

# An Interview with Roger Craig

**The significance of this interview and  
some reflections on its meaning in the  
1990s**

by Hal Verb

## **The background**

This account of my interview with the former Dallas County Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig ties in with my firm belief that Lee Harvey Oswald was an agent of the Office of Naval Intelligence. During the 1995 COPA Conference in Washington DC I presented evidence of Oswald's connection with the ONI and I listed the Roger Craig interview as part of my proof. I did not, however, go into any great detail about the circumstances surrounding the interview itself. I hope that this article will explain in greater detail the background to the interview.

I will also touch on one or two other interesting aspects of the case which were discussed on the day that I met Craig.

The interview I conducted with Roger Craig occurred sometime around 1969. I cannot pinpoint the exact date as I have not been able to find all my notes from the interview.

The interview took place in the home of Mrs Maggie Field, a Beverly Hills, California researcher who was part of what has become known as the "First Generation" researchers - that group of people which emerged shortly after the assassination. More precisely, the activities of these researchers grew in

intensity after the publication of the Warren Report in September 1964. I was part of that "First Generation" group and I maintained contact with other researchers via letter, telephone calls and personal meetings. I contributed fairly regularly with articles to the *Berkeley Barb* and I instigated a course on the Kennedy Assassination at San Francisco State College which students could take with a full credit.

## **The invitation**

When I received an invitation to attend an informal meeting of Californian researchers at Mrs Field's home, I jumped at the opportunity and flew down to Los Angeles from my home in San Francisco. I recall that it was a beautiful sunny day and I met many of the "First Generation" researchers whose names have now become legendary for their great contributions. The researchers who attended included Lillian Castellano, Ray Marcus, Steve Jaffe, "Charlie Brown" (not her real name!), Penn Jones Jnr. and of course, Maggie Field. I am not certain but I believe that David Lifton and Bill Turner were also present.

Penn Jones brought former Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig along. Craig had been a crucial eyewitness to the assassination and by this time he was an extremely controversial individual whose testimony and comments had made him either the subject of vicious attacks or a personal hero in the midst of a national tragedy.

After exchanging notes and our thoughts on what was occurring in the field of assassination research, we settled down to view a film which Steve Jaffe had brought along. This film had been taken on the afternoon of Sunday, November 24th, 1963 and related to the shooting of Oswald by Jack Ruby. It was one of the 18 films shot by various amateur

photographers located in the Dallas area which covered the events of the November 22nd to November 24th period. Eventually this particular movie film became part of what has come to be known as the "Dallas Cinema Associates" (or DCA) film. More of this later.

**A coincidence**

I spoke briefly with Mrs Field and learnt that she was related to Brig. Gen. Godfrey McHugh, who had not only been President Kennedy's personal military aide but had also been in the presidential motorcade on November 22nd, 1963. As readers of this journal are undoubtedly aware, he was also present at the Kennedy autopsy.

Mrs Field told me that she had spoken with McHugh about the assassination but apparently he could add little to what was in the record about what he had seen and heard. Although the McHugh area was one in which I was strongly interested I was more intent on speaking with Roger Craig

**Roger Dean Craig**

Penn Jones introduced me to Roger Craig and he and I sat down in a corner of the room where I began to "pick his mind" as much as I could. One of my first questions was concerned with a recent event in his life in which he had narrowly escaped being killed. He told me that as he was leaving his home and about to step outside, a bullet whizzed past his ear. I asked him just how close it was and he replied that if he had been an inch or so further from his door it would have hit him. Craig added that he had no idea who would have fired a shot at him.

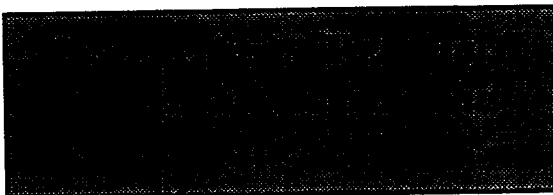
As we all know, this was not the only such harrowing experience in the fateful life of Roger Dean Craig.

Years later, on May 15th, 1975, he would meet with a violent death, a gunshot wound to the head finally ending his life. Reportedly, the wound was self-inflicted but many researchers remain convinced that he was murdered. Craig's good friend Penn Jones has remained silent about his own thoughts on this.

**Some important questions**

There was another aspect of Roger Craig which interested me and I took advantage of the situation to ask him about it. This dealt with a revelation in the testimony which he had given before the Warren Commission on April 1, 1964. (See Volume 6, page 270 of the Warren Commission 26 Volumes). During questioning from Assistant Counsel David W Belin on the subject of the interview of Oswald in Captain Fritz' office in the late afternoon of the day of the assassination, Craig said:

*"And - uh - Captain Fritz then told him, as close as I can remember, that, "All we're trying to do is find out what happened, and this man saw you leave*



*the scene. " And the suspect again interrupted Captain Fritz and said, "I told you people I did. "And - uh -yeah- then, he said - then he continued and he said, "Everybody will know who I am now.."*

At this point in the questioning, Craig was not asked what he thought Oswald meant by that remark. Instead, Mr Belin asked Craig what Oswald was wearing - and that Oswald remark immediately became lost in the limbo of assassination

history!

As readers of this journal are no doubt aware, Oswald's comment "Everybody will know who I am now" has become the subject of considerable controversy ever since the alleged assassin uttered those famous (or infamous) words.

Apologists for the Warren Commission version of history have argued that the three-way discussion between Fritz, Craig and Oswald never occurred. For example, Captain Fritz himself denied that Craig had (a) ever been in that office or (b) that he (Craig) had ever seen Oswald (in that office). Respected researchers J Gary Shaw and Larry Ray Harris, in their book *Cover-Up*, refer to Craig's testimony and point out that Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry published a photograph on page 72 of his own personal book on the case (*JFK Assassination File*) which clearly shows Craig standing in the background in Fritz' office. The caption to this photograph reads: "The Homicide Bureau Office under guard while Oswald was being interrogated."

A small problem arises in the Shaw/Harris rendering of this incident. I may be accused of nit-picking but it does demonstrate the importance of accurate reporting on a researcher's

part. In *Cover-Up* (page 27), Oswald is quoted as saying "Now everyone will know who I am" Their footnote citation is correct in identifying the Warren Commission volume and page number but putting the word "now" at the beginning of the quote is obviously wrong and puts a twist or spin on the episode which could mislead readers of the book. There is a second error in that seven-word Oswald quote when the word "everyone" is used instead of the

correct "everybody". I agree that this is *minutiae* but nevertheless such quotes - especially those of this importance - should be reported with total accuracy.

A far more important error occurs when the authors state that when Oswald made this remark he allegedly "slammed his fist on the table" Nowhere in the text of Craig's 14-page testimony does he state that. Giving that impression to their readers adds to the unnecessary confusion in the interpretation of this event.

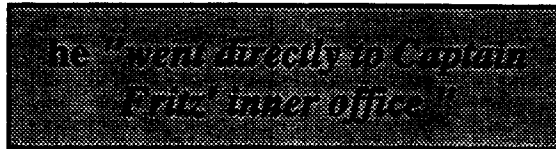
#### The Gerald Posner version

Gerald Posner joined in the fray for his own part in his much bally-hoed work *Case Closed* and he also attempted to prove that Roger Craig was not where he said he was and thus could not have heard this remark by Oswald.

Posner's proof? It is in the form of photographic evidence. On page 259 of the hardback version of *Case Closed* he notes that Fritz "branded Craig a liar" when Craig stated that he was in the interrogation room. Posner's footnote citation states "Some have tried to defend Craig by saying he was in the interrogation room, and they produced a photo of him in Captain Fritz's office, where they say Oswald was interrogated. The picture does not show Craig in the inner office where Oswald was kept, but instead in a separate outer office."

Posner's citation of "a photo" is not quite accurate because more than one photograph of Craig in the Homicide & Robbery Bureau

exists. Shaw and Harris provide two such photographs in *Cover-Up* (pages 27 and 101). Furthermore, Posner claims that his reference is to Fritz' "inner office" but did Craig say anything about *not* being in that "inner office?"



#### Why was Roger Craig in Captain Fritz office?

In a little-known television interview of Roger Craig made by Lincoln Hall in April 1974, Craig was asked to comment not only on the Oswald "Everybody will know..." remark but also on other aspects of his testimony before the Warren Commission. I have both the TV version and the audio tape of this interview and what follows can easily be verified.

Craig was asked how he happened to be in Captain Fritz' office on that occasion. He replied that he was there because he had called Fritz to inform him that he had important information about seeing someone drive away in a car about ten minutes after the assassination. He said that the car was



driving south on Elm Street - that would be in the direction of the triple underpass..

Craig said that he "went directly to Captain Fritz' inner office"

In addition to Oswald and, of course, Captain Fritz in this inner office, there was also a gentleman wearing a white cowboy hat. Roger Craig confirmed that such headwear was a "trademark" of the Dallas Homicide Bureau. To date, this

Homicide Detective has never been identified. However, the photograph on page 101 of *Cover Up* shows two such gentlemen wearing their "trademark" cowboy hats in the presence of Roger Craig. Perhaps one of these gentlemen is the one he observed. If so, and he could be identified, he could positively verify whether or not Craig is telling the truth on this point. I very definitely believe that Craig did tell the truth here.

#### Corroboration in support of Craig's claim?

There may perhaps be another way to get to the truth of this matter. This is to ask DPD Patrolman Clyde Franklin Goodson what he may have heard and seen in the late afternoon of Friday November 22nd, 1963.

According to his Warren Commission testimony (see *Volume 15, page 598 of the Warren Commission 26 Volumes*), Goodson was assigned to guard the door to the Homicide Bureau (Fritz' office) and let nobody unauthorised enter the room.

left: Photograph Shows that Roger Craig was in Fritz' office at the time of Oswald's interrogation

Goodson said that his assignment began at "approximately 5.30" and that he left "around 7.30". Since Craig told Mr Belin in his Commission testimony that he arrived at Fritz' office "after 5 - about 5.30 or sometime like that .." it is very possible that Goodson would have seen Craig inside that inner office.

**Back to my Craig interview**

Let us return to my interview of Roger Craig at Mrs Field's home. I recalled for Craig his testimony before the Warren Commission and zeroed in on his claim that Oswald had said: "Everybody will know who I am now". I looked directly into Craig's eyes and asked him exactly what he thought Oswald had meant by this rather unusual statement. I did not actually mention that I thought this remark unusual although that was certainly my intention in putting the question.

With no hesitation and without batting an eyelid, Craig replied: "Well, Hal, I thought he had blown his cover".

Excitedly, I immediately responded to Craig's answer and said: "That is exactly my thinking on the matter too!" At no time had I placed any thought or suggestion in my interview with Craig which may have led him on. That was not my intention. Craig struck me as a spontaneous, straightforward man with integrity and to this day I can recall vividly how impressed I was with his candor.

The significance of Oswald's comment (and Craig's views on that comment) cannot be lost sight of today. Craig was in effect, providing 'first day evidence' for the theory that Lee Harvey Oswald was a U.S. Intelligence agent!

It is a fact that Craig heard this remark just a little over two hours after Oswald had been brought in for questioning. Craig says in his

testimony that there was a rumor circulating that the man being questioned (Oswald) had been a suspect in the killing of President Kennedy. Technically and legally, at that time Oswald was not even charged with the assassination of the President. The murder of a fellow Police officer (Tippit) was uppermost in the minds of the Dallas Police.

I must make the point here that Craig's impression about Oswald having blown his cover was, indeed, the first piece of evidence that Oswald had ties to U.S. Intelligence. Here, I mean evidence immediately after the assassination. One could, of course, cite other suggestions of Oswald's links to Intelligence such as his mother Marguerite who told the State Department that she thought that her son was a spy. That however was prior to the assassination.

Evidence, as I am sure no reader needs to be reminded, is still not proof but Craig's impression most probably could not have come from a discussion with other people such as news reporters or policemen whom he may have known. There is no evidence of that anywhere, either in the record, in interviews of him or in any document I have seen relating to him.

I do recall reading that in the aftermath of the assassination, up to



as many as 40 news reporters had heard rumors of Oswald being an Agent. However one would be hard-pressed to believe that all of these news reporters' accounts refer to Craig's encounter with Oswald in Captain Fritz' office. No! There must be some other explanation for the

circulation of that rumor.

**The Lincoln Hall television interview**

Earlier in this article I referred to a videoed TV interview of Roger Craig conducted by Lincoln Hall in April 1974. Since I knew that Hall had queried Craig about Oswald's "Everybody will know .." remark, I went over the tape again to see if Craig had in any way changed his thinking on what Oswald had said. In response, Craig said again that Oswald had "blown his cover". Craig insisted that "this was not a brag" and he repeated this on the tape, saying that Oswald's remark was not a brag.

Those who will say that Oswald was 'confessing' to a crime (either the Tippit murder or the Kennedy assassination) will again be hard-pressed to maintain their position. If Oswald were, indeed, confessing, then why did Captain Fritz deny that the event happened? Surely, if Oswald had indeed 'confessed' then Fritz would have taken great delight in holding up a newspaper the next day revealing an Oswald confession. Oswald confessing? Why, then, in the following 14 hours of interrogation, had Oswald not broken down and repeated his confession? Why indeed!

**The DCA Film - and another unexplained mystery**

In concluding this article, I would like to return briefly to the motion picture film from the Dallas Cinema Associates group which we viewed that afternoon at Mrs Field's home. Anyone interested in learning more about this film can contact my good friend and photographic researcher Joe Backes (in Albany, NY). He has a copy of it.

As I have noted, the segment of the film which interests us here was shot on the morning of Sunday November 24th, 1963 at about the time that Jack

