

Nov. 22, 1963: ANOTHER STORY BLURS THE FACTS



Son of Dallas cop says dad was 1 of 3 who shot Kennedy

By Earl Golz

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In another bizarre twist to a mystery that has haunted Americans for more than a quarter century, the son of a former Dallas police officer plans to tell the world Monday that his father was one of the assassins of President John F. Kennedy.

Ricky White, a 29-year-old, unemployed oil equipment salesman in Midland, says he "had no conception of ever, ever giving this story out" but decided to do so after FBI agents began asking questions in May 1988.

"I'm telling you a story that has touched me, not only others, and I feel uncomfortable just telling it to strangers," White said during a recent interview with the *Austin American-Statesman*.

Monday in Dallas, White is scheduled to show reporters material implicating his father, Roscoe Anthony White, in the 1963 assassination. It suggests that White, who died in 1971, was a member of an assassination team of three shooters, that he fired two of the three bullets that killed the president, and that he also killed Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit during the manhunt for Lee Harvey Oswald.

Among the material: a rifle with telescopic sight that uses the same kind of ammunition as Oswald's gun; records showing that Oswald and White served together in the Marines; three faded messages that appear to be decoded orders to kill someone in Dallas in November



Staff photo by Shirley N. Post

Roscoe White, top, served in the Marines with Lee Harvey Oswald. Ricky

White, above, has material he says implicates his father in the JFK assassination.

1963; and a son's recollections of his father's incriminating diary — a document that is missing.

The press conference is being sponsored by two private groups — the JFK Assassination Information Center of Dallas and the Assassina-

tion Archives and Research Center of Washington — and some Midland businessmen.

The possibility of Ricky White's story being a hoax — a falsehood concocted either by Ricky or his fa-

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ther — has not been dismissed by the people urging him to publicly talk about the matter. During the last 27 years, many private researchers have claimed to have found evidence of a conspiracy, only to be proved wrong or deceitful.

Bernard Fensterwald, executive director of the Assassination Archives and Research Center, says if there was a conspiracy, Ricky White may have the key. "I think it's our best shot," he says, "and we better take it."

J. Gary Shaw, co-director of the JFK Assassination Information Center, says he hopes White's story will result in an investigation of the assassination by Texas authorities. Two Washington-based probes — the Warren Commission in 1963-64 and the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1976-78 failed to resolve the enigma of the Kennedy shooting, Shaw maintains.

As with previous conspiracy theories, White's story is tantalizing, the evidence intriguing. Yet, as with other theories, it raises more questions than it answers — such as: Who issued the orders to the so-called assassination team? Why was the assassination ordered against Kennedy? And why is Ricky White telling this story now?

An Oswald connection

Using clues discovered in his father's effects and relying on available government records, Ricky White says he has determined that Roscoe White and Lee Harvey Oswald probably met in 1957. Ricky White's mother, Geneva, is gravely ill and unable to be interviewed, family members say.

According to military records, both White and Oswald were among a contingent of U.S. Marines, who boarded the USS Bexar in San Diego that year for the 22-day trip to Yokosuka, Japan.

In its final report, the Warren Commission published a photo of Oswald with other Marines in the Philippines. All but one of the Marines was squatting on the ground. Ricky White says his father claimed to have been the standing Marine and claimed to have become acquainted with Oswald in Japan and the Philippines.

Military records show that Roscoe White took frequent unexplained trips in the Pacific, and Ricky White says that his father's diary described those as secret intelligence assignments.

It has been established in previous investigations that Oswald was discharged in 1959 and defected to the Soviet Union. He returned to the United States in mid-1962, settling first in Fort Worth with his Russian-born wife, then moving to Dallas a short time later.

Military records show Roscoe White

was discharged in late 1962, joining his wife and two young sons in Paris, Texas. Ricky White says that shortly thereafter, his father moved the family to Dallas and took a job as an insurance salesman.

Man with two names

Ricky White says that two months ago he found several faded messages in a military weapons canister in the attic of Geneva White's parents' home in Paris. Ricky believes the messages to be decoded cables in which Mandarin, a name he says his father was known by, was told his next assignment would be "to eliminate a National Security threat to worldwide peace" in Houston, Austin or Dallas.

Another message from the same source — "C. Bowers" of "Navy Intelligence" — identified Dallas as the destination and provided White with a list of contacts. It stated White had a "place hidden within the department." The message was dated September 1963 — the same month that Geneva White began a brief stint as a cocktail hostess at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club in Dallas. Ruby fatally shot Oswald two days after the Kennedy assassination.

Dallas police records show that on Oct. 7, 1963, Roscoe White joined the department as a photographer and clerk. He did not become a patrol officer until 1964. A staff member in the police personnel department said recently that White's file contains no job references.

Ricky White says his father's diary referred to several trips made during this period to a remote area in the foothills near Van Horn, Texas. There, Roscoe White and several others practiced shooting at moving targets, Ricky White says. Although he was younger than 3 years old, Ricky White says he has vague memories of being taken to Van Horn.

"My impression was they (others at the Van Horn camp) had been working with my father in the military," Ricky White says, "because they had known each other well when this took place."

A footlocker and diary

Ricky White says that, after his grandfather died in 1982, he was given his father's footlocker, which had been stored in the grandfather's house in Paris.

The locker contained military memorabilia, a Marine uniform, a safe deposit box key and a black leather-bound diary with gold trim that detailed Roscoe White's life.

As he and his mother read the diary, Ricky White says they found passages that implicated Roscoe White in the Kennedy assassination.

"My mother and I cried together," he says, "because it hurt very deeply to learn what I know now. It hurt so much because the man I had known couldn't have fired those shots. It took this investigation to be

able to learn it's true. And my family's given a part of themselves to tell the story."

From the diary he says he learned the significance of the hunting rifle his father gave him: a 7.65mm Mauser with telescopic sight, an Argentine rifle that shoots round-nose, elongated bullets — projec-

tiles that closely resemble those of a Mannlicher-Carcano, an Italian rifle that Oswald was accused of using.

After reading the diary, White says he was convinced his father was one of three assassins who fired six shots from Mauser rifles into the president's open top limousine in Dealey Plaza.

Roscoe White shot from behind a fence atop a grassy knoll to the right and front of the limousine, his son says. Two other marksmen were in the Texas School Book Depository and Records buildings behind the vehicle.

Three shots struck Kennedy; a fourth wounded Texas Gov. John Connally.

Ricky White says the two shots that his father fired both struck Kennedy: the first in the throat; the second, and last of the shots fired, in the head.

Oswald, Ricky White says, knew of the plot, but did not fire a shot. He had been instructed to bring his rifle to the Book Depository, where he worked, and to build a sniper's nest of book boxes near the sixth floor window, from which he was accused of firing all the fatal shots, Ricky White says.

Ricky White says the diary referred to the other shooters only by code names: Sol in the Records building; and Lebanon in the Texas School Book Depository. The diary indicated each of the three riflemen was accompanied by an assistant who disassembled the rifles after the shooting and carried them out of the area, Ricky White says.

According to the diary, Ricky White says, his father was to escape with Oswald by riding to Red Bird Airport in South Dallas in a city police car driven by a friend and fellow officer who did not know what was happening. That officer, Ricky White says, was J.D. Tippit, who was shot to death at 10th Street and Patton Avenue in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas about 45 minutes after Kennedy was shot. Oswald was seen running from the scene of that shooting.

Ricky White says his father wrote that, as they drove south, the unsuspecting officer began to realize what White and Oswald were involved in. Oswald panicked and jumped from the car. When the officer insisted on "turning in" White, White got out of the car and shot the officer, Ricky White says.

"I killed an officer at 10th and Patton,"

Ricky White quotes the diary as saying.

Less than a half hour later, Oswald was arrested in the Texas Theater on West Jefferson Boulevard in Oak Cliff. He had a .38-caliber revolver police said was the murder weapon. Murder charges against Oswald in connection with Tippit's death were filed before he was charged with Kennedy's death. Whether the revolver found in Oswald's possession was actually the weapon that killed Tippit has been a matter of dispute in several government investigations.

Ricky White says that shortly after the assassination, his father sent the family to Paris and that he and other members of the assassination team used a "hideaway house" in Dripping Springs.

He says that, among his father's effects, he found a third decoded message, dated December 1963, that advised his father to "stay within department, witnesses have eyes, ears and mouths . . . The men will be in to cover up all misleading evidence soon."

That same month President Lyndon Johnson named Chief Justice Earl Warren to head a commission to investigate the assassination. The Warren Commission concluded in September 1964 that Oswald acted alone in killing both Kennedy and Tippit.

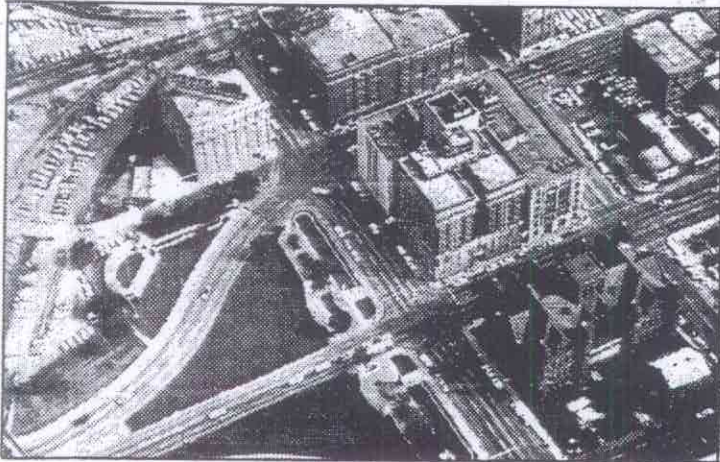
Police records show that on Oct. 19, 1965, Roscoe White quit the Dallas Police Department and became manager of a Dallas area drug store. During the next six years, he switched jobs several times, finally working as a foreman at M&M Equipment Co. in East Dallas.

Family trouble and death

By early 1970, Roscoe and Geneva White were a deeply troubled couple and sought help, said the Rev. Jack Shaw, their Baptist minister in Dallas.

During a recent interview with the *American-Statesman*, Shaw said Roscoe White told him at that time that he and his family were "in danger." White confessed to leading "a double life," the minister says, "and I knew something was not right, something strange was going on."

Shaw says that within the last two years he tape recorded a number of counseling sessions with Geneva White about her recollection of what she believed to be her former husband's role in assassinations. Shaw, who is very guarded in talking



File photos

The motorcade of President and Mrs. Kennedy, top, started at Love Field, before winding through part of downtown Dallas, above.



Staff photo by Smiley N. Pool

A military weapons canister found at the home of Ricky White's grandmother included faded messages, which he thinks are cables.

Text of Navy cables

Navy Int.
Code A MRC
Remark data
1666106
NRC VDC NAC
Dec. 63

Remarks Mandarin: Code G:

Stay within department, witnesses have eyes, ears and mouths. You (illegible) do of the mix up. The men will be in to cover up all misleading evidence soon. Stay as planned wait for further orders.

C. Bowers

RE — rifle Code AAA destroy/on/

Navy Int.
Code A MRC
Remark data
1666106
NRC VDC NAC
(illegible): 63

Remarks Mandarin: Code A

Foreign affairs assignments have been cancelled. The next assignment is to eliminate a National Security threat to world wide peace. Destination will be Houston, Austin or Dallas. Contacts are being arranged now. Orders are subject to change at any time. Reply back if not understood.

C. Bowers
OSHA

RE — rifle Code AAA destroy/on/

Navy Int.
Code A MRC
Remark data
1666106
Sept. 63

Remarks Mandarin: Code A

Dallas destination chosen. Your place hidden within the department. Contacts are within this letter. Continue on as planned.

C. Bowers
OSHA

RE — rifle Code AAA destroy/on/



Geneva and Roscoe White while he was in the Marines. Geneva White later worked at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club in Dallas.

Previous inquiries on assassination

The assassination of President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas was investigated by two government bodies:

The Warren Commission, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, concluded after a nine-month investigation in 1964 that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, fired two shots from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, killing President John F. Kennedy and wounding Texas Gov. John Connally.

The report conclusions left many skeptics. Since bullets passed through the victims and shattered, investigators were not able to match the rifling on the bullets to the marks that would have been caused by Oswald's rifle.

After a three-year investigation, the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded in early 1979 that Oswald fired two shots that killed Kennedy and wounded Connally. Scientific acoustical evidence indicated a "high probability" that an unidentified second gunman was firing from the grassy knoll to the front and right of the presidential limousine, but missed.

about the case, says Ricky White has only a small portion of the full story, which he says "will knock your eyes out."

Shaw says he met with the Whites several times in 1970-71, but the Kennedy assassination was not mentioned. In 1971, Roscoe White was fatally injured in an explosive fire at M&M Equipment. Before White died, Shaw talked with him in the hospital. He recalls White saying he didn't think the fire was an accident — that he had seen a man running away just before the fire.

After the funeral, Geneva White moved her family back to Paris. There, about four years later, the White home was burglarized and some of Roscoe White's personal possessions were taken, Ricky White says.

Police captured the two burglars and returned the possessions which included some of Roscoe White's photos — among them a shot taken by Marina Oswald of her husband Lee Harvey Oswald holding a rifle in the back yard of their Dallas home in 1963.

For nearly 15 years after the assassination only two such photos were known. Roscoe White's became the third. In its final report, the House Special Committee on Assassinations identified the photo as coming from the family of a former Dallas policeman. According to Ricky White and an investigator for the House committee, Geneva White had contacted the FBI after the burglary. The FBI informed the committee of the existence of the photo. The matter was not pursued because committee investigators didn't know about White's past relationship with Oswald or Geneva White's brief employment at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club.

Others find out

Until he discovered the footlocker, Ricky White says he didn't think much about his father or the Kennedy assassination. He grew up in Dallas and Paris, where he went to school, got married and moved to Midland where he and his wife have two children. There he took a job selling oil field equipment.

As shocking as the diary was to Ricky White and his mother, Ricky says it was the safe deposit box key that was to draw others into the Roscoe White story.

Thinking his father might have left money or valuables in a deposit box, Ricky White tried to find a bank that would recognize the key. By 1988 he was so frustrated in his attempts that he turned to Midland District Attorney Al Schorre for help.

Schorre says he and his chief investigator, J.D. Lucky, failed to find the bank.

Schorre and Lucky say they repeatedly asked to see Roscoe White's diary after Ricky White mentioned it, but that he told

them a relative in the Lubbock area had it. Ricky White says he may have told Schorre the diary was somewhere else but that he had always kept it in his possession.

Finally, Schorre, who lacked authority to demand the diary, called the FBI.

Ricky White says three agents came to his house and asked him to answer questions in their Midland office. He says he took his father's effects with him and the FBI made copies of all the items except the diary. He says after several hours of questioning he returned home with all his father's effects.

Later that same day, White says, FBI agent Tom Farris came to his house to retrieve a notebook he had inadvertently left in the box of Roscoe White's effects. White says he became aware that the diary was missing three or four days later.

"I never said that the (FBI agents) took it," he says. "I am just saying he was the last one to leave that box."

Agent Farris, who is in the Midland FBI office, transferred inquiries about the diary to his supervisor, Tom Kirspel. Kirspel would neither confirm nor deny that the agents had seen a diary.

White says he never asked the FBI if it had the missing diary because he was "scared" of the agents who called at his house. "I don't want to have anything to do with the FBI," he says.

Ricky White says FBI agent Ron Butler told him in 1988 that the FBI had determined that Roscoe White was at a crime scene in far Northeast Dallas at the time Kennedy was shot. Butler declined to comment on any conversations with Ricky White.

Question of authenticity

Shaw, the director of the JFK Assassination Information Center in Dallas, says Ricky White has passed both a polygraph test and a voice stress analysis and passed both tests "with flying colors."

However, the authenticity of the messages Ricky White says he found is undetermined.

Office of Naval Intelligence spokesman John Wanat says the agency cannot determine whether the messages came from authentic ONI cables without the coded cables.

"What they have there is really nothing that we can narrow down as far as who may have generated it or if it's legitimate or whether it's something that was fabricated," Wanat said after viewing texts of the messages.

John Stockwell, former chief of the Central Intelligence Agency's Angola Task Force in Washington, DC., has seen the messages and sees a "90 to 95 percent probability" that they are genuine. However, he says he cannot discount the possibility the messages are part of "an

elaborate hoax."

"I've measured it against my own readings and consultations with researchers of the Kennedy thing," says Stockwell, who ended a 12-year CIA career in 1976 after being accused of violating his secrecy agreement with the agency. "I can't see anything in what they have found and what the young man (Ricky White) is saying that is implausible in terms of what our best knowledge of the assassination is now. It all could very well be true, and I would put it at a high probability that it is true."

Bob Inman vehemently disagrees. After reading copies of the text, Inman, former naval intelligence director (1974-76) and CIA deputy director (1981-82), says the messages were not ONI generated. None of the three-digit code names in the heading of the messages means anything, he says.

"My reaction is that it's a forgery of some kind or invalid," Inman says. "There is not anything about this format that I have ever seen before. That's not the way messages were set up in those days at all."

Less is known about what Ricky White says is a witness elimination list that he found in the canister. Ricky White says there were 28 witnesses on the list, news clippings of each victim and accompanied in some cases by his father's writing.

"Ricky White's story is no less logical than what we have been led to believe in 27 years," says Fensterwald. "If just anyone came out of the woodwork and said, 'I shot John Kennedy,' I would be exceedingly cautious about it. But if someone who was in the Marine Corps with Oswald, whose wife worked for Jack Ruby and who knew the Tippit family, crawls out of the woodwork and says I was involved in it, that doesn't stretch my credulity at all.

"It does, however, need a lot more investigation by some official body with power to subpoena witnesses. I don't think private citizens can carry it much further."