Russell's The Man Who Knew Too Much.

Besides the Walter information, chapter 10 reveals the following: An FBI document shows that DRE member Fermin de Goicochea told the FBI details about the planned late November invasion of Cuba. But then they pretended to be looking for de Goicochea until after the Warren Report had been published in September of 1964. The FBI allowed the DRE arms thefts and weapons stockpiling to continue, and although the CIA's Ted Shackley was critical of William Pawley's and Clare Booth Luce's DRE patronage and the planned invasion, his influence was evidently bypassed by other elements in the CIA. Mobster John Martino, who was involved with the DRE, has said that they were aware of Oswald's role as informant and altered it to make him patsy. The assassination by Marxist Oswald would bring about the late November invasion.

Much of the final chapter is devoted to debunking

other conspiracy theories via the La Fontaines' story of document discovery and media tribulations. The AP wire service ignored their Houston Post story regarding the long lost arrest records of the three tramps, found by Mary La Fontaine in the released Dallas Police archives in February 1992. They tracked down and interviewed the "Frenchy" tramp, non-conspiratorial Harold Doyle. But despite being journalists themselves, the major media continued to ignore them of course, so they went reeling into the world of tabloid television journalism, a fact they relate with a fair amount of good humor. They retell the Ricky White story in a rather abbreviated and simplistic fashion, and give reporter and CIA asset High Aynsworth a well deserved comeuppance for his well known (among JFK assassination students at least) sabotage of the Garrison investigation. Appendix A gives a basic and helpful chronological summary of the events covered in the book. Appendix B, "The Case Against Oswald," in my opinion misses the mark by offering a simplistic and inaccurate assessment of areas of evidence not covered in this book, mixed with the La Fontaines' celebrated "new evidence."

The primary importance of Oswald Talked can be summarized as follows. The documents uncovered by Mary La Fontaine and Bill Adams show quite conclusively that John Elrod did in fact hear Oswald refer to Jack Ruby and gun-running deals while in jail. [8] Miller and Whitter were involved with Ruby in gun-running (Whitter also worked as Ruby's auto mechanic), and Oswald was both cooperating with the DRE and operating as an FBI informant on Ruby's group and the DRE. This is shown by his identification of Miller, his associations at 544 Camp Street, by the nature of his strange associations with Bringuier and Quiroga, through Silvia Odio's reported statements about Oswald meeting with DRE people, and through his probable informant relationship with Hosty.

Every time Hosty met with him, Oswald would take some kind of suspicious action the very next day, like mail-ordering the Mannlicher Caracno, opening a P.O. box, or, in the case of the November 16 meeting, probably issuing the warning which was the source of the November 17 teletype. [9] The authors also believed that Oswald probably reported the Miller-Whitter gun deal that the FBI broke up on November 18, possibly in

order to protect those higher up in the operation. Finally, the La Fontaines' new Silvia Odio analysis shows that she was afraid the DRE would be blamed for the framing of Oswald. Many other ancillary bits of information tend to support these conclusions.

Oswald Talked not only provides new information, it also confirms the research of many others and expands our knowledge regarding Oswald's relationship with U.S. intelligence. It confirms the idea that anti-Castro Cubans, with the help of elements of the CIA (de Mohrenschildt), framed Oswald as a Marxist in hopes that the assassination would spark another invasion of Cuba which the La Fontaines' evidence shows was planned by the DRE for late November, 1963. It significantly narrows the search for the specific anti-Castro group which helped to frame Oswald, putting that responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the DRE. [10] It strengthens suspicions and witness reports of a Ruby-Oswald relationship [11], and adds many important documents and details which help bring the framing of Oswald into clearer focus.

But despite the importance of Oswald Talked, it does have some problems. The La Fontaines are journalists, working in a milieu which has vacillated between ignoring assassination scholars, which the La Fontaines have now become, and belittling ideas and people that have for many reasons become easy targets. The irony is not lost on them, but has possibly forced them into adopting certain attitudes.

One of these is the Maileresque attitude offered primarily in Chapter 6 that Oswald was a "true Marxist" but that nevertheless a paradox or conflict existed in his soul which allowed him to act in various contradictory ways. But for all the trouble they go to to show that Oswald was cooperating with the FBI and the DRE, and then to explain the contradiction by concluding that Oswald's soul was ardently pro-Castro, smacks of equivocation.

Using reasoning similar to Mailer, Posner, and others who say that many have an irresistible urge to believe in conspiracy because they can't conceive of the "puny" Oswald killing the powerful JFK, I say that maybe there is an irresistible urge to ascribe big vision, ego, or dementia to Oswald because of what he allegedly did. But if the evidence shows that he was framed (which the La Fontaines' evidence does show), isn't it more reason-

able to believe that Oswald only saw his role as a small time operative and that he rather enjoyed acting this prescribed role, which may or may not have been as important to him as any political philosophy? [12] After all, he was probably a very good actor. I believe that the La Fontaines have fallen into the trap of continuing to saddle Oswald with monstrously confused idealism.

In an "Open Letter to the Research Community" published in the December, 1994 edition of The Investigator, I attempted to show that many researchers belittle certain areas of conspiracy evidence in order to promote their own agenda. They believe, I think, that by deliberately showing they are above buying into certain malarkey about the assassination, their aspect of the case will have more credibility with publishers, the media, the establishment, and the public. Certainly there has been an incredible amount of disinformation and poor scholarship in some areas of research. But because huge amounts of evidence have been destroyed, altered, forged and suppressed, and because witnesses have been intimidated and their testimonies distorted, the primary blame for the difficulty of getting it right falls squarely on the shoulders of the custodians of the evidence, the U.S. Government.

In addition to the "Oswald as genuine Marxist" scenario, many other subtle indications of the above mentioned attitude are prevalent in Oswald Talked. Despite the fact that they often criticize Posner, their two page analysis of the single bullet theory in "The Case Against Oswald" section is misleading with regard to the essence of what Failure Analysis Associates did with the computer enhancements. [13] Their analysis is also misleading with regard to what the essence of the single bullet theory controversy is. For example, the authors suggest that although the stretcher bullet was probably planted, the single bullet theory is probably still correct. It seems that the La Fontaines want to fight the establishment only on specified fronts.

And I have always had a problem with equivocation about whether or not the backyard photos are genuine. Although the La Fontaines present some important information regarding the photographs, their failure to be forthright here is almost unforgivable. I don't need Anthony Summers, Hal Verb, Paul Hoch or the House Select Committee to tell me that the backyard photos are

"probably genuine" when my eyes tell me very clearly that Oswald had a chin replacement, not to mention at least twenty other well documented problems with those photographs. According to the La Fontaines, Michael Paine "says today" that he saw one of the backyard photographs in early April 1963, which, if true, "would make it a certainty that [they] are real, not forged." [14] I don't follow this reasoning, which is obviously based on time constraints. The authors don't attempt to show that the photo could not have been faked between March 31st and "early April," whenever that was. The idea that Oswald helped with the faking, possibly thinking of it as "patsy insurance," since the faking is obvious, should not be ruled out. [15]

Several times the authors state that they believe the actions of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI indicate that they were simply trying to cover the Bureau's ass, and were not complicit with the assassination. [16] Of course that's the official establishment stance on that issue. But a vast amount of information suggests that both Lyndon Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover had foreknowledge of the assassination. Maybe the La Fontaines believed that examining evidence regarding assassination predictions made to Bureau informants Jose Aleman, Ed Reid, and William Somerset (whose reports certainly ended up on Hoover's desk), by Santos Traficante, Carlos Marcelo, and Joseph Milteer, would distract from their "new evidence."

The authors take a cheap shot at Gary Shaw, and at Beverly Oliver, whom they dub the "babushka lady-impersonator," without any explanation except implied guilt by association with Shaw, who's evidently guilty by association with Ricky White. [17] And their frequent use of terms like "buff" and "Kennedy-nut" seems calculated to poison the wells toward other research and emphasize the all too common "our research is the important stuff because we are not with them" theme.

Some other problems with Oswald Talked are due, I believe, to weak reasoning or lack of knowledge regarding certain aspects of the case. For example, they reason that, after warnings by Oswald of a plot to kill JFK, the FBI probably believed it had taken enough appropriate action by arresting two principals of the gun-running subplot, Whitter and Miller on November 18. [18] (Miller was the man Oswald identified from his jail cell

as having been with Ruby in the hotel room making the gun deal.) How or why the FBI could or would believe this outrageously simplistic notion is not explained.

Another La Fontaine opinion is that the campaign to discredit the FPCC was not taken seriously by Banister, Bringuier, or Oswald, but was rather a way of promoting each man's own particular agenda. [19] The fact that both the FBI and the CIA had been operating campaigns to discredit and destroy the FPCC, and that the FPCC was indeed destroyed by Oswald's status as the alleged assassin, has been well documented in assassination literature. But this is ignored by the La Fontaines.

Most students of the assassination realize that if Abraham Zapruder hadn't by chance filmed it, and if James Tague hadn't by chance caught a deflected scrap of curbstone on his cheek, conspiracy theories would have a much tougher time existing. Now add to these the La Fontaines' contention that if Oswald can't be connected to 544 Camp street, "then the game's over. Posner wins." [20] In other words, if Oswald had conducted his pro-Marxist posturing without a proven association with an office building tied to anti-Castro Cubans, then Oswald must have been the lone assassin. I realize that the authors are trying to emphasize the importance of the 544 Camp Street information, but the argument doesn't make sense stated in this way.

The subtitle of Oswald Talked: The New Evidence in the JFK Assassination, implies that the authors are covering all the important evidence released since 1992 by the Assassination Records Review Board. Of course, this is not possible. But the authors could have acknowledged that their own finds, which are certainly very important, are not the only important documents which researchers have recently found. Just open a copy of The Fourth Decade, or Probe, read John Newman's Oswald and the CIA, or get on the Internet and the AARB's mailing list to find that this is true. For example, on page 289 the authors refer to a "rosetta stone" FBI - FOIA document obtained by Bill Adams, which along with their Elrod discovery they consider the two most important finds in understanding the JFK assassination. The Adams document, obviously important to their research, reveals details about DRE activities in Dallas during the month preceding the assassination and also why de Goicochea was not interviewed by the FBI until September 1964.

However, considering the hundreds of important documents and items of evidence which researchers have been citing since 1964, the hyperbole seems unwarranted. The myth, also perpetuated by many media critics of Oliver Stone's *JFK*, is that "old" evidence is basically inconclusive or unimportant and only with "new" evidence can we really understand the JFK assassination.

I wish the La Fontaines had asked the following question which I have not seen addressed by anyone who believes that Oswald was working for U.S. intelligence: If Oswald was working for the FBI as an informant, and was also possibly an operative for the CIA and other military intelligence agencies, how was he being paid and where was the money going? I'm not aware of any research showing that Oswald spent more money than he made at his various jobs after returning from the Soviet Union. [21] And even if his classified tax records were released, it's quite certain that we'll never be allowed to see a line item on a record that shows he was being paid as an operative or informant. Was he working for a pittance or for nothing because he liked the work and had been promised bigger things for later? Or was the money possibly going into a numbered Swiss account?

Despite some problems of perspective, *Oswald Talked* is a very important book. The broad scope of the La Fontaines' research into the complex assassination conspiracy web did not lend itself to a neatly organized plot line and therefore the book seems to jump around a bit, much like Anthony Summer's *Conspiracy*. [22] But it was certainly a joy to read a well-written "pro-conspiracy" book which has no typos that I could find and only two syntactical problems, apparently caused by a missing adverb and a missing preposition. [23] Hopefully other serious journalists like the Fontaines will begin honestly seeking answers to the important questions which the research community has been asking for years. It would be an important step on the road to convincing scholars, the major media, and ultimately the government to treat the subject honestly.

Notes

1. Undoubtedly, however, the book will sell more copies as *Oswald Talked*, perhaps capitalizing on public suspicions that Oswald was tape recorded during Dallas Police interrogations.

2. There are a number of reasons for this. For example, on first reading I was confused as to who the "cellmate" was that the authors referred to repeatedly on page 36. There isn't a good reason to keep the reader guessing as to whether they (via Elrod) are referring to Oswald just because the FBI document failed to acknowledge that Elrod identified him as Oswald.
3. The DOD picture I.D. card issued to Oswald in the fall of 1959, before he went to the Soviet Union, uses the Minsk photo, obviously not taken until after 1959, and is the same photo which appears on the phony Hidell selective service card allegedly found on Oswald at the time of his arrest on 11/22/63.
4. The authors rightly criticize Jim Marrs' *Crossfire* for unaccountably and totally misrepresenting de Mohrenschildt's important manuscript's portrait of Oswald. They quote Marrs writing that de Mohrenschildt described him as a "cursing, uncouth man with assassination on his mind..." The manuscript actually paints the opposite picture of Oswald.
5. La Fontaine, p. 162. Brinquier and Quiroga also lied about when the incident had occurred.
6. Although the book is generally well footnoted, several times I looked in vain for needed footnotes. This page and a quarter description is unfootnoted despite the reference to Garner's testimony to Liebler, and references to Quiroga's and Brinquier's Warren Commission testimonies. Other examples include: Page 92, where the authors state that de Mohrenschildt "burst into the Oswald household a couple of days after the attempted shooting of Gen. Walker, shouting, 'Lee, how did you miss General Walker?'" Not only is this an inaccurate description of the Warren Commission testimony, it is also unfootnoted. And the information on page 212 regarding Earlene Roberts' sister Bertha Cheek being involved in gun-running probably comes from the "Griffin-Hubert memo"
7. This was a surprise to me. I've read over 70 books on the assassination and don't recall anyone referring to this important Odio admission from WCIX, p. 380.
8. However, Elrod apparently doesn't want to talk much about what happened. And judging from a short video clip Mary La Fontaine showed of him

when she appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show with Marina (Oswald) Porter on 11/22/96, he also appears to be quite inarticulate.

9. The argument could certainly be made that much of the La Fontaines' evidence of Oswald serving as Hosty's informant on gun-running and the DRE is based on post hoc ergo propter hoc. I found myself accusing them of that logical fallacy, especially with the first few examples they relate, because they seem to be uncautious about stating, for example, that because Oswald ordered the Mannlicher-Carcano the day after his first meeting with Hosty, therefore the two events were related. However, as more similar examples of suspicious time correlations began piling up, I became more convinced that they were probably correct.
10. Reading between the lines, the La Fontaines do not deny CIA involvement in the framing of Oswald (they do connect de Mohrenschildt with the CIA), but their primary story is on the DRE whose members were probably acting as operatives.
11. On page 41, the authors claim that other reports of a Oswald-Ruby relationship are mostly "tenuous claims (and outright lies)...[having] in common a lack of evidence...with no support beyond the credibility of the person telling the story." The idea that the sheer volume of reports about a Oswald-Ruby connection volunteered to the Dallas Police Department immediately after 11/24/63 (about 100, according to D.A. Bill Alexander quoted in the November 26, 1963 Dallas Morning News), could have indicated some truth behind the "rumors" possibly didn't occur to the La Fontaines. They promise to discuss some of these "claims" "in later pages," but if they did, it had to be anything but thorough because it's not in the index and I missed it despite reading the book twice. There's also a long list of known individuals who reported that Oswald and Ruby were connected. These include Madeleine Brown, Walter Weston, William Crowe (Bill DeMar), Robert Paterson, Beverly Oliver, Bill Willis, Kathy Kay and others. It would seem since the La Fontaines' new evidence is solid confirmation of these "rumors," that they should then give some credence to them. After all, what are the chances that all these people just made up these stories, and then it just happened that Oswald and Ruby really did know each other? All this seems to me to be more evidence for my theory of an "our evidence is the important stuff, and we don't buy into phony theories" sale approach discussed later in this review.
12. But this sounds too much like Jim Garrison and Oliver Stone, and, well, it would be just plain politically incorrect for the La Fontaines to sound like either one of them. On page 210 they slam Garrison for "allegedly" wanting to charge Robert Perrin, who died a year before the assassination, with the assassination. For this alleged "fact" they cite George Lardner's "On the Set: Dallas in Wonderland" article from the May 19, 1991 Washington Post.
13. They created two opposing lawyer's briefs for a mock trial.
14. La Fontaine, p. 223-4. Despite a one page description of Michael Paine visiting the Oswalds in early April 1963, which includes the phrase "Michael Paine says today" (p.224), there is no footnote indicating whether Michael was interviewed, or whether it's hearsay, or whether he wrote this down somewhere. In short, there is no reason why we should suddenly believe this modern day recollection of his "early April" viewing of a backyard photo. Also, on page 380 they state that "credible testimony that a genuine backyard photo existed prior to the assassination would severely undercut conspiracy scenarios based on the photos." This makes no sense for several reasons. Why would the photo have to be faked after the assassination in order for it to be conspiratorial? And their use of the word "genuine" here is bizarre, as are the phrases "credible testimony" (Michael Paine??!!), and "conspiracy scenarios based on the photos." No conspiracy scenario is "based on" only the photos. They are simply evidence.
15. If Oswald was curious or apprehensive about who was ultimately controlling his actions, and to what purpose, it would have been ingenious to create an incriminating photo which he could show was faked, just as he explained to Will Fritz and his interrogation team on 11/22/63.

16. La Fontaine, pp. 315, 369.
17. Since the La Fontaines, Gary Shaw and Beverly Oliver all live in the Dallas area, this apparent backstabbing may be indicative of Dallas rivalries.
18. La Fontaine, pp. 312, 357.
19. Ibid, pp. 182-3.
20. Ibid, pp. 147-8.
21. The exception is of course the financing of his \$1500 trip to Soviet Union in 1959.
22. Summers' book, published in 1980, was also based on a flood of new evidence, gleaned from HSCA investigators and Summers' follow-up.
23. La Fontaine, p. 315, "...had turned up (as) an accused presidential assassin." And: p. 199, "...were conducting twin background checks (on) de Mohrenschildt..." I consider quality editing and publishing important because poor quality in these areas, rampant in JFK assassination conspiracy literature, gives academics and others another excuse to ignore or discredit it.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor: Although it is ancient history, I would like to respond to the remarks directed at me in Vol. 8 #4, May 1992 issue of The Third Decade. In the following excerpt Scott Van Wynsberghe is at his vitriolic best in his references to me:

"Concerning Chauncey Marvin Holt, the guy who thinks he is one of the three tramps, the recent revelations from the Dallas police department files may have settled that question by the time this sees print"

I have no quarrel with this statement. If Van Wynsberghe, or anyone else for that matter, feels the curious arrest records and other records (or lack thereof) from the DPD settles the matter of the photographs taken of three individuals crossing Dealey Plaza late in the afternoon of November 22, 1966 once and for all, they are entitled to their opinion.

However, Van Wynsberghe is not content with this statement, which, one must admit, appears at first blush to have some validity. Instead, he starts quoting other authors as if their pronouncements were chiseled in stone. To continue:

"If not, consider this: Holt says he worked very closely with Detroit Mafia figure Peter Licavoli, who in turn passed him on to Meyer Lansky. Robert Lacey's superb biography of Lansky, Little Man (New York: Little, Brown, 1991) does not mention Licavoli once. Hank Messick's now-obsolete biography of the Jewish gangster, Lansky (New York: Berkley, 1971), likewise fails to cite Licavoli. Neither book refers to Holt. Do I smell a new Robert Easterling?"

I don't know where Van Wynsberghe's information came from that "I was passed on from Licavoli to Lansky." In fact, I met Lansky and Licavoli both in the waning days of World War II, when I was living and working in Baltimore. I was first introduced to Licavoli in Newport, Kentucky by Bob Zwick, one of Pete's enforcers. This introduction was not necessary, however, since my cousin, Bud Holt, worked for Peter Licavoli and Harry Bennett, Chief of Security for Ford. In fact, Peter Licavoli hired my cousin and Eddie Percelli to

kill Walter Reuther of the UAW but they botched the job. They were both tried for attempted murder but were acquitted. I met Lansky in Baltimore at a time when he was involved in a scheme to have his long time pal, Lucky Luciano, moved from Dannemora to an easier joint near New York City and deported. I was introduced to Lansky by Sy Bloom, a long time associate who owned a night club called the Chanticleer on North Charles Street in Baltimore that served as the bookmaking headquarters of Jules Fink, another close associate of Lansky who was his son, Buddy's, babysitter while Buddy was being treated at the Phipps Clinic, located at 711 Harriet Lane adjacent to the main Johns Hopkins Hospital. I spent a great deal of time at the Clinic since I earned extra money doing anatomical drawings and medical illustrations for the staff members of Phipps Clinic and the Department of Physical Anthropology, Johns Hopkins which was located across the street from the Phipps Clinic. I met and often visited with Buddy during this time.

In Lacey's superb (?) biography, it is true that he did not specifically refer to Licavoli. However, on page 79, Lacey mentions the Molaska Corporation and mentioned that Moe Dalitz and Sam Tucker were Meyer's co-investors. He failed to mention that other co-investors were Lou Rothkopf, Morris Kleinman and Peter Licavoli among others. Lacey could have also mentioned that the Detroit mob, including Peter Licavoli, owned a one-third interest in the Colonial Inn before they were ace'd out. I handled the camera concession at the Colonial Inn and I have many unpublished photos, mostly of entertainers who were perfectly willing to shill for the gangsters at this plushiest of carpet joints.

I could go on, ad infinitum, to the connections between Licavoli and Lansky that Lacey failed to mention in his book that Van Wynsberghe considers the "bible" where Lansky is concerned.

I am not surprised that no mention is made of me in Lacey's book. There are many other noteworthy names that are not referenced in Lacey's book. Max Orovitz, for one. Orovitz was a very important Miami Beach philanthropist (?) who fronted for Lansky in many stock manipulation schemes, including the abortive raid on American Motors, where he was aided and abetted by Dan

Ruskin, Baron de Hershmeier, Sam Becker and Lou Wolfson, who later became a respected horse owner and owned triple crown winner Affirmed. Orovitz was tried and convicted of these stock manipulations. I prepared the tax returns for all the aforementioned financiers, so I had first hand knowledge of their high level fiscal machinations. I still remember vividly Meyer Lansky strolling into my office at the Gator Corporation, another of Lansky's fronts, and casually dropping a check for several million dollars, which represented the proceeds from the sale of the American Motors stock, on my desk and ordering me to "cut it up." That was a lot of money in those days.

It is interesting to note that when Orovitz died in the late seventies, while I was incarcerated in the Federal Correctional Institution-Terminal Island, Hank Messick, who was on my visiting list, sent me a copy of the glowing obituary that appeared in the Miami Herald and commented that they made no mention of his association with Meyer Lansky.

When Messick wrote his earlier biography of Lansky, which is still the most accurate portrayal of Lansky ever written, I specifically asked him not to refer to me. Years later, when Messick wrote of Grass and Snow, I supplied him with information regarding my cellmate, David Owen, whose career is detailed in Messick's book. Again, Messick acceded to my request and made no mention of the fact that this information came from me. I also furnished Messick with information about the Otto Kerner case which was the basis for Messick's book, *The Politics of Prosecution*. I first met Messick when he was writing *The Silent Syndicate* under a Ford Foundation grant. This excellent book is about the Cleveland branch of organized crime and contains a lot of information about the joint ventures of Licavoli, Lansky and Moe Dalitz.

While I was in FCI-TI, Hank Messick wrote me every week and kept me informed as to what was happening in South Florida, especially with Lansky, who was trying to bring legalized gambling to Florida. I have an extensive correspondence file from Licavoli and Lansky, neither of whom were great correspondents. On one occasion when Messick came to see me in California, he was accompanied by IRS agent Richard Jaffe who is

mentioned in Lacey's book. After my release from Terminal Island in 1979, I was hired by Hank Messick to assist him in the famous Penthouse Case where Moe Dalitz, Merv Adelson and the other developers of the La Costa Country Club were suing Bob Guccione of Penthouse.

I really don't understand the thrust of Van Wynsberghe's caustic remarks in the section of the Third Decade referred to above. I suppose he was attempting to prove that I had never been associated with Licavoli or Lansky. He should confine his research to more productive lines of inquiry.

My suggestion to Mr. Van Wynsberghe would be for him to limit the scope of his scurrilous remarks to the direct quotations of the authors he is relying on and not conjecture about what the author failed to comment on.

—Chauncey M. Holt
PO Box 1773 Lemon Grove, CA 91946.

To the editor: Although I respect Ian Griggs as a researcher, I am not satisfied with Beverly Oliver's contention that she is the so-called "Babushka Lady." First of all, two photos of Beverly taken in 1963 (one published in Nightmare in Dallas and another featured in the April 10, 1977 edition of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal) show her with much slimmer legs than the Babushka Lady, who strikes me, by her appearance, as being much older than seventeen.

Beverly, whom I met at the Sudbury conference, kindly sent me a complimentary copy of her book, which I hoped would resolve the question, once and for all. I was disappointed that no members of Beverly Oliver's family such as her mother, sister or brother provide any support for her account, and Larry Ronco, who had allegedly loaned her an experimental super-8 camera, conveniently disappeared shortly after the assassination. Surprisingly, she makes no reference to her earlier contention made in a letter to TFD (July, 1993) that she danced with Jack Lawrence (aka Donny Allen Lance) at the Cabana Motel on Nov. 21, 1963. She also briefly refers to a "young woman" with Lawrence Meyers, but

does not identify her by name (Jean Aase).

As for her long-time claim of having met Lee Oswald at the Carousel with Jack Ruby, I suggested in a letter to Beverly that possibly she actually met Curtis "Larry" Craford, Ruby's handyman (who told me in reply to my 1989 letter that he "vaguely" recalled seeing Oswald at the club). In Beverly's reply, she seemed to think I was referring to Corky Crawford, a mistake also made by James Hosty in the course of a telephone conversation earlier this year. I sent Beverly a photo of Craford (taken by the FBI), but she did not recognize him at all; which is surprising, since he spent all his time at the club and much of it with Ruby.

In regard to Beverly's other contention that she had seen David Ferrie at the Carousel so often she assumed he was the assistant manager, her description of him is totally inaccurate. According to a Secret Service report dated Nov. 25, 1963, Ferrie was 5' 11" tall, and yet Beverly refers to him in Nightmare in Dallas as being a "little man." She also describes him as speaking with a southern accent, but I had learned from Perry Russo in 1990 that Ferrie did not have a southern accent, which makes sense, as he grew up in Cleveland (the man whom Richard Giesbrecht of Winnipeg claimed was Ferrie had been described three years earlier as having either a Canadian or northern American accent.) Frankly, Beverly's description of Ferrie is actually a more accurate description of Ferrie as played by Joe Pesci in JFK.

Although Darryl Weatherly's discovery of a document (CD 298—cited by Harrison Livingston in Killing Kennedy) crediting film footage from the "Babushka Lady's" exact location to Orville Nix strongly suggests a possible attempt at deception on the part of the FBI, this does not prove Beverly's major claim. Even though the HSCA did interview her behind closed doors in 1977, she was not invited back to testify as an eyewitness, seriously reducing her credibility.

In September 1993 Colin McSween, a long-time researcher who also lives here in Abbotsford, organized a conference held at a nearby Baptist seminary at which Beverly and Jean Hill appeared. At the request of Jean, who was aware of my lengthy article questioning her credibility too ("Jean Hill: the Lady in Red" available from me for \$6.00, which the Dallas Public Library

purchased), I did not attend. However, I did attempt, unsuccessfully, to persuade Beverly (through Colin) to appear on a local cable program with me to discuss her allegations, but her schedule, which included singing at a local church, did not permit it. I was prepared to question her honesty. Maybe next time.

—Peter R. Whitmey

A149-1909 Salton Rd. Abbotsford, BC, V2S 5B6.

To the editor: I've always enjoyed reading William Weston's informative articles. But he often makes unwarranted assumptions and draws problematic conclusions. His recent "Tenth and Patton" article (November 1996 issue) tells of an "elderly" auto mechanic who claimed to see Oswald drive a red 1961 Ford Falcon away from a parking lot near the garage he was working at in within about a half mile and a half hour of the Tippit killing.

First of all, Weston assumes that the "elderly" T.F. White had good eye sight and correctly identified both Oswald and the license plate number, PP 4537. With more than a dozen reports of "false Oswalds" and Oswald look-a-likes on record, how can we assume from an elderly man's description of an apparent two or three second sighting of a man's shoulders, neck and face, from a distance of about ten yards, that this was indeed Oswald?

Also, Weston should have acknowledged the fact that Oswald did not have a driver's license, and despite the fact that he had taken a few driving lessons with Ruth Paine, there is no accurate record of him operating an automobile by himself. Most researchers rightfully don't believe that the historic Lee Harvey Oswald test drove a car at Downtown Lincoln Mercury on November 9, 1963.

Certainly White's description of the driver leaving the parking lot "at top speed" sounds suspicious, but it doesn't necessarily tie the driver to the assassination or the Tippit murder. Shouldn't Weston have acknowledged that this story might either be a red herring or indicate another Oswald impersonation?

The story contains a series of extraordinary coinci-

dences including that the PP 4537 license plate (but not the car) belonged to a friend of J.D. Tippit who had ties to the intelligence community. Unfortunately, none of these very interesting coincidences make it any more likely that Oswald was driving the red Falcon.

The most serious problem with Weston's article concerns the statement he makes on page 30 that since "Oswald" was driving in a suspicious manner it suggests that he knew about and was complicit with the conspiracy. Weston then follows this up with the following statement on page 34 and five conclusions he pulls from this "observation." "The mere fact that there are deep, mysterious connections regarding the red Falcon is sufficient grounds for accepting the validity of the auto mechanic's story that Oswald was driving it."

It's impossible for me to imagine what Weston had in mind when he wrote this. His circular reasoning is apparently that because the license plate (which could easily have been mis-copied), belonged to the car (though the red Falcon did not) of a man who knew and visited J.D. Tippit that day, and because an elderly man decided that the alleged assassin and cop murderer looked just like the man he'd recently seen act suspiciously (even though, gee, we don't know what Mr. White's optometrist would think about this), therefore, it must have been Oswald who was willingly acting as the patsy for the assassination of the president he admired and was apparently willing to die for helping to kill him.

Weston evidently failed to consider that someone who had just seen something suspicious might be naturally inclined to link it to sinister events occurring nearby. Therefore, a man who looked like no one in particular becomes Oswald after Oswald becomes the suspect in a nearby murder. But even if Oswald was driving the red Falcon, it doesn't mean that he was complicit with the conspiracy. There is too much evidence that he was being controlled. Also not considered is that there is some evidence that the man who Johnny Calvin Brewer saw outside his shoe store was a "false Oswald" whose purpose was to lead police to the real Oswald. There are many possible explanations for all these perceived events, some of which have probably never been considered. But jumping to unwarranted conclusions is counter-productive.

It would take too much space to comment on the rest of Weston's five "conclusions," (don't get me started). I would not state that they are impossible, but rather that the idea that they follow from this interesting story demonstrates a very strange sort of logic.

In each of two other recent Fourth Decade articles regarding Oswald sightings in Wisconsin, Weston made a startling "leap of faith" that the individual in question was indeed the "historic Oswald," and from there jumped to other unwarranted conclusions.

Weston and other Fourth Decade readers should be made aware of John Armstrong's extremely important research on the multiple addresses and multiple school records of Marguerite and Lee Harvey Oswald. It offers, by deduction, an alternative and more plausible explanation for not just the Wisconsin Oswald incidents, but for the North Dakota and other Oswald incidents as well. Armstrong's presentation and corresponding paper published in the "Proceedings of the Research Conference of The Fourth Decade," is, in my opinion, the single most important piece of research I've seen on the JFK assassination. It dramatically expands the scope of Jack White's important work. In Fredonia, I observed while Peter Dale Scott and Armstrong spent three intense hours exchanging information and comparing notes. It was obvious that Scott grasped the importance of the new information.

I believe that there could be a very strong correlation between the work of Weston and Armstrong. But Armstrong insists that his interest in Oswald ends with 1959. And Weston seems unable to sense that these incidents indicate that there was more than one Oswald, and not just companies aligned with the intelligence community forging time cards so Oswald could travel around the U.S.

Although Armstrong is the first to admit that his work is not finished and that all conclusions have not been drawn, the importance of his work to Weston and all Fourth Decade readers cannot be exaggerated. It should force many of us to rethink some preconceived notions. We should all encourage Armstrong to publish his preliminary findings in a Fourth Decade article, or encourage Dr. Rose to republish the conference paper for all Fourth Decade readers. Armstrong has encouraged other researchers to pursue the same leads he's following. Although it may take several years, a book on Marguerite's multiple addresses and Lee

Harvey Oswald's multiple school records could prove extremely important.

Mr. Weston is a very important researcher who re-exposes extremely interesting bits of information. That he sometimes tries to force square pegs in round holes is possibly due to human nature. We all want our jewels to have immediate and ultimate great value more patient and restrained in our conclusions can be very difficult.

The Armstrong research suggesting two Oswalds certainly provides a compelling new theory which potentially explain some Oswald anomalies.

—Tom C

805 Kendalwood NE, Grand Rapids, MI.



In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

RE: CONSTITUTIONAL AMERICAN PARTIES
OF THE UNITED STATES

Miami, Florida
December 12, 1963

RE: CONSTITUTIONAL AMERICAN PARTIES
OF THE UNITED STATES

On December 10, 1963, a source, who has furnished reliable information in the past and in addition, has furnished some information that could not be verified or corroborated, stated as follows:

Source stated that he is in receipt of a letter signed J. A. MILTEER, Valdosta, Georgia. This letter is set forth as follows in its entirety except for the salutation:

"CONSTITUTIONAL AMERICAN PARTIES OF U. S.
Post Office Box 873
Valdosta, Georgia
J. A. Milteer, National Chairman

"Dec. 9, 1963.

"Due to recent events which have taken place within our American borders that may, in time, change the course of history, and the usual Holidays before us, it is deemed advisable to curtail any contemplated meetings of our Constitutional American Parties of the United States movement until early in the new year of 1964. You will be advised of any meeting which may be called for early in January, 1964.

"Since we are 'Right Wing' and it is our aim and intention to uphold and defend our United States Constitution against all enemies, both within and without our borders, we may be called before the F. B. I. for questioning relative to many things. You are advised to cooperate fully but do so on your Constitutional American Parties rights. Do not go alone for any conference or to answer any questions to any F. B. I. office. Be interviewed in your own home or office with some one present or with others present with you. Do not at any time be interviewed alone with any F. B. I. Agent or Agents.

"If a telephone call comes to you any where, your home, office or any other place requesting you to meet with some one at any certain place, street corner, building, home, business place, church, synagogue or any where, wait a few minutes and call the person who called you to arrange any such meeting to see if it is authentic and for further detailed instructions. This will verify the call and make it clear in your mind whether it is a frame-up or not. Then to further keep yourself in the clear, remain in your home or business place, do not go any where and do not meet with anybody. Frame-ups to involve any and all 'Right Wing' followers may be in the making by none other than the F. B. I. Be very cautious.

"I extend to you and your family a warm, hearty and Merry Christmas, followed with a Happy, Prosperous New Year with blessings from our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST throughout the entire 1964 year.

"Yours for the return to GOD ALMIGHTY, the BIBLE and our United States Constitution in 1964.

/s/ "J. A. Milteer."