

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

ARRB Interview with L. Fletcher Prouty

September 24, 1996

Summary prepared October 23, 1996 by Christopher Barger

On September 24, 1996, members of the ARRB staff interviewed L. Fletcher Prouty, an author and retired Air Force colonel, in the ARRB offices. Tim Wray was the lead questioner; also present were Jeremy Gunn, Christopher Barger, and Joan Zimmerman. The interview lasted approximately two hours and was recorded on audio cassettes. Prouty was cordial and cooperative, and the atmosphere was relaxed.

In his various writings, Mr. Prouty has advanced several claims or theories about the assassination of President Kennedy. In many cases he has asserted that his conclusions are based on special, firsthand knowledge that he gained through his own experiences as an Air Force officer assigned to duties in the Pentagon as military liaison for CIA clandestine operations from 1956 to 1964. According to Oliver Stone, Mr. Prouty and his claims are the basis for the anonymous "X" character played by Donald Sutherland in Stone's film JFK.

The purposes of the ARRB interview with Prouty were:

- (1) To determine precisely what firsthand knowledge Mr. Prouty has regarding the assassination;
- (2) To determine the extent to which his various allegations or statements regarding the assassination are based on his own personal knowledge or experience;
- (3) Should he disavow factual knowledge from his own experience, to determine whether he is aware of other factual data that could tend to prove or disprove his allegations;
- (4) To ascertain whether Mr. Prouty has in his possession any original documents or other records that might be valuable to the JFK Assassination Records Collection at the National Archives;
- (5) To seek Mr. Prouty's advice on where the ARRB might look for additional records relating to the assassination;
- (6) To seek Mr. Prouty's advice on other individuals whom the ARRB might contact in order to confirm or deny his statements and theories.

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

Shown below and on succeeding pages is an issue-by-issue comparison of Prouty's allegations (including those previously made by him in writing, those attributed to him by the producers of the film JFK, and those that he spontaneously offered to the ARRB staff) together with whatever clarification, explanation, or amplification that he provided at the time of his ARRB interview on September 24, 1996.

Note: All passages shown in italics are direct quotations taken from interview tape. Also, all times are approximate.

Regarding his trip to Antarctica in November 1963:

Allegation 1: Trip to Antarctica may have had sinister connotations.

Prouty went to Antarctica in November 1963 as the military escort for a group of VIP's. This assignment was out of the ordinary or unusual in some way. [Source: JFK by Oliver Stone]

Previous statement:

. . . [T]his trip had nothing to do with my previous nine years of work, except that I had supported CIA activity in Antarctica over the years. . . . I have always wondered, deep in my own heart, whether that strange invitation that removed me so far from Washington and from the center of all things clandestine that I knew so well might have been connected to the events that followed. Were there things that I knew, or would have discovered, that made it wise to have me far from Washington. . . ?

[Source: L. Fletcher Prouty, JFK: The CIA, Vietnam and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy, Introduction by Oliver Stone (New York: Citadel Press, 1992), p. 284.]

Statements to ARRB:

Tape 1, Side 1; 24:15: Prouty confirmed this trip. He escorted a group of scientists, businessmen, and Congressman Pete Abele (Ohio) to McMurdo station to observe a new power generator. This was not unusual, because Prouty had worked "*at least as far back as 1959 with the organization that works underneath the White House on Antarctic projects... It was a duty I had to work Antarctica; of course not regularly, but when something came up.*"

Tape 2, Side 1; 1:08: Asked by Wray if he felt it was "sinister" that he had been sent to Antarctica: "*Oh, no. I'd been working with them since 1959. It was so routine for them to call me, I didn't*

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1\data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

give it a second thought... it's the military custom to put an escort officer on board."

Tape 2, Side 1; 1:52: *"And even afterwards, when I heard people extrapolating in that sense-- thinking that it wasn't my job-- they didn't know I'd already been working with Antarctica people since 1959."*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: The trip to Antarctica, ascribed sinister intent in the film JFK, was a routine duty for Col. Prouty, and was not particularly unusual. Since there was nothing unusual about the trip, nor is there any apparent connection to the assassination beyond Prouty's having been on the trip at the time of the shooting, no further research is recommended by ARRB staff. No records relating to the assassination could be reasonably expected to be obtained. Prouty made no statements for the record to back up the suspicions he mentioned in the excerpt from his book cited above.

Regarding Christchurch, New Zealand, and the *Christchurch Star*:

Allegation #2: In the film JFK, in the segment dealing with the "Mr. X" allegations, it is alleged that the Christchurch Star, when running its first story about the assassination, included biographical information on Lee Harvey Oswald and named him as the accused before he had actually been arraigned for the crime in Dallas. The allegation is also made that the first reports from Dealey Plaza, which were not entirely accurate, were sent out as a part of a 'cover story' of some sort.

Tape 1, Side 1, 27:22: Prouty tells his "how I heard of the assassination" story. This is anecdotal in nature and while interesting in a human nature sort of way, is not particularly controversial or document related.

Tape 1, Side 1, 29:12; 33:49: Prouty is asked by Barger the approximate time he purchased the paper. *Prouty responds that they learned of the shooting at approximately 6:30 a.m.; he then said, "I'm quite sure we didn't have the paper before noon... in my opinion, it was just before we had lunch."*

Tape 1, Side 1, 31:30: Prouty gets into his suspicions regarding the breakdown of security in Dallas and the perpetration of a cover story, and how the paper was reporting that *"the arrested man had lived in Russia..."* Prouty then said, *"We didn't learn till-- it was the next day when they finally arranged [sic] Oswald for the crime, and even at that time, reporters hadn't gotten to him to find out all this background. Where the hell did it come from?"*

**Using the Warren Commission as a source, I have determined the times of Oswald's arraignment for the Tippit murder, his being charged with Kennedy's murder, and his arraignment for Kennedy's

murder. I also have obtained from Tom Samoluk a large stack of initial press reports from the day of the assassination. Culling through those reports, I should be able to determine whether any of the information contained in the reports came out before the arrests/arraignments. If Oswald's background information was distributed before his arrest or arraignment, we would have to ask where that information had come from and who the source was. If, however, the time lines are plausible and feasible, then Prouty's allegation of a 'cover story' will be weakened.

Regarding the 112th INTC Group and/or the 316th INTC Detachment:

Allegation #3: *"I called a member of that army unit later. I was told that the commander 'had offered the services of his unit for protection duties for the entire trip through Texas,' that he was 'point blank and categorically refused by the Secret Service,' and that there were hot words between the two agencies."* [Prouty, JFK, p. 294]

"I called a man who I knew was a member of the 112th Military Intelligence Group in the Fourth Army area at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas." [Prouty, in the forward to Plausible Denial by Mark Lane, p. XV]

Statements to ARRB:

Tape 1, Side 2; 6:10: In response to Wray asking Prouty when he had called the man: *"It didn't work that way. He called me."*

Tape 1, Side 2, 6:37: Asked by Wray who he spoke to at the 112th: *"He was the #2 man, as I understand it, to Col. Reich... and that should be a matter of record. That's how he introduced himself to me."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 6:53: Asked if he'd known the person prior to this phone call: *"No. No-- again, it's one of those things where we never dealt by names. I had dealt with the unit..."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 7:12: Wray presents Prouty of a roster of the 316th from November 1963. *"I think I was speaking to his (Reich's) deputy, and I don't see him here..." "See, we never dealt by name with the organization. In fact, the few times that we had anything to do with this kind of a crowd would be when they'd call us... and usually, it would be a call from Fort Myer. Like, I don't remember ever having a call from Col. Reich."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 10:08: *"We never dealt with that organization... I don't ever remember getting a call*

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

from Col. Reich. No way I would have known him."

Tape 1, Side 2; 12:00: Asked if he knew the man with whom he spoke: *"I was quite surprised... because it was when I had retired and left, and the chance of me having contact with people I'd never even worked with was rare."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 13:00: Asked directly, "Did you know this person?": *"I didn't know **anybody** in the unit."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 17:05: *"The fact that this guy called me is almost an irrelevant issue."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 17:40: *"I didn't know him. We didn't know any of them. I had never heard the name 'Reich' before. But we weren't the ones who set up the schedules. The schedules were set up through the Secret Service, as I understand it."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 19:57: Asked why the unidentified "deputy" had called him (Prouty) about this: *"My impression was that he was looking for someone that might have some idea of why the schedules hadn't gone out that day. 'Cause [sic] they hadn't gone out to any of the units-- see, no units showed up in Dallas... And I told him that I wasn't in the business, I wasn't in the country, and I didn't know."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 29:53: *"The man who called me was an individual. I didn't even know if he was on duty, and I'd never seen him."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 31:37: *"I think [that] the man who called me was, purely an individual-- he said he was the deputy, [but] I have no record of it."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 35:02: *"Since I've seen the list of names, and he's not on there, I'm beginning to wonder seriously if he was really in that crowd... but that's neither here nor there."*

"You know, that guy didn't sound like he knew the business. I wonder if he was even genuine."

[Informal conversation with Wray at conclusion of the interview.]

Result or conclusion by ARRB: Prouty admits that he was not responsible for protection schedules, and that these schedules were handled by the Secret Service. Two minutes later, he speaks as if he knows on authority that no schedules had gone out on November 22, that no units had shown up (which he is admittedly in no position to know), and that he had tried to disavow any knowledge at the time of alleged phone call. Prouty did not indicate that he either possessed or

knew of protection schedules or similar records from November 22. Regarding the telephone conversation with the man allegedly from the 316th, it should be noted that in two of his past writings, Prouty states that he made the call. To the ARRB, he indicated several times that the other man initiated the call. At one point, Prouty all but admits that the call was probably not authentic, or at least was not made by an authentic member of the 316th. As for the contention that it is “neither here nor there,” since the content of the call and its implications are central to Prouty’s entire argument and allegations, the issue of the caller’s veracity *most certainly is* ‘here or there.’ It is basic to the credibility of the allegation. After over an hour of questioning, Prouty conceded that he neither knew the man who called him, nor has he any proof that the man was really in the 316th. Since Prouty declined to name any of the persons we have identified as members of the 316th as his caller, it is not recommended that we follow up this allegation by telephonically contacting any members of the 316th about it.

Allegation #4: *“I have kept the notes I made during that call and shall quote from them here.”*
[Prouty in Plausible Denial, p. XV]

Statement to ARRB:

Tape 1, Side 2; 20:45: Asked if he still has his notes or if we could see them: *“Oh, I think they’re long gone.”*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: It was hoped that the notes from this conversation, mentioned in the forward of a 1991 book, might be our best opportunity to add records to the collection. It is unfortunate that the notes appear to have disappeared since that time, and we are unable to add them to the collection.

Allegation #5: *“It ‘knew Dallas was dangerous,’ the commander told **my associate** in explaining why he had decided to offer his services.”* (Emphasis added.) [Prouty, JFK, p. 294]

Statement to ARRB: It is important to note the fact that, where in his writing, Prouty identifies this man as his associate, in his statements to ARRB, he was a previously unknown man with no verified identification whose name does not appear on any unit roster.

Regarding Prouty’s experience with military presidential protection duties:

Allegation #6: *“I have worked with the military presidential protection units.”* [Prouty, JFK, p. 294]

"I had worked on what is called, 'Presidential protection.'" [Prouty in [Plausible Denial](#), p. XV]

Statements to ARRB:

Tape 1, Side 2; 25:20: *"Quite frankly, other than knowing [that] Presidential protection exists, that's about all I was required to know."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 25:32: *"The only time I was personally involved-- and I think that was just for familiarization early in my assignment for this work-- was when I went to Mexico City [in 1955]... that was my first and last course with them..."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 27:53: *"[Mexico City] was the only one I ever went on... I flew the airplane to Mexico City for them."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 28:30: Asked if there were military protection units or personnel on this flight: *"The only person I knew was a Secret Service man."*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: It appears from Prouty's statements during the interview that the extent of his experience is the one trip in 1955. It is unexpected that Prouty either possesses records relating to presidential protection or could direct us to any.

Allegation #7:

Tape 1, Side 2; 15:45: *"When I went to Mexico City with the Secret Service when Eisenhower was going down there back in the 50's-- geez, we were in Mexico, I think, at least 3 weeks before the President went down there, doing all kinds of prepatory work. You know, who'd take the windows of this building, who'd close those, who'd be of the roof of this building, where will the sniper be... I mean, that's business. And it's a lot of work. It's not casual. It isn't just 'run out there for one day and back again.' Well, since I knew that's the way they worked [sic], I figured, 'where the hell were they?' Well, that begins to ask some pretty big questions. But that was just my own wondering, 'why weren't they there?' When I see the windows open-- why the hell weren't they closed? And if they weren't closed, something **very serious is wrong**. (Emphasis Prouty's.) Not just casually-- this is 100 years of work, Secret Service work. This is a profession... and since I had gone with them myself on a trip to Mexico City-- they have a book on what to do. One thing you do is you keep the windows closed. If a window opens, there's a sniper on that window immediately. That's why they have lots of military scattered in civilian clothes around there-- to be sure that nothing happens."*

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

Follow-up statements to this allegation:

Tape 1, Side 2; 18:05: This book, if it exists, would clearly be an assassination related document and a record. Seeing this, Barger asked Prouty about the origin of the book; i.e., was it a military document or of Secret Service origin, in an attempt to ascertain where the ARRB could conduct a search for it. Prouty responds with a lengthy discussion of his actions and those of the people he was working with, but his comments make clear that he is only speculating. *“The guy once in a while referred to their manual.”*

Tape 1, Side 2; 32:47: Asked by Wray about the number of Secret Service agents that Prouty believes should have been in Dallas that day, according to procedure: *(Very agitatedly) “See, we’re overdoing this. I went to Mexico City **once**, so I would know the business. I have no idea how they run their business. And the difference between Dallas and Mexico City... I don’t think you would have comparable units. No way... I shouldn’t be giving you anything that misleads you, because I only went to Mexico City with the senior man of that group, and stayed there a few days with him; but I went there for logistics purposes, not to learn all about the system. I can’t extrapolate that into a nationwide system, because I have never had any Secret Service [training]. What appalled me is the fact that the Secret Service was not in Dallas. That’s the point that’s important.”*

Tape 1, Side 2; 33:43: Asked if his statement that ‘the Secret Service wasn’t there’ is figurative or literal: *“It’s so basic to their [the Secret Service’s] business that the windows be down, just for one thing. And in order to do that, they had to be there. That doesn’t leave you much question. You don’t have to go any further... And I have no experience in that; all I know is, they weren’t there.”*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: Note that in the first statement, Prouty makes some very specific outlines of procedures, about windows going up and having snipers covering buildings, having people on rooftops, spending three weeks in preparation for the trip, etc. Fifteen minutes later, when pressed by ARRB for details and specifics, Prouty quickly backs off, disassociating himself from the Secret Service, understating the nature of his participation (logistics purposes, not to learn the system), acting careful not to mislead us, and admitting that he doesn’t know how the Secret Service “runs its business.” Within 15 minutes, Prouty makes statements which sound plausible, and as if he knows procedures from personal knowledge, then backs away from knowing any specifics and hastens to add that he participated in only one presidential trip. In the final excerpt cited above, Prouty makes the very serious charge that the Secret Service was not even on duty in Dallas on November 22, then admits he has no experience upon which to base this statement, **in the same sentence**. One might deduce that Prouty is unable to discern where fact ends and his own belief system begins.

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

Regarding Lee Harvey Oswald's alleged participation in covert programs headed by Prouty, specifically Indonesia in 1958:

Allegation #8:

Tape 1, Side 1; 37:40: *"Lee Harvey Oswald was among the people taken from the Armed Forces to work for the CIA in the program I headed... He was out at Atsugi, Japan; he had worked for us in the Indonesia campaign... I never met him, but I found that out from the records later."*

Follow up statements to this allegation:

Tape 1, Side 1; 38:25: Wray asked which specific program Prouty referred to; Prouty responded that it *"was... support of military operations of CIA, clandestine operations."*

Tape 1, Side 1; 39:23: Asked by Barger if Prouty had seen Oswald's name before the assassination: *"No, no. We almost never saw names...I never saw the Oswald records; I never looked for the Oswald records. I had retired after that."* (Emphasis added.)

Tape 1, Side 1; 39:45: Wray directly asked, "So, when you say, 'Oswald was in this program', what's the basis for saying that?" Prouty's response (after a long pause): *"It was just general knowledge. It's come up lots of times. And since I recognize the program whenever I see it... he fit the pattern so perfectly, I would never doubt the stories I saw. I don't know whether it was the New York Times, [or] something like that, I don't know."*

Tape 1, Side 1; 40:54: Wray continued to try and establish whether there was a factual basis for the allegation. "Oswald's involvement in the Indonesia campaign-- again, that comes from your interpretation of stories you've heard?" Prouty answered, *"Things that I've read. Things from various sources or people I've talked to."*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: Prouty could not and did not provide any substantiating evidence whatsoever. At one point, it became apparent that his source for this information was not personal knowledge, but a report in the New York Times or some other newspaper. It appears that this allegation is either fabricated or hypothesized.

Regarding who was in charge of the Indonesia campaign:

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

Tape 1, Side 1, 12:58: *"For instance, when we went into Indonesia... the man in charge of the program in Indonesia was Frank Wisner."*

Tape 1, Side 1, 40:30: *"I was the guy who **sent** the guys to Indonesia."*

Regarding Edward Lansdale:

Allegation #9: General Edward Lansdale was in Dealey Plaza on the afternoon of the assassination, and can be seen in one of the "tramp" photos. (Prouty has made this statement at several public conventions, and repeats it during the interview.)

Tape 1, Side 1, 21:45: *"He (Lansdale) was a CIA man under Air Force cover."* Asked by Wray. "When you say he was a CIA person under Air Force cover, [you mean] he was not really a career Air Force person?", Prouty responds, *"Oh, no. He was [an] intelligence person."*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: At this point, Prouty tells the story of how Allen Dulles intervened to get Lansdale promoted to Brigadier General, and how General LeMay (who was signing the papers, didn't recognize Lansdale and had to be told by Prouty that Dulles had engineered the promotion. This story is basically corroborated, though not necessarily verbatim, in Newman's *JFK and Vietnam*, p. 3-4, and Lansdale's book *In the Midst of Wars*, p. 343-345.

Tape 1, Side 2; 00:59: Prouty also claimed that he sent the tramp photo to an acquaintance who also knew Lansdale, and that this person had corroborated that the man in the photo is Lansdale. But when we asked if he would identify this person so that we could talk to him, Prouty responded, *"No. No, that's a personal matter."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 1:39: Asked if he ever discussed this situation with Lansdale: *"No. I figured that was his business."* He concedes that his next statement is, *"nothing more than personal,"* but says that Lansdale was very good at Cover and Deception, and implies that Lansdale, Hunt and others were engaged in a distraction tactic in Dealey Plaza with the tramps. Wray asked if there was anyone who could confirm Lansdale's absence from Washington more concretely; Prouty cites Stone's book of the film *JFK* as saying that Lansdale had been in Dallas a week before JFK, in the same exact hotel; but no evidence is offered that Lansdale was in Dallas on November 22.

Result or conclusion by ARRB: Prouty relies on a dubious (at best) source to "prove" Lansdale's presence in Dallas the week before the assassination, and has no corroboration whatsoever of

Lansdale's presence in Dallas that day. While a search of travel records from Lansdale's office or his personnel file might verify or disprove this allegation, the small likelihood of successfully finding such records, as well as the relative unimportance of these records, the fact that finding them might not clarify much of anything, and the limited amount of time and resources the ARRB has remaining would indicate that these records are not worth our checking out. No action is recommended.

Regarding whether Prouty had any experiences upon returning to the States which fueled his suspicions:

Prouty was asked by Wray whether, upon his return to work at the Pentagon, anyone had said anything, or whether Prouty had heard anything at all that might have led him to believe that something more than met the eye had happened.

Tape 1, Side 1; 36:26: *"To be very frank with you, I thought it was over. I can just look at the pictures and know there's something... you know, there was a big time conspiracy; [one] that was big enough to control the news, and control other things. There was nothing I could do about it; being a military officer, I went back to my job. I was not what grew later to be [called] an assassination 'buff'. I've never even picked up the Warren Commission Report. I wouldn't know it if I saw it. That kind of thing-- it's not my business."*

Under scrutiny and close questioning, Prouty basically concedes that he has no personal knowledge of anything sinister, and that the basis of his statements are his own personal beliefs only. Additionally damning is the admission that Prouty has never read or even seen the Warren Commission Report. No reputable historian would write a criticism of a source document without having read the source document first. There may well be holes or inconsistencies in the Warren Commission Report, but Prouty, by his own admission, is in no place to pass judgment on them-- he doesn't even know from his own experience what is contained in the report. This is somewhat akin to a con man selling snake oil to remedy a disease about which he knows nothing.

Regarding Army Presidential Protection units allegedly based at Ft. Myer, Virginia:

Allegation #10: When discussing the existence of military units which have as their responsibility the protection of the president, Prouty asserted that such a unit was headquartered at Fort Myer, Virginia. [ARRB Prouty interview; Tape One, side two, 22:00] In addition, he at one point asserted, "These units are created for Presidential protection." [ARRB Prouty interview; Tape One, side two, 12:55]

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

Follow-up statements to the allegation:

Tape 1, Side 2; 21:44: *"The only one I ever knew about by being there was I went to Ft. Myer one time... to meet with the fellows about some part of their work... I don't think any specifics came up, but that's when I realized that we had this role of presidential protection... and that it was a regular function of the Army... I didn't know where the other units were."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 23:30: Asked by Gunn who the "we" referred to in the previous sentence was: *"I couldn't define it beyond 'military.' Because you see, the only contact I would have had would be at the headquarters of the Air Force or at the headquarters of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I wasn't really the job that I had... I never knew the program in detail... it wasn't my business."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 24:49: *"My feeling is, and it never occurred to me to ask them in detail-- because I didn't have any reason to-- is that it was an Army function, and that it was done in conjunction with the Secret Service."*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: This excerpt is very telling. Prouty admits that he doesn't know the program in detail and never asked for details. This is very different from what he says in his books.

Tape 1, Side 2; 25:48: asked if the unit in Ft. Myer he is referring to was Army Intelligence: *"I'm positive [that] it had nothing to do with Intelligence. That thought never occurred to me. It was a function of... that's a good question. I can't remember that."*

Tape 1, Side 2; 26:20: *"These units existed at Ft. Myers [sic] for some job the Army would have, and among them was assistance of the Secret Service; and they called the course 'Presidential Protection.'"*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: Within 90 seconds, Prouty went from disavowing knowledge of the details of these units, even admitting he doesn't even remember if they were attached to Intelligence or not, to making very specific statements about the nature of these units' duties, and classes these units had to take. How this leap in degrees of knowledge is suddenly made is known only to Prouty.

Tape 1, Side 2; 22:00: *"This was a meeting, really, on another subject, in which this came up. [It was] sort of like, 'here's a function we have.' But I probably never went back to them again."*

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1\data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

Tape 1, Side 2; 26:58: Asked if the units at Ft. Myer he refers to might be the ceremonial units: *“That might have been a connection. I’ve never thought of that before. Because that’s Presidential work, isn’t it? I’ve never thought of that before. I never thought of, like, Arlington Cemetery work and other things. It could very well be why they were doing it. It never occurred to me.”*

Tape 1, Side 2; 30:00: Asked by Gunn if Prouty could key ARRB in to records from Ft. Myer, or if he had any suggestions for us regarding records: *(Testily) “No, and this has been much overplayed. I had to go to Ft. Myer for certain functions... and usually it was, I had to phone them, and they had to come see me. I had other things to do... It would be on a very specific point. I never asked for a briefing or something like that. We’re overdoing it a thousand times. I think I went there once... and it was not on this subject... it was just that they had these jobs. It was not my beat.”*

Result or conclusion by ARRB: Prouty admitted that he never even considered what is clearly the most plausible, and least sinister, explanation of what might have occurred at or been based at Ft. Myer. The credibility of an historian who fails to even consider the most plausible explanation of events he is describing, but rather jumps to unfounded and undocumentable conclusions, is easy to judge. Finally, in a final attempt to glean records or some positive result from this meeting, Gunn asks for specific records. Prouty responds, with a discernible edge in his voice, with an admission that he has no experience or knowledge of what occurred at Ft. Myer, because it was not his job, and suggests that we (the ARRB) are “overdoing” this aspect. It seems apparent that there are not likely records to be found on this subject. Recommendation is to make cursory inquiries of Ft. Myer about records belonging to units with any presidential duties whatsoever; we should expect, however, to receive only those relating to the ceremonial units.

CONCLUSION

Fletcher Prouty was where he says he was during the period from 1955-1964. His position can be documented. That, however, is about the only thing about Prouty that *can* be documented. His statements, coming from someone who was verifiably in a position to know, sound plausible, and would appear to carry the credibility of an insider’s knowledge.

But under even a slight degree of more careful analysis, it becomes clear that:

- a.) Prouty has no first hand knowledge of any activities involving Lee Harvey Oswald, a

File No. 4.0.2

e://arrb1/data/cbarger/wpdocs/prouty10.wpd

- plot to assassinate the president, or any evidence of such a plot.
- b.) Prouty's allegations, while sounding believable and authoritative, are based primarily on his interpretations of events; events he was in no position to have an informed interpretation of. Furthermore, upon questioning, it seems clear that many of Prouty's allegations are not based on interpretations of actual events, but merely his feelings or general beliefs; in these cases, there seems to be *no factual basis* for the allegation.
- c.) Prouty has made a living writing about these allegations, and having Oliver Stone turn them into a primary segment of *JFK*; his statements allege treason on a high level by members of the American military, which is obviously a very serious charge. Under questioning by ARRB, Prouty backed off, could not document, or directly contradicted his published work. Prouty's willingness to make such serious allegations while completely lacking factual basis is extremely troubling; his statements to us for the record which contradict his past writings and assertions cast doubt on the credibility of both his allegations and his character.

Two things should be emphasized: that this rejection of Prouty *does not* reflect a rejection or confirmation of any other conspiracy theories; and that the ARRB did not seek out Prouty for the purpose of tearing him and his theories down. We had intended on hearing his story and trying to obtain suggestions from Prouty as to where we could find documents to add to the collection. Only in the face of numerous contradictions, unsupportable allegations, and assertions which we knew to be incorrect did we discount Prouty and his work. But, just as it would be our responsibility to expose inaccuracies in the "official" story, it is also our responsibility to do so when inaccuracies and misleading allegations occur within the research community.