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file Zapruder

IN THE NEWS

17 January 2000

Plane Crash Critically Injures Ex-CIA Chief

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — Former CIA director Adm. Stansfield Turner was injured and was in critical condition after his wife and three others were killed when their plane crashed into a home shortly after taking off in the Costa Rican capital.

Turner, 76, who was CIA director under President Carter, suffered injuries to his chest and head, said Dr. Deborah Beaychan of the emergency surgery unit at the Hospital Mexico. He was later transported to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas.

His wife, Eli Karen, was killed in the Saturday afternoon crash, which occurred shortly after the Taxi Aereo Centroamericano flight took off from San Jose, U.S. Embassy spokesman David Gilmour said.

Also killed in the crash were Siegfried and Therese Richert of San Francisco, and Spaniard Antonio Sanchez Diaz, according to Gilmour and Javier Montero, chief of operations for Costa Rica's Judicial Investigation Organization.

"It was like a bomb"

Investigators were still looking into what caused the plane to fall from the sky and plunge into a house in an upscale neighborhood near the Tobias Bolanos airport, Red Cross officials said.

Three people were in the house, including a Nicaraguan housekeeper who suffered minor injuries.

"It was like a bomb. Pieces of cement, wood and even a wall fell on top of us," the housekeeper, Yamileth Saenz, told the daily *La Nacion*.

In addition to Turner, the injured passengers and crew included nine Spaniards, two French citizens, one Salvadoran and three Costa Ricans, the Red Cross said. Most were in stable condition in San Jose hospitals Sunday.

The Costa Rican pilot was seriously injured, according to Pamela Villalta, spokeswoman for the San Juan de Dios Hospital.



Stansfield Turner in 1976

Were heavy winds to blame?

The plane had been destined for the Tortuguero national park on Costa Rica's Atlantic coast.

It was unclear whether heavy winds at the time played a role in the crash.

"I was coming up the street when suddenly I saw the plane start to fishtail," one witness, Pedro Chinchilla, told the daily *La Republica*. "It fell, and then I heard a loud noise, like a hurricane. When I reached the site, I could hear screams coming from inside the house."

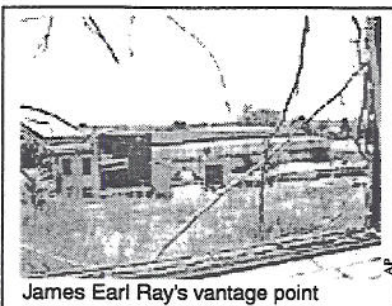
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King Evidence Heading for Public Display

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Evidence pointing to James Earl Ray as Martin Luther King Jr.'s killer, including Ray's rifle, is heading for its first public display at the museum on the site of the civil rights leader's murder. The exhibit will mention a recent civil court verdict that the King family says supports their belief that Ray was an unknowing fall guy in a murder conspiracy.

But the government evidence against Ray—much of which has been locked away for more than three decades—is expected to dominate the exhibit at the National Civil Rights Museum, which opened in 1991 at the old Lorraine Motel.

"There are not going to be theories about who killed Martin Luther King pre-



James Earl Ray's vantage point

sented. What we will present is pieces of evidence that will help people evaluate the various theories," said Clayborne Carson, a Stanford University history professor working on the project.

King was shot on the motel's second-floor balcony on April 4, 1968. He was in Memphis to help lead a garbage workers strike.

Monday is the national holiday in his honor.

Ray's vantage point opened to public

In addition to the display of evidence, visitors will get to see the view of the murder scene from the flophouse from which Ray admitted firing the fatal shot. The flophouse, across a small side street, also is to become part of the museum.

The state plans to give the museum the physical evidence and investigative reports that it would have used against Ray had he gone to trial. He died in prison in 1998.

The material is expected to go on display by next year, after the Justice Department finishes a new, limited investigation into the murder. Information on that investigation also will be part of the museum exhibit.

State prosecutors and a congressional committee have concluded Ray was the killer, though he may have had help from a small group of conspirators. His confession was upheld eight times by state and federal courts.

In December, a civil court jury hearing a wrongful death suit filed by the Kings against a former Memphis restaurant owner concluded that King was the victim of a murder conspiracy involving government agents and other conspirators. Critics described the trial as a hodgepodge of vague conspiracy claims and unsupported testimony.

26 January 2000

Zapruders Donate JFK Film, Rights to Sixth Floor Museum

By Mark Wroldstad

The Dallas Morning News—The Zapruder family, longtime caretaker of the famous home movies of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, has given its last original duplicate of the film and the copy-right to its coveted images to the Sixth Floor Museum.

The donation represents a potential windfall in licensing income and prestige

for the 11-year-old Dallas museum.

For the museum, whose main attraction is its location including Lee Harvey Oswald's crow's nest, the acquisition of the Zapruder print and related materials solidifies its stature as a destination for researchers, as well as its financial future, officials said.

For the survivors of Abraham Zapruder, the Dallas dressmaker who took his 8 mm camera when he walked up a grassy rise in Dealey Plaza and stepped into history on Nov. 22, 1963, the donation ends decades as keepers of America's best-known sequence of amateur movie-making.

And for the copy of the 26-second film clip itself—as well as the other film copies, frame-by-frame slides and stills contained in what the museum has dubbed the “Zapruder Collection”—the gift represents a homecoming, right next to the spot where it was created and where a nation was altered.

“This is a coup,” said Jeff West, the museum's executive director, who planned an official announcement Wednesday. “It's truly transformational for us, and it secures our future, not just financially but historically.”

Mr. Zapruder's heirs, including son Henry of Washington, D.C., and daughter Myrna Ries of Dallas, announced their intention to transfer the copyright's ownership to a public institution in August, after an arbitration panel ordered the U.S. government to pay the family \$16 million, plus interest, for the original film.

The original has been stored at the National Archives since 1975, when Time Inc. returned the film and the copyright to the family. Time Inc. had bought the rights in 1963.

Mr. Zapruder ordered three so-called first-generation copies of the film when it was processed the day of the assassination. The two he gave to the Secret Service also now rest at the archives.

Months of discussion

The third copy, the only one still privately owned, became the Sixth Floor's property when an agreement was signed Dec. 30, capping four months of discussions.

Mr. West and an associate carried the film in an archival box on a flight to Dallas nine days ago, along with other materials.

He said the negotiations began after he heard the copyright needed a new home and

he found Henry Zapruder's office number.

“I told him, ‘We think we're the guys who should take this on,’ ” Mr. West said. “It was not a subtle conversation.”

A federal board created by Congress to collect and make public all assassination-related films and records took ownership of the original Zapruder film in 1997.

But the government let the heirs retain the copyright, which brings fees for public uses of the film's images in documentaries or publications.

Licensing fees earned about \$879,000 for the family from 1976 to 1997, according to estimates made for the arbitration panel.

In a written statement about the museum gift, the heirs again emphasized their efforts to keep the film from being used in ways they considered exploitative.

Exploitation fears

“The guiding principle for the use of the film, established by our father and grandfather at the outset in 1963, was the balance of respect for the sensitive nature of the images with appropriate access by the public,” the statement read.

The family said it chose the Sixth Floor because of confidence that its administrators “share our values.”

Mr. West pledged that his institution will meet the high standards set by the filmmaker and his heirs.

“His fear was that his film would end up on a T-shirt or a coffee mug, all the exploitative things that we're concerned about,” Mr. West said.

An independent appraiser is estimating the value of the gift. Mr. West wouldn't estimate how much the film's licensing might continue to generate.

Jamie Silverberg, the Zapruders' attorney for 12 years, has been hired by the Sixth Floor partly to help with the licensing and indicated the film will continue to be a moneymaker.

“There seems to be an unyielding historical and public interest in the film,” he said.

He said the Zapruder heirs considered options other than the Sixth Floor and again demonstrated what he called their “immense sense of civic responsibility.”

Critic of decision

Richard Stolley, now a senior editorial adviser for Time Inc., disagreed with the heirs' decision to license a high-tech exami-

nation of the Zapruder film in a \$15 home video in 1998.

As an editor for *Life* magazine in 1963, Mr. Stolley bought the original film from Abe Zapruder.

“When I first talked to him, it was his fervent and emotional desire that the film not be exploited in any way,” Mr. Stolley said. “I think the Zapruder family has finally done the right thing and honored the man who took the film.”

“The museum is where it belongs. In a strange way, for it to wind up in a building about 200 feet from where this garment-maker stood and took the pictures is a kind of historical irony and completeness that doesn't often happen.”

Part of the 1,900-item donation may be exhibited later this year, but the material must first be cataloged.

Gary Mack, the museum's archivist, was all but whistling Tuesday as he examined what may be the gem of the bunch—oversized transparencies of each Zapruder frame believed to have been made in 1963 or '64.

“These may be in better condition than the original film is today,” he said. “We may have something that is better or sharper. Who knows?”

21 February 2000

After 36 Years, More Revelations About Kennedy's Assassination

By BRENDA SAPINO JEFFREYS
From the ABA Midyear Meeting

TEXAS LAWYER—A lawyer who spent four years chasing down records about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy says the independent review board charged with declassifying documents found no smoking gun that will prove one way or another if Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. But Thomas Samoluk, former deputy director of the Assassination Records Review Board, says that doesn't mean the American public will never know if Oswald conspired with others to shoot Kennedy.

“There will be more revelations over time,” says Samoluk, now a compliance counsel for John Hancock Financial Services in Boston.

Samoluk says he and others who worked for the review board hope someone may discover some long-forgotten pictures taken when the presidential motorcade was driving through Dealey Plaza in Dal-

las on Nov. 22, 1963, at the time when the president was shot. Those photographs may show if a second gunman was shooting from the grassy knoll overlooking the motorcade route, says Samoluk, who spoke about the board's work during a Feb. 12 speech to a crowd of about 150 people at the American Bar Association's midyear meeting in Dallas.

"We always say that somebody, somewhere has a shoebox in a closet with some photographs that were taken that day by their grandparents or their parents who may be long gone and they don't realize the importance of the photographs," he says.

From 1994 to 1998, the review board located and declassified tens of thousands of documents that federal agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, kept away from the public eye on grounds of national security. The 4.5 million pages of documents in the assassination records collection, which also include many papers turned over by the public, are now available at the National Archives, providing fodder for historians and conspiracy theorists. (The index is online at www.nara.gov/research/jfk/index.html.)

The review board wasn't charged with deciding whether alleged gunman Oswald acted alone or with conspirators, whether a second shooter took aim from the grassy knoll or why Jack Ruby—a Dallas businessman with ties to organized crime—shot Oswald at the Dallas police station. But Samoluk, a Massachusetts native who was able to turn a lifelong interest in the JFK assassination into a dream job, says he personally believes Oswald didn't act alone.

"I think it has something to do with anti-Castro Cubans," he says.

OPEN FILES?

The federal investigation into the JFK assassination has been controversial since the Warren Commission reported in 1964 that Oswald acted alone. By 1979, the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded a conspiracy was probable. By 1988, the U.S. Department of Justice closed its investigation into the assassination after finding no persuasive evidence of a conspiracy.

But in the wake of the questions raised by Oliver Stone's *JFK*, a movie that took a conspiracy point of view, Congress passed the President John F. Kennedy Assassina-

tion Records Collection Act of 1992, which mandated the gathering and opening of all records connected with Kennedy's death.

At the February 12 speech, Samoluk was filling in for the chairman of the review committee, U.S. District Judge John R. Tunheim of Minneapolis, who is on a mission to Kosovo. Samoluk made his presentation in a hotel ballroom just a few miles from Dealey Plaza and Parkland Hospital, where Kennedy was taken after the shooting.

Although the review board had a congressional mandate and subpoena power, Samoluk says it was a hard battle to persuade government agencies such as the FBI, CIA and Secret Service, to declassify many of the documents. The JFK act presumed that documents and files were open, unless the harm of disclosure outweighed the public's interest in the information, but Samoluk says the committee and the federal investigative agencies often disagreed about whether files should be viewed by the public.

"At first the agencies fought us on everything but it became clear they weren't going to win," he says.

The newly declassified documents include a considerable amount of material about the alleged assassin, Oswald, including FBI files on an attempt to trace his moves in Europe and the Soviet Union before the assassination, as well as CIA and FBI records about his trip to Mexico City in September 1963, when it is thought he visited the Cuban and Soviet embassies.

But Samoluk says the committee also went after and acquired documents such as interrogation notes of Oswald when he was held by Dallas police, and extensive documents from New Orleans, including secret grand jury testimony in District Attorney Jim Garrison's prosecution of Clay Shaw for conspiracy to assassinate JFK—an investigator had stored them in his basement—along with Shaw's diary and records from his defense attorneys.

Some new information came from other private sources, including the papers of J. Lee Rankin, the general counsel for the Warren Commission. A Dallas woman turned over outtakes of television news tape that show the grassy knoll in the minutes after the shooting, and David Powers, an aide to Kennedy, directed the committee to some home movies he took during the motorcade ride, Samoluk says.

The famous 26-second, 8 mm Zapruder

film that shows the assassination was donated in January to the Sixth Floor Museum on Dealey Plaza by the family of the cameraman, Dallas businessman Abraham Zapruder. Visitors to the museum, located on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building, can look down onto the presidential motorcade route from windows close to the one where Oswald allegedly stood among stacks of cardboard boxes and fired a rifle, hitting Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Connally.

DEAD ENDS

The review board hit some dead ends in its quest for documents. For instance, it didn't locate any secret papers of former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, Samoluk says.

Although the committee disbanded after its final report in September 1998, Samoluk says Tunheim is still trying to get more KGB documents on Oswald's visit to the Soviet Union.

Many questions—besides the burning issue of whether Oswald acted alone—remain unanswered, Samoluk says. For example: Where is JFK's missing brain? Was there a gunman on the grassy knoll? How did one "magic bullet" do so much damage?

About half of the people Samoluk spoke to on February 12 in Dallas indicated with a show of hands they believe in a conspiracy. That was a little surprising to Samoluk, who says usually the majority of any crowd he speaks to about the assassination believes Oswald did not act alone.

Samoluk says that while photographs might reveal if a second person shot at the motorcade from the grassy knoll, that evidence wouldn't resolve the ultimate question of who might have conspired with Oswald.

He doubts the whole truth will ever come out, since 37 years have passed since the assassination. The trail has probably gone cold, he says.

But Samoluk says the newly public documents reveal a lot about how the FBI handled the investigation into the shooting. For instance, he says, FBI agents interviewed confidential informants across the nation, but didn't interview people who were at Dealey Plaza to watch the motorcade.

"Personally," says Samoluk, "I think they were afraid of what some witnesses would say."