

Chapter 28

Lee Harvey Oswald; North Dakota and Beyond

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North Dakota would become part of the JFK assassination story subsequent to a letter, sent by Mrs. Alma Cole to President Johnson. That letter [1] follows (the original was in Mrs. Cole's handwriting):

Dec 11, 1963
President Lyndon B. Johnson
Dear Sir,

I don't know how to write to you, and I don't know if I should or shouldn't. My son knew Lee Harvey Oswald when he was at Stanley, North Dakota. I do not recall what year, but it was before Lee Harvey Oswald enlisted in the Marines. The boy read communist books then. He told my son He had a calling to kill the President. My son told me, he asked him. How he would know which one? Lee Harvey Oswald said he didn't know, but the time and place would be laid before him.

There are others at Stanley who knew Oswald.

If you would check, I believe what I have wrote will check out.

Another woman who knew of Oswald and his mother, was Mrs. Francis Jelesed she had the Stanley Café, (she's Mrs. Harry Merbach now.) Her son, I believe, knew Lee Harvey Oswald better than mine did.

Francis and I just thought Oswald a bragging boy. Now we know different. We told our sons to have nothing to do with him (I'm sorry, I don't remember the year.)

This letter is wrote to you in hopes of helping, if it does all I want is A Thank You.

Mrs. Alma Cole

Rt 3 Box 1H

Yuma, Arizona

A facsimile of the original can be found in [2].

The response to the letter, which was sent to the FBI on December 19, 1963, was immediate. On December 20th, Mrs. Cole was interviewed in her home in Arizona, and a day later her son, William Timmer, was first interviewed in Spokane, Washington. Also, the FBI began interviewing several persons in Stanley, North Dakota (and nearby towns).

The FBI Interview of William Timmer

William Henry Timmer was interviewed by FBI Special Agent (SA) Donald Head. The interview transpired over two days, December 21 & 22, 1963. During the

summer of 1953, a person Timmer knew as either Harv or Harvey Oswald [This is the first known use of Harvey Oswald], appeared to be older than Timmer (Oswald was born 10/19/1939; Timmer was born 5/14/1941) Oswald was observed riding a bike with no chain guard, and he kept getting his pants leg caught in the chain. Oswald wore shabby clothes. Timmer met with Oswald several times (perhaps half-a-dozen times). Oswald showed Timmer a communist pamphlet, written by someone named Marks (Marx?). Timmer recalled Oswald as having been in a couple of fights. Oswald mentioned being a member of a gang in New York City. Timmer invited Oswald to his grandmother's property, where Timmer and his mother were staying in a trailer, to see Timmer's pet rabbits. Timmer wanted to introduce Oswald to his mother, but when Oswald saw her, he rode off on his bicycle. At another meeting, Oswald told Timmer, "Someday I'm going to kill the President" or words to that effect.

Timmer indicated that he had been ill recently, and at the time of the assassination, he was in a motel room without a TV. Timmer heard that Lee Harvey Oswald had killed the President, but that name didn't mean anything to him. Timmer's mother, Alma Cole, sent a letter to Timmer with two pictures of Oswald, one where Oswald was being lead by policeman in jail, and one when Oswald was shot. Timmer wrote to his mother, in answer to her letter, that Oswald was the same boy he saw in Stanley. Timmer wasn't quite sure who was with him when he saw Oswald, but he did give the agent some names of some of his acquaintances from that time. [3]

Other FBI interviews associated with Stanley, North Dakota

Mrs. Alma Cole confirmed that she wrote the letter, and said that she had only seen Oswald once briefly. [5] Mary Wurtz, the mother of Alma Cole and the grandmother of William Henry Timmer, said that she didn't know any of her grandson's acquaintances. She was 80 at the time of the interview. [6] Jerry Evenson, an acquaintance of Timmer, did not recall a person named Oswald from the summer of 1953. [7] Bud Will, Mayor of Stanley and proprietor of City Trailer and Motel, stated that his records did not show that Oswald or his mother had ever stayed at his establishment. [8] Lane Evans vaguely remembered an incident in the park (involving a fight), but Evans could recall little else. [9] Delvin Douglas Jelesed indicated that he was unaware that Lee Harvey Oswald or his mother had ever been residents of Stanley, North Dakota. [10] Mrs. Harry Merbach indicated that she was not personally acquainted with Lee Harvey Oswald or his mother. [11] Ralph Hamre, Sheriff of Montrail County (Stanley is the county seat) said that, "To my knowledge, Lee Harvey Oswald has never been a resident at Stanley, North Dakota." Hamre also indicated that Timmer was an itinerant and unreliable. [12] Mrs. Elmer Nelson, mother of Jack Feehan, gave the FBI her son's current address. [13] The FBI decided not to interview Feehan, given their negative findings to that point. [14] Walter Poulson, a lifelong Stanley resident, denied ever having known Lee Harvey Oswald. [15]

More Recent Interviews of William Henry Timmer

Timmer was interviewed by the BBC sometime in the 1960's, but that interview was never broadcast. Timmer was interviewed by John Armstrong on October 27, 1994. [16]

Subsequent to that interview, Timmer was interviewed in 1995 by Nigel Turner, a British filmmaker who was known for his series, *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*, which was broadcast in Britain and then on various networks in the United States. [17] The last broadcast of *The Men Who Killed Kennedy* occurred on November 22, 2003, a segment that investigated the culpability of Lyndon Baines Johnson in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. [18] Jack Valenti tried unsuccessfully to have a prior restraint placed on the History Channel to keep them from airing this episode. He was successful in stopping the History Channel from re-airing the episode, and preventing sales of DVDs that included the episode. [19, 20] Presumably, Turner spent two days interviewing Timmer with the intent that a subsequent episode would address events in Stanley, North Dakota.

Timmer wrote his mother after she sent him the newspaper photographs that the man in the newspaper was the same boy whom he had met in Stanley. His mother then sent her letter to President Johnson. [21] Oswald, or an imposter, was probably in North Dakota during July and August, 1953. [22] Timmer was one of several persons whose evidence was ignored by the FBI and never interviewed by the Warren Commission. The evidence supplied by many of these persons was contradictory for the evidence that they chose to use. [23] It was Armstrong's contention that the evidence, placing Oswald in two different places at the same time, were too numerous not to investigate. Armstrong would conclude that there were two Oswalds- a Lee Harvey Oswald, and a Harvey Lee Oswald. [24]

Interviews in 1999

These writers conducted a series of interviews 36 years after the FBI interviews, addressing events in Stanley relating to Oswald. [25] Mrs. Alma Cole, Jerry Evenson, and Lane Evans, all interviewed in 1963 by the FBI, were interviewed by us. Jerry Fehan, whom the FBI decided not to interview, was interviewed by us. Two significant persons living in Stanley, Keith Schulte, States Attorney for Montrail County (1947-1957) and (1960-1975) and Russel Kilen, editor of the Montrail County Promoter (1946-1979) were interviewed by us.

Interview of Mrs. Alma Cole

Two interviews were held with Alma Cole, mother of William Henry Timmer. [26] Several significant points were raised. First, Mrs. Marguerite Oswald was said by Cole to be living in Stanley for the duration of the time Lee Harvey Oswald was in North Dakota. Mrs. Oswald was pointed out to Mrs. Cole in a dress shop by Cole's cousin, Francis Jelesed, who had seen Mrs. Oswald at Jelesed's restaurant in Stanley. Mrs. Oswald was loud and wanted everyone to know she was from Texas. Mrs. Oswald was described as having grey hair, glasses, and was at most 5'3" tall. Also, Cole indicated that

her son had told her that the boy wanted to be called “Lee Harvey” rather than just “Lee”. Her son was with Oswald when Oswald stole the book by Marx from a small library in a room of the Memorial Building in Stanley. William Henry Timmer declined to be interviewed by us at this time.

Interviews with Jerry Evenson and Lane Evans

Jerry Evenson had kept in touch with Bill Timmer and had visited him in the summer of 1999. Timmer had never talked about the Oswald incident to Evenson. Timmer is not a “bullshitter” in Evenson’s view. Evenson had thought about the FBI interview 36 years previously. Evenson was interviewed at the Montrail County Courthouse in Stanley. Present were himself, Sheriff Ralph Hamre and SA Fred Harvey. [27]

Lane Evans does recall a fight on the south side of Stanley where the swimming pool was located in 1999. The fight involved an out of town person. Evans cannot recall who was present. Evans was not instructed by the FBI to avoid talking about his interview with them. Evans was acquainted with Timmer, Jelesed, Evenson, Jack Feehan, Lyle Aho and Vern Buehler (the significance of the last two named individuals is addressed later in this paper). [28]

Interview with Jack Feehan

Jack Feehan was scheduled to be interviewed by the FBI in 1963. After talking to his mother, Mrs. Elmer Nelson, the FBI decided interviewing Feehan would not be necessary. We contacted Feehan through his son Greg. Jack Feehan indicated that he had never discussed the Harvey Oswald experience with Timmer, though they had remained in contact. Feehan had no recollection of Harvey Oswald himself. [29] In a subsequent interview, Greg Feehan indicated that his father had called Timmer and asked him about the Oswald circumstances. Timmer, according to Greg’s father, denied knowing anything about the Oswald events. [30]

Interviews with Keith Schulte and Russel Kilen

Keith Schulte, States Attorney for Montrail County, 1947-1957 and 1960-1975, stated that he had never heard of the FBI coming to Stanley regarding investigations of the Kennedy assassination. He thought that Sheriff Hamre and Mayor Will would surely have told him about being interviewed by the FBI. [31] Similar views were expressed by Russel Kilen, editor of the *Montrail County Promoter*, 1946-1979. [32] Both men expressed friendships with the sheriff and the mayor; their expectations of communication in this matter were not met. Dan Will, son of ex-Mayor Bud Will, said that his father never mentioned being interviewed by the FBI in regard to an investigation of the assassination. [33]

Interviews with Lyle Aho

We initiated our trip to Stanley, coordinating with Mrs. Arlene Clark of the Montrail County Historical Society. She suggested to us that there was a person we might like to talk to; his curious story related to Lee Harvey Oswald. [34] We began a series of three interviews with Lyle Aho. [35] Lyle was an unassuming man, 5'10", born on May 9, 1939 (making him slightly older than Oswald) in Belden, North Dakota. Belden was a Finnish community, and during the 1930's a stronghold for the Communist Party USA; Belden is now a ghost town. Aho's story took place in either the summer of 1955 or 1956. At the time, Aho was perhaps 5'6". That summer, Aho spent a lot of time with a relative, Vern Buehler. Buehler was thought to be less than a year younger than Aho (Buehler was born September 27, 1943, making him more than four years younger than Aho.) Aho was introduced to an "older" boy, perhaps 3-4 years older, whose name was Lee. Lee seemed to spend a lot of time with Vern Buehler. Aho thought Lee might be staying at the Buehler's. Lee told people that he was a furnace salesman; Aho thought this was a cover, since Lee didn't have anything like brochures or other material to back up this claim. He didn't seem to spend any time going door to door trying to sell furnaces. Lee said that the salesman job was just a cover and that he actually worked for the government. He was trying to recruit Buehler and Aho to get two years of training and then go to Cuba. They would make a lot of money. [36] Lee did seem to have considerable money to spend. Lee drove a '49 or '50 black Mercury. Lee would drive around town with Vern Buehler, Doug Jelesed, and perhaps Lane Evans, Pat Feehan and Lionel Ellis. Aho stated, "Lee seemed to always have enough money to go uptown and have pops and such for himself and the guys with him. He always seemed to have the money to buy a hamburger if he wanted one." Aho described Lee as having dark hair.

Aho was shown a series of pictures during the two subsequent interviews. [37, 38] The pictures were taken from a number of sources, most of which showed Oswald, among other persons. The first picture he identified as Lee was a picture of Oswald as a twelve year old at a zoo in New York City. Aho stated, "It's a poor picture; possibly, the guy was older than that." (See Groden, 39, p. 12) The next tentative identification was a picture of Oswald in a classroom in New Orleans in 1955, in which Oswald was holding his head up so that the missing front tooth shows. [40] The next picture Aho identified as possibly being Lee was the picture of Oswald alone in Moscow. [41] The picture of Oswald with his coworkers in Moscow [42] elicited the response "Well, it could be, but you can't see the cheekbones very good." A collage of 77 pictures taken throughout Oswald's life was shown to Aho. [43] Aho picked three of the pictures as "kinda looking like the guy." The first two of these were the backyard photos showing Oswald with the gun and copies of *The Militant* and *The Daily Worker*. In the cropped pictures Aho saw, only the head showed. The last picture that Aho recognized as possibly being Lee was Oswald dressed in civilian clothes holding a gun while in the Marines. [44].

Aho did not have any particular recollection of the assassination. He was probably in Stanley, but he doesn't recall with any clarity news of the assassination. He did not connect Oswald with the Lee he knew.

Aho further described Lee as having a southern accent, probably Texan. Lee weighed about 150 pounds, and he wore baggy clothes; he was slender. Aho thought he might be getting a gang together to rob banks or something.

Aho had in his adulthood worked on construction for a company known as Brown & Root. When asked, "Who owned them?" Aho replied, "Mrs. Lyndon Baines Johnson." He saw her picture in a company magazine, *Ground Builder*. Aho was disabled in a car accident in 1976; eventually he took up tailoring to make a living. He lived most of his life in Stanley.

After the questioning was done, Aho asked of the pictures, "Who is this guy?" He seemed genuinely unaware that he was looking at pictures of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Vern Buehler

It would have been important to contact Vern Buehler to corroborate or refute Aho's information. Aho thought Buehler died sometime in the 1960's. Aho was able to give us a list of Buehler's siblings. Vern Buehler was found to be living in Seattle, Washington with his younger brother Dale. Vern remembered the person named Lee in Stanley, but he was not as close a friend as Aho thought him to be. Lee did not live with the Buehlers. Buehler remembered the talk about going to Cuba; he also remembered Lee as a fast talker. [45]

The Cuba Connection

The Lee in this story could be Lee Harvey Oswald, an imposter, or just some Southern boy named Lee. If it is the latter, there are several possibilities. But it is interesting to note that Castro was in Mexico preparing to invade Cuba, and was training his troops for that effort. Lee may have heard about the Cuba story from Oswald or someone else. Of course, Lee's name could have been something other than Lee. "Lee" may have given some thought of trying to join Castro's group, though we can't imagine Castro welcoming three gringo youths into his revolution. "Lee" might have been testing the waters to see if he could find others foolhardy enough to try to go to Mexico and join Castro. On the other hand, Oswald may have already been an asset of the CIA by this time. Were Oswald interested in infiltrating Castro's group, then training at Rancho Santo Rosa near Chalco, approximately 20 miles from Mexico City, [46] he would probably have either gone there alone, or brought companions who had some military experience. Given that Oswald had already attempted to enter the Marines at 16, and would enter the Marines in October of 1956, [47] it would seem most unlikely that he would go to Stanley to recruit two boys who would look less than 15 years old. If the CIA were already in a process of building an Oswald legend, an imposter might have been sent to Stanley for that purpose, particularly if Oswald or an impersonator had been there in the summer of '53.

Information about Oswald

At the time of the Warren Report, [48] the information about Oswald had mainly come from government sources. The material in the Warren Report itself built a case for establishing Oswald's guilt in the assassination. Along with the Report, which was widely published and disseminated, were the 26 volumes [49] of evidence; only a few thousand of these 26 volumes were produced, and many were sent to libraries. Few initially read these volumes, but those who did found a different picture than was woven in the Report itself. In the 26 volumes, there were several FBI reports of sightings of Oswald not mentioned in the much shorter Report. The first 15 volumes consist of 7909 pages of testimonies and affidavits. The final 11 volumes contain 3912 "Commission Exhibits" in 9831 pages. There were also "Commission Documents" that were seen as too sensitive to publish; these documents constituted 357 cubic feet of material; the Stanley FBI interviews were among the latter. The government sought to have these documents kept under seal until 2039 [50]; many of these materials (often with substantial redaction) were made available through releases by the archives, through The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), or through the *Assassination Records Review Board* (ARRB, 51). One diligent researcher, Harold Weisberg, working mainly before the ARRB report became available, wrote several books attacking the Warren Report, using only Warren Commission documents. One particularly damaging publication was the transcript of the Warren Commission as its members were setting the Commission's guidelines. The Oswald picture they were intent on painting, of a loner, deranged individual, was already challenged by reports that Oswald was an FBI informant. [52] Because of Weisberg we have the complete transcript, which came into his possession through the FOIA.

There have been any number of books that have addressed Oswald and the Warren Report conclusions. Fewer have addressed Oswald as a person. One that did was the unpublished manuscript by George deMorenschildt, *I am a Patsy! I am a Patsy!* [53] deMorenschildt had befriended Lee and Marina Oswald and had introduced them to the Russian speaking community in Dallas. deMorenschildt saw Oswald as being badly treated by Marina. "She picked on him, annoyed him, as if she desired a separation, which she achieved through us. The letter from Marina's ex-lover which Lee intercepted. [sic] What annoyed us also was that Marina tried to ridicule Lee. She called him a fool, a moron." [54]

Two other writers of note addressed Oswald in far more depth than other writings, and they need to be explored. John Armstrong [55] wrote a definitive book on the hypothesis that there were two Lee Harvey Oswalds. One was the boy born in New Orleans in 1939, but who essentially disappeared after the assassination (probably taking on another persona). The other was probably a Russian speaking youth who was brought over around age twelve and would eventually assume Oswald's identity. Armstrong called the boy born in New Orleans Lee, and the Russian speaking boy, Harvey. [56] The other books are by Judyth Vary Baker. [57, 58] Whereas Armstrong again relies prominently on the documents from the 26 Volumes accompanying the Warren Report and documents pried loose by the FOIA and the ARRB, along with many interviews

conducted by him and members of his research team, Baker's story is her personal story with Lee Harvey Oswald. Her story was also broadcast on *The Men Who Killed Kennedy, Part VIII*. [59] Baker has recently completed another book about Oswald. [60] At this point, we need to address the big enigma regarding Oswald—how did he become as proficient as he did in spoken Russian?

Oswald's Ability in Spoken Russian

According to Armstrong, "For reasons that may never be known, Lee Oswald was chosen, and sent to New York City in the fall of 1952, to begin the process of lending his identity to a Russian speaking boy from Eastern Europe. Several years later, this boy 'defected' to Russia after assuming the Harvey Oswald's identity and background." [61] It should be pointed out that this was Armstrong's hypothesis, to be contrasted with the Warren Report thesis.

Another hypothesis is that Oswald learned Russian under the auspices of the CIA. It would also explain why Oswald, who was fairly fluent in Russian, refrained from speaking Russian during his stay in Russia; he did not want to be suspected of being a CIA false defector. It has been suggested that Oswald studied some language at the "Monterey School of the Army", now the Defense Language Institute. [62] Oswald claimed not knowing a word of Russian on his defection to the Soviet Union on October 16, 1959. [63] While Judyth Baker disputes that Oswald was anything other than American born, she recognized his facility in Russian; Baker had studied Russian in high school. [64]

While it is not presently known how Oswald learned Russian, It seems most likely that the Lee Harvey Oswald arrested on November 22, 1963 was clearly American born and with a residual Cajun accent. Consider Oswald's encounter in the hallway while in police custody:

Newsman: Did you kill the President?

Oswald: No, I've not been charged with that, in fact, nobody has said that to me yet. The first thing I heard about it was from the newspaper reporter in the hall who AXED me that question. [65]

It seems most unlikely that a Russian born person would lapse into a Cajun pronunciation of the word, "asked".

Oswald and the Customs Agent

It is interesting that though Baker insisted Oswald was born in the U.S., it is through her that a mechanism for the second Oswald could come to the U.S. According to Baker, Oswald had skipped school and gone to Niagara Falls, where a cooperative Customs agent, Arthur Young (later known as Charles Thomas) allowed the 12 year old unaccompanied Oswald to cross over into Canada, and then let him back into the U.S.

later in the day. Whatever the actual details of that story (a Customs agent who would allow said 12 year old to cross the boundary with Canada), ten years later (previously Young, now Thomas) was sent to New Orleans to facilitate Oswald's passport application to go to Mexico City. The passport was available to Oswald the day after he applied. [66] Now, that is quite a coincidence!

One could hypothesize that "Harvey Oswald", an Eastern European youth, would immigrate to the U.S. through the Niagara Falls Customs with the cooperation of Young/Thomas, and that Young/Thomas was later enlisted to facilitate Oswald's visa to Mexico. It is possible, however, that the actual facts may support the simple story that Oswald was allowed to cross the boundary and then come back across later. No hypothesized "Harvey" was necessarily involved.

Other Useful Oswald References

Armstrong's two Oswald theory is by no means the first such theory. Rather, his is the most extensive expression of a two Oswald theory, backed up by a considerable amount of research, producing a thousand page text together with a similar amount of exhibits on a CD-Rom. There are a variety of persons who have developed theories related to discrepancies in the Warren Documents, particularly regarding Oswald's activities; for example, Oswald was on a bus trip to Mexico City when he supposedly was seen at Sylvia Odio's home in Dallas. Twyman wrote on the two Oswald scenario in his book. [67] An earlier book that theorizes a Russian speaking Eastern European would be substituted for Oswald was written by W.R. Morris and J.B. Cutler. [68] A pictorial record of Lee Harvey Oswald was produced by Grodin. [69] In an excellent volume edited by James Fetzer, Fetzer wrote a chapter on Jesse Curry's assassination file, and asks the rhetorical question, "Could Oswald have been convicted? Fetzer then sets about showing probable doubt, if not exoneration for Oswald. On this one point I'll disagree with Fetzer; all he did was show Oswald was probably innocent. [70] Henry Wade would have probably prosecuted the case. Wade never lost a case he prosecuted (never mind the fact that many of the persons he helped convict would have their convictions overturned through DNA evidence [71]). In Wade's jurisdiction, at that point in time, innocence was not a deterrent to conviction.

Judyth Vary Baker

Judyth Vary Baker's story about Lee Harvey Oswald differs from other accounts in that her account is at the personal level. Very briefly, Judyth and Lee met in a post office in New Orleans on April 26, 1963. Judyth Vary had gone to the post office to get a letter from her fiancé Robert Baker. Judyth was holding a rolled up newspaper with a circled coded message in it (to Robert) that fell when she reached over the counter to give the postal worker a letter. The newspaper fell, and Oswald, who was in line behind her, picked it up. Judyth said, in Russian, "Thank you, comrade." Lee answered her in Russian. Judyth had a habit of using Russian and other foreign languages in salutations and letters. [72]

From that encounter, they would quickly become friends, though Judyth's impending marriage would, for a while, preclude more than a friendship. Judyth had come to New Orleans to work with Dr. Alton Ochsner, an internationally known cancer researcher who had a clinic that treated cancer patients as well as others. Judyth had an outstanding record in doing science research and had recently been working with fast acting cancers, even though she was only 19 years old in 1963. Oswald first introduced Judyth to David Ferrie as well as to Guy Banister. Banister confirmed to Judyth that Oswald was working on the anti-Castro project. Later that day (April 27, 1963), Oswald took her to Charity Hospital for their appointments with Dr. Ochsner, with Oswald going in first. Oswald's interview lasted about 40 minutes. After Oswald left Dr. Ochsner's office, Judyth was invited in. In Judyth's interview, she agreed to participate in clandestine projects. [73]

On May 2, Judyth and Robert Baker were married. On the evening of May 3, 1963, Robert Baker left for his summer employment on a seismic survey ship in the Gulf of Mexico. Judyth had arrived early to New Orleans; Ochsner had asked Judyth to come at the end of the school year, but he was unfamiliar with the trimester system, which let out about three weeks earlier than a semester system. Her work with Ochsner would begin May 10. Apparently through a mix-up, she was thought to be the young researcher who would liaison with David Ferrie and his research with mice and cancer. She began this work through a clandestine arrangement; she and Oswald were hired by Standard Coffee, [74] a subsidiary of Reily Coffee, to be transferred to Reily Coffee the following week.

It would appear that Oswald was getting "money under the table". He gave Judyth \$400 before she left New Orleans. This gift has a double meaning; not only does it relate to Oswald's caring for Judyth, it also addresses the issue of Oswald having considerably more money than his meager wages at Reily Coffee would have afforded him. Even this low paying job had been lost several weeks prior to Oswald's \$400 gift to Judyth. [75] The most likely source of this money would seem to be unvouchered money from the CIA. Oswald being involved with the CIA could also explain Oswald's apparent relationship with Alton Ochsner and Oswald's relationship with Guy Banister. Without rehashing Judyth's books on Oswald, from her viewpoint, they fell in love, had begun an intimate relationship, and in late August planned to get together in Mexico in the next several months. Rather than being the loner and crazed assassin that the Warren Commission painted him to be, Oswald was a complex young man, but one who was caught up in a web of circumstances that left him no way out. As to whether Oswald and Jack Ruby knew each other, Ruby was asked by Carlos Marcello to keep an eye on Oswald, after Oswald's first attempt to get into the Marines. At one point, Ruby asked Oswald if he wanted to be in Marcello's "family". Oswald was already at least somewhat connected to the Mafia through his Uncle, Dutz Murret. Oswald said he preferred to be in the "military family". [76]

Why did Judyth Baker Wait so Long to Tell Her Story?

First, there was the issue that she was, until 1989, still married to Robert Baker. From Judyth's point of view, she saw herself going to Mexico to live with Oswald in a

few months, so she could tread water until then. Her husband never asked any questions about Judyth's activities while he was working on the Gulf coast. After Oswald's death, she just settled in, eventually having 5 children with Baker; they finally divorced in 1989. Judyth decided to write a book about Oswald. Given the many deaths associated with those close to the JFK assassination [See Roberts & Armstrong, 77], being careful seemed prudent. She had already been warned by Dave Ferrie in December 1963 that she would die if she ever revealed what she knew; she was told that Santos Trafficante was having Judyth monitored. Ferrie told her, "You have to be a vanilla girl, a nobody. Keep your head down, don't make waves, if you want to stay alive." Ferrie finished with, "I can never contact you again, and you can never speak about this to anyone again, for all our own good". [78]

Judyth's plan in the early 1990's was to write the book and leave it with her son, who was a professor of economics. She would eventually go through three separate versions; there were problems with getting it published. When the two volumes were published in June of 2006, contractual problems made it necessary to remove them from the market in less than a month.

Who was in Stanley ND in the Summers of 1953 and 1956?

The person seen in Stanley in the summer of 1953 most likely would have been Lee Harvey Oswald or an Oswald imposter, which could include "Harvey", if Armstrong's hypothesis about an Eastern European Russian speaking youth having emigrated to the United States were true. Note that admitting an Oswald imposter at this point would have clearly pointed to a conspiracy; the more benign version would be that it was Oswald. True to the FBI's process of ignoring contrary evidence, given the choice, it appears the FBI chose to make the interpretation that the witnesses must have been mistaken. What of the FBI interviews showing several persons saying neither Oswald, nor his mother, were residents of Stanley?

Our interpretation is that the meaning of the term "resident" allowed the speaker to deny this status to the Oswalds. In 1953, Stanley's population had doubled due to an infusion of new persons involved in the expanding oil industry. Locals often saw the oil people as itinerants, and thus not "residents". A personal example might shed some light. In 1990, I (JDW) was living with my family in an older section of Grand Forks, ND; we had lived in this location for 10 years. I was out doing some yard work in the front yard when an older couple was walking by. The husband asked, "Do you live here?" I answered, "Yes." He responded, "How long", to which I responded, "10 years." The man turned to his wife and, in a low voice said, "Newcomers." It would have served the purposes of J. Edgar Hoover that the persons interviewed in Stanley had a different meaning to "resident" than might be inferred from reading the FBI reports.

The person seen in Stanley in 1956 named Lee with the Southern, probably Texan accent, could have either been Oswald, an Oswald imposter, or simply a young Southerner with a remarkably similar appearance to Oswald, together with an interest in

going to Cuba, also coincidental in the interests that an older Oswald would have. Nearer to the assassination, it seems likely that more than one Oswald imposter was active.

Personal Research Refuting the Warren Commission's Findings

For some reason, despite the voluminous literature showing that a conspiracy existed, and that the conclusions of the Warren Commission were erroneous, many Warren critics still contribute to that literature. Alas, I (JDW) also suffer from contributing to the overkill. As a young 23 year old junior college teacher, I attended a rally on August 17, 1962, in Pueblo, Colorado at which President Kennedy was the featured speaker. As I walked into the stadium, where I had played high school and junior college football only a few years before, I walked up the aisle and noticed my brother, Gerald R. Williams, who had become a state trooper within the past year. I said, "Hi, Gerald." He ignored me, but I noticed he was holding a rifle. I suddenly became engrossed with the degree of protection provided President Kennedy. Inside the stadium, there were three troopers in every aisle, with at least 14 aisles. There were troopers surrounding the perimeter, and several more on the field. This was in a city that voted overwhelmingly for Kennedy in the election, and a city where President Kennedy was beloved. Clearly, there was more than adequate protection. A week later I asked my brother about him ignoring me at President Kennedy's speech. Gerald replied, "They sent me there to protect the president, not to talk to my brother." [79] Unfortunately, the protection afforded President Kennedy in Dallas was not equal to the protection provided in Pueblo a year earlier. In Dallas, persons in the sheriff's department, which was overlooking Dealey Plaza, were told to stand down for the parade. [80] Palamara, who has written extensively about the lack of security provided in Dallas, has termed this lack of security as "security stripping." [81]

Yet a second effort in addressing the validity of the Warren Report happened almost by accident. We were interviewing Madeleine Brown. Brown had in years past been a mistress of Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson, and had a son with him. [82] She made a comment that slipped right by me. [JDW] I was transcribing the transcript the following April; I was astounded by what Madeleine said: "See, through the years, I've met Marina [Oswald]. And I've talked to Marina over and over again. And I say 'Marina. Tell me what you want others to know. You couldn't speak English in those years.' And she told me that the police came out and picked up the rifle the next day after the shooting. I said, 'Are you sure? She said, 'Yeah.' [83] I stopped transcribing and immediately called Madeleine on April 3, 2002 and confirmed the conversation in the interview. [84] The import of this is immense. If they picked up Oswald's gun on Saturday, he could not have had it available to him at the Texas School Book Depository on Friday, the day of the assassination.

Three Patsies

While Oswald claimed to be a patsy, he apparently was not the only one. There were two plots prior to Dallas, the first being set for November 1, 1963, in Chicago. The designated patsy in Chicago was Thomas Arthur Vallee, a Chicagoan who was

outspokenly opposed to President Kennedy, and who had in his possession several weapons; he also was an ex-Marine. [85] Vallee's place of employment overlooked the planned motorcade route where President Kennedy was scheduled to pass. [86] Vallee had been recruited to train anti-Castro guerrillas for the assassination of Fidel Castro. [87] A four man assassination team, separate from Vallee, was being monitored in Chicago. One of the secret service agents involved in protecting the President was Abraham Bolden, the first Black Secret Service agent to be involved in protection detail for the President. [See 88, 89, 90.] Through Bolden's efforts, President Kennedy's appearance in Chicago was cancelled at the last minute. Bolden later tried to make arrangements to testify before the Warren Commission regarding the Chicago assassination plot. Such testimony could have blown the non-conspiracy theory out of the water. [91] A plan was hatched to accuse Bolden of being involved with counterfeiting, an area that he investigated in Chicago. He was actually set up through false testimony by Richard Cain, the Chief Investigative agent for the Special Investigations Unit of the Cook County Sheriff's office in Chicago. Cain, a made member of the Chicago Mafia, was trying to keep Mafia involvement in the aborted assassination attempt from reaching public knowledge. [92] Bolden would serve six years in prison for his attempt to reach the Warren Commission.

Cain was a complex person. After Fulgencio Batista was deposed from his position as President of Cuba by Fidel Castro, Batista and several other Cuban exiles took up residence in Cain's garage until they made other arrangements. Cain worked with the exiles to help train them for a return to Cuba. Cain had previously done wiretapping work for Batista. [93] Cain would eventually be scammed himself, and sent to prison. [94] Cain would hold a grudge against Kennedy for not providing air support in the Bay of Pigs invasion. [95]

The person of interest in the Tampa assassination attempt was Gilberto Policarpo Lopez, who also was a defector to the USSR. [96] No connection has been made between Lopez and the assassination. Had President Kennedy been assassinated in Tampa on November 18, 1963, Lopez would have been a perfect patsy. Lopez was reported to be in Dallas on November 22, 1963. It is speculated that if the Oswald as assassin ploy didn't sell, Lopez could fill the bill. [97] Waldron & Hartmann stated that their publication was the first to expose the Tampa assassination threat. [98] They connected it to another attempt to remove Castro from office, and termed C-Day, apparently scheduled for December 1, 1963. President Kennedy spoke in Tampa on November 18, 1963, and apparently signified the words the Cuban rebels were hoping to hear. Some newspapers reported that Kennedy was inviting a coup in Cuba, notably *The Dallas Times Herald*, whose November 19, 1963 headline read, "Kennedy Virtually Invites Cuban Coup." [99] Details are lacking for the Tampa attempt on JFK; it likely followed the scenario in Chicago, except that there was no cancellation of President Kennedy's participation. Files held by the Secret Service and the Tampa Police Department were apparently destroyed. In the case of the Tampa Police Department, the destruction was to keep them from any JFK investigating committee. [100] The Tampa police kept several persons of interest during President Kennedy's time in Tampa. The overall police presence providing

protection for the President in Tampa included 200 of the 270 uniformed police force plus 400 federal officers, including Air Force personnel. [101]

The Interesting Story of Adele Edisen

Adele Edisen decided to get back into scientific work in the summer of 1962; her husband, a psychiatrist, had become ill, and it made sense for her to get back into her field of neurophysiology. She had held a postdoctoral fellowship in that field with the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness (NINDB) from 1954-1956, and applied for a third year postdoctoral fellowship in 1962, working at the Department of Physiology and the Louisiana State University School of Medicine. Edisen was told that she would receive a fellowship beginning January 1, 1963. Edisen was told by her chairman, Dr. Sidney Harris, that he was relaying this information from Dr. Jose Rivera of the NINDB. She would be doing research on synaptic inhibition and excitation in the cat spinal cord. Edisen had been collecting data that was presented at the April, 1963 meetings of the Federation of the American Societies of Experimental Biology. After her presentation she visited the exhibits at the convention. She had heard of a five year award to be given by the National Institutes of Health and inquired about that award. She was told to go to the NINDB booth. At the booth, she met Dr. Rivera for the first time. He offered her a Lifesaver candy, which Rivera insisted she eat in his presence. The Lifesaver incident would re-occur several times over the next few days. Only later would she conclude that the Lifesavers were probably laced with LSD. [102]

She made arrangements to visit the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Of the persons she wished to contact, only Dr. Rivera was available. They went to dinner, and Dr. Rivera started speaking of his travels and of Dallas. Rivera recommended a "nice" nightclub in Dallas, the Carousel Club. Rivera then asked if she knew Lee Oswald. She did not. Rivera explained that Oswald had lived in Russia, had a Russian wife, a child, and that they would soon be moving to New Orleans. Rivera said the Oswalds were a lovely couple, and that Edisen should get to know them. Edisen thought Oswald was a scientific friend of Rivera. Rivera also mentioned that the recent shooting aimed at General Walker might be blamed on Oswald. The first public mention of an Oswald connection with the attempt on General Walker would occur only after President Kennedy was assassinated. [103]

The next day, Edisen and Rivera went to the Library of Congress. On the way there, Rivera asked if she had heard of John Abt of New York City. She had not, and inquired as to who Abt was. Rivera replied that Abt was a lawyer who defended communists. Edisen thought these were strange questions to be asking her. After going to the Library of Congress, they went by the White House three times. Rivera commented, "I wonder what Jackie will do when her husband dies." Rivera then claimed he meant when the baby dies. [104]

Rivera then asked Edisen to write a telephone number down: 899-4244. Then he said, "Write down this name: Lee Harvey Oswald. Tell him to kill the chief." This was

supposed to be joke for Oswald. Rivera then became agitated and said, “I’ll show you where it will happen. Rivera drew a diagram and said that it would be on the fifth floor. Later, Rivera told Edisen to destroy the note she had written. Rivera threatened her with, “I really don’t want to hurt you.” Rivera briefly tried to find the note in her purse before she pulled the purse away. [105] It is important to recognize these interactions between Dr. Rivera and Adele Edisen took place in April, 1963, before Oswald was a public figure.

Shortly after Edisen returned to New Orleans, she tried to call Lee Harvey Oswald. On her first attempt, she contacted Jesse Garner, manager of the apartments Oswald would soon occupy. Garner said there was no one there by that name. The apartments were owned by William McLaney, who also owned the land where the Cuban ex-patriots were training for an invasion of Cuba. Oswald actually moved into the apartment May 10, 1963. The second time Edisen called, she spoke to Marina Oswald. On her third call, she finally spoke to Oswald. Oswald said he had never heard of either a Colonel Rivera or a Dr. Rivera. Edisen had identified herself in each call. She did not convey any message to Oswald. [106]

So who was Dr. Rivera? He was a naturalized citizen, born in either Lima, Peru, or San Juan, Puerto Rico between 1905 and 1911. He was in the US Army, 1943-1957, and had done “Top Secret” work under a Dr. Carl Lamanna before he became a science administrator from 1961-1973 at the NINDB. His actual retirement is not documented. He died in 1989. [107]

Legacy of Secrecy

Waldron and Hartmann’s newest book, *Legacy of Secrecy* [108] seems to sum up in a phrase a major outcome of the assassination of President Kennedy. Government secrecy surely didn’t start then—it just became institutionalized on a continuing and increasing basis. If the facts that have been drawn out by critical researchers were known much earlier, many political careers would have been shortened. But keeping the secrets of the assassination continued. But most future administrations added their own travesties to the legacy of secrecy. In the extreme apologist sense, perhaps Lyndon Johnson might be forgiven for his pushing through the idea that Oswald acted alone, in order to avoid war with Cuba, and by inference, with the USSR (were it not for his own culpability [109, 110]). In that apologist sense, only Lee Harvey Oswald and his family would have been defamed. Perhaps the defamation of Oswald might have been rectified at a later date. (So far, it has not been.) During the George W. Bush presidency, trying to keep information on the lack of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, along with other secretive misdeeds, presumably left little positive legacy for his eight years as president. [111] It is interesting to note that the author of the single bullet theory, Arlen Specter, may have recently seen his career in the US Senate start to unravel. Specter, first elected to the Senate in 1980 as a Republican, switched to become a Democrat in late April 2009. How well this plays for him remains to be seen.

Notes:

1. Cole letter to President Johnson, 12/11/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
2. Robertson, J. (1999). *Denial #2. The John Armstrong Research*. Lafayette, IN: Author.
3. This was the first known use of Harvey (or Harv) Oswald.
4. FBI Interview of William Henry Timmer by SA Donald H. Head 12/21-22/1963 in Spokane, WA. FBI file SE 89-47. Seattle, WA.
5. FBI Interview of Mrs. Alma Cole by SA Jack C. Pollock 12/21/1963 in Yuma, AZ. FBI file 89-42. Phoenix, AZ.
6. FBI Interview of Mary Wurtz by SA Fred Harvey in Stanley, ND 12/23/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
7. FBI Interview of Jerry Evenson by SA Fred Harvey in Stanley, ND 12/23/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
8. FBI Interview of Bud Will by SA Fred Harvey in Stanley, ND 12/23/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
9. FBI Interview of Lane Evans by SA Fred Harvey in New Town, ND 12/23/1963. FBI Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
10. FBI Interview of Delvin Douglas Jelesed by Douglas H. Smith in Stanley, ND 12/21/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
11. FBI Interview of Mrs. Marry Merbach by Douglas H. Smith in Grenora, ND 12/21/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
12. FBI Interview of Ralph Hamre in Stanley, ND 12/21/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
13. FBI Interview of Mrs. Elmer Nelson in Stanley, ND 12/23/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
14. Teletype from Minneapolis FBI SAC to FBI Director 12/24/1963.
15. FBI Interview of Walter Poulson in Stanley, ND 12/23/1963. FBI file Minneapolis 105-2564; Dallas 100-10461.
16. Armstrong, J. (2003). *Harvey & Lee: How the CIA Framed Oswald*. Arlington, TX.
17. Armstrong, p. 71.
18. *The Men Who Killed Kennedy, Part IX*. The History Channel, 11/22/2003.
19. Williams, J.D. & Cousins, K.T. (2005). Judyth and Lee: Was Their Employment a Chance Event? *Dealey Plaza Echo*, 9, 2, 37-43.
20. All nine episodes were made available on YouTube at least temporarily, on 4/20/2009.
21. Armstrong, p. 71.
22. Armstrong, p. 84.
23. Armstrong, pp. 490-491, 521, 952, 959.
24. Armstrong.
25. Williams, J.D. & Severson, G. (2000). Oswald in North Dakota? Part One. *The Fourth Decade*, 7, 2, 3-7.
26. Interviews of Mrs. Alma Cole by Gary Severson, 9/8/1999 & 9/24/1999.
27. Interview of Jerry Evenson by Gary Severson, 10/3/1999.

28. Interview of Lane Evans by Gary Severson, 10/3/1999.
29. Interview of Jack Feehan by Gary Severson, 10/3/1999.
30. Interview of Greg Feehan by Gary Severson, 12/7/1999.
31. Interview of Keith Schulte by Gary Severson & John Delane Williams, 8/2/1999.
32. Interview of Rusel Kilen by Gary Severson & John Delane Williams, 8/2/1999.
33. Interview of Don Will by Gary Severson, 9/22/1999.
34. Interviews of Mrs. Arlene Clark, Mountrail County Historical Society by John Delane Williams & Gary Severson, 8/2/1999 & 8/3/1999.
35. Williams, J.D. & Severson, G. (2000). Oswald in North Dakota? Part Two. *The Fourth Decade*. 7, 3, 3-5.
36. Interview of Lyle Aho by John Delane Williams & Gary Severson, 8/3/1999.
37. Interview of Lyle Aho by John Delane Williams, 8/8/1999.
38. Interview of Lyle Aho by John Delane Williams, Gary Severson & Jole Williams, 8/14/1999.
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40. Ibid, p. 16.
41. Ibid, p. 44.
42. Ibid, p. 46.
43. Ibid, p. 240.
44. Ibid, p. 30.
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54. Ibid, p. 32.
55. Armstrong.
56. Ibid.
57. Baker, J.V. (2006). *Lee Harvey Oswald: The True Story of the Accused Assassin of President John F. Kennedy by His Lover: Part One*. Victoria, BC: Trafford.
58. Baker, J.V. (2006). *Lee Harvey Oswald: The True Story of the Accused Assassin of President John F. Kennedy by His Lover: Part Two*. Victoria, BC: Trafford.
59. *The Men Who Killed Kennedy- Part VIII: The Love Story*. (11/21/2003). The History Channel.

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61. Armstrong, p. 68.
62. Summers, A. (1980). *Conspiracy*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
63. Armstrong, p. 262.
64. e-mail from Judith Vary Baker to JDW, 2/16/2003.
65. *As It Happened*. (11/22/1997). The History Channel.
66. Williams, J.D. Cousins, K.T. & Baker, J.V. (2007). Judyth and Lee in New Orleans. *Dealey Plaza Echo*, 11,1, 24-43. Kelly Thomas Cousins, one of the co-authors of the cited article, is the granddaughter of Charles Thomas, the Customs agent brought in to expedite the passport application of Lee Harvey Oswald.
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72. e-mail from Judyth Baker, 5/19/2009.
73. e-mail from Judyth Baker, 5/23/2009.
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88. Ibid, p. 626.
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92. Waldron & Hartmann, pp. 258-259.
93. Cain, M.J. (2007). *The Tangled Web: The Life and Death of Richard Cain- Chicago Cop and Mafia Hitman*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, p. 61.
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96. Waldron & Hartman, pp. 657-658.
97. Ibid, p. 702.
98. Ibid, p. 684.
99. Ibid, p. 694.
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