

CITIZENS' COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY

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- Newsletter -

GARRISON SUBPOENAS THREE WITNESSES

Los Angeles, Dec. 29: District Attorney Jim Garrison announced in New Orleans today that he was subpoenaing three new witnesses in his Kennedy assassination probe.

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

Little information was available on Beckham, 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 Leon to infiltrate 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." (11H73)

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 decided that it was not Lee Oswald who visited Sylvia Odio. They concluded (or, rather, Ass't Counsel Wesley J. Liebeler concluded without consulting the Commission -- see L.A. Free Press, Nov. 24, '67) 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 published, 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, Cal., 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 with 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 says he was also arrested at Jew Fish Creek in Florida while on a raid on Cuba.

Hall claims that he was at his home in Monterey Park, Calif. on Nov. 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 Sept. 16, 1964 in which Hall is quoted as saying that he, Seymour and Howard visited her. The FBI report 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). (Weisberg, 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." --Steven J. Burton

GARRISON SUBPOENAS TWO MORE WITNESSES

New Orleans, La., Jan. 9: District Attorney Jim Garrison has announced the subpoenas of two more witnesses in his continuing probe of the Kennedy assassination. They are James Hicks of Enid, Oklahoma and Kerry Thornely, an ex-marine buddy of Lee Harvey Oswald.

The District Attorney's office said that Hicks, an estimate specialist at Vance Air Force Base, was in Dealy Plaza, Dallas, when the President was murdered. His name appears nowhere in the proceedings of the Warren Commission.

No further information on Hicks was released in New Orleans, but I learned that Hicks had been to see Garrison in July, 1967. At that time, he told Garrison that he was very near the Presidential limousine when the President was killed. He said that he saw gunshots come from the grassy knoll and the Book Depository Building. He said that he also saw a man inside an automobile trunk before the shooting.

Hicks also identified six men from photographs shown him by Garrison as Cubans he had known in Dallas.

Hicks said that Garrison is "one of the most sincere and dedicated men I have ever met." He also said that, after meeting with Garrison, he is convinced that the District Attorney has strong evidence which shows that more than one man was involved in the assassination.

Garrison disclosed that Thornely had been associated with Oswald in the Marines. Thornely told the Warren Commission (9H82-117) that he had met Oswald in early 1959 while they were stationed at El Toro Marine Base in Southern California.

Oswald had been attached to Thornely's company after losing his secret security clearance for pouring beer over a sergeant's head. He had previously worked in the security files and had a higher clearance than most Marines in that company.

Some critics of the Warren Report have pointed to Thornely's testimony as one of many indications that Oswald was not a leftist. It would be odd for a Marine who identified himself as a Communist and subscribed to a Russian newspaper to have a high security clearance.

Thornely later wrote a book, The Idle Warriors, which was, he said, inspired by Oswald and his defection to the Soviet Union.

--Steven J. Burton

WITNESS HICKS ATTACKED

New Orleans, La., Jan. 10: James C. Hicks was beaten and thrown through a glass window in his hotel room the night before he was to testify before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury in Jim Garrison's continuing probe of the Kennedy assassination.

Some observers were quick to label the action a harassment of the witness because of what he knows, but reports here do not seem to indicate this.

It appears that Hicks was drunk that night and bragged about how much money was in his hotel room while in the hotel bar. When he returned to his room, two Negro men attacked him and threw him through the window.

Hicks showed up for the Grand Jury session in the morning with cuts across his face.

HALL, HOWARD WILL NOT GO TO NEW ORLEANS
Los Angeles, Jan. 26 (LNS): Judges in Los Angeles and Bakersfield have ruled that Loran Eugene Hall and Lawrence Howard, recently subpoenaed as material witnesses by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, will not be required to go to New Orleans.

Garrison said in the subpoenas that Hall and Howard were in Dallas from October 16, 1963 until the assassination, and that both had an opportunity to know of an assassination plot. Garrison said that Hall brought a .30 caliber rifle with him.

In Bakersfield, Hall pleaded that he was not in Dallas more than a few days. The judge ruled that "Hall is either not a material witness or he has perjured himself. If he has perjured himself, I see no reason to transfer that perjury to New Orleans."

The judge did not request an investigation into possible perjury and seemed content to let the matter rest.

In Los Angeles, Howard also denied that he was in Dallas when Garrison said he was. He produced employment records to prove it and denied knowing Clay Shaw, David Ferrie, Lee Oswald, Jack Ruby, or Edgar Eugene Bradley.

Howard's attorney, Bruce Wolf, called Bradley to the stand. Bradley has been accused by Garrison of conspiring to murder President Kennedy. He denied ever knowing Lawrence Howard.

Deputy District Attorney (of Los Angeles) Joe Carr represented the District Attorney of New Orleans. He called no witnesses and asked few questions.

Judge Shure ruled that "The evidence in the warrant is not nearly so persuasive as the testimony today. The warrant is denied."

Afterwards, Howard said, "I'm glad I don't have to go. I fear for my life if I do. But I may go anyway," he added.

"The only reason I'm in this thing is because of a rash and outrageous lie by Hall," he said. He was referring to Hall's statement that Howard was with him when he visited a Cuban exile in Dallas, Sylvia Odio. Sylvia Odio told the Warren Commission that two Cubans and a man who looked like Lee Oswald had visited her in September, 1963 and spoke of assassinating President Kennedy.

Both Howard and Hall have offered to give Garrison sworn affidavits from California.

--Steven J. Burton

MARINA OSWALD SUBPOENED BY GARRISON
New Orleans, La., Jan. 25 (LNS): Marina Oswald Porter, widow of alleged presidential assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, was subpoenaed for Grand Jury testimony by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison today.

James Alcock, executive assistant to Garrison, told the press, "We've got some very interesting questions to ask her. We know of several instances when she was with Oswald when he saw some of these people (conspirators).

"I don't know whether or not she will be a willing witness," he added. "I don't see how any court would say her testimony is not material in this case."

Contacted in Richardson, Texas (near Dallas), Marina said that she was surprised to hear of the subpoena. She said that she does not want to go to New Orleans, but may have to.

Marina Oswald was the first witness called by the Warren Commission. Her testimony lasts about 150 pages. She told the Commission that she believed her husband to be guilty.

A significant portion of her test-

imony deals with the five months Oswald lived in New Orleans in 1963. The Commission tried to reconstruct Oswald's activities during the spring and summer with Marina's testimony, but large gaps exist during which his activities are unknown.

For instance, Oswald was unemployed in New Orleans from July 19, 1963 until he left in late September. During this period, Marina said, Oswald would leave during the day and return in the evening to read. The Commission did not know what he did during the day.

This is the same period of time in which Garrison says Oswald actively conspired with others to murder President Kennedy.

NEW EVIDENCE ON BRADLEY

Los Angeles, Jan. 26 (LNS): New evidence has surfaced today placing accused presidential assassin Edgar Eugene Bradley at the scene of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas.

The evidence, an affidavit from a former Dallas deputy sheriff, was part of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's request for the extradition of Bradley from California. It is reported that other affidavits in the request remain confidential.

Bradley has repeatedly denied his presence in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

Roger Craig, a deputy sheriff for 8 years, has testified to the Warren Commission but they dismissed him without explanation as "unreliable." He told them that he saw a man who looked like Lee Oswald run down the "grassy knoll" moments after the assassination. The man jumped into a car driven by a dark-skinned man and sped away under the triple underpass.

The Commission concluded that no one was on the knoll. They said that Oswald fled on foot in the opposite direction.

Craig told the Liberation News Service, "I was going around questioning people who were standing in the area.

"When I saw the suspect jump into the car, I went over to the School Book Depository Building and asked for anybody in authority so I could give information to him," he said.

"This man identified himself to me as a Secret Service agent. He gave me no name nor did he show me any identification. He said, 'I'm a Secret Service agent,' and I gave him the information," he continued.

Sylvia Meagher, author of "Accessories After the Fact (Bobbs-Merrill, \$8.95)" has proven that no Secret Service agents were in Dealey Plaza at this time. Abraham Bolden, the first Negro to be assigned to the Secret Service White House detail, is reported to have said that all Secret Service credentials were called in after the assassination for re-validation.

Craig described the man as of medium height with dark blond hair. He had a very pleasant, smooth voice. The description, though inconclusive, fits

Edgar Eugene Bradley. Craig first identified Bradley as the man when he saw Bradley on television after he was indicted last December.

Bradley's attorney, George C. Jensen, said that this was another case of mistaken identity. He pointed to Craig's identification of Oswald as the man who jumped into the car as the basis of his reasoning.

"We all know that Oswald was in the Depository Building," he said.

His argument, however, presupposes the validity of the Warren Commission's conclusion. Recent polls show that over 60% of the American people doubt the Commission's findings.