

Three Californians subpoenaed as witnesses in Garrison's Kennedy assassination probe

STEVEN J. BURTON

LOS ANGELES Dec. 29 (LNS)— District Attorney Jim Garrison announced in New Orleans today that he was subpoenaing three new witnesses in his Kennedy Assassination probe.

They are Thomas Beckum of Iowa, Loran Eugene Hall of Kernville, California, and Lawrence Howard of Los Angeles.

Little information was available on Beckum, whose name does not appear in Warren Commission proceedings, but Hall and Howard are well known to students of the Warren Report.

In late September, 1963, three men visited Miss Sylvia Odio, a Cuban exile, in Dallas. One was introduced as "Leon Oswald." The two Cubans with "Leon Oswald" told Odio that they wanted to infiltrate Leon into Cuba to assassinate Castro. The next day, Odio received a phone call from one of the Cubans who told her, "Oswald told us we Cubans don't have any guts, because President Kennedy should have been assassinated after the Bay of Pigs." (11 H 73)

When Miss Odio saw Lee Oswald's picture on TV after the assassination, she fainted because she thought he was the man introduced to her two months earlier. Annie Odio, Sylvia's sister, corroborates the identification.

This would prove to be very interesting if Lee Oswald (a "Marxist-communist" says the Warren Report) was with anti-Castro Cubans. It would be more interesting if he were being impersonated by someone talking of assassinating the President.

The Warren Commission de-

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ecided that it was not Lee Oswald who visited Sylvia Odio. They concluded (or rather, Assistant Counsel Wesley J. Liebeler concluded without consulting the Commission — see L.A. Free Press Nov. 24, 1967) that three men named William Seymour, Loran Eugene Hall, and Lawrence Howard were her visitors. Seymour is similar in appearance to Lee Oswald, but no attempt was made to find out why Seymour evidently used the name "Oswald."

This conclusion was based solely on a letter, dated three days before the Warren Report was issued, from J. Edgar Hoover referring to an FBI interview of Hall. Hall subsequently told the FBI that the information furnished by him was false (CD 1553).

Garrison's news release claimed that Hall and Howard had an opportunity to know of a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. Both had been involved in raids on Cuba from the Florida Keys. Garrison says that they checked into the Dallas YMCA in October, 1963, and stayed in Dallas until

shortly after the assassination. He says that Hall brought a .30-caliber rifle with him. He says that Howard was seen with the late David Ferrie in New Orleans in 1963.

Howard was unavailable for comment, but I found "Skip" Hall in Kernville, California where he tends bar at Duffy's Tavern.

Hall told me that he is a "militant conservative" and disliked President Kennedy. He said, "Kennedy was not the right man for the job of President."

"Sure, I wanted to beat Kennedy — but with ballots, not bullets," he added.

He said that he had been arrested in Dallas on narcotics charges in October, 1963, while transporting medical supplies to Cuba. He also says he was arrested at Jew Fish Creek in Florida while on a raid in Cuba.

Hall claims that he was at his home in Monterey Park, Calif. on November 22, 1963. He denies ever knowing Oswald, Ruby, or anyone Garrison thinks is involved at all except Howard.

"Garrison was in L.A.," he said.

"If he came up here and said, 'Skip, what do you know about the assassination?' I would have told him everything."

"But now, if he came here, I'd probably kick him. The City of New Orleans may find themselves with a lawsuit," he added.

Hall said that he may have met Sylvia Odio at one time, but not under the circumstances described in the Warren Report. This contradicts an FBI Report of September 16, 1964, in which Hall is quoted as saying he, Seymour, and Howard visited her. The FBI further quotes Hall as giving Odio's address correctly as apartment 4 on Magellan Circle in Dallas. He is also quoted as being familiar with the Odio family history (her father was imprisoned on the Isle of Pines). (Weissberg, "Whitewash II")

Hall added that, "If a court order is issued for my return to New Orleans, I naturally will go, since I have absolutely nothing to hide."

Distance corrected

Dear Editor:

The caption with the photo taken from the storm drain by the FP photographer said the Kennedy car (at the time of the head shot) "... was approximately 25 feet further back ... to the left ..." than the car shown in the photo. This is incorrect. The distance, as can be verified from a surveyor's map of Dealey Plaza, is approximately 95-100 feet—as I demonstrated to Managing Editor Ted Zatlun last week.

Raymond Marcus
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Tribune corrected

Dear Editor:

In a copyrighted story on Dec. 28, 1967, Russell Freeburg of the Chicago Tribune charged that Jim Garrison was a psychiatric patient for 4 1/2 years in the early fifties. He said that Garrison was given a medical discharge from the Army and was ruled to be "totally unfit for military service."

Garrison spoke with Art Kevin of the KHJ news department about the charges. "I'm very familiar with all that stuff. They tried to use it in the election and at that time I went to the trouble of explaining it, but I'm not going to do it anymore.

"There's going to be too much coming," he added, "if they say next week that I'm a communist and the next month that I'm a thief, I don't want to stop each time to say that I'm really not.

"They tried to use this before and they didn't have the facts. I'm a Lieutenant-Colonel in the reserve right now in the field artillery."

It was further learned that Garrison resigned from the National Guard last February, giving as his reason "incompatible occupation." In fact, he was discharged from the army in 1955 on a medical discharge because he had amoebic dysentery, not for mental reasons.

Since then, he has been an FBI agent for a few months, assistant district attorney of Orleans Parish, and District Attorney of Orleans Parish.

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