

# Does This Man Know Who Conspired

BY DICK RUSSELL

There is a man from Arkansas who, if he did not conspire to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., might be able to tell the world who did.

His name is Walter (Jack) Youngblood—soldier of fortune, published author, confidence man extraordinaire. He's a mysterious figure who befriended Fidel Castro and the late Guatemalan dictator Carlos Castillo-Armas, who may appear in the Warren Commission appendix as a possible gunrunning associate of Jack Ruby, and who most recently was rumored to be either in Robert Vesco's employ in Miami or secluded on a ranch in Arkansas or hustling an oil deal on the Alaska Pipeline. Jack Youngblood is also quite probably a onetime employee of either the CIA, the FBI, army intelligence, or all of those.

A number of strange characters and stranger tales have surfaced amid the recent assassination-conspiracy revival. In the King case alone, a young convicted drug dealer from Atlanta claims he was framed because of his knowledge about the plotters; CBS News flies a shady Canadian with "the real story" to New York, then discounts him; rumors circulate that the Black Congressional Caucus has learned the identity of a cadre of wealthy Southern financiers.

The Youngblood story is the strangest of all. According to an interview released in December by Zodiac News Service in San Francisco, it's the belief of Robert Livingston—Memphis attorney for King's convicted slayer James Earl Ray—that King was murdered "by a hit man who was contracted by an agency of the federal government." Livingston last week confirmed that statement, and admitted that the man he means is Jack Youngblood.

Although some assassination researchers do discount Youngblood's involvement in the King case, Livingston is not alone in his suspicions. Some years back two Memphis citizens identified Youngblood from a photograph as a well-dressed man who dined in a ghetto cafe, a half-block away and one hour before King's assassination on April 4, 1968. Three other people, a lawyer and two ministers, believe he could also be the mystery man who visited them five days later, using separate aliases to tell similar stories about the plot's supposed modus operandi. And Ray himself, serving 99 years in the Tennessee State Penitentiary, has identified Youngblood in a picture as the man he thought was tailing him in two Memphis taverns on the fateful day.

There is in all this the possibility that Youngblood might originally have been observing Ray for somebody, or perhaps carrying out a "disinformation" scheme to plant false leads. Even so, a staggering implication is involved—because part of the assassination scenario reportedly described to the Memphis ministers by the "mystery man" in 1968 is similar to a story revealed in Jack Anderson's column late in 1975. That

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*'A number of strange characters and stranger tales have surfaced amid the recent assassination conspiracy revival. The story of Jack Youngblood is the strangest of all.'*



Jack Youngblood was one of the U. S. military's promising young men in the early 1950s. In 1961, with Robin Moore, he wrote a book (this photograph is from the jacket) about his adventures as a flying gunrunner in Cuba and Latin America. Some feel he's a faker. James Earl Ray's lawyer thinks he's a hitman.

story concerned a jealous-husband motive for the hiring of King's assassin. And Anderson's source was none other than J. Edgar Hoover, who leaked it to him through an intermediary shortly after King's murder, and which Anderson's investigation finally concluded was probably a deliberate hoax.

The name of Jack Youngblood, however, didn't surface publicly until the Zodiac News release. In 1974, in a series of articles for Computers and People magazine, Memphis lawyer and investigative reporter Wayne Chastain exhaustively documented all evidence linking Youngblood to the assassination, but gave him the pseudonym "Jack Armstrong."

"I'm not too pleased with seeing his real name published," Chastain said last week. "I've been trying to set up an interview with him. Now I think he's been scared off. People say he's still living out around Allene, Arkansas, and comes in on weekends to get drunk, but he lives way out on a ranch and has no phone. Three weeks ago, a deputy sheriff down there told me he disappeared, maybe up to Canada."

What makes Jack Youngblood run? The story, as Chastain recounts it, begins at 4:30 p.m. the day of King's death, in a short-order joint called Jim's Cafe. Until it burned down last year, Jim's

was an invisible place, a haven for the down-and-out white boarders in the rooming house above, on the periphery of Memphis's black ghetto. That's why it felt strange to cafe owner Lloyd Jowers when a man in dark sweater and white dress shirt—a man who "just wasn't our regular run of customer"—sat down to order "eggs and sausage."

A black waitress remembered him as "very handsome," with dark eyes, dark wavy hair, high cheekbones, and a brooding quiet that made her think he was part Indian. "He kept going over to the wall where the telephone was located," she said, "but he never picked up the phone. He looked at the wall and appeared to be angry about something. There was a telephone book nearby, but he didn't bother using it."

At 5 p.m., the stranger departed. Exactly an hour later, Lloyd Jowers heard a sound like "a backfire from a truck" echo from behind his cafe. And Martin Luther King was dead—less than a block away on the second-floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

When the Memphis police questioned Jowers that night, the first thing he mentioned was "the eggs and sausage man." If the man comes back, the police captain told him, call immediately—"He is probably our man."

Oddly enough, the very next

morning, he did. At first, Jowers hardly recognized him. He was wearing dark glasses, and carrying a large suitcase. At the same table, a different waitress took the same order—"Eggs and sausage." And Jowers quietly telephoned the police.

When the stranger left this time, Jowers watched from his doorway as two homicide cops took him away in a waiting squad car. All day long, Jowers listened to the radio for word. No suspect had been named, but already Attorney General Ramsey Clark was stating "no evidence of a conspiracy."

That night, the police captain again came by Jim's Cafe for coffee. "That guy you put us on must have had some real connections," Jowers said the captain told him. "One phone call, and he was gone less than an hour after the boys brought him in."

All this was told to Wayne Chastain, who'd been traveling with Dr. King's entourage for two years off and on. Chastain had spent the last two days of King's life covering his Memphis speeches for the Press-Scimitar. Within 10 minutes after the assassination, he was on the scene interviewing witnesses.

But to his astonishment, Chastain could find only one police officer who would later acknowledge the "eggs and sausage man's" arrest. There wasn't even a record of it with the police

Bureau of Identification. According to Chastain, Frank Holloman—then director of the Memphis Police and Fire Departments—finally conceded it had happened. Chastain quotes Holloman as saying: "We picked him up for the FBI, who wanted to check him out on something completely different from the King slaying." Holloman refused to identify the suspect.

Contacted last week in Memphis, Holloman refused to discuss any aspect of the assassination, saying, "I'm enough of a lawyer to know that the case is still pending, and feel it would not be wise to comment at this time." Asked about an arrest in a cafe the morning after, he replied: "Not to my knowledge. I do not recall any such thing."

In confidence, another high-ranking Memphis police official allegedly told Chastain—then later denied making the statement—that the "eggs and sausage man" was both an undercover FBI informer and an army intelligence operative.

Another remarkable response, Chastain writes, came from the FBI's Special Agent in Charge in Memphis, Robert Jensen. Last week, Jensen couldn't be tracked down; the Memphis office says he has either been transferred or retired, but in 1968 Chastain reports Jensen admitting the cafe visitor had been picked up for questioning in the King case. "We are on the crossroads here," Jensen is quoted as having said, "There's nothing in the man's story to connect him in any way to King's death."

Both Chastain and Ray's lawyer Livingston say that Youngblood's photograph was identified by cafe owner Jowers and his waitress as the "eggs and sausage man" arrested that April morning. Jowers was unreachable for comment, and the lady's identity is being kept confidential. But two other principals, Russell X. Thompson and the Reverend James Latimer, in the bizarre chain of events did talk last week by telephone, and this is what they remember:

Five days after King's murder, Russell X. Thompson—a Memphis attorney who had gained notoriety in winning cases for the Legal Defense Fund and NAACP—received a call "from a man in Chicago who wanted to talk to me about a murder."

As arranged, early the next morning the stranger showed up in Thompson's office. He was a ruddy-complexioned six-footer with blondish hair, which Thompson later told Chastain could conceivably have been dyed. He gave his name as "Tony Benavides," admitting it was an alias, and said he wanted Thompson to represent him in case the police charged him with Dr. King's murder. The lawyer remembers his adding something to the effect that he'd already been picked up for questioning the previous Friday (the same day the "eggs and sausage man" was arrested and released).

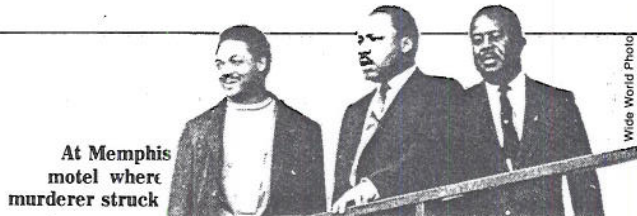
"He then went on to say he knew who killed Dr. King," Thompson says. "His roommate in Denver, whose alias was Pete."

Despite Thompson's warning that he'd have to know his true name and report this to the law in

Courtesy Coward McCain



# to Assassinate King?



At Memphis motel where murderer struck

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order to defend him properly, "Tony Benavides" continued to relate his story.

"He said that the shot that killed King did not come from the bathroom window of the rooming house but was fired from some bushes behind a wall across the street from the motel," Thompson says. "Due to the crowd and the confusion, the gunman escaped almost unnoticed, and left the scene on a motorbike."

True or false, the gist of this was corroborated by others—including King's chauffeur Solomon Jones and an 11-year-old boy, both of whom said they saw a man jump down from a bush-shaded wall.

"He seemed to be bragging about how he was a professional hit man or knew how they worked," Thompson says. "He never did produce any weapon, but mentioned to me that a good place to carry a gun was in the small of the back, and demonstrated how a suitcoat would hang over it. This meant a real hasty frisk might not reveal the gun. He also had tattoos, and said he frequently changed them and could erase one any time he wanted. He mentioned various tricks of the trade, conveying he was some sort of hit artist or in some illegal activity."

After about an hour and a half, "Tony Benavides" rose to leave. "He asked me about Doyle Ellington, where he could find him and whether I knew him. Then he told me he was going to go see him in Brownsville, Tennessee, and that he couldn't be reached but would call me again."

Doyle Ellington was a Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, who a few weeks earlier had been in the Memphis headlines for indictment in illegal whiskey operations. He later denied receiving a visit from anyone of "Benavides's" description and accused the FBI of trying to frame him. But, as we shall soon see, under another alias, "Benavides" did indeed board a bus that day for Brownsville, Tennessee.

Less than four hours after "Benavides" left Thompson's office, two Memphis ministers received a phone call at the Central Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The caller told Reverend James Latimer he needed "spiritual guidance" or he'd "commit suicide." Latimer, accompanied by Reverend John Baltensperger, agreed to meet with the man at a downtown cafe.

"He was sharply dressed," Latimer remembered last week. "Sunglasses like an Italian movie type, long sideburns, peg pants, wearing a dark suit and tie. About six feet tall. He told us he worked for the Mafia."

The stranger called himself J. Christ Bonnevecche. Like "Benavides," he said he was on his way to Brownsville, where a guy he'd known in prison would "give him a cover." He also mentioned he carried a gun "in the small of his back." Latimer thinks he may have shown them a tattoo on his arm.

"He said the guy who killed Dr. King came into town riding a cycle, and that he was of Spanish descent. He had disguised himself as a Negro and done the job. He

said it was a setup deal. And he told us that the next public figure to be killed would be Bobby Kennedy." \*

Latimer's memory is vague about who "Bonnevecche" claimed was behind King's death. He thinks the man even mentioned the Masons but doesn't remember any talk of a Mafia murder contract with a wealthy man whose wife had been seduced by King, although Chastain records that as one of the ministers' recollections in an interview some four years ago. At any rate, Chastain must have gotten it from somewhere—and Jack Anderson didn't reveal the FBI's hand in a similar story until this past December.

FBI Director Hoover sent word to him shortly after the assassination, Anderson writes, that "the motive behind the murder was cuckoldry, that the assassin apparently had been hired by a jealous husband." Hoover's intermediary even identified a Los Angeles couple and showed Anderson supporting data, "including an FBI report describing a passionate interlude between the wife and Dr. King in a New York City hotel."

Anderson writes that he flew to L.A. and tried to confirm the story, interviewing husband and wife separately, but found no evidence "that contradicted the couple's own explanation that Dr. King was an honored friend of the family, a frequent guest in their home and nothing more." Also, he found no FBI agents "on this trail that was supposed to be so hot," and reluctantly concluded the story "was erroneous and half-convicted that it was a deliberate hoax."

Were "Benavides" and "Bonnevecche" also masters of the deliberate hoax? "Bonnevecche" carefully laid down to the ministers his own alibi, that he'd been carrying \$300,000 in counterfeit traveler's checks for the Mob when somebody rolled him in St. Louis. Told by his New York supervisor to come up with the money in 24 hours or else, he had fled by bus to Memphis.

"He did give us one of those traveler's checks out of his attache case," Rev. Latimer says, "and we later turned it over to the police. We kept thinking he was just a bum wanting a handout, and finally asked him what he wanted. He said again 'spiritual help,' that his mother was a Presbyterian so he just called the first Presbyterian church in the phone book."

"He said he had plenty of money, but that we could do him one favor—take him to the bus station so he could catch a bus for Brownsville. That's a little town about 30 miles from Memphis. We let him out and that's the last I saw of him, except I did get a postcard from him a few days later."

"Benavides" recontacted lawyer Thompson, too, calling him a few days later "wanting to touch base." That was the last anyone heard from Tony Benavides or J. Christ Bonnevecche. But both the lawyer and the two ministers went to Memphis officialdom with their stories.

Thompson says he gave the FBI "either the person's name or maybe it was a phone number" of the Denver roommate that Ben-

avides said killed King. Thompson also now says he didn't pursue it further, though he did do independent research on the assassination for the Legal Defense Fund.

"A month afterward, I was talking to Shelby County District Attorney General Phil Christie," he recalls, "and I asked what happened with the guy. Canale said they'd checked him out and determined he went to some preacher doing a similar type thing. They concluded he was some kinda nut."

Thompson remembers viewing



James Earl Ray, convicted slayer of Martin Luther King, wants a new trial.

photographs with private detective Renfro Hays and later Chastain. "I said something to Wayne, to the effect that one of the pictures looked similar to this man and could have been him. But I wouldn't be able to say that it was. Wayne told me afterwards that the picture was of Jack Youngblood. That name has popped up a lot. A number of people have mentioned it, but I don't recall specifically where."

Reverend Latimer went to one of his church elders, an assistant chief of police, and told him the full story. "Then about two years later, the state attorney general's office and the TBI (Tennessee Bureau of Investigation) came by to see me with seven or eight mug shots. I picked out one guy and said it might've been him. But they never came back and told me if that's who they were looking for."

Next came Chastain with his pictures. One closely matched the Memphis officials' photographs and again Reverend Latimer made his tentative identification. He couldn't recall offhand, last week, the name Chastain then said it was.

Did Youngblood ring a bell? "Yes, I think that's the guy, far as I know. I keep hearing things in blows and stretches. But nobody ever comes back and tells me anything. I don't know a lot about it, except the guy knew something. Maybe he was sent here, a plant of some kind. But he wasn't a nut, he had some purpose. He was savvy about something."

Three days after the mysterious visits of "Benavides" and "Bonnevecche," Eric Starvo Galt—the alias of James Earl Ray—was named as King's assassin, and the

manhunt was on. Ray is currently seeking to win a new trial, and long has talked of a conspiracy without naming names. Says his Washington lawyer Bernard Fensterwald, Jr.: "He says if he talks he's a dead man, and I can't argue with that."

One thing Ray had talked about, long before any other links were forged to Jack Youngblood, is a man he bumped into twice in separate taverns the day of the assassination. A man who "looked at me kind of funny," and who Ray suspected was tailing him either as a gun-smuggling contact—or a police agent.

Chastain, the only reporter to gain recent access to Ray in prison, also showed him the Youngblood photos. Chastain says: "Ray identified him as the man in the tavern."

Now another piece of the puzzle is falling into place in Los Angeles. Affidavits being signed by a number of witnesses, according to assassination author and researcher Donald Freed, place Youngblood in L.A. within two weeks after the assassination—hanging around a black man and someone looking very much like James Earl Ray.

The problem is, every previous account of Ray's postassassination movements has him going to Canada, then on to Europe (he was captured in London on June 8, 1968). He is known, however, to have spent considerable time in L.A. before the assassination.

"When I last talked to Fensterwald," says Freed, "he said he always believed there was a Ray imposter. If this was really Ray, that calls his whole Canadian trip into question. And if anything's been established, it's that trip. But whoever this was looked and acted like him, and of course the people we've talked to think it was."

Here's the way Freed's investigative team recreates what happened, through eyewitnesses at L.A.'s St. Francis Hotel and an ex-informer who apparently helped locate them.

"The man using Ray's name came to Los Angeles to put on a big show," Freed says. "Youngblood was posing with him as a mystery figure of some kind and they were in the company of a black man, off and on, apparently creating a whirlwind disinformation team—implicating Ray. This guy was not any patsy. He was bragging, throwing around hundreds of dollars, and talking to a few hotel regulars. Also, they were hinting broadly about another and bigger hit coming up in Los Angeles." \*\*

Around April 20, less than two months before Robert Kennedy's murder in L.A., the police raided the room at the St. Francis. At this point, only Ray's alias (Galt) had been released by the FBI. The raid, which did make the L.A. papers, was quickly called a false alarm.

"We've learned it was not false," Freed goes on. "Youngblood apparently came into the hotel 30 minutes before the raid, alerted them, and they left—this Ray, a woman, and the black man. All hell broke loose in the hotel. The police came in with guns drawn."

What did it all mean? Nobody knows. But, says Freed, Youngblood also went to the Los Angeles Times using the name "Walter." "He said he knew what had happened in the King murder. The Times to this day thinks it was just a hoax." \*

The book is gathering dust now on the shelves of secondhand bookstores. Its foreword begins: "Until this spring I followed trouble and excitement and the top dollar wherever they led me. They led me through Latin America, into most of the revolutions that have taken place there since 1954. I was a gunrunner, primarily—a flying gunrunner; and because running guns is dangerous it earned me a good living."

This book, written by Jack Youngblood with Robin Moore, is called "The Devil to Pay" and was published by Coward McCann in 1961. It is dedicated "to those Cuban patriots and anti-Communists who joined the 26th-of-July Movement in good faith, and who are now working underground or in exile to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro."

Jack Youngblood was one of the U.S. military's more promising young men of the early 1950s. Already an accomplished pilot, he was trained by the Army as a ranger commando and, at 20, commissioned directly from the ranks to second lieutenant.

Youngblood describes how, on a trip to Panama where his uncle served as chief of the Judge Advocate section, he attended some receptions with "many Latin American politicians." One was a Guatemalan Colonel named Carlos Castillo-Armas, who apparently sought Youngblood's advice about "guerrilla and combined air-ground operations."

It would prove a fateful meeting. Six months later Youngblood got his discharge, and in the fall of 1953 enrolled at the University of Arkansas. His academic career lasted one semester, when he was expelled on what he says was a phony accusation of rape by an Arkansas coed.

At any rate, Youngblood next surfaced in Central America—training a team of rebels in Nicaragua to break Castillo-Armas out of a Guatemalan prison. A revolution was brewing in Guatemala. Its leader, Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, was leaning dangerously close to the Communists. The interests of the United Fruit Company were threatened.

As described by David Ross and Thomas Wise in their 1964 best-seller "The Invisible Government," "The CIA needed someone to serve as a leader of the coup and a focal point around which anti-Arbenz Guatemalans could rally. The man chosen was Colonel Carlos Castillo-Armas . . . (who) set up headquarters in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and with the CIA's help, began plotting to return to his homeland."

Youngblood's jailbreak team had been successful. On June 27, 1954, so was the Guatemalan coup—with the help of CIA pilots like Jerry Fred DeLarm, who became a close friend of Jack

Continued on next page

\* 6 DAYS AFTER KING MURDER (P. 10, COL. 5)

\* FORTNIGHT, COL. 2



## Assassination

Continued from preceding page.

Youngblood's. Castillo-Armas became Guatemala's president, and as Youngblood describes: "My payoff was a handsome one."

In 1957 he moved on to other pastures. Captured records of ex-Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista show a supposed price on Youngblood's head in Havana that year. He had been taken into custody over a con caper pulled in an elegant casino at the expense of a top Batista lieutenant. His sentence was death by firing squad, until for reasons unexplained he somehow escaped to Mexico.

There, he went to work for a rebel leader named Fidel Castro, as a highly paid gunrunner, piloting black market weapons first from Philadelphia and St. Louis by way of a secret airfield near Houston, then south to Mexico City. Eventually, he would accept a top command position in Castro's revolutionary army.

It should be remembered that, at this time, Castro had given no indication of any Communist leanings. In fact, a considerable CIA faction openly supported his planned takeover from the corrupt Batista. The agency probably wanted to keep its hand in either way. And an old army buddy of Youngblood's thinks he became a key CIA operative assigned to penetrate Castro's underground.

In "The Devil to Pay," which deals almost entirely with his Cuban adventures, Youngblood brags openly about training revolutionaries in commando tactics in the mountains—and about becoming a bounty hunter when Castro started paying \$500 per head for every enemy killed by a guerrilla. When Castro took power, Youngblood stayed on in his entourage. He had his own plane and, according to Chastain, flew from Havana to Miami almost daily.

Then, in June 1959 he was arrested in Florida for conspiring with three Miami Springs policemen to kidnap former Cuban Senator Rolando Masferrer. Masferrer who was called "El Tigre" and finally met his demise in Miami last year when a bomb blew up his car, had been Batista's unofficial executioner and the number two man on Castro's most-wanted list. For \$100,000 from Fidel, Youngblood had allegedly arranged to spirit "El Tigre" home to face a Cuban firing squad.

On the day of the trial, though, Youngblood vanished. The Miami News reported: "A check of county and city records showed Youngblood had been picked up by the city for investigation and released on \$5000 bond. Although charges have been filed against him by the state, he as yet has not been picked up or booked. No one seems to know why Youngblood disappeared. Charles Branham, attorney representing the Springs police officers, said his clients had seen Youngblood outside the courtroom before the hearing but didn't know what happened to him."

Chastain's research concludes that Youngblood was let go "for policy reasons," when Florida officials discovered his strong ties to both the FBI and CIA. He even speculates that Youngblood was "bodily seized from state officers by FBI agents" outside the Dade County courtroom.

After this incident, Youngblood's journeys back to Havana apparently stopped. But not his inter-

est in Cuban affairs. Andrew St. George, a writer who also traveled with Castro before his coming to power, particularly recalls Youngblood's interest in the disappearance of Camilio Cienfuegos, Fidel's chief of staff.

"When I was working for Life magazine for several years," St. George said last week, "the disappearance of Cienfuegos was a great mystery."

"I got a call to go to Miami, secret coded urgent top priority message, where I was met by the Time-Life bureau chief. He says, 'Cienfuegos has been found. He defected because communism was on the rise, and is holed up organizing a rebel band.' I had been delegated to run him down.

"Life had given \$5000 for the tip, and the tip turned out to be Youngblood. We chartered a little plane to Haiti, where he gave us a song and dance about how Cienfuegos couldn't see us just yet. Nothing happened. I wrote a long report for Life saying Youngblood was a swindler. Then I got called back to Miami again. Life trusted him—another \$5000 and we fly off on another chartered plane to a little Mexican island at Merida, sleepy little godforsaken town.

"So we are driving around town because Youngblood says Cienfuegos is coming to meet us on a private plane, when I realize another car is following us. We rounded a corner, I got out and told the driver to move on. The other cab came into view and I saw a guy in the back, with his head down to hide from me. And it's a guy from NBC—a Miami cameraman!

"Youngblood not only sold my boss, but went to NBC and sold them the notion that I knew where Cienfuegos was. And if they'd tail me, they'd find out. Eventually, things became clear even to Life. But I know he kept our \$10,000 and NBC's \$3000. This guy had something going!"

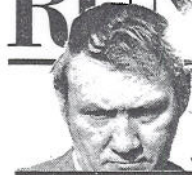
Did St. George know of any Youngblood connection to the intelligence business? "I have no evidence of that. I talked to a CIA man in Havana, Paul Burns, about him. He said he was a crook and a liar, not to be trusted. The CIA even offered to get his criminal record, but Life didn't want it."

There is a mention in the Warren Commission appendix on the assassination of President Kennedy of a "Youngblood." It's a fairly common name in the Southwest and, except for the context, it would be unfair to cast aspersions on the man from Arkansas. However, the name surfaced with a Dallas lady named Nancy Perrin Rich, who said that in 1962 she and her husband attended several meetings about running guns to anti-Castro guerrillas in Cuba and getting refugees out. At the last meeting, she said Jack Ruby showed up, met privately with the colonel, and apparently passed him money.

She also remembered someone named "Youngblood," who would help in the gunrunning venture. This Youngblood, she believed, was an associate of Ruby's and perhaps "a government agent of some sort."

Gerry Patrick Hemming, a one-time CIA contract man and trainer of Cuban exile forces in Florida, believes Youngblood did have intelligence ties. Reached last week in Miami, where he now has a private investigating firm, Hemming said, "He was tied in with Herry DeLarm, Youngblood's pilot friend, who was with the company

# RUNNIN' SCARED



WHAT'D I DO TO DESERVE THIS?

Cunningham sulks, his 'friends' depart.

BY KEN AULETTA

State Democratic Chairman Patrick Cunningham, whose firm has made a bundle from politics, is sulking. He has told friends he is hurt and upset that the man who appointed him, Hugh Carey, has not come to his defense against a series of press leaks and sometimes innuendo from state special prosecutor Maurice Nadjari. He is depressed that his incoming phone calls have dwindled from an average of over 100 per day to roughly five. Meetings have been canceled, calls not returned, and Cunningham incredulously watches his "friends" run away from him. One old friend who hasn't is Boston Mayor Kevin White. He cut short a vacation last week in order to lend Cunningham his support and advice.

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Governor Hugh Carey's office, which has loudly protested the smear tactics of special state prosecutor Maurice Nadjari, may have indulged in some private smear tactics of its own. On December 28, the governor received a letter full of innuendos about Nadjari. The writer charged that Nadjari and a mysterious woman were involved in a hushed-up 1969 Connecticut auto accident; four years later, the writer reports, he was standing at a bar and just happened to overhear two men talking about the accident, claiming that false accident reports were filed and records destroyed. Shocked by this "Watergate-type scandal and cover-up," on December 31 the governor's first assistant counsel, Michael Nadel, hastily dispatched the citizen's letter plus a cover note to Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz requesting that he "please advise of your disposition."

Lefkowitz dutifully complied by meeting with Nadjari and showing him the evidence. Nadjari, always a portrait of sweet calmness, exploded. Lefkowitz asked him to write a memo. Nadjari reportedly banged the desk and shouted, "God-damn it! You will listen to me." The prosecutor then explained that the mystery woman was none other than his wife, and Lefkowitz said that

the other charges were nonsense.

Why, asks an official in the attorney general's office, wasn't the letter followed up by Carey's staff or even discarded as trash? Perhaps the governor did not know the letter was forwarded to Lefkowitz? "That's like saying," angrily responds an aide to Nadjari, "that Bennett Gershman, chief of our appeals bureau, was speaking for himself not Maury when he responded to Pat Cunningham's attorney's charges. That's ridiculous." What may also be ridiculous is that the attorney general and the special prosecutor have been instructed, concedes a Carey spokesman, henceforth to put all their communications with the governor in writing. To carry out Carey's wishes, Lefkowitz and Nadjari reportedly spent all of Friday morning writing memos.

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Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton has scheduled a \$50 and \$100 a ticket fundraiser for January 19. The proceeds, reads the invitation, will be used "to fund community surveys and political action." Which is an elegant way of saying Sutton is planning to run for mayor and wants to conduct a citywide poll. He desires, says a close aide, to be able "to spot trends." He is expected to contract with Metropolitan Campaign Services, Inc., which is currently polling for Senator Birch Bayh in the state and nation. The head of the firm is Richard Dresner—one of the "West Side kids"—which doesn't hurt, as Bayh learned, if you want to win a network of NDC support. The poll can't answer two key questions which haunt Sutton: Can he, as a black, speak to and for the white middle class the city needs to retain? Would he, out of a sense of loyalty, step aside if his friend Abe Beame decided to seek reelection? Nobody knows, but beame and his advisors have begun to talk of the mayor's reelection, noting what they call "the warm response" he receives on the streets. Presumably the public would have to curse at or punch him to prove he was unpopular. □

(CIA) in Mexico and Guatemala and Salvador in '69. And he looked like somebody with intelligence connections. He knew too much. Not many of the guys gunrunning for Castro ever went public. (Bill) Morgan had kinda set a precedent for it, so maybe a replacement was needed and the man was Youngblood. But Youngblood's book was 99 per cent bullshit. He was a guy floating around for himself or for somebody, trying to get in."

For the last 10 years, the name of the swarthy six-footer who once considered playing football at Arkansas has been largely absent from public domain. But Youngblood is still around. Robin Moore, who went on to fame and fortune writing books like "Green Berets," "French Connection," and "Making of a Happy Hooker," has "seen him every so often" in the 15 years since their collaboration on "The Devil to Pay."

Contacted in Connecticut last week, Moore said he'd last spoken to Youngblood "about three or four months ago."

"The last I heard, he was hustling oil investments, going to get involved in some hustle on the pipeline in Alaska. He wants to write a book on the pipeline. Yeah, he used to be a con man, but I think he's pretty straight right now."

As for the King case, strangely enough Youngblood's supposed involvement came as no surprise to Robin Moore. Moore says the allegation came up long ago, and that

author Gerold Frank "spent a week with Youngblood and discussed that." But Frank, who wrote what some people regard as the definitive book on the King slaying ("An American Death"), never mentions Youngblood.

Did Moore ever ask Jack about his possible role? "He said he really knew nothing. If he did, he said he would have come to me and had me write a book and make some money."

Who then, is Walter (Jack) Youngblood? Mail addressed to him in Allene, Arkansas, where he's purportedly been a wealthy gentleman farmer, comes back: "Not Deliverable in the U.S. At This Time." Is it plausible that this single man could possess real knowledge about who killed Martin Luther King, John Kennedy, and Robert Kennedy? Or is he merely the master hoaxer of our time?

Everybody has a different opinion. Bernard Fensterwald, Ray's Washington attorney, thinks of Youngblood's Memphis role: "It could well be, but the evidence seems a little thin. I have the gravest doubts about identifying people through photographs."

Harold Weisberg, the King case's most obsessive private investigator, believes: "It's utterly improbable that a man having anything to do with an assassination would make himself available afterward in the vicinity. Unless he were part of an operation of disinformation. But why?"

Weisberg, at the same time, is

"almost certain Youngblood was in Memphis about the time of the crime. He had an old friend there, a prominent attorney. But I don't know if he's the 'eggs and sausage man' they arrested, or the man who visited that lawyer Russell Thompson."

Henry Lux, then the Memphis chief of police, has "some vague memory" of the cafe arrest, and no recollection of either the Benavides or Bonnevecche incidents.

Donald Freed, in tracking down Youngblood's Los Angeles leads, concludes: "Youngblood has to be seen as one of history's greatest agent-provocateurs, at a level beyond anything conceived of. He seems to be in some kind of liaison with law enforcement, newspapers, and organized crime—and in touch with revanchiste elements of the CIA, FBI, and Cuban G-2."

Andrew St. George, who knew him well enough, simplifies matters: "Youngblood is a crook. But not a violent criminal, because his specialty is conmanship. Bunko and badger games, swindling widows, bilking stewardesses. He's a con man, a swindler, a fraud. But women loved him—a handsome, clean-cut, persuasive, all-American fake."

Perhaps Jack Youngblood himself says it best, in the final words on the dust jacket of "The Devil to Pay": "I am not a moralist or a deep thinker," he writes. "I'll do anything for money, for anyone but a Communist. If I can live high till I'm 40, that's enough." □