

Cuban raider 'Skip' Hall denies conspiracy charges

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Loran Eugene Hall, recently subpoenaed by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, visited the Free Press Tuesday.

Hall walked in with Art Kevin of KHJ News, and asked if he might see a photograph which appeared in the Free Press and the Berkeley Barb a few weeks ago.

The photograph was of a man who, according to the Barb, was being sought by Garrison in connection with his investigation, into the assassination of President Kennedy. It was said to be a blow-up of a part of a frame of a film showing him being arrested at the scene of the assassination.

While the picture was being found, and afterwards, the following dialogue took place with Hall and members of the Free Press staff:

FP: In Garrison's news release, as I heard it, he didn't mention this photograph.

HALL: Oh no. But he's gonna sock it on me when I get there.

FP: Then how will this photograph ... since Garrison hasn't even said ...

HALL: I've got a witness that will testify to the fact that this is what Garrison sent the photograph out for—to see if it was me. Because he made the blatant statement that that was a picture of me, taken at the depository store on the day of the assassination, in Dallas, Texas. This here (he pointed at the picture) ... you can tell that that's ... it's not me! Because, number one, my beard does not come up in here—you can see where my beard doesn't go like that. See how his hair comes up in there like this here? You can tell that my beard doesn't.

FP: When will you know whether you are going to be extradited to Louisiana?

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HALL: I go tomorrow morning at nine o'clock to show cause why I should not be sent ... ah ... extradited to New Orleans, before Judge Borton, superior court judge in Bakersfield.

FP: And you feel that Garrison is subpoenaing you on the basis of this picture? Or another one?

HALL: Now if it's this other picture here, then it was me.

FP: But this picture, to the best of your knowledge was taken in Florida?

HALL: I don't know when it was taken.

FP: Is it Garrison's contention that you were in Dallas on the day



Loran Eugene Hall in Free Press office.
Free Press Photo by John Palmer!

of the assassination?

HALL: Well, he's made the statement that I had checked in at the YMCA in Dallas, Texas on Oct. 21. And that I never left the YMCA until the day of the assassination. He's made this statement. Now then, if he'd had an investigator that really had investigated, and if the man had not perjured himself, and libelled me by making this statement, he would have found by checking the register at the YMCA, that I was checked in either for one or for two days, and possibly three at the longest.

He would also have found out that approximately ten to twelve days later, I was arrested at Jew Fish Creek on Key Largo by the CIA customs units and Coast Guard for violation of the Neutrality Act, for pullin' a raid on Cuba. He would have also found out that I was tailed by the FBI every second of the time that I was in Miami, after I was arrested sometime around November the tenth of '63. He would have also found out by going to the airport that I had a reservation on a flight from Miami to L.A. He would have found out that I

arrived in L.A. about two o'clock in the morning. He would have also found out that I remained in L.A. and that I was at my residence on the day of the assassination, at the precise moment that it came on television, I was in my apartment shaving. In Los Angeles! In Monterey Park! If he would have also taken the time, he would have found out that I was having lunch with a fella here in L.A. who I later went to work for, who was a superintendent of a warehouse ... that we went over to a cafe called "Frank's Cafe" and had lunch there sometime between twelve and twelve-thirty that daynoon—of the assassination. And he also made the statement that I had never been investigated by the Warren Commission. This man makes statements that you can't believe!

FP: I think he said that you hadn't testified before the commission, not that you hadn't been investigated ...

HALL: Well, yeah—I never was called before the Commission, but I was still investigated by the Warren Commission.

FP: And so you think that it's a case of mistaken identity probably based on this picture?

HALL: I don't know! I'm completely at a loss on the thing!

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FP: But you do know that he did show this picture to someone ...

HALL: Well, the only thing that I can think that he's trying to do is to try to get me down there to testify ... because ... maybe he's liberal - minded ... he thinks the Conservatives did the assassination. The conservatives think the

Superior Court Judge P. R. Borton delayed Wednesday for two weeks a decision on whether to order Loren Hall of Kernville to appear before a New Orleans grand jury investigating the assassination of President Kennedy.

liberal establishment might've had a hand in it. But I think that somewhere along the line in the six or seven months prior to President Kennedy's assassination, that he was going from the left—not Communism or pro-socialism, but from liberalism. There's a spectrum—three hundred and sixty degrees, and he was to the left of center. And I'm saying that in the last six or seven months, that he was slightly going towards the center, and that really upset the liberal establishment, and they got upset to the point where—boy—whew! Something's got to happen!

And I'm saying that—well, I'm not saying that they did it—but they damn sure knew that it was

going to happen, and that they allowed it to happen and then brought up this phony Warren Commission. Far as I'm concerned, the biggest percentage on the Warren Commission is phony. I'll say that there is substance to a lot of it. Maybe basically it's true. But, hell! Half the populace of the nation doesn't believe the Warren Commission!

And I'm one of them that don't

....
FP: Do you personally know any of the people Garrison has named as being involved in the alleged conspiracy, such as David Ferrie, Gordon Novel, Clay Shaw ...

HALL: Only one that I can ever recall ever meeting—even talking to in any way, shape or form—was Larry Howard. He's the only one, and he's subpoenaed, same as I am.

FP: On what occasion did you meet him?

HALL: First time I met him was somewhere in the latter part of January in Miami, Florida, at a hotel room. I met him for about five or ten minutes and then left—it was just a chance introduction.

The next time I met him was in East Los Angeles. This was about August or September. And he knew that I was going down on a raid—that I was gathering equip-

ment and medical supplies for the raid—and he wanted to know if he could go down on the raid—and he wanted to know if he could go down on the raid with me.

I knew that he was a qualified man, and I also knew that he had never been on a raid prior to this. I also knew that he had been either arrested or raided or something by the CIA and the Customs unit on No Name Key sometime in either November or December of '62 on preparations for going into Cuba on a raid. This was known as Patrick's group.

I said, "Sure, you could go in with me." I had him checked out through a few sources that I had here and found out that he was a pretty good boy. So I went ahead and took him and another fellow with me through Dallas on into Miami.

FP: On these raids, what did you do?

HALL: We landed. We would go in at least one or two days, almost on every occasion.

FP: What kind of targets did you attack?

HALL: Just about everything we could find; sugar fields, factories, radio antennas, bridges. These were demolition raids.

FP: Are you an expert on demolition?

HALL: Yes.

FP: Were you trained in the service?

HALL: Yes. I also had some training in Cuba.

FP: Were these raids done under the auspices of the CIA or any government agency?

HALL: Absolutely not!

FP: Was the public aware of these raids?

HALL: Well, there was a record cut on it, called "Cuba Betrayed" and there were a lot of speeches out here in California. By myself.

FP: Then there was no secret about it. And there's also the fact that I was in prison in Cuba for about six months. Picked up for counter-revolutionary activities. Cienfuegos was the one that got me out of that.

FP: Who was in charge of the prison?

HALL: Che Guevara was in charge of the Cabana when I was there.

FP: Did you know him?

HALL: I had met him.

FP: Where was your headquarters in the United States? What area were you operating out of?

HALL: Well, when I was gathering supplies and everything, I was back here in California. In Monterey Park. When I was in Florida it was in Miami. When I was in Texas, it was in Dallas.

FP: Did you have any connection with the group that was on Camp Street in New Orleans?

HALL: No. I never had any connections at all. None whatsoever.

FP: One of the allegations that Garrison made was that you had a rifle. He said that you had a rifle, here in the Los Angeles area.

HALL: I can't answer that question.

FP: Did you leave it with anybody? Did you have any knowledge of a rifle?

HALL: I can't answer that question. Not until tomorrow.

FP: Did you ever have any connection with the Cuban Revolutionary Council or the Student Directorio?

HALL: I had connections with Guerra. I had connections with Ciento y Seis. The office of Ciento y Seis, the Viente Cinco Zero Seis ...

FP: Who was financing these raids?

HALL: I was, baby! I came out here and gave talks. We'd get a group and I'd give a talk and then you would donate. Maybe you'd donate a quarter, a dime or a dol-

lar, and I would give a receipt for this. And when I got ready to leave, I turned these receipts over to somebody. I don't remember who it was now. But I remember I turned the receipts over for the money I had collected and for all the equipment that I purchased, I had receipts.

FP: Was this done under your private, personal auspices, or was there a group that sponsored this?

HALL: I'd just as soon not say.

FP: Did you encounter any difficulties in buying equipment? Such as automatic weapons?

HALL: I think automatic weapons are illegal to purchase.

FP: Why didn't the CIA who arrested you in Florida, ... why didn't they hold you for more

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than three or four days?

HALL: I don't have any idea why.

FP: You were arrested literally with the goods?

HALL: That's right. They confiscated two cars ... they confiscated a \$7000 boat ... they confiscated about seven thousand dollars worth of equipment. I never have got the cars back, the boat back, or any of the equipment. No charges were ever formally pressed against me.

FP: How long after the Cuban Revolution did you start these raids?

HALL: I was arrested in Havana on April 26, 1959, approximately three or four months after the takeover of Castro.

FP: You were living in Cuba at the time?

HALL: I had been in the Revolution, I was a Captain in the Sixth of July Movement, under Camillo Cienfuegos. And we decided—well, I didn't—but a bunch of the higher officers under Camillo Cienfuegos decided that Castro was Communist and that everything was going Communist, so we formed a counterrevolutionary group called the La Sombra. And we were training troops about twenty miles outside of Havana, and somehow or another the word got out, and when I went into downtown Havana, I was arrested. When I walked out of the Biltmore Hotel, there was probably

35 or 40 militians out there—Barbudos—with machine guns and rifles and everything else, and they put us under arrest and took me to the police estacion number one, and from there I was taken to La Cabana, and from La Cabana to the Dierre, and from the Dierre to the Ciudad Libertad and from Ciudad Libertad to the Tochcornia.

FP: Were you ever at any time working for the CIA?

HALL: Never.

FP: Or any federal agency?

HALL: No.

FP: Did they ever approach you?

HALL: Aaaahhh ... no. Never.

FP: Did you know Sergio Carbo?

HALL: No, I did not know Sergio Carbo.

FP: Did you know of him?

HALL: The name doesn't mean anything to me.

FP: Did you know Oswald?

HALL: No.

FP: Ferrie was doing a lot of gun running to Cuba through and Ruby and ...

HALL: I never recall, and I can truthfully say that I have never met any of those people! In fact I never even heard of them—until November the 22nd, like the rest of the American people ... on television, and all of that.

FP: Were you involved in the Bay of Pigs invasion?

HALL: No, I was not. Listen, we weren't the only people making those raids. The CIA was making plenty of them too.

FP: How do you feel about Vietnam?

HALL: I think we should win in Vietnam. But we should do it and get it over with. We should do it in about one or two days, wipe them out and get it over with.

FP: Do you think the investiga-

tion into the assassination of President Kennedy should be reopened?

HALL: Hell yes. It might be too bad for the Kennedy family to see those ugly photographs of the body and the autopsy, but those belong to us. Open it up, and let it all come out! If it was a conservative that did it, hang 'im. If it was LBJ, hang 'im. If it was a liberal, hang 'im. Whoever the sorry bastard was, hang 'im.

(There was a very funny moment, later, when Hall and members of the Free Press staff were dis-

cussing the "Blow-up" photos published on the front page of the Free Press several weeks ago, showing what looks like a man holding a rifle behind the stone wall near where Kennedy's car was passing, just after the shots were fired. Hall was discussing this with interest, and picked up a long cardboard tube to demonstrate how an expert rifleman would hold his rifle, while taking aim. Just as he was doing this, several people raised their cameras to get a picture of Hall in this position. He immediately lowered the cardboard tube, laughing, and said, "You son of a bitch!")

According to the Warren Report, late in September, 1963 three men visited a Miss Sylvia Odio in Dallas, and one was introduced as Leon Oswald. This man, introduced as Oswald, allegedly advocated the assassination of President Kennedy. The Warren Commission decided it was not Oswald who visited Miss Odio, but that it was three men, named William Seymour, Loran Eugene Hall, and Lawrence Howard.