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A reading alternative without limits

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There are strong indications that four men were in Chicago to assassinate John F. Kennedy on November 2, 1963, twenty days before Dallas. Here's how it happened:

November 2, 1963, JFK was scheduled to attend the Army-Air Force game at Soldiers Field. Plans called for him to arrive at O'Hare around 11 a.m. and motorcade

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But first...

Five years ago, on commission from Atlantic Monthly, I began investigating a Chicago conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy just twenty days before Dallas. When I asked the wrong questions and came too close to sensitive information, I was followed and investigated by a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) operative. By examining my own file, I identified him and embarrassed the DIA into halting the harassment. There's a record of their "project" in the credit bureau where it began, Credit Information Corporation (named Cook County Credit Bureau at the time). The DIA's inquiry listed my employer as Atlantic Monthly, although that assignment was my only work for the magazine.

Unfortunately, the harassment didn't end until *after* my apartment was broken into. No valuables were taken. But all my files were obviously and clumsily searched.

But that was five years ago, before Watergate, a different era. Today, when reporters edge close to dirty government secrets, it is the agencies who become nervous. And they think thrice before attempting the retaliation and tactics once common to the game.

My investigation, revived within the past eight months, took me to New York, Long Island, Houston and Washington as well as through courts, warehouses, police stations and federal offices in Chicago. Hundreds of hours scrutinizing federal, state and local documents, dozens of interviews, hundreds of leads. And always with the Secret Service and FBI working against me. Doing what they could to make the investigation tedious, time-consuming and expensive. Perhaps they hoped the investigation would just disappear for all the obstructions.

I hope they now know they *must* come up with the answers. It is simply unacceptable to wait until the 21st Century for the release of seventy or so top secret Warren Commission documents.

edwin

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THE PLOT TO KILL JFK IN CHICAGO



I. The Scenario

A maze of evidence developed by other journalists and investigators has totally discredited the Warren Commission and its claim that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone and with no particular motive, assassinated John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 in Dealey Plaza. The shabby work of the Commission's investigation, the improper evaluation of ballistics and trajectories, photographic evidence... any school boy can look at the Zapruder film and see that JFK was fatally shot from the front right. So we BEGIN from the assumption that the President was murdered by a conspiracy in Dallas, one which has not yet been precisely detailed, but one which has been clearly outlined. A man's shadow reveals his presence even though his identity is unknown.

Our contribution to the on-going national search for the truth has nothing to do with Dallas. But by indicating a conspiracy in Chicago, just shortly before JFK was shot in Texas—a conspiracy which the government preferred to forget—we hope to encourage others with information to step forward.

Our work is divided into three sections: Scenario, Investigation, Cover-up. They must be read in order.

Don't read one and neglect the others. Don't accept anything you read in the Scenario until you have read the Investigation of that information and the basis for our conclusions.

There are strong indications that four men were in Chicago to assassinate John F. Kennedy on November 2, 1963, twenty days before Dallas. Here's how it happened:

November 2, 1963, JFK was scheduled to attend the Army-Air Force game at Soldiers Field. Plans called for him to arrive at O'Hare around 11 a.m., motorcade down what was then known as the Northwest Expressway to the Loop.

At Jackson, the caravan would lumber up the Jackson exit, make that slow difficult left-hand turn onto the street and shuttle over to the stadium. The Jackson exit would be crowded with no fewer than 45 local school and civic organizations anxious to see the President. As in Dallas, JFK's limousine would pass through a warehouse district—which Secret Service advance men consider ten times more deadly than any office building corridor. As in Dallas, JFK's limousine would be forced to make a difficult 90-degree turn that would slow him to practically a standstill.

As in Dallas, triangulation of fire would be simple because of the unobstructed view. As in Dallas, the crowd would panic, allowing the assassins to escape unnoticed.

Wednesday, October 30, three days before, a coordination meeting was held in the anteroom to Mayor Daley's fifth floor City Hall office. Attending were various Secret Service officials, three Deputy Chiefs of Police and Captain Robert Linsky, the security liaison between the Chicago Police and the Secret Service. As the security plans for Kennedy's visit were mapped, each Deputy Chief was assigned an area of responsibility. Patrol Deputy Rochford took the airport; Traffic Deputy Madl took the motorcade route and its precarious passage under those deadly overpasses; Captain Linsky took the Conrad Hilton, the stadium itself and various street security functions. Mayor Daley's special events man, Jack Reilly, stopped in to extend his boss' hope for a safe visit.

A few hours after that meeting adjourned, the phone rang in the Chicago office of the Secret Service. Agent Jay Lawrence Stocks was for a few hours the ranking agent, so he took the call. It was the Federal Bureau of Investigation calling from Washington. The FBI man warned

Nov. 2, 1963 – twenty days before Dallas

investigated by Edwin Black

Stocks of a serious and dangerous four-man conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy at the Army-Air Force game. The suspects were rightwing para-military fanatics, armed with rifles and telescopic sights. The assassination itself would probably be attempted at one of the Northwest Expressway overpasses. This information came from an informant named "Lee."

Stocks turned to the other people in the office and with disbelief related the information, adding words to the effect that the FBI wasn't sure how to handle the threat. These men were not the typical nuts with a cheap handgun or some irrational score to settle. They were organized, para-military assassins. It wasn't a federal crime to kill a president or even threaten him (at that time). And J. Edgar Hoover had decided since it was the Secret Service's province to protect the President, the FBI would not, could not, participate in the investigation.

Shortly thereafter, the TWX, or inter-office teletype, clanged out confirmation of the conspiracy from the office of Chief James Rowley, head of the Secret Service in Washington. His instructions were to call every available man in from every other detail and concentrate them in a coordinated blanket investigation to locate the assassins. The teletype added that this would not be an FBI matter, but would be handled strictly by the Secret Service. The buck had officially been passed.

The Chicago office was critically understaffed and unprepared for such a crisis—only eight men for all assignments—counterfeiting, presidential protection and so on. So reinforcements were sent in from other offices around the country: most notable, Myron Weinstein, a crack agent called in from Minneapolis.

A break came the next day, Thursday, October 31. A near north rooming house landlady telephoned the Chicago Police with a tip. Four men were renting rooms, and in one of them, she observed four rifles with telescopic sights. Inasmuch as she knew the President was coming to Chicago in two days, perhaps there was some threat here. Would the police look into it. The police immediately informed the Secret Ser-

vice. Acting agent-in-charge Maurice G. Martineau scooped up the message and made the connection. This was it.

A 24-hour surveillance was set up on the rooming house. Agent Jay L. Stocks spotted and followed two men fitting the landlady's description, all the time maintaining radio contact with Martineau. Stocks was growing tired when the subject's vehicle headed back to their rooming house in the vicinity of Clark and Division. Stocks, maintaining a discreet distance, followed their car into an alley behind the rooming house. Unfortunately, it was a one-way alley. When suddenly the subjects decided not to park in the alley and turned around to exit, they were forced to squeeze past Stock's car.

Stocks saw the men driving his way. Tried to maneuver his car around in time, but couldn't. A message came across the radio before Stocks could reach over and turn the volume button down. As the suspects passed Stocks' car, they heard the radio message, looked him in the eye and took off. Stocks reluctantly reported to Martineau that the surveillance was blown—before any real evidence could be amassed.

Martineau thought. Bust them now, with or without the evidence.

The two men were taken into custody (but not actually arrested or booked) in the very early Friday hours and brought to the Secret Service headquarters. There are no records that any weapons were found in their possession or back at the rooming house.

The interviews and interrogation were conducted by Agent Stocks in the front interrogation office and Agent Robert Motto in the rear interrogation office. Motto's suspect was of large build with an extremely large head and mangy hair, wearing a short waist-jacket. By 10 a.m., the interviewing agents had coaxed nothing out of their suspected assassins. The only record of their effort was the dozens of half empty styrofoam coffee cups scattered throughout the office.

When the other agents in the office heard of Stocks' rookie error, they couldn't believe it. Every time Stocks emerged from interviewing his suspect, the agents would drop comments, crack jokes and make fun. Blocking the alley on a surveillance!

Thomas D. Strong, who fashioned himself above such mistakes, led the ribbing. Over and over again he took the opportunity to get a little dig. Stocks hated it.

The patsy

Meanwhile, two other agents had been following up a highly suspicious yet bum lead. The man's name was Thomas Arthur Vallee, a 30-year-old ex-Marine classified extreme paranoid schizophrenic by military doctors. Vallee worked as an apprentice at IPP Litho-Plate at 625 West Jackson. As a patsy, he was perfect—as perfect for the Chicago assassination plot as Lee Harvey Oswald was for the Dallas assassination plot.

Vallee was born and raised in Chicago. Like Oswald, he joined the Marines in the mid-fifties during the Korean War period. Like Oswald, Vallee was assigned to a U-2 base in Japan; Oswald at Camp Atsugi, Vallee at Camp Otsu. The cover reference for the U-2 project at these bases was Joint Technical Advisory Group (JTAG). Since the CIA exerted a strong presence at these two bases, they were prime recruitment stations.

Both Vallee and Oswald appear to have been recruited by the CIA for "black missions" or otherwise unsavory, personally discrediting assignments. In Oswald's case, at the height of the cold war, he was instructed and helped to defect to Russia. With him he carried top secret radar codes. Oswald's mission, probably unbeknownst to him, may have been to reveal this information for some complex CIA intelligence strategem. Warren Commission testimony documents that all these radar codes had to be revised because of Oswald's defection.

Vallee was recruited about the same time to train members of a fiercely anti-Castro guerrilla group. Objective: the assassination of Fidel Castro. Training locale: in and around Levittown, Long Island.

Neither Vallee nor Oswald received money for their clandestine duties. The surreptitious nature of the business was ego-building to their personalities... inherently rewarding.

Both Vallee and Oswald had recently taken jobs in warehouses at the

Chicago Tribune 1963 FINAL

HEAR DIEM, NHU END LIVES

Suicides of Viet Rulers Reported by Saigon Radio **President Visits City Today**

PLANE IS DUE AT 11 A.M. AT O'HARE FIELD

COURT BACKS AREA SCHOOL PLAN IN GARY

planned assassination sites. Oswald at the fifth floor book depository on Elm Street in Dallas. Vallee on the third floor IPP Printing Company looking out over the Jackson Street exit ramp where Kennedy's limousine would have been hit.

Both Vallee and Oswald could be shown to have extremist political views. Both owned rifles. Both were basically loners, basically drifters. Basically lowlife. The dregs of society. Perfect for the work they were recruited for. Perfect for a frame-up.

They even resembled one another physically.

Arrested by Daniel Groth

While Agent Stocks was chasing his suspects around town, two other agents were acting on their tip about Thomas Arthur Vallee, a violence-prone John Bircher. Information

received accused Vallee of threatening to assassinate Kennedy during his Chicago visit. The source of the tip is unknown. But whoever pointed out Vallee knew his history and personality and how law enforcement would react to him.

In fact, Vallee had spoken bitterly of JFK, blaming him for pulling air support off the Bay of Pigs invaders. "We lost a lot of good men down there," Vallee would say. In his mental state he may have verbalized death threats against the President. But he does not appear to have been connected to the real threat: four other men referred to in the Secret Service teletype.

Problem was, when two Secret Service agents surreptitiously visited Vallee's Uptown fleabag at Paulina and Wilson, they observed weaponry that classed Vallee as more than a loudmouth. An M-1, a carbine, a

handgun and 2500 rounds of ammunition.

With the other members of Chicago's dimly understaffed Secret Service office following other leads, the two agents telephoned Captain Robert Linsky for 24-hour surveillance on Vallee, requesting he be "gotten off the street." Linsky was just about to enter a second special security coordination meeting, this one in the auditorium of police headquarters at 11th and State. The President was due in tomorrow and Linsky had the massive security task of Soldiers Field, the Conrad Hilton and downtown streets to cope with.

He made some telephone calls, requesting two "sharp cops." One of the city's "sharpest" teams was selected: Daniel Groth and Peter Schurla, both working out of the Task Force. Specifically, the "pickpocket detail." They were alert, sensitive, street-tough, efficient. They took orders like sponges take water.

Groth and Schurla dropped everything and whipped over to 11th and State to attend this second security conference. Linsky gave them their instructions. They left the meeting and set out to find Vallee. He hadn't committed any crime yet. Remember, in those days, threatening a President's life was no specific crime. The gun laws probably allowed him to keep the weapons in his home. The surreptitious visiting agents had nothing more on Vallee than a tip. But Groth and Schurla knew their job. "Get Vallee off the street."

November 2, Saturday morning, Groth and Schurla had been tailing Vallee for some time when they decided the moment was right. Vallee's white Ford Falcon was curbed by their unmarked car as he turned west onto Wilson from Damen, heading toward the expressway entrance. Excuse: a left turn without a proper signal. Time: 9 a.m., just two hours before Kennedy was scheduled to parade down the Northwest.

On Vallee's front seat, in open view, a hunting knife. Perfect. Groth charged Vallee with unlawful use of a weapon, the knife, and failure to signal a left turn. A search of Vallee's person and the front of his car revealed no firearms. But when they opened the trunk, they found 750 rounds of ammunition. Vallee had purchased the ammo at the Lawrence Avenue Sears just a short time before.

Diem brothers assassinated

The international dateline places an imaginary day between Chicago and

Saigon. Our November 2 is their November 1. And it was very early that Saturday morning, November 2, when the news hit Chicago. The Diem Brothers—the corrupt rulers of South Vietnam—had been assassinated by a CIA-backed coup, by CIA-sponsored assassins. Obviously, the situation there could no longer be tolerated by a powerful rightwing military faction in America. The Diem Brothers just weren't running an efficient anti-Communist campaign. They refused to operate as American powers-that-be dictated. They were an obstacle. They were eliminated. Method: Executive Action, terminate with extreme prejudice.

At home, the same powers were frustrated and unbelieving. This JFK must be some sort of traitor! In addition to this Civil Rights nonsense; this silliness about moving to repeal the oil depletion tax; this traitorous deal with Khrushchev promising never to invade Cuba and in so doing selling out the Cuban people and tacitly endorsing Dr. Castro—in addition to all that, this sonovabitch Kennedy was soon to announce that Vietnam was a great mistake for America. The bastard was soon to announce all our troops would be home by Christmas! First he sold out Cuba to the Russians. Now South Vietnam to the Red Chinese.

Like Diem, Kennedy was an obstacle.

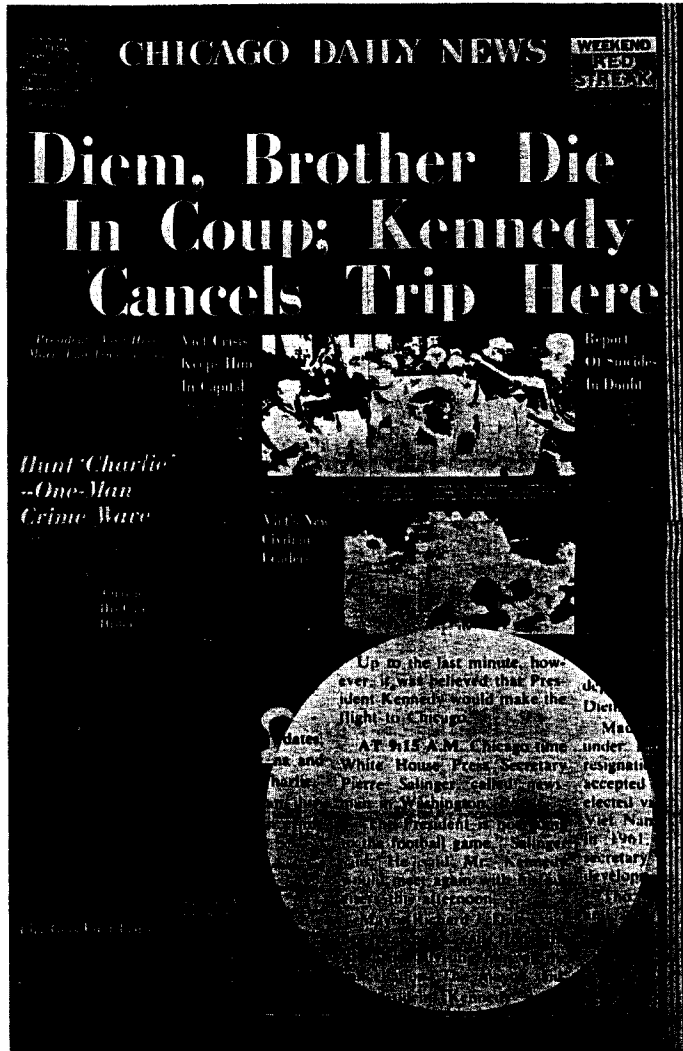
At the last minute

Captain Linsky was in his downtown office when his phone rang with the notice of Vallee's capture.

Groth and Schurla were already escorting Vallee to the Damen Avenue police station where he was interrogated about his political views by Detectives John Madden and Lawrence Coffey. Vallee warned them that the country was in "serious trouble" unless Barry Goldwater would be elected over Kennedy, and ranted about how "only Mayor Richard Daley's crooked machine could insure Kennedy the ghost votes" he needed to beat the conservative Republican.

Madden "invited" Vallee to take them back to his Paulina Street apartment and permit them to search. There was no time for a warrant, the President would be in Chicago in under an hour.

When Vallee refused, Madden threatened to drag Vallee into the "back room." Vallee chose to open his apartment to their search. Madden and Coffey sped with Vallee over to the Uptown address, not knowing they were worried about the wrong man.



With information supplied by the two Secret Service men, they knew exactly what they were looking for. They seized Vallee's M-1, his matched carbine and 2500 rounds, all purchased in New York.

Vallee was transported to the 20th District where he was locked up during the hours the President was expected to be in town.

Back at Secret Service headquarters, Motto and Stocks still couldn't break their suspected conspirators. The minutes were counting down til Kennedy's arrival at O'Hare. Less than an hour away. And still the two remaining conspirators—if they existed—couldn't be found, couldn't be traced. The two suspects pinched the day before remained in custody while Motto and Stocks hit the streets. Motto raced over to Soldiers Field, checking the area around Kennedy's seats. Two sections were reserved for him. One on the Air Force side. A

second on the Army side. The President was scheduled to change sides during halftime.

Word from Washington

The assassination of the Diem brothers shocked Kennedy and his close advisors. But the Chicago visit would not be cancelled. Instead, Pierre Salinger announced at 9:30 a.m., a special communications facility would be rush-constructed under the Soldiers Field bleachers to keep the President informed on up-to-the-minute developments in coup-torn South Vietnam. He reiterated Kennedy would not cancel the trip.

But developments in downtown Chicago apparently were far more threatening than what was going on in Saigon. Two men were in custody in Secret Service headquarters. This Thomas Arthur Vallee character was in custody, his weapons confiscated. But if the original FBI information

was accurate, two of the four alleged conspirators were still at large, probably armed. They were not frenzied maniacs racing across hallways or intersections with cheap pistols in their hands. They were cool, militarized assassins. Identity completely unknown. Waiting somewhere in Chicago with loaded rifles.

JFK cancels

10:15, Saturday, November 2. People in Washington, aware of the unsettled security problem in Chicago, absolutely refuse to allow the President to fly to Chicago. The visit is cancelled at the very last moment. The press corps jet has even taken off. The excuse: Kennedy had to stay close to developments in Southeast Asia.

Phones rang in Chicago bringing the news of JFK's cancellation. This was unheard of! No notice at all? Someone hired soundtrucks to cruise up and down the motorcade route announcing the cancellation over loudspeakers to the waiting crowds. Mayor Daley was piqued. Thousands more who had lined the streets especially on Jackson Boulevard were sorely disappointed.

But a handful of agents and investigators were intensely relieved. The two suspects could no longer be held without an iota of evidence. They were released from Secret Service custody.

However, the shadow of the assassins followed JFK wherever he went from that moment on. An identical warning of an assassination conspiracy was teletyped to the New Orleans office of the FBI just before Kennedy's planned visit there November 17. (A copy of the teletype was recently acquired by CBS news and televised along with an interview of the man on duty when it came across.) That plot was probably assigned to a second team. There is no record of any New Orleans arrests. But obviously the plot was either neutralized or aborted for some reason. It didn't stop JFK from safely visiting New Orleans.

It also didn't stop him from visiting Dallas, November 22, just twenty days after Chicago. As he drove over the most precarious of routes, through a warehouse district on Elm Street that had not even been covered by the Secret Service advance men, as the motorcade lumbered to a fatal pause in Dealey Square, shots split through the cheering crowd, Kennedy's head exploded into tremendous bloody bits.

They finally got him.

II. The Investigation

Obviously, the information related to Chicago Independent by numerous sources and pieced together in the preceding scenario was shocking. Every word of the scenario is predicated on information gained from documents and interviews. All documents were doublechecked for authenticity. All interviews were compared to other independently-gained information. Where individual claims could not be either substantiated or discredited, the sources were subjected to either polygraph or voice stress analysis to indicate truthfulness. There is no supposition, except in one area. We know Thomas Arthur Vallee was arrested and that his background is accurately described. However, we have no way of knowing that the people behind the conspiracy to kill JFK actually set Vallee up as a fall guy, as Oswald was set up for a patsy in Dallas. We do not know who supplied the original information leading to Vallee's arrest. We speculate the conspirators were behind it. Now follows a complete documentation and investigative profile of all the information in the scenario.

Documenting anything in the conspiracy to assassinate John F. Kennedy is practically impossible. Worse, theoretical, often false, statements have a way of reinforcing themselves and slowly transforming into truth in the eyes of investigators.

Problems: 1) The biggest problem is sources. Most of them are insane, emotionally disturbed, seeking attention or unreliable because of their illicit activities.

2) Key sources in a position to confirm or deny critical information are often dead. Not necessarily because some grand conspiracy wanted to "X" off every viable witness. There is good reason to suspect the deaths of 90 important witnesses in rapid succession during the first few years following the assassination. Generally, they died under bizarre circumstances (frequently suicide), usually on the day they were to render some important testimony or deposition to an

investigative body. But in the Chicago plot, at least, people died from ordinary circumstances, most of them during the past five years.

3) Reporters have distorted facts to sell newspapers. Assassination theories make great headlines. Unfortunately, follow-up for authenticity is scarce.

4) Most of the routine documents such as flight tickets, arrest reports, weapons receipts, and so on have been destroyed—either intentionally or because of normal purging procedures.

5) The government is covering up the facts. Specifically, the FBI and the Secret Service. Not because they were in on the plot. But because they botched the protection of the President and the investigation of his assassins. They are covering up their own stupidity. Their own ineptitude.

The disclosures about threatening letters Oswald delivered to the FBI ten days before the assassination are only now surfacing. An agent has admitted destroying the evidence just hours after the killing of JFK in Dallas. Former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's closest aide, William Sullivan, is quoted by Time Magazine as claiming ten top FBI officials, including himself, were ordered to withhold information about the Oswald threat from the already misguided, bluffable Warren Commission investigators.

In any man's book, such cover-ups are accessory to murder after the fact.

The one single foremost guiding principle we pursued in this investigation was trust no source, trust no document, trust no government official, trust no eyewitness, trust nothing until it had been so severely challenged, it could not be discredited.

Our main source

Our main supply of information was one of the Secret Service agents on duty at the time of the conspiracy. In cooperating with us, he broke the "old boy system" of the Secret Service and regulations forbidding press contacts among individual agents. His terms: total

Our source agreed to submit to a polygraph test, as long as he could do so without being discovered.

anonymity. His motives: a desire to set the record straight. We agreed. He is afraid that if his cooperation were uncovered by the Secret Service or the FBI, they would move against him in small but powerful ways—as organizations can do to their disloyal. "They can make life very difficult," he explains.

To verify his information, our source agreed to submit to a polygraph test, as long as he could do so without being discovered. An unlogged appointment was arranged with John E. Reid & Associates, the most respected lie detection and polygraph service in the nation. Under an assumed name, our man flew from the East Coast to O'Hare, where he was met, then shuttled to the Loop.

The polygraph technician interviewed our man for about 45 minutes, then conducted actual polygraph examinations for about 30 minutes. Our man was tested for his knowledge of the original teletype he claims was received by Secret Service in Chicago warning of a four-man conspiracy; his knowledge that the informant's code name was "Lee"; his knowledge of Secret Service Agent J.L. Stocks' surveillance and the suspected assassins' discovery of that surveillance; and related information.

The test was inconclusive. Reid's tester explained 15-20 percent of the subjects examined must return for a second shorter test before their truthfulness can be certified. He added that deceit is generally quite easy to detect, especially among law enforcement personnel who already bear an emotional respect for the polygraph. And in our man's case, the lie detector didn't come close to the deceit range, but did fall just short of the total truthfulness range, requiring the second shorter session.

The Reid laboratory panel of experts explained that these indefinite tests are generally due to subtle doubts in the subject's mind. For this reason, polygraph questions are structured with extreme care. Reid's panel ventured that the subtle doubt could be regarding the date *October 30*. Our man remembered it more as a "Wednesday before the President's Saturday visit" rather than October 30. In fact, when the Reid examiner detected the indefinite response, he queried our man about any doubts. Our man replied only that the specific date October 30 troubled him.

Unfortunately, because our man had been interviewed and tested in a tiny cubicle for nearly one and a half hours, he was physiologically unsuitable for additional testing at that time (testing which would repeat the questions in a different phrasing to ignore the date and concentrate on the main issue—the teletype itself).

After the test, the Reid panel pleaded with us to somehow return for a second short 20-minute test—that's all they'd need to positively certify our man's truthfulness, assuming he was telling the truth. It was painful to tell them that it was impossible.

Persuading our source to go as public as flying to Chicago and submitting to a polygraph examination was extremely difficult. He's already gone through a lot in his attempts to bring the details of the Chicago plot to light. Regretfully, we can't expose that entire story here, lest we identify our source.

His wife and family were against the polygraph. His minister was against it. His best friend was against it. He was against it. He projected that the lie test would be just the first step. More testing, then grand juries, Senate sub-

committees, reporters, and more reporters would eventually follow.

His life and his family's life would become public property. The sole basis under which he finally consented, after long appeals, was that the single test be his last involvement. From then on, it would be up to the rest of the country to scratch away at the facts. We promised him that under no circumstances would we let any other investigative body get near him. There would be no additional tests.

John E. Reid's tester even agreed to meet our man in a neutral spot—such as a motel room. Certifying his truthfulness was very important to the polygraph institute, especially in light of our man's far-reaching disclosures. But our source would not come in again. He wouldn't even discuss it.

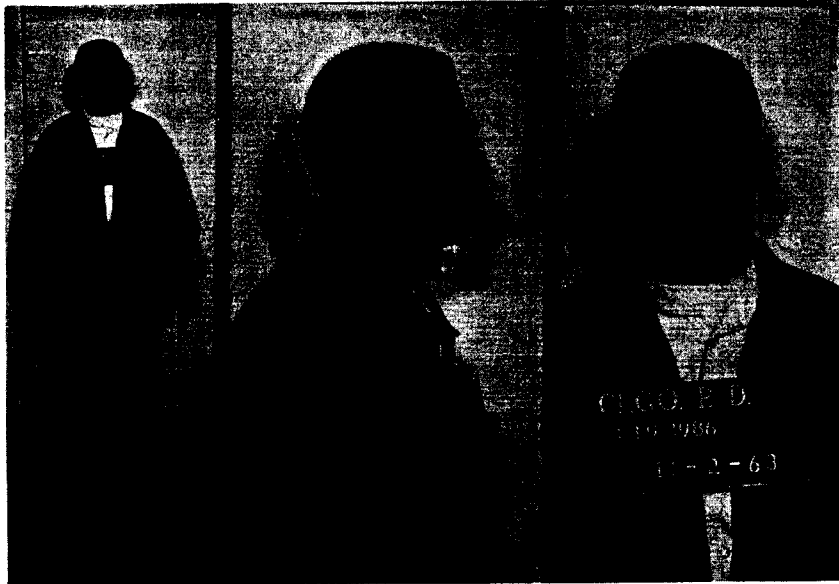
Checking out our source's version of the events at the Secret Service office just before JFK's November 2 visit involved tracking men and documents. We began at the southside home of court activist Sherman Skolnick. Skolnick, whose local reputation has suffered within the past few years, at one time held an admirable score of direct hits against corrupt politicians and judges. It was Skolnick who began the investigation into Otto Kerner's racetrack deals.

Skolnick had developed some leads on the Thomas Arthur Vallee arrest years ago, that never went beyond the question mark stage. He even filed a Freedom of Information Act suit against the government to release more facts. He was ignored.

It was 2 a.m. on a Saturday night as we drank coffee and reviewed documents in his possession that at least proved there was a man named Thomas Arthur Vallee, the Secret Service was concerned about him and Dan Groth and Peter Schurla of the Chicago police had arrested him.

I took copies with me.

We promised we'd let no other investigative body get near him.



Thomas Arthur Vallee as he was booked November 2, 1963.

Records are gone

Next step was to scour local records. We discovered that Judge Walter J. Kowalski's Rackets Court was one of several handy depositories for security risks like Vallee or perhaps any of the four men. In those days, federal agents without enough evidence for a federal warrant, would drag their suspects into a cooperative judge's courtroom. Some trumped charge would be entered, say disorderly conduct, reckless driving or vagrancy. Just enough to keep the man off the streets. Then depending on the judge's demeanor that morning, he would order a suspended sentence, a fine or a dismissal.

In a warehouse on Lake Street and in Civic Center storage rooms, the County preserves all the old dockets, the court records, from ten, fifteen, twenty years back. Each docket is encased in a massive 30-pound ledger. After two days of searching for Kowalski's November 2, 1963 docket, we finally found it. Vallee's name and charge was located. In addition, we checked out the records of every other defendant during the three or four days in question. Dozens of good leads. No other results.

Then we checked every arrest in the entire city on those days. Who arrested them? Why? Any weapons? It took weeks. In the process, we'd develop leads: Look for Cuban names. Look for the name "Bradley." Look for the name "Braden." Nothing came of it.

Well, if Vallee was the only one arrested, maybe arrest records were the wrong route. Let's think about the weapons. All weapons are inventoried when seized. The crime lab routinely tests them, and issues a weapons receipt. We found the confidential weapons inventory records. Vallee's rifles were registered. So were other long guns, but it was impossible to identify them without the corresponding receipts. When we went looking for the receipts, we discovered they had been routinely destroyed several years ago.

Working against us was not a conspiracy, but a bureaucracy. It was impossible to cope with.

Tracking Motto and Stocks

Still, we did have *some* documents to show. With them we might convince a few agents to cooperate. We'd have to track the original group, who had moved several times from city to city in the

intervening twelve years.

First a word of background. We're told Secret Service men possess remarkably good memories, especially where it concerns major conspiracies or other important crimes. Furthermore, we're told that while serious, elaborate conspiracies are rather commonplace in the counterfeiting business, which Secret Service investigates, they are quite uncommon with regard to protection of a president. Most threats against presidents are from basically unorganized, emotional, frenzied individuals easy to locate and put away — not conspiracies.

Secondly, Secret Service men who have served protection detail for presidential visits generally recall the incidents clearly. In particular, November of 1963 was of course the fateful month for the Secret Service. In talking to agents and former agents, I perceived their special awareness of where they were at the time of the assassination and how they helped protect JFK on any of his immediately preceding visits, including the planned November 2 appearance.

One of the most important men to contact was Jay Lawrence Stocks, the man said to have first received the phone call from Washington about the four-man assassination conspiracy and the man who later conducted the blundered surveillance of the two suspects in the alley. We tracked Stock's movements within the Secret Service from the Chicago office, to the Kansas City office, to the Detroit office where he is today. I located Stocks at his home in the Detroit area.

In a telephone interview, Stocks recalled the planned November visit but hedged on the subject of conspiracy. At first he claimed to remember "something about a guy called Vallee." Then he stopped himself and recited, "All I can say is I have no specific recollection one way or the other. Maybe it happened, maybe it didn't. I just don't remember." Pressed as to whether he flubbed the surveillance on two of the four suspects, thus incurring the general office ribbing the next day, he answered with irritation, "I just can't remember one way or the other. You'll have to

We found the confidential weapons inventory records. Vallee's rifles were registered.

call Washington for more information."

We were eager to challenge our informant's information about Stocks and told him so, urged him to think about it and please indicate whether our story was false. Stocks said he could have no more comment.

Next we tracked Robert Motto, the man said to have interviewed one of the two suspected conspirators November 1 in the Secret Service office. Motto retired from the Secret Service several years ago but still lives in Chicago. After some checking, we located him working as an investigator for the Cook County Public Administrator's office, handling probate cases. A meet was arranged in a parked car at Diversey and Broadway.

Motto well recalled the planned November 2 visit. He affably told where he was on November 2—checking seats in Soldiers Field and related other details. But when the question of conspiracy came up, Motto also suffered a memory lapse. "Gee, I'd really like to help you. For all I know maybe there was

something like that. I just can't be sure. I have nothing to be afraid of. The Secret Service can't touch me. My pension is in. But I just don't recall."

Well, yes or no, did he interview a suspect? "I wish I could remember. I just can't."

Documents from D.C.

Initial leads were all turning up dry. We would have been happy to disprove our source's information. But all the "I can't remember" were just *too* convenient. It's easy enough for a man to say "No, that never happened" when you're asking if he was investigating a major assassination plot. So something was there.

I called a friend in Washington, DC who knew a lot about Secret Service and FBI records and filing systems. He would help me gain access to some original files and reports relating to the Warren Commission. The next flight to Washington was in 45 minutes. I was on it.

I began going through the documents at 10 a.m. There were

thousands of them. About 1550 separate reports, each one anywhere from a single page to a hundred pages. Many of these had been classified for years. Hour after hour I studied the FBI and Secret Service approach to presidential protection and investigation of threats.

The striking feature was the incredible diligence, the incredibly exhaustive level of investigation. A telling example of Chicago investigations: somebody had heard a rumor that their homosexual boyfriend had slept with Oswald several weeks before the assassination. An agent worked day and night, tracing the source of the rumor, from homosexual to homosexual, until seven persons later he located the source, a bi-sexual who claimed he had really remarked, "Wouldn't it have been nice to sleep with Oswald."

Even more exemplary: A girl reports her friend who works at the Cokesbury Bookstore on Wabash Street recalls talking to a "strange" customer a few days before JFK

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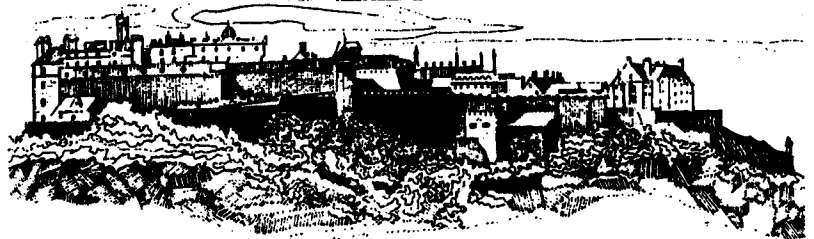
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Kennedy

continued from page 11

was murdered. The strange man was "an avid fan of science fiction paperbacks." On the day in question, he remarked that "Martians were likely to invade Earth and assassinate all world leaders." Presumably, that included Kennedy. No fewer than a dozen interviews were conducted. When the customer was finally located, he admitted he enjoyed science fiction and really wasn't predicting such a worldwide catastrophe as much as relating an interesting storyline he'd read somewhere.

On and on, the investigations of kooks, nuts. Then Oswald, Ruby. Interviews with everyone they'd ever known. Every phone call they'd made for six months before Dallas. Every check they ever received.

In depth. Leaving nothing to guesswork. Exhaustive.

Then I happened on some reports of the Vallee incident. The reports were strangely second-hand. Based on the single surreptitious visit of the Secret Service agents to his apartment and police accounts. His weapons were never checked. The serial numbers were never checked to see if they were in sequence with any others uncovered in the Dallas investigation. Vallee himself was not interviewed about his possible connections to anything in the Dallas investigation. . . unlike the homosexual, the science fiction

lover. . . unlike anyone else of the thousands that came to the attention of the Secret Service as they investigated Jack Kennedy's murder. They didn't even ask the routine question they asked all potential threats: where were you on November 22? They merely reported that his employers claimed Vallee was in Chicago on November 22 (a statement these sources later denied to me.)

Why? Why was everything being cut short on the Vallee case? What were they afraid to find?

It was late, about 9:30 at night. My eyes hurt. I stretched them to stay awake. I hadn't moved from the little table where I was sitting for nearly twelve hours. There was nothing more on Vallee anywhere. There were three strange top secret memos regarding Lee Harvey Oswald dated in Chicago that I couldn't get my hands on. Other than that, zero. Nothing on any conspiracy of four men—and records on that were more important to me than anything on Vallee, especially since he was probably a side issue.

Then just at the end, I almost glossed over it. Unlabeled. Just a few terse sentences without elaboration. Ten days after the Dallas assassination, FBI agents in Chicago paid a discreet visit to Jose Mills, a Mexicana ticket agent at O'Hare airport. The question: on Flight 800, November 1, did a foreigner named Lee Martin fly from Mexico City to Chicago? The answer: No. But one M. Lee and one R. Martin were passengers on that flight. (Lee Harvey Oswald used

many aliases, a favorite of which was O.H. Lee.) Second question: on Flight 800, November 12, did a foreigner named Wilfred Oswald fly from Mexico City to Chicago. Answer: No, but J. Oswalt was a passenger on that flight.

On a second sheet, a report dated the same day. Ernest R. Tobin, an immigration inspector at O'Hare was asked how the I-94 forms, required of all such entering aliens, could be examined. Tobin told the agents where to find them.

But the file indicates they never looked. They never tried to locate Lee or Martin or the man known as Oswalt. Later, we checked with immigration. If the FBI or Secret Service had followed up that week, they could have traced M. Lee, R. Martin and J. Oswalt. Now that those I-94 forms have been added to the master file—organized alphabetically, not by date or flight number—it is virtually impossible to locate a single name (without more detailed personal data) from the tens of millions of I-94 names listed.

Seeing this after all those exhaustive investigations, it appears someone asked some wrong questions, received right answers and decided they didn't want to know any more. A similar federal investigative pattern was to reappear over and over again throughout the next decade until in Watergate someone got caught. Obviously, the FBI didn't want to uncover any complications. Why should they? Oswald was clean and neat. Leave it alone.

I took the last flight out of Washington back to Chicago.

FBI agents received good positive leads in response to inquiries about foreigners named Lee Martin and Wilfred Oswald flying from Mexico City to Chicago. But they never followed up, even after pinpointing the records they needed. The basis for the inquiry about the critical November 1 date has never been explained.

FD-302 (Rev. 1-25-60) FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Date 12/2/63

1

JOSE MILLS, Ticket Agent, Mexicana Airlines, International Terminal, O'Hare International Airport, advised that passenger manifests for Flight 800 from Mexico City to Chicago on November 1, 1963, failed to reflect one LEE MARTIN as a passenger. However, they do reflect that one M. LEE and one R. MARTIN were passengers.

Mr. MILLS also advised that on the same flight, that is, Flight 800 from Mexico City to Chicago on November 12, 1963, no passenger by the name of WILFRED OSWALT is listed. However, one J. OSWALT is listed as a passenger.

Mr. MILLS stated that no further data concerning these passengers is available in Chicago.

FD-302 (Rev. 1-25-60) FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Date 12/2/63

1

ERNEST R. TOBIN, Inspector in Charge, Immigration and Naturalization Service, O'Hare International Airport, advised that all passengers arriving by airline from Mexico are required to fill out I-94 forms which would give an address where they could be located. He stated, however, that the records for the dates November 1 and 12, 1963, have been placed on microfilm and are now in the possession of Immigration and Naturalization Service, Appraisers Building, 630 Sansone Street, San Francisco, California. He stated that in order to further identify passengers arriving from Mexico on Mexicana Airlines on those dates, the microfilm records should be consulted.

Ken Lynch and Tom Coll stonewall it

The next morning I turned to Thomas D. Strong, the man who reportedly led the office ribbing the morning after Stocks muffed the surveillance. We traced Strong to an intelligence unit of the Secret Service. We were expecting him to return our call when the telephone rang with Ken Lynch at the other end.

Who is Ken Lynch? He is a Secret Service agent assigned to deal with unpleasant media inquiries. He insisted that Strong would not make any comment to us about any possible assassination plot against JFK, but could we give him the details.

We did and he promised to contact Strong and within a day or two respond in the following manner, and we quote: "If the teletype and the conspiracy existed, we'll answer truthfully that it did, if we can. If it did *not* exist, we will of course immediately inform you that it did not. If the teletype and/or this conspiracy did exist but for some reason I wouldn't be permitted to discuss it with you, rather than lie to you and say it didn't, I would merely respond 'No comment.' That's our procedure around here."

Shortly before that, we had filed a Freedom of Information action to gain access to the teletype in question and other documents relating to the surveillance and custody. Soon after, we were contacted by the Freedom of Information officer, Robert Goff, who claimed the Secret Service could locate no records that might confirm or deny the existence of any such teletype warning of a Chicago conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy. Nor could the Secret Service find records of Stocks' surveillance or the interrogation of two suspects by Stocks and Motto. Nor could they determine if agent Thomas D. Strong had joked about the foiled surveillance the next day.

I asked Goff if anyone had actually contacted Stocks, Motto, or Strong to check the information. Somewhat embarrassed he answer-

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Kennedy

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ed, "Well, actually no one had contacted them, no." I came back, "Then how the hell do you know it isn't possible to determine if the surveillance or interrogation occurred?" Goff mumbled something, sputtered and then blurted, "Well, that's all I can say. We're not going to give you this information so you may as well give up."

We scurried back to Ken Lynch, remember? The guy who would tell us the truth, unless he couldn't, in which case he would "no comment." Lynch delivered his official response to our inquiry. "No comment on anything!" Can't you even tell me if we're right or wrong, if this

teletype exists? He repeated his frozen answer.

At one point, we demanded a reason for the "no comment." Lynch retorted, "Here's one reason. There's a Freedom of Information Act inquiry on the entire subject. And therefore we cannot divulge any information." Who submitted the inquiry? "Sorry," he came back. "I can't discuss that."

Wait a minute. You're not by any stretch of the imagination referring to my own FOI action, are you? "Actually, I am," Lynch answered. Incredulous, I told him I had already been turned down on my request—and even if I hadn't, what difference did it make. I was the same person seeking the same documents, whether through a press inquiry or through a Freedom of Information action. Lynch seemed a bit startled to learn I had already been turned

down on my FOI action. "Really?" he said. "But I was told we were still studying just how we would respond to you. No decision has been made." After that last slip, however, Ken Lynch declared he had nothing more to say, period.

We tried the FBI, the agency said to have originated the conspiracy information through their informant named "Lee." Here was a serious hole in our source's story. As everyone in the law enforcement and the intelligence community knows, informants are never given name-codes, only number-codes. So why was the FBI's informant in this conspiracy name-coded? Even our own man thought this was illogical.

An unofficial source of ours in the FBI explained why once in a great while non-numerical codes are assigned to informants. All Secret Service and FBI informants routine-

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Date December 2, 1963

Detective LAWRENCE COFFEY, Area 6, Chicago Police Department, furnished the following information:

One THOMAS VALLEE, described as a white male, residence at 4614 North Paulina was arrested at 9 A.M. on November 2, 1963, on the basis of a traffic violation involving a wrong turn. The arrest occurred a short distance from VALLEE's reputed residence. At the time of this arrest, VALLEE was found to be in possession of a knife, and he was so charged (carrying a concealed weapon). COFFEY advised that he was assigned to investigate this matter as a result of information furnished to his office by investigators of the Secret Service Division in Chicago. He stated that the Secret Service had received information to the effect that the individual known as THOMAS VALLEE was in the possession of a "small arsenal", referring to a rifle or rifles and a large amount of ammunition. In view of the planned forthcoming visit by President KENNEDY for the Army-Air Force game to be held at Soldier's Field, Chicago, on November 2, 1963, the Secret Service passed this information on to officers of the Chicago Police Department on the basis that this individual possibly provided a threat to the President's life.

From the time this information was first furnished to the Chicago Police Department (a couple of days prior to November 2, 1963), officers of the Chicago Police Department placed a 24 hour surveillance on VALLEE and his activities. Finally on the morning of November 2, 1963, at about 9:00 A.M., surveilling officers noticed VALLEE make a wrong turn, and on this basis proceeded to arrest him. The officers found a knife in the front seat of VALLEE's car and formally charged him with carrying a concealed weapon.

Subsequently, officers of the Chicago Police Department conducted a search of VALLEE's home and discovered an M-1 rifle, a carbine rifle and about 2,500 rounds of rifle ammunition.

On 11/30/63 at Chicago, Illinois File # 62-6118

by SA WILLIAM L. HERRMANN/WAQ Date dictated 12/2/63

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Date December 2, 1963

MAURICE G. MARTINEAU, Supervising Agent, Secret Service Division, Chicago, furnished the following information:

A short time before November 2, 1963 (estimated to be about three days prior to November 2, 1963) the Secret Service Office in Chicago received information to the effect that one THOMAS VALLEE, residence 4614 North Paulina, was in possession of a large amount of rifle ammunition, along with a collection of guns. Along with this, information was received that VALLEE was of definite anti-KENNEDY and anti-administrative sentiments, that he was an ex-Marine, that he had been wounded during the Korean War and that he received complete disability from the Veteran's Administration. In view of the fact that President KENNEDY was due into Chicago for the Army-Air Force game to be held at Soldier's Field in Chicago on November 2, 1963, Agents of the Secret Service Office conducted a pretext interview of VALLEE on October 30, 1963, three days prior to the President's planned arrival. During the course of this pretext interview, interviewing Agents noted that VALLEE had two M-1 rifles in his possession, along with a .22 caliber revolver and an estimated 1,000 rounds, in miscellaneous ammunition.

The Secret Service Office immediately notified officers of the Chicago Police Department after the pretext interview mentioned above and a 24 hour surveillance was placed on VALLEE and his activities by the Chicago Police Department. On November 2, 1963, officers of the Chicago Police Department arrested VALLEE on a technical traffic violation and found in his possession a knife and the officers charged him with an "assault with a deadly weapon" charge. At the time of his arrest on the traffic violation, the police found in the trunk of VALLEE's vehicle 700 rounds of ammunition. They subsequently searched his home at 4614 North Paulina and found additional ammunition.

MARTINEAU advised that his office had verified on the day of President KENNEDY's assassination, through a source, that VALLEE was employed at his place of business during the entire day. He added that VALLEE is employed as a photo lithographer at ITP Printing Company, 696 West Jackson, Chicago, Illinois.

On 11/26/63 at Chicago, Illinois File # 62-6115

by SA WILLIAM L. HERRMANN/WAQ Date dictated 12/2/63

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Incredibly sloppy, inaccurate, conflicting reports filed just 10 days after the assassination. A & A1) No one knows exactly when the investigation of Vallee began. Highly unusual. Confusion perhaps because the entire office was busy tracking down four other men suspected of a massive conspiracy. B) Fails to mention 750 rounds recovered from trunk. C) Quotes the wrong charge. Assault and unlawful use (possession) are two separate offenses. Assault is far more serious, of course. D) Specifies 300 rounds were recovered from Vallee's trunk. Vallee and Detective Coffey confirm 750 rounds were actually recovered. E) No one asked Vallee himself about his whereabouts. And ask yourself this: Why is the Secret Service relying wholly on the Chicago Police for their surveillance, investigation, searches and interrogation? Was the rest of the office too busy with investigating a more massive conspiracy before the President's arrival?

Coll blurted out, "I remember that case. . . That was strictly a Secret Service affair."

ly receive a number-code such as "834." The Service or Bureau maintains an extensive file on each such informant, identifiable by number-code only. However, it's not difficult for any federal intelligence agent to discover the identity of such an informant through a cross-index which lists the number-coded informants and their true identities. This cross-index is supposed to be a secret.

Therefore, once in a great while an informant is so highly placed, so vital or so vulnerable, he is assigned a non-numeral code. His identity is known only to his control in the Bureau or Service. Such was the case with an informant known only as "D," whose classified testimony about Lee Harvey Oswald in the American Embassy in Mexico was only recently revealed through a Freedom of Information Act suit.

This thinking may have also been the case with Lee, the man or woman supplying the information on the Chicago assassination plot. For an official response, we contacted the official Washington smoke screener, agent Thomas B. Coll, in charge of press relations. Coll at first refused to check our claim, denying that FBI originated the Chicago conspiracy tip. I kept asking how he knew this for a fact without checking. He finally blurted out, "Because I remember that case. Some people were picked up. And I'm telling you it wasn't ours. That was strictly a Secret Service affair. That whole Soldiers Field matter was a Secret Service affair." When pressed on his specific knowledge of the Chicago plot, Coll grunted, "You'll get no more out of me. I've said as much as I'm going to on that subject. Get the rest from the Secret Service."

Robert Linsky remembers

Having been stonewalled and no-commented by everyone we contacted in the Secret Service and FBI, we turned to local sources. First on the list was Robert Linsky. We found him working as a supervisor with Burns Security in

Evergreen Plaza. After the police tavern shakedowns that scandalized his entire unit and sent many of his direct subordinates to jail, Linsky resigned.

Linsky was reluctant to talk, but he finally consented to a taped sitdown in his far southside office. Linsky remembered the planned November 2 JFK visit. He supplied information about the security meetings in the Mayor's office and the police headquarters auditorium. And he confirmed information we had developed on the events leading to Thomas Arthur Vallee's arrest, from the Secret Service request, to the selection and assignment of arresting Chicago police officers Groth and Schurla, to the actual surveillance and arrest of Vallee. The only area in which his information on Vallee failed was in the ammunition found in the automobile. He refused to believe 750 rounds of ammo were recovered. Even after we showed him federal documents to prove it.

While Linsky supplied much information about security in general, and Vallee in particular, he denied any knowledge whatsoever about a four-man conspiracy. He said, "For all I know there could have been such a conspiracy, but I wasn't in a position to be aware of it." Linsky maintained this position no matter how hard pressed.

Later, the interview tape was subjected to Psychological Stress Evaluation (voice stress analysis), which is a lie detection technique analogous to the polygraph. While John E. Reid's machine measures respiration and blood pressure, the PSE measures micro-tremors in the voice which are affected in much the same way when a person is deceitful. Anthony Pellicano Associates, a nationally recognized voice stress expert located in Westchester, subjected the Linsky interview tape to PSE and adjudged his responses to be truthful.

Groth and Schurla get nervous

Next stop, Dan Groth and Peter

Schurla. Very touchy. You see, Dan Groth has quite a name in Chicago. A few years after "this sharp cop" had done the Secret Service a favor by getting Vallee off the streets, he kicked down Fred Hampton's apartment door and 99 bullets later two Black Panther leaders were massacred—which many claim was another favor. . . this one to the FBI. In fact, Groth has repeatedly been accused of being some sort of a CIA or intelligence operative brought out of the deep freeze for special assignments when necessary. He has even been taken to court by a number of legal activists who claim that Groth and the other State's Attorney raiders that dawn were really pulling a deadly *dirty trick, black mission*, whatever euphemism you call it, for the CIA or FBI. And they've predicated these suits on Groth's save-the-day involvement in the Vallee affair. The claim: if Groth wasn't a special federal agent, why would he of all people have been chosen to pinch Vallee.

In all fairness to Dan Groth, there has been no substantiation to these charges beyond rhetoric and supposition. In the process, however, Groth has transformed from a cool, tough cop to a nervous pity of a man. His hair has greyed considerably. His family life has been ruined. He's run out of answers for his children. And he works two full jobs a day to pay off a massive legal expense bill in excess of \$17,000.

The Vallee affair has been enmeshed in suspicion because Groth and Schurla—either on assumed or express orders from the federal government—covered up the exact nature of the Vallee arrest. Vallee's arrest report indicates nothing about the 750 rounds of ammunition and Groth and Schurla have repeatedly denied arresting Vallee for anything more than a turn signal violation. Even though the words M-1 Rifle appear incongruously at the top right hand corner of the arrest report. Groth has always dismissed that as a "freak typo."

Vallee answered quickly and curtly: "Soldiers Field. The plot against John F. Kennedy."

Groth was once a very good source of mine. During the height of the Black Panther raid controversy, he granted me exclusive interviews. But when I contacted him this time, he accused me of plotting against him. In a coffee shop across from the Chicago Avenue police station where he works, Groth and I tried to negotiate terms for conveying information. He rejected any and all guarantees of anonymity or confidentiality. But he did end the discussion with this telling emotional outburst: "Dammit! I had the weight of my country on my shoulders when I went out to arrest Vallee. Why is everyone trying to make me out a sonovabitch now!"

I had no better luck with Schurla. While he hadn't suffered the stigma Groth had (since Schurla was not a part of that infamous State's Attorney raiding party), he was still extremely jittery. This Vallee business had brought him to the attention of legal activists who knew fragments of the Vallee story and had subpoenaed him to testify, trying to prove his former partner was CIA. That meant legal fees for Schurla as well. So Schurla refused to acknowledge one word.

Until one day I visited him in his office on the eighth floor of police headquarters. Oh yes, Schurla had gone up in the world. Now part of Chicago's massive police intelligence apparatus. I sneaked into the eighth floor complex, where all the surveillance photos are developed and confronted Schurla personally. Up until this time we had conversed only on the phone. Before Schurla had a chance to back away, I fired the facts at him. He looked at me nervously and admitted, "Okay, if you got all that information, you've got the Vallee story. Go ahead and print it." I thanked him for his permission.

Coffey confirms details

We received greater cooperation from Sergeant Lawrence Coffey, who with his partner Sergeant James Madden, interrogated Vallee, searched Vallee's Uptown apartment and seized rifles. Madden had died a few years before, but Coffey's

memory was one of the most helpful. "Naturally I remember every detail," he said. "How often is anyone involved in a threat against the President's life? One involving a lot of heavy weapons like this Vallee character." Coffey supplied most of the details quoted in our scenario about Vallee's interrogation. He ended his recollection with the statement, "You know, with the President being murdered like that just a few weeks later in Dallas, I often wondered if Vallee had anything to do with it. But I suppose

found a good-paying printing job. Confidential Secret Service records we examined showed that when he moved, the Chicago office forwarded his file to Indianapolis. A few years later, he moved on again. This time to Columbus. Once again the file was forwarded to the next city. His file also reveals that in the fall of 1966, the Secret Service conducted its first interrogation of Vallee. Agent Manpell called him in for questioning about his rifle numbers. Apparently, Vallee had quickly replaced the weapons Coffee



Groth and Schurla for years claimed the notation "M.1 (Rifle)" in the upper right-hand corner of the report was a "freak typo." We now know Groth and Schurla recovered 750 rounds of M-1 rifle ammunition from Vallee's auto. Did "M.1 (Rifle)" refer to the ammunition or to something else?

the Secret Service talked to the guy and checked him out pretty thoroughly. Ruled it out, huh?" I answered, "No. You and your partner were the only law enforcement people to interrogate Vallee. They didn't even contact him after the assassination to check on his weapons or associations." Coffey shrugged and capped, "I wonder what that means?"

Undercover in Houston

The last step was to locate Vallee himself. Shortly after 1963, Vallee drifted to Indianapolis where he

and Madden had confiscated. The file sections we saw did not indicate exactly why Manpell was checking Vallee's new weapons, but one Secret Service source reported it involved a subsequent threat by Vallee against a Secret Service protectee, perhaps LBJ. But even then not a single question was raised about Vallee's 1963 activities in Chicago.

Recently, Vallee again drifted, this time to Houston. His Secret Service file did not list his current address. But by checking with a source in the Texas Department of

Motor Vehicles, we determined Vallee had applied for a drivers license just a few months ago and was now living in the rural outskirts of Houston. And a survey of printers turned up his place of employ.

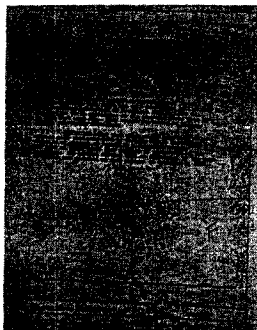
A few weeks ago, my barber gave me a crew-cut, then I boarded a Braniff jet for Houston. I carried nothing more than my toothbrush and some tape recording equipment. I would pose as a rightwing reactionary—which some of my friends joked required no pretending! My name would be Eddie Brokaw. My objective: to coax out of Vallee all the details of the incidents surrounding JFK's planned November 2, 1963 visit.

Vallee's place wasn't far from the airport. He lived in a ramshackled mobile home park. A guard dog chained to his door kept visitors away. I waited down the highway for his VW van to pass on his way home from work. It was 7 p.m. when I knocked on the door. Restraining the dog with one hand, and holding a rosary in the other, he answered and then invited me in.

It was a dump. Just a shabby sofa, a discarded coffee table and a few chairs in the trailer's front room. The cooking area was piled with dishes, half empty cans and packages, garbage spilling out of bags. His bedroom was simply two mattresses, not even sheets. Cigarette butts and ash heaps littered over everything. An oiled, polished M-1 leaned against his mattress. A high-powered hunter's crossbow was visible underneath. A Springfield rifle was stored elsewhere in the trailer.

I explained that Eddie Brokaw was part of some imaginary clandestine group, I called it Special Operations Group. I was recruiting riflemen for a special operation involving Cuba. But first I would have to check his "security ratings," which meant re-hashing all the details of the 1963 episode. I made it clear the entire account must be taped which we would then subject to voice stress analysis to determine his truthfulness. The entire matter appealed to Vallee and he was happy to join.

I began with the simple question: "What happened November 2,



The above fifth-generation photocopy was received in this near-illegible form. A better copy is unavailable. It reads:

Acting Supervisor MARTINEAU, Secret Service Division, Chicago, on December 9, 1963, advised SA William S. Hermann as follows:

Investigation conducted by the Secret Service in Chicago reflects that there was only one arrest on November 2, 1963 regarding protection of President KENNEDY, who was expected to be in attendance at the Army-Air Force game to be held that same day. This arrest pertained to THOMAS VALLEE, previously mentioned.

MARTINEAU added that there might have been other arrests made that same day by Chicago Police Department officers on charges of "carrying a concealed weapon," but none of these would have related to protection of the President. He advised further that no individual by the name of OSWALD was arrested on such charges on November 2, 1963.

Note the extreme ambiguity for a supposedly exhaustive investigation 17 days after the President's assassination. Were others detained but not arrested as was usually the case in such incidents? Also, one of the few documents that did not investigate "the name Oswald or any of his known aliases (O.H. Lee, Aleck Hidell, etc.)." This document almost hopefully addresses the name "Oswald" without concern for aliases.

1963?" He answered quickly and curtly: "Soldiers Field. The plot against John F. Kennedy. I was arrested." He then supplied confirming details about his whereabouts, the arrest, the interrogation, the weapons, the ammunition, where he purchased them, and his political beliefs about JFK and Mayor Daley. His staccato account was punctuated with stereotypical military cliches such as "negative," "affirmative," and "nine-er" for the number nine.

But while Vallee admitted everything about the guns and his whereabouts, he patently denied he actually threatened the President or even considered doing him any harm. Vallee claimed he was framed. Framed because with his openly anti-Kennedy sentiments, he could easily be believed to have threatened the President. Framed by someone with special knowledge

about him. It seems the first information about Vallee identified his middle name as "Patrick." His middle name was actually Arthur, but he once used the middle name Patrick to enlist at an early age in the Marine Corps.

He also gave specifics about his CIA assignment to train exiles to assassinate Castro. And he confirmed that he was never called before the Warren Commission or even interviewed by the Secret Service on anything until 1966. Even Vallee thought that was remiss on general principles.

His information checked out with everything we had compiled independently. And when we voice-stressed the tape, we found his account to register truthful. Although truthfulness is difficult if not impossible to accurately gauge (even within the normal margin of error) when the subject is so far from reality he may believe his own fabrications to be the purest truth.

Yet if Vallee was just a lone nut who wasn't dangerous to anyone, and if our investigation wasn't turning up anything substantial, why is it that while I was talking to Vallee in Houston, a Chicago Secret Service agent named Tom Hampton was discreetly investigating Eddie Brokaw. Hampton called our office, identified himself and asked whether we employed a reporter named Eddie Brokaw and could we furnish any information on him. Hampton was told his call would be returned.

When I arrived back in Chicago, I was told of Hampton's inquiries. I called him and asked how he knew Eddie Brokaw was a reporter for Chicago Independent when Eddie Brokaw had only come into existence a few days before and then in an undercover role. Hampton snapped, "Well he's been asking a lot of sensitive questions and we want to know why?"

Speed is a quality the Secret Service learned was indispensable . . . after the assassination of the President.

Compiling the scenario

By playing one man's information off against another's, by comparing reactions to accusations, by the use of voice stress analysis and the

polygraph (not as *foolproof* evidence, but merely as a good gauge within limitations), by document analysis and other means, we were able to piece together the scenario. A scenario which has not been contradicted or even criticized by either the authorities or the prin-

ciple players alleged to have taken part. "No comments," memory lapses, yes. But specific denials or contradictions—not a one.

In fact, the more pieces we put together, the more reluctant the Secret Service or FBI people were. If that was any barometer of the

reliability of our sources, then the scenario we recounted is accurate.

And so, without using the word proof, we repeat: there are strong indications there were four men in Chicago to assassinate John F. Kennedy, November 2, 1963, twenty days before Dallas.

III. The Cover-up

Looking at all the events, in perspective, we can easily see who covered up and why.

Remember that in 1963, presidential protection was disorganized. Under the law. Among federal agencies. After the assassination, the various agencies squabbled over exactly who would take charge of the investigation: Secret Service, FBI, CIA, City of Dallas, State of Texas. Finger-pointing and buck-passing escalated into a race to avoid blame for the President's death under the flimsiest of security precautions conceivable.

So of course, no one wanted it known that prior to the Dallas trip there had been high alerts, reasons for special caution. Otherwise, how does it look that the Secret Service routed Kennedy through the most physically obvious of traps, with his bubble top down, in the hostile Dallas environment. And even then not securing the warehouses as they customarily do.

So of course no one wants to admit that teletypes warned of serious assassination conspiracies throughout the month of November. In New Orleans on the 17th (documented by CBS). In Chicago on the second of the month. No one wants to admit that the FBI conveyed advance tips about these conspiracies, but then under orders from J. Edgar Hoover (who bitterly hated the Kennedy Brothers), didn't lift a finger to stop it.

Even today, you can call Thomas B. Coll of the FBI in Washington and you'll hear the bitter rivalry and buck-passing. Listen to him as he coldly defends the FBI's right to do nothing about presidential threats because of something Coll calls "jurisdiction."

Even today, you can call Ken Lynch of the Secret Service in Washington and listen to him coldly

ignore the fact that the FBI destroyed the threat Oswald delivered ten days before the assassination. He'll say, "That's the FBI's problem. Not ours. Talk to them about it."

Why doesn't one agency go after the other when these disclosures come out? Or is it that all of them are in bed together, and only if everyone covers up can they all avoid exposure?

If you approach that problem with the cold war government mentality of dirty tricks, cover stories, cover-ups, evidence destruction, you can see why the white-wash investigation of what really happened during the month of November, 1963, was just another of the misdeeds of that era: the Bay of Pigs, attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro, Mafia murder contracts, break-ins, mail interceptions, the assassination of the Diem brothers on November 1. Why should JFK's murder be any different?

Begin in Chicago, November 2. First the Secret Service launches an all-out investigation against a four-man conspiracy, blows the surveillance and can't crack their two suspects. Then comes the second tip about Thomas Arthur Vallee.

But wait a minute. A quick check of Vallee's past with the CIA shows his involvement in anti-Castro assassination squads in Long Island. Back off. Get this nut off the street, but don't squeeze him too hard. We wouldn't want that embarrassing information leaked. So just have the local police pinch the guy. We don't even want to talk to him. A few days after Kennedy leaves Chicago, Vallee and everyone else will feel better.

The Chicago Police oblige by covering up any information about weapons and ammunition. Somewhere along the way, however,

someone leaked it and the rumors began. Who cares? The government can always deal with rumors.

But now these four other guys. Two of them are still at large. The situation is so un-secured, JFK cancels his visit. The investigation continues. Literally hundreds of Cubans and Mexicans in Chicago are contacted in the next week, hoping to pin down information.

In the middle of the investigation a separate group is suspected in New Orleans on November 17. What the hell is going on? How many guys out there are trying to kill him? How many teams? What kind of money behind them? What's the organization? They'd never encountered anything remotely as sophisticated, professional and persistent. They couldn't cope with it.

Just five days later, their protectee was gunned down at noon. The ground shook under the feet of every Secret Service man. Hoover sat back and smiled at their incompetence. Out of the smoke and screams emerges the fall guy—Lee Harvey Oswald. Like an embarrassed police department looking to wrap up their case and quickly hang the culprit's head on a pike for all to see, Oswald was seized upon. As their Messiah. The man who would take all the hate, all the blame. Then before he could speak up, they crucified him in the basement of the Dallas police station. How many millions reeled in horror? Yes, but how many dozens in the government realized they had in fact been saved.

Like all other cover-ups before and after, the small omissions, deletions, distortions, extractions begot larger and larger crimes. Until like a powerful man trying to cover a petty burglary, all the resources available were subtly

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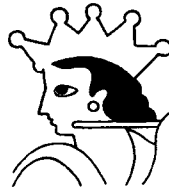
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used to stonewall. To stonewall in so massive a way, that the edifice began tumbling down out of sheer size. Then came rushed and nervous support to patch up the cracks.

Far more than Watergate, it was the biggest betrayal of the American people in their history. Its dimensions may never be known. But even the little we can see is awesome.

And dammit, it's still going full speed. Gerald Ford, who sat on the original Warren Commission, refuses to take another look. Ken Lynch and Thomas B. Coll are sitting there in Washington afraid to answer questions, afraid to give the least indications. Preferring instead to adopt Goebbel's tactics of harrasing the investigators rather than responding to the investigation.

If anyone wants to find out the truth, if anyone wants to disprove that there was a conspiracy to kill JFK in Chicago, twenty days before Dallas, it's easy. 1) Show us the teletypes received by the Chicago office during the week of November 2. There were only a few. 2) Give us the case titles on every CO file (any investigation controlled directly by the Secret Service Chief's Office in Washington) that originated the week of November 2. 3) Have Motto, Stocks, Martineau and Strong submit to a polygraph examination. That's all. Just those three things and the Secret Service can prove all this is nonsense, just some disgruntled sources within their own ranks, just some journalist in Chicago trying to make a name for himself. Okay, smart guys? Prove the conspiracy never happened. We have some of your own who swear it did.

They swear that it was just the chance of split-second decisions that kept Kennedy from actually flying to Chicago. That kept Thomas Arthur Vallee from falsely becoming one of history's "lone assassins" because he worked in a well-located warehouse and fit a convenient personality stereotype. Split-seconds from the world remembering Chicago as the place they killed the President of the United States. ★

Edwin Black is coordinating writer of Chicago Independent.

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