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The Cup of Coffee Jazz

We first saw the uncropped James Altgens' photograph in Harold Weisberg's book "Whitewash" which was published in 1965. We were puzzled at that time at the difference in the fast protection given the Vice President as opposed to the lack of reaction, except possibly a turned head, on the part of the Secret Service men charged with protecting President Kennedy. The Warren Commission cropped the Altgens' picture so the American people could not see that Secret Service men assigned to protect the Vice President were leaving their car by the time President Kennedy had received the second shot. In the same picture, only two men guarding the President had even turned to look toward the School Book Depository Building.

The Vice Presidential backup car was driven by State Patrolman Joe H. Rich. Vice Presidential aide Clifton C.

RENN JONES ON
CUSTON CARTER -
TAPE 75-76

Carter sat in the middle of the front seat with Secret Service man Jerry D. Kivett on Carter's right. Agents Len Johns and Warren Taylor were in the rear seat. Taylor, on the left, had his door open when Altgens snapped his famous picture. Johns, on the right, left the car and raced toward the Vice President, but the motorcade sped away, and Johns was forced to hitchhike to the hospital. If one includes Rufus Youngblood, three agents reacted to protect Johnson, while those charged with protecting the President only turned and gazed.

These unusual reactions are followed at Parkland Hospital by more strange actions. Both Carter and Len Johns comment in their statements that Johnson requested a cup of coffee. Carter says in his affidavit: "I went out on a couple of occasions to secure coffee." (Vol. VII, P. 475)

This is too much for us! We know Carter too well to think he left the new President to secure coffee. Carter knows that "rank has its privileges," and Carter knew at that moment he outranked everyone in that hospital except President and Mrs. Johnson. Carter, we insist, grabbed the first nurse, doctor, doorman, Secret Service agent or whoever was present and in no uncertain terms demanded coffee be brought to Johnson immediately.

The new President and Carter needed information more than they needed coffee. We feel sure Carter did leave the President, but only to make some important telephone calls back to the assassination site to a pre-arranged telephone. Other than Carter's absence to make his calls, he and Judge Homer Thornberry did not leave Johnson's side until about 3:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

Why did Carter need to phone back to the assassination site?

Those who want to know, now know that President Kennedy was killed as a result of a conspiracy which included the United States Government, and Vice President Johnson. If one believes this, it soon becomes apparent that it was absolutely necessary for the new President to learn quickly, at the first possible moment, just how the killing had been accomplished.

Only the untutored would ever think there was only one plan to be used in the assassination. There were at least four alternatives, and the new President needed to know which of those actions had been used to accomplish the task. Johnson, himself, hinted at an alternative plot. While in Parkland, he suggested to a newsman that the assassination might have been a Communist conspiracy. The new President had little on which to base such an accusation since he was still crouching in a medicine room at Parkland.

The new President had some real power until after the Warren Commission Report was made public. After public acceptance of the lone gunman theory, the real planners of the assassination took over completely in running this country. But before Johnson left Dallas, he need-

ed to know which of the procedures had been used to kill President Kennedy. Carter did not leave Parkland until he had the necessary information from someone previously assigned that task at the killing site. This is the only reason Carter would leave Johnson's side, and this is the reason Carter remained behind at Parkland to be driven to the airport later in the company of Agent Len Johns.

The only flaw in executing this favored plan of the lone gunman was the failure of the police to kill Oswald at the back door of the Texas Theater. Oswald did not run from the theater, and lucky for him that he did not.

Three policemen and Assistant District Attorney Bill Alexander were waiting for him at the back door. Had Oswald run out that door, his execution would have been quick and painless, and the lone gunman theory would have been intact completely.

Failure to kill Oswald immediately, we feel, caused a momentary delay while the decision was being made as to how Oswald could be rubbed out before he had a chance to talk. No doubt Jack Ruby was chosen for the task before Air Force I left Dallas that day.

All these decisions had to be made before the plane with the new and the dead President became airborne. In the air, relying only on radio, important signals might leak.

The radio signals did leak, in fact, and that is how we know that while Air Force I was winging to Washington the military was signaling around the world that the killing was the result of a lone gunman, and no conspiracy was involved. Such a decision by the military was indeed a hasty finding, but no doubt it came from the new Commander in Chief and could not be questioned.

The request for a cup of coffee had served its purpose.