

Department of Justice

REMOVED FROM OR ADDED TO THIS FILE

FBI - CENTRAL RECORDS CENTER

ME - MEMPHIS

ME-0066-0030B: ME

| Class / Case # | Sub | Vol. | Serial # | |
|----------------|-----|------|----------|------|
| 0066 2197 | | 1 | 1 | OPEN |

11/10/1158028



RRP002MV9V

BUREAU

66-2197
CLASSIFICATION NO.

12/27/78

INVESTIGATION

B. Johnson 10/30/78

10/10/78

Bureau File Number 62-117290

Volume Number
Serials

11-5(78)

B. Johnson 10-28-78

11-15-78

D. Johnson 6-1-78

Free

5/30/78

B. Johnson 5-19-78

11-21-78

B. Johnson 12/29/79

(8-15-77)

11-27-77

B. Johnson
9-22-76

See also Nos.

Do Not Destroy

Pending Litigation

66-2197

(237) (Dec 83)

10

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|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------|----------|
| SERIALS | REQUESTERS FULL NAME | COMPUTER NUMBER | DATE | BY |
| all | James Resan | 4271134 427113 | 8-19 | G. Merin |
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MAINTAIN AS TOP SERIAL

In 2016, the serial(s) removed from this file was accessioned to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) pursuant to the JFK Records Collection Act of 1992 (JFK Act).

Under the JFK Act, originals of all material deemed assassination records must be accessioned to NARA. Accession of these records is mandated by the JFK Act and public access to them is available through NARA. If you wish to access the records through NARA, you must send your request to NARA at College Park.

The following materials were removed from this file and are maintained in the JFK Collection at NARA:

Case and Serial Number(s)

66-2197 1 thru 6, 9, 16, 17

66-2197 24 thru 28, 30, 31, 33, 34

66-2197 36 thru 58, 60, 61

66-2197 63 thru 78, 80, 81

66-2197 85 thru 93

For Informational Purposes Only

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The following materials were removed from this file and are maintained in the JFK Collection at NARA:

File & Serial Number

JFK Subject Identifier
(for NARA purposes)

ME 66-2197-
serials 1A-1A1

HSCA

For Informational Purposes Only

(File No.)

[illegible]

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (IFKARCA)
DATE 8/5/94 dcd

66-2197 1A

nbe nbe

OCT 13 1978

File No. 66-2197-1D-1
Date Received 10/2/78
From Nobel Pepper
(NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR)
5181 Lebanon Rd
(ADDRESS OF CONTRIBUTOR)
Herming Tenn
(CITY AND STATE)
DANIEL C. Krag
(NAME OF SPECIAL AGENT)

To Be Returned ☐ Yes ☒ No
Receipt Given ☐ Yes ☒ No

Description:

note

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (NARCA)

8/5/94 *dal*

382

10/2/78

86-207

Pepper & Hayes 5181 Lesson Rd

Hampton Tn

758-0425

ASSA of 10/2/78 CIA sent
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110 U

Nobel Pepper

as for 8/2/78
NATL CHS
del (10/2/78)

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CIA
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gray

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CIA

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implication was intended

Jerry Reed

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in the USA

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For Informational Purposes Only

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The following materials were removed from this file and are maintained in the JFK Collection at NARA:

File & Serial Number

JFK Subject Identifier
(for NARA purposes)

ME 66-2197-7

HSCA

For Informational Purposes Only

HQ00014 3312117

RR AFD

DE HQ

R 261715Z NOV 76

FM DIRECTOR

TO ALL SACS ROUTINE

BT

C L E A R

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

FOR INFORMATION OF RECIPIENTS, AT THE CLOSE OF THE 94TH CONGRESS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CREATED A SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS TO INVESTIGATE THE DEATHS OF JOHN F. KENNEDY AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. THIS COMMITTEE AND THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, HAVE REACHED AN AGREEMENT STIPULATING THAT ALL COMMITTEE REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO FBI FILES AND PERSONNEL WILL BE MADE IN WRITING TO THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS.

IT IS NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE STAFF HAVE SOUGHT ON THEIR OWN TO INTERVIEW DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES KNOWLEDGEABLE REGARDING THE KENNEDY AND KING INVESTIGATIONS. UNILAR EFFORTS MAY BE DIRECTED TOWARD FBI FIELD OFFICES

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
DATE 8/31/94

66-2197-7

| |
|---------------|
| NOV 26 1976 |
| FBI - MEMPHIS |

B. C. ...

PAGE TWO CLEAR

AND HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL. IF SUCH CONTACTS OCCUR, YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO REFER THE CONTACTING HOUSE COMMITTEE OFFICIAL TO THE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS OF THE DEPARTMENT OR TO FBIHQ. ATTEMPTS BY THE COMMITTEE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION THROUGH YOUR PERSONNEL OR ANY OTHER MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE SHOULD BE FURNISHED PROMPTLY TO FBIHQ, ATTENTION CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY UNIT, GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION.

FOR YOUR FURTHER INFORMATION, IN THE EVENT PERSONNEL ARE CONTACTED FOR PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW OR TESTIMONY, REFER TO MY LETTER, CUMBER 1-75, DATED MAY 28, 1975, CAPTIONED "MEMORANDUM TO ALL EMPLOYEES; RE: INTERVIEWS OF FBI EMPLOYEES." THIS MEMORANDUM DETAILS EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION AS OUTLINED IN THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, AND THE FBI EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT, WHICH REQUIRE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY BEFORE FURNISHING INFORMATION, TESTIMONY OR RECORD MATERIAL.

RECIPIENTS ARE ALSO REMINDED THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR DESTRUCTION OF FILES AND RECORDS PROGRAM, RECORDS POSSESSING EVIDENTIARY, INTELLIGENCE OR HISTORICAL VALUE, SUCH AS THE KENNEDY AND KING ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATIONS ARE

PAGE THREE CLEAR

EXCLUDED FROM THE FILE DESTRUCTION PROGRAM AND CANNOT BE
DESTROYED.

ALL LEGATS ADVISED SEPARATELY.

BT

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The following materials were removed from this file and are maintained in the JFK Collection at NARA:

File & Serial Number

JFK Subject Identifier
(for NARA purposes)

ME 66-2197-8

HSCA

For Informational Purposes Only

TRANSMIT VIA: Airtel

PRECEDENCE: _____

CLASSIFICATION: _____

DATE: 11/29/76

To: SAC, Memphis (66-2197)

From: Director, FBI

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Reurtel 11/17/76 and FBIHQ teletype to all SACs
11/24/76.

Refer to referenced FBIHQ teletype relative to
handling any inquiries from captioned committee.

SA Hester can be assigned full time to review the
Martin Luther King assassination files under SAC authority.

(This line for LEFT MARGIN.)

(Do not type BEYOND THIS MARGIN.)

(Do not type below this line.)

SAC

66-2197-8

| | |
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| SEARCHED | INDEXED |
| SERIALIZED | FILED |
| DEC 1 1976 | |
| FBI - MEMPHIS | |

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
DATE 8/5/94

FBI/DOJ

HC0075 0060043

RR AFD

DE HQ

R 06000Z JAN 77

FM DIRECTOR (62-117290)

TO ALL SACS ROUTINE

CLEAR

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

66-2197*

REFERENCE BUREAU TELETYPE NOVEMBER 24, 1976.

REFERENCED BUREAU TELETYPE SET FORTH THE FACT THAT THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS (HSC) HAS BEEN CREATED BY THE NINETY-FOURTH CONGRESS TO INVESTIGATE THE DEATHS OF JOHN F. KENNEDY AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE HSC INVESTIGATION THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS INSTRUCTED THE BUREAU TO MAKE AVAILABLE, FOR REVIEW BY THE HSC STAFF INVESTIGATORS, ALL MATERIAL REGARDING THE JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION AND MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., ASSASSINATION AS WELL AS CLOSELY RELATED CASES.

IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE HSC REVIEW, YOU ARE REQUESTED

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
DATE 8/9/94

AB

66-2197-10

| | |
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| SEARCHED | INDEXED |
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| CB | CB |
| JAN 1977 | |
| FBI - MEMPHIS | |
| * Lester | |

PAGE TWO (62-117290) CLEAR

TO PREPARE AN INVENTORY OF ALL MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN YOUR OFFICE REGARDING THE CASES SET FORTH BELOW. IT IS NOTED THAT BUREAU TELETYPE DATED DECEMBER 9, 1975, TITLED "MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.," BUREAU FILE 100-106670, YOU WERE REQUESTED TO INVENTORY ALL PERTINENT MATERIAL RELATIVE TO THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., ASSASSINATION. IT IS, THEREFORE, NOT NECESSARY FOR FIELD OFFICES AND LEGATS TO REINVENTORY THAT MATERIAL AT THIS TIME.

FILES TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR CURRENT INVENTORY ARE:

- (1) THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

NOVEMBER 22, 1963

44-1166

OO: DALLAS

BUREAU FILE 62-109060

- (2) LEE HARVEY OSWALD

44-1165

IS - R - CUBA

OO: DALLAS

BUREAU FILE 105-82555

- (3) MARINA N. OSWALD

IS - R

SOBIR

BUREAU FILE 100-126032

- (4) JACK RUBY

44-1165

LEE HARVEY OSWALD - VICTIM

44-1165

CIVIL RIGHTS

BUREAU FILE 44-24016

PAGE THREE (62-117290) CLEAR

(5) PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF
PRESIDENT KENNEDY (WARREN COMMISSION)

BUREAU FILE 62-109090

IN PREPARING FIELD OFFICE INVENTORIES FOR ALL MAIN
FILES RELATING TO ABOVE, THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC ITEMS MUST
BE INCLUDED: (A) FIELD OFFICE FILE NUMBER, INCLUDING OFFICE
PREFIX; (B) TITLE AND CHARACTER OF FILE; (C) VERY BRIEF
DESCRIPTION OF FILE CONTENTS, INCLUDING WHETHER IT CONTAINS
ANY TAPED, ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE LOGS AND/OR TRANSCRIPTS,
PHOTOGRAPHS, BULKY EXHIBITS AND ANY OTHER SIMILAR MATERIAL
WHICH IS IN ADDITION TO ROUTINE CORRESPONDENCE. IF ANY OF
THE ABOVE (TAPES, ETC.) IS NOTED, VERY BRIEFLY DESCRIBE.
INCLUDE STATEMENT DESCRIBING ALL SUBFILES RELATING TO THE
MAIN FILE; (D) ACCOUNT FOR SIZE/SCOPE OF FILE AND RELATED
MATTERS. FOR EXAMPLE, INDICATE NUMBERS OF SECTIONS AND
SERIALS IN FILE; VOLUME OF LOGS/TRANSCRIPTS AND BULKY
EXHIBITS; ETC.

IT IS FURTHER NOTED THAT IN REFERENCED BUREAU TELETYPE
OF NOVEMBER 24, 1976, YOU WERE REMINDED OF THE FACT THAT
RECORDS POSSESSING EVIDENTIARY, INTELLIGENCE OR HISTORICAL

PAGE FOURN(62-117290) CLEAR

VALUE SUCH AS THE KENNEDY AND KING ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATIONS ARE EXCLUDED FROM OUR DESTRUCTION OF FILES AND RECORDS PROGRAM AND SHOULD NOT BE DESTROYED.

YOU ARE, THEREFORE, INSTRUCTED TO REPLY BY TELETYPE SETTING FORTH YOUR INVENTORY REGARDING THE ABOVE LISTED JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION FILES. IN ADDITION, YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ADVISE WHETHER ANY MATERIAL RELATIVE TO THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ASSASSINATION (MURKIN) AND THE ABOVE LISTED FILES RELATED TO THE JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION MAY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED UNDER THE DESTRUCTION OF FILES AND RECORDS PROGRAM. IF SO, INCLUDE A LISTING OF SAID FILES. THE HANDLING OF THIS MATTER MUST BE UNDERTAKEN IMMEDIATELY AND GIVEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY. SUTEL YOUR RESULTS ATTENTION GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION, CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION, CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY UNIT.

ALL LEGATS ADVISED SEPARATELY.

BT

FBI

Date: 1/6/77

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via _____
(Precedence)

FM MEMPHIS (66-2197) (P)

TO DIRECTOR PRIORITY

BT.

CLEAR

ATTENTION GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION, CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION,
CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY UNIT

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

RE BUREAU TELETYPE TO ALL OFFICES DATED JANUARY 6,
1977.THE FOLLOWING IS AN INVENTORY OF MATERIAL RELATING TO THE
ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY:(1) MEFILE 44-1166 - ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F.
KENNEDY, NOVEMBER 22, 1963, DALLAS, TEXAS; AFO. 00 DL.THIS IS A TWO VOLUME FILE CONTAINING 263 SERIALS. THE
FILE IS COMPOSED OF LETTERS, MEMORANDA, AIRTELS, TELETYPES,
FD-302'S, AND LHM'S SETTING FORTH LEADS AND INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MATTER AND CONTAINING RESULTS OFBFJ:mrp
(1)ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
DATE 8/5/94SERIALIZED *CS*

66-2197-11

INDEXED

FILED *CS*Approved: *[Signature]*

Special Agent in Charge

Sent

HQ 16552
1-7-77

Per

GPO : 1975 O - 590-992

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via _____
(Precedence)

PAGE TWO (ME 66-2197)

THE INVESTIGATION. IN ADDITION, IT CONTAINS NUMEROUS NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS TAKEN FROM NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN THE AREA COVERED BY THE MEMPHIS OFFICE. THIS FILE CONTAINS TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF STEPHEN YVES L'EANDES. L'EANDES WAS OF INTEREST TO THE BUREAU IN CONNECTION WITH THIS INVESTIGATION BECAUSE HE ALLEGEDLY VISITED RUSSIA WITH LEE OSWALD. THIS FILE CONTAINS NO TAPED ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE LOGS, TRANSCRIPTS, OR BULKY EXHIBITS.

(2) MEFILE 105-891 - LEE HARVEY OSWALD, AKA; IS - R - CUBA. OO DL.

THIS IS A TWO VOLUME FILE WHICH CONTAINS 134 SERIALS. THIS FILE IS MADE UP OF MEMORANDA, LETTERS, AIRTELS, TELETYPES, REPORTS, AND LHM'S SETTING FORTH LEADS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS MATTER AND CONTAINING THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION. THIS FILE ALSO CONTAINS NUMEROUS NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS OBTAINED FROM NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN THE AREA COVERED BY THE MEMPHIS OFFICE. THIS FILE CONTAINS PHOTOS OF JAMES FREDERICK MURPHY, ALBERT OSBORNE, AND JOHN HOWARD BOWEN.

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)Via _____
(Precedence)

PAGE THREE (ME 66-2197)

JAMES MURPHY WAS OF INTEREST TO THE BUREAU BECAUSE HE AND A PERSON BELIEVED TO BE LEE HARVEY OSWALD APPLIED FOR EMPLOYMENT AT THE STATLER HILTON HOTEL, DALLAS, TEXAS, ON THE SAME DATE, OCTOBER 31, 1963. ALBERT OSBORNE AND JOHN HOWARD BOWEN WERE OF INTEREST TO THE BUREAU IN THIS INVESTIGATION BECAUSE ALBERT OSBORNE TRAVELED FROM NUEVO LAREDO, MEXICO, TO MEXICO CITY ON A BUS USING THE NAME JOHN HOWARD BOWEN ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1963, WITH OSWALD. BOTH OSBORNE AND BOWEN WERE INTERVIEWED BY BUREAU PERSONNEL. THIS FILE DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY TAPED ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE LOGS, TRANSCRIPTS, OR BULKY EXHIBITS.

(3) A REVIEW OF THE INDICES OF THE MEMPHIS OFFICE REVEALED NO MAIN FILE HAS BEEN OPENED BY THIS OFFICE REGARDING MARINA N. OSWALD.

(4) MEFILE 44-1165 - JACK LEON RUBY, AKA JACK RUBENSTEIN; LEE HARVEY OSWALD, AKA ALEK J. HIDELL, O. H. LEE - VICTIM (DECEASED); CR. OO DL.

THIS IS A ONE VOLUME FILE CONTAINING 120 SERIALS. THIS FILE IS COMPOSED OF MEMORANDA, LETTERS, AIRTELS, FD-302'S, TELETYPES, AND LHM'S SETTING FORTH LEADS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
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(Precedence)

PAGE FOUR (ME 66-2197)

AND CONTAINING RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION IN CONNECTION WITH THIS CASE. THIS FILE ALSO CONTAINS NUMEROUS NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS OBTAINED FROM NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED IN THE AREA COVERED BY THE MEMPHIS OFFICE. THIS FILE CONTAINS TWO PHOTOS OF JACK L. RUBY TAKEN IN NOVEMBER, 1963. THIS FILE CONTAINS NO TAPED ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE LOGS, TRANSCRIPTS, OR BULKY EXHIBITS.

(5) MEFILE 62-1412 - THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY.

THIS IS A ONE VOLUME, 2 SERIAL FILE CONTAINING 2 AIRTELS FROM THE BUREAU TO ALL OFFICES REGARDING THE REPORT PREPARED BY THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY. THIS FILE CONTAINS NO TAPED ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE LOGS, TRANSCRIPTS, OR BULKY EXHIBITS.

(6) MEFILE 46-1174 - UNSUBS, AKA STEPHEN YVES L'EANDES, JAMES F. RIZZUTO; FAG - FFI.

THIS IS A ONE VOLUME, 13 SERIAL FILE CONTAINING TELETYPES, AIRTELS, MEMORANDA, AND A REPORT SETTING FORTH LEADS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF THIS MATTER AND CONTAINING THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION. THIS INVESTIGATION IS RELATED TO THE

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

F B I

Date:

Transmit the following in _____
(Type in plaintext or code)

Via _____
(Precedence)

PAGE FIVE (ME 66-2197)

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY BECAUSE L'EANDES WAS
ASSOCIATED WITH LEE HARVEY OSWALD. THIS FILE CONTAINS NO TAPED
ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE LOGS, TRANSCRIPTS, PHOTOS OR BULKY
EXHIBITS.

NO MATERIAL RELATIVE TO THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
ASSASSINATION (MURKIN) AND THE JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION
INVESTIGATIONS HAS BEEN DESTROYED UNDER THE DESTRUCTION OF
FILES AND RECORDS PROGRAM BY THE MEMPHIS OFFICE.

BT

Approved: _____ Sent _____ M Per _____
Special Agent in Charge

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

From Investigation to Farce

The House of Representatives probe into the assassinations of President Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. has degenerated into a farce, and responsible members of Congress ought to put it out of its misery.

We say this reluctantly, for when the House voted last September to take another look at the two murders, we saw merit in the move. After all, it came after disclosures that the FBI and CIA had withheld information from each other and from the Warren Commission investigation of Kennedy's death.

However, the grandly named House Select Committee on Assassinations has been sliding downhill from the start. It hired as its chief counsel Richard Sprague, a controversial Philadelphia ex-prosecutor, who demanded a \$13 million budget for two years, a staff of 170 and hidden microphones and psychological stress evaluators to test the credibility of witnesses without their knowledge.

The House rightly found Sprague's plans too costly and ambitious and his proposed electronic toys a threat to witnesses' civil rights. It extended the committee's life only until March 31 in hope

that it would come up with a realistic budget and plan of operation.

Now Sprague and Chairman Henry Gonzales, D-Texas, have noisily fallen out. Gonzalez has fired Sprague and Sprague has got the other 11 members of the committee to tell him to ignore the chairman's dismissal move.

With this latest Keystone Cops caper, the committee has so discredited itself that it ought to go out of business. No sensible person is likely to place credence in any conclusion it comes up with.

A meticulous, unsensationalized investigation of the Kennedy and King slayings might have had some value. It might have convinced some conspiracy theorists of what all the evidence indicates: that the assassinations were committed by Lee Harvey Oswald and James Earl Ray, each acting alone.

But the Sprague-Gonzalez mess can convince nobody of anything, and consequently is without value. The deaths of Kennedy and King were tragedies in our history, and we do not honor their memories by staggering on with a probe that has become a sick joke.

PAGE 4

MEMPHIS PRESS
SCIMITAR

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: 2-14-77

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

SEARCHED InvestigatedSERIALIZED Chu

INDEXED

FILED Chu

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
DATE 8/9/94

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

House Feud Escalates In Slayings Committee

By MORRIS CUNNINGHAM

From The Commercial Appeal
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Quarreling members of the House's Select Committee on Assassinations, meeting to settle differences, wound up after a four-hour meeting Wednesday in greater disarray than ever.

Over the protests of Chairman Henry N. Gonzalez (D-Texas) members adjourned and walked out rather than confront mounting budget problems and Gonzalez' disputed dismissal last Thursday of committee counsel Richard A. Sprague.

Rep. Harold Ford of Memphis was one of three members of the 12-member committee who didn't show up for the meeting. The other two were out of the country. Ford was reported making a speech in Shreveport, La.

Gonzalez was starting to read a 13-page "white paper" relating his turbulent relations with Sprague when he abruptly was choked off by the adjournment motion.

After the other members stalked out, the chairman convened the news conference and proceeded with the statement in which he denounced Sprague as "dishonest, deceitful and irresponsible."

He said he had no choice other than to fire the 51-year-old former prosecutor. "There may be those who wondered at my haste, but when one spies a rattlesnake on the doorstep, there is no time to hesitate," Gonzalez said.

Walking out, the other committee members exhibited none of the defiance of last Thursday when all 11, including Ford, had endorsed a letter advising Sprague to disregard his dismissal.

Gonzalez said Wednesday that Sprague's termination is final and pointed out that House rules empower committee chairmen to sign pay and expense vouchers.

Gonzalez said he has no intention of resigning and that other members of the committee have no power to depose him.

"I was appointed by the speaker," he said, "and only the speaker can remove me."

Under Sprague's direction, the chairman said the committee is greatly exceeding its \$83,533 monthly budget. He said Sprague pointedly refused to make necessary cutbacks in expenses and staff.

Gonzalez painted a bleak picture of the committee's future if order and budget re-



Richard Sprague

made he will not recommend that the panel's life be continued beyond its present March 31 expiration date.

Answering questions, Gonzalez revealed a bizarre pattern of behind-the-scenes intrigue with secret transcripts of Sprague's statements at staff meetings being recorded and passed to Gonzalez, and Sprague in turn conspiring against Gonzalez with other committee members at secret meetings.

The apparently still-widening difference.
(Continued on Page 10)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

PAGE 1

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, TENN

Date: FEB. 17, 1977

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title:

Character:

or

Classification:

Submitting Office: MEMPHIS

☐ Being Investigated

66-2197

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT SENT TO
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DATE 8/5/94 dsk

Only filed to
Bureau 2/24/77 JON

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FEB 24 1977

FBI-MEMPHIS

B. Johnson

Assassination Panel Delays Ruling On Surveillance, Rights Of Witnesses

(Continued from Page 1)

ences within the committee obviously were greater than previously indicated.

Sprague attended the meeting, sitting silently but prominently on a front row seat. He walked out with the other members and did not hear Gonzalez' later remarks. However, a Sprague aide stayed and taped everything Gonzalez said. Gonzalez named Reps. Richardson Preyer (D-N. C.) and delegate Walter E. Fauntroy (D-D.C.) as members with whom Sprague had met secretly.

Sprague had no comment. Shortly before the committee adjourned, Gonzalez indirectly accused Preyer, a former North Carolina judge, with desiring to take over as chairman. Preyer retorted that he wouldn't take the job if it were offered.

The committee, charged with investigating the deaths of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., spent almost all of the four-hour morning session, which began at 8 a.m. Memphis time, bickering over rules that Gonzalez had proposed. They resumed after lunch.

After a seemingly endless series of amendments and revisions, they tentatively agreed to ban the electronic surveillance and wiretapping Sprague had advocated, and put restrictions on use of lie detectors and voice analysis devices, other measures proposed by Sprague.

They also tentatively agreed to assure that witnesses had opportunity to obtain legal counsel, and wrote in other safeguards to protect the rights of persons who may figure into the committee's proposed investigations.

But, after bickering over 12 pages of rules, the panel voted to postpone final action until a later meeting.

It was at this point that Gonzalez sought to take up the problem of the searing budget and his dismissal of Sprague.

Gonzalez said he believes the committee can be saved and the investigations carried out if the differences are settled. A starting point, he said, is to pare the staff.

"The American people want an investigative committee not an employment bureau," he said.

Gonzalez said Sprague had hired six former members of the staff of former Rep. Thomas N. Downing (D-Va.), all at inflated salaries and some at almost double what Downing paid them.

Downing headed the committee until he retired from Congress Jan. 3. Gonzalez was picked by Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill to succeed him.

"If staff employees were to receive the salaries they were promised by Mr. Sprague," Gonzalez said, "committee costs for personnel alone would be exceeding our total funds by \$20,000 a month."

He said Sprague, rather than cutting costs, had kept handing him new vouchers to sign. One set of vouchers, he said, was

for \$9,000 in expenses incurred last December, much of it for telephone calls to Philadelphia.

Gonzalez said Sprague, contrary to House rules, had continued his partnership in a Philadelphia law firm and also teaches classes at a Philadelphia university.

Gonzalez cited House rules which he said prohibit such outside activities by House employees. He said he would leave it to the House ethics committee to investigate.

"With each passing day," Gonzalez said,

"the committee's financial problems grow deeper. Each day there are more unpaid bills."

The committee's adjournment motion specified it will meet again Monday afternoon behind closed doors.

Offering the motion, Preyer said the committee needed time to work out its problems.

Gonzalez said the committee could have stayed and tackled them in Wednesday's open session. "There's no reason to go behind closed doors," he said. "This doesn't involve national security."

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

King Panel Might Call Miami Man

House Panel Contacts Ex-Police Lieutenant

By JIM BUCHANAN

Miami Post-News

A former Miami police lieutenant said Sunday that he may be called to testify before a congressional committee about receiving a pre-assassination tip in 1968 that Martin Luther King might be killed.

Charles Sapp, the former policeman, said the information came in April, 1968 from a Miami Police Department paid informant, Willie Somerset, who five years earlier had claimed advance notice of President John Kennedy's assassination.

"I've been contacted by a spokesman for the House Assassinations Committee," Sapp said Sunday, "and I've told them I'd be happy to testify as to what I know."

SAPP SAID he can't recall the exact time element, but it was shortly before King was killed. King was killed on April 4, 1968.

Other sources told The Herald that the telephoned tip was received by the lieutenant April 8, Sapp, who retired in 1971, headed the department's intelligence-gathering unit.

Somerset, an admitted racist who then was trying to organize his own National Foundation of Labor, "claimed to have overheard the death threat at a union affair in Washington," according to Sapp.

"He said he overheard two men condemning King for meddling in union affairs. If you remember, King was helping the Memphis sanitation workers, who were out on strike," Sapp said.

"Somerset told me the men said they'd have to take care of King, or words to that effect."

"SOMERSET called me and he wanted me to know he was in Miami and shouldn't be suspected if something happened."

Somerset was once a member of the National States Rights Party and claimed to have heard, during a conversation 13 days before the Kennedy slaying, of plans to shoot him.

Sapp said Sunday, "I can't remember the exact day he called me, but I'm certain the FBI got an immediate report on the tip, because the agents were in our office every day, and they got the same information I sent on to the chief."

Sapp's distant connection with the King case came to light last September as part of a Miami magazine article dealing with the assassinations of King and Kennedy.

Two weeks ago, Sapp said, he was contacted by an investigator for the House committee.

"WE TALKED for a while, and he said they'd be in touch with me, but I haven't heard anything from them yet," Sapp said.

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

17-A

MIAMI HERALD

MIAMI, FLA.

Date: 3-14-77

Edition:

Author:

Editor:

Title: WILLIE SOMERSET

Character: 44-1854*

Classification:

Submitting Office: MIAMI, FLA.

☐ Being Investigated

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
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66-2197-14
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APR 14 1977
FBI - MEMPHIS
B. Johnson

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JFK Subject Identifier
(for NARA purposes)

*ME 66-2197 -
serials 10 thru 15*

HSCA

For Informational Purposes Only

Airtel

3/17/77

To: SACs, Miami
Memphis (Enclosure)

From: Director, FBI

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Re Miami facsimile dated March 14, 1977, which enclosed a copy of a newspaper article captioned, "King Panel Might Call Miami Man," a copy of which is enclosed for Memphis. No information could be located in FBIHQ files reflecting receipt of the information allegedly furnished by William Somerset relative to his claim that he overheard a death threat at a union affair in Washington as set forth in referenced article.

Miami promptly review appropriate files to determine if there is any record of receipt of any such information allegedly furnished by Somerset. Also determine if your office has any knowledge of the statement of Charles Sapp, in this article that "I can't remember the exact day he called me, but I'm certain the FBI got an immediate report on the tip because the agents were in our office everyday, and they got the same information I sent on to the Chief." If your files do not reflect the receipt of any such information, determine if there are any Agents still on active duty in the Miami Office who would have had any such contact with the Miami Police Department, and recall the receipt of any such information. Do not conduct any active investigation concerning this newspaper article. SuLHM results.

Memphis review your appropriate files to determine if there is any record of the information allegedly furnished by Somerset re the "threat at a union affair" as mentioned in the enclosed article. SuLHM results.

66-2197-15

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| SEARCHED | INDEXED |
| SERIALIZED | FILED |
| MAR 21 1977 | |
| FBI - MEMPHIS | |

[Handwritten signature]

ORIGINAL SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (JFKARCA)
DATE 8/5/94 *[initials]*

Airtel to SACs, Miami and Memphis
Re: HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

Also, if not already done, Miami attempt to obtain through an appropriate public source, a copy of the "Miami magazine article dealing with the assassinations of King and Kennedy," mentioned in this article. If this Miami magazine article has already been submitted to FBIHQ, identify caption and date under which it was submitted.

Regarding the inquiry by the House Select Committee into the Kennedy assassination, the Committee recently furnished the following request:

"The list of all FBI agents present at the November 10, 1963 meeting in Miami, Florida with members of the Miami Police Department's Intelligence Section, at which time the taped conversation between Joseph A. Milteer and William Somerset was made available to the FBI."

Miami promptly advise if any such meeting occurred and if so, identify the Agents present.

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*ME 66-2197 -
serials 18 thru 23*

HSCA

For Informational Purposes Only

3/28/77

AIRTEL

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, MEMPHIS (66-2197)

SUBJECT: HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

**Re Bureau airtel to Miami and Memphis dated
3/1/77.**

A review of the indices and appropriate files of the Memphis Office revealed no information allegedly furnished by **WILLIAM SOMERSET** regarding the "threat at a union affair" mentioned in a press report published in the "Miami Herald," Miami, Florida, on 3/14/77. It is noted that Memphis indices and files indicate that **SOMERSET's** name is spelled as **SOMERSETT**.

**No further action contemplated by the Memphis
Office.**

2 - Bureau
1 - Miami
1 - Memphis
BFJ:jap
(4)
jap B7D

SLP 66-2197-18
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SERIALIZED

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FILED

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DATE 8/3/94

ORIGINAL SENT TO
NATIONAL ARCHIVES (KARCA)
DATE 8/5/94 dcr

JFK, King: The Dade County links

66-2197-19

Is it mere coincidence that a Miami police informer was able to predict with astonishing accuracy the assassinations of both John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King? Apparently, the FBI thought so

By Dan Christensen

© Copyright, 1976
Miami Magazine Inc.

Nov. 9, 1963 — Miami Police tape-record a conversation in which an extreme right-wing political organizer accurately predicts the assassination of President John F. Kennedy just as it was to happen 13 days later. The man said the President would be killed by shots fired "from an office building with a high-powered rifle."

Jan. 13, 1964 — The same man, using an alias, withdraws \$12,000 from a savings account at a now defunct bank in Provo, Utah. The man, who lived in Georgia, had opened the account the previous July.

Nov. 1, 1963 — A Cuban exile walks into the Parrot Jungle gift shop and tells a female employe he hates the President and he could "shoot Kennedy between the eyes." He has a "friend named Lee," he says, "who is also a sharp-shooter," and that Lee spoke Russian and German and was living in either Texas or Mexico. (Lee Harvey Oswald spoke Russian, lived in Texas, and earlier



Willie A. Somersett, informer

in the fall had been traveling in Mexico.)

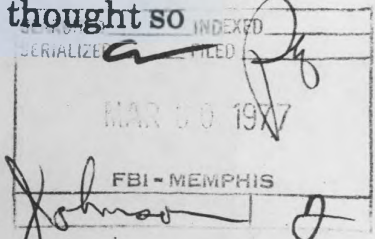
These intriguing incidents suggest the surreal atmosphere permeating Miami in 1963. Not only were many newly arrived Cuban refugees making raids on their homeland in attempts to overthrow the regime of Fidel Castro, but America's home-

grown right-wing fanatics were conducting a last-gasp effort to head off the drive for equal rights by blacks. For both, the prospects seemed bleak, and for both, hatred focused on John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

To Cubans, Kennedy was the ultimate betrayer. He had backed out of supportive air strikes when a Cuban exile brigade landed at the Bay of Pigs, and he had knuckled under to Nikita Khrushchev in 1962 when he pledged not to invade Cuba in return for removal of Soviet missiles from the island. Kennedy had committed himself and, as long as he lived, a return to Cuba would be impossible.

On the right-wing fringe, Kennedy was hated for other reasons, mainly his stand on integration. He was feared also as a leader who was setting the United States up for some nebulous takeover conspiracy by the United Nations and the despised Jews, extremist documents show.

Miami Magazine's inquiry into the assassination began with the Miami Police tape-recording. Scat-



Story behind the story

Miami Magazine writer Dan Christensen was watching the CBS television report analyzing the assassinations last April when he heard Dan Rather's fleeting mention of a Miami police tape-recording forecasting the death of John F. Kennedy. Since that moment, Christensen has spent hundreds of hours exploring leads that document the desire of extremists in Miami to kill Kennedy. With the assistance of Circuit Judge Seymour Gelber, he gained access to a wealth of primary materials (including a copy of the tape-recording) and, almost by accident, uncovered a rather astonishing link between threats against Kennedy and the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. almost five years later. In the first segment of his fascinating two-part story, Christensen looks at the "Miami connection" in the Kennedy case. Next month, he will reveal previously unpublished material in which the police informant who taped the threat on Kennedy predicted the death of King only hours before it actually occurred in Memphis, Tenn.

tered references have been made to the recording since it was uncovered in 1967, most notably by assassination researcher Harold Weisberg who published the transcript in his 1970 book "Frame-Up." Investigation of this incident led to discovery of the Parrot Jungle threat.

Circuit Judge Seymour Gelber, then an assistant to State Attorney Richard Gerstein, provided nearly all the initial information about the tape-recording. Not only did he save records and memoranda from the investigation, he kept a diary. The diary was invaluable in our research. Gerstein too has been totally cooperative.

Their investigation, which culminated in the tape-recording of Nov. 9, 1963, began in February 1962 after a series of local bombings, including an attack upon the home of Miami Herald editor Don Shoemaker. A few days after that bombing, Willie Somerset, a union organizer with extensive right-wing political ties (he was a Klansman), showed up at the Herald building to offer his services as an informer. Quickly, he began working for the Miami police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The police were never advised of his ties to the FBI. (Actually, he had worked for the FBI, off and on, for about a decade, it is now known). Over the next several months, Somerset imparted enough information to state investigators to enable them to arrest and convict several of the bombers.

After the bombing investigation, Somerset remained on the payrolls of both the city and the FBI, revealing

extremist activities. In April 1963 he traveled to New Orleans for a meeting of the Congress of Freedom party. The COF, a confederation of right-wing political groups, still exists, acting, its leader Mary Cain of Summit, Miss., says, "to get patriot organizations together to discuss the issues." It was in New Orleans that Somerset hooked up with an old friend, Joseph A. Milteer, now deceased, the man who later made the tape-recorded threats against JFK.

Willie Augustus Somerset, at age 61 in 1963, was a mountainous figure who was beginning to feel the agony of afflictions that eventually would kill him. Dubbed agent '88' by Miami police, it was said he reminded one of an Oldsmobile 88. Gerstein described him as "a real Sidney Greenstreet type."

Somerset had lived in Miami for about four years by 1963, sharing a room in a semi-flophouse with his wife Peggy. He managed his union affairs out of the old Dolphin Hotel, headquarters for his pretentiously titled National Federation of Labor. He died May 7, 1970, in Goldsboro, N.C., just a few miles from where he had been born.

In an interesting sidelight to Somerset's death, his closest friend in Miami, George Brackett, received a mysterious call at 3 am from a man who claimed to be at Washington's Walter Reed Hospital. The man, who wouldn't identify himself, told Brackett of Willie's death and said he was calling because Brackett's name was on an emergency card in Somerset's wallet.

atives say Somerset died in North Carolina.

Through the years Somerset had been associated with right-wing politics, but he disliked groups pressing for violence. Why he became an informer is uncertain. Money? Honor? Patriotism? It could just have been his job.

Joseph A. Milteer, a wealthy rabble-rousing racist from Quitman, Ga., devoted his life to right-wing causes, belonging to at least four ultra-conservative organizations: the National State's Rights Party, The White Citizen's Council, The Dixie Klan, and the Constitution Party. He rarely stayed at home, choosing instead to traverse the country attending meetings and calling on other true believers. At least once in 1963, he visited Dallas.

When Milteer was at home, he churned out reams of what he and fellow Georgians called "yellow sheets" in which he blasted Kennedy, Jews, Communists, the UN, local politicians and the federal government. He also sold tape-recorded speeches of notorious patriotic zealots.

When he wasn't busy with politics, Milteer tried his hand as a mail-order salesman for various novelty items. And he bootlegged wine from a still in a shed in his backyard.

Milteer died Feb. 28, 1974, two days after his 72nd birthday — reportedly from burns inflicted when a gas heater in his home exploded. Several days later, a small cache of arms and ammunition was uncovered in his car.

Because of mysterious circumstances shrouding his death, I went to Quitman to explore Milteer's life in detail. Since he had no known relatives, his estate has remained in probate, his dilapidated Victorian home unexplored for two and half years.

Milteer lived like a packrat. Besides saving junk mail and trivial belongings of his dead parents, he kept carbon copies of letters he sent during his prolific career. Some were cryptic. Most were mild. All belied the deadliness with which he had spoken in Miami.

Since Milteer's death, the house has been ransacked several times. What was taken is unknown. A neighbor told probate Judge James R. Knight that she saw men in a truck with Texas license plates carting boxes of Milteer's belongings away.

The most fascinating evidence found at Milteer's home was in a

Using an alias, Joseph A. Milteer deposited \$12,000 in a now-defunct Provo, Utah bank in mid-1963. In January, 1964, the Georgia racist withdrew it all at one time

22

bankbook tucked away amid piles of letters in his closet. The savings account, No. 115376 from the now-defunct Utah Savings and Loan Association of Provo, Utah, was made out to one Samuel Steven Story and Mrs. C. C. Cofield. The address given was 212 South Troupe St, Valdosta, Ga., Mrs. Cofield's home. (Cofield had been Milteer's common-law wife for many years and lived with him until her death in 1971). When the account was opened on July 31, 1963, an initial deposit of \$5,000 was made. There followed but two others, one of \$5,000 and another of \$2,000 on Aug. 20 and Sept. 24, respectively. On Jan. 31, 1964, (52 days after the assassination,) all \$12,000 was withdrawn abruptly and the account was closed.

There is no doubt that Story was an alias for Milteer. A letter to the bank was found, typed on Milteer's "yellow sheets" with Story's signature which matched Milteer's; along with it was another letter to the same bank, dated the same day, with Milteer's signature. Apparently he had an account under his own name as well. There is no evidence to indicate Milteer ever used an alias except during that brief, crucial period.

It is significant that with exception of a series of invitations to notables (George Wallace and Klan leader Robert Shelton) to attend a Constitution Party meeting in mid-October, 1963, no letters found dealing with 1963 were found, despite detailed correspondence for the years before and after.

Unearthed amid the rubble of his decaying house was part of a diary, ostensibly by him, that briefly recounts events from July 8, 1963 through October 1, 1963. It mentions the trip to Dallas and a meeting with arch-conservative commentator Dan Smoot.

Unanswered questions about Milteer's death abound. Apparently, he was fatally burned Feb. 9, 1974 when a Coleman stove he was using for heat in his antiquated bathroom exploded. He died two weeks later.

According to the death certificate,

Milteer died of "severe third degree burns on both lower extremities." Marion Maxwell the local mortician, says, however, the burns he saw on Milteer's body weren't severe enough to have caused death. In fact, he said they were already partially healed. No autopsy was ever performed.

Milteer himself mentions receiving burns similar to those that allegedly caused his death in an unfinished letter dated Jan. 27, 1964: "I had an accident wherein I knocked over a sauce pan of hot



Joseph A. Milteer, extremist

water on the floor into which I fell and the hot water burned the small of my back."

Milteer had attended the April 1963 meeting in New Orleans as a representative of the Dixie Klan, a notoriously violent faction of the KKK based in Chattanooga, Tenn. and advocated a coordinated assassination program that would eliminate a long list of prominent government officials and businessmen. He felt that the "patriot" organizations should act swiftly because Kennedy was on the verge of turning the U.S. government over to the United Nations.

Somersett, in recounting the meeting, said that the visible

leaders didn't discuss violence but he said, "Not only Milteer, but others said they would start as soon as it was deemed necessary to prevent the UN from taking over the U.S. . . . They felt that the President of the U.S. or the Congress was handing over the United States to the UN, that these people were the conspirators, and (that) they should be killed immediately. I am satisfied Milteer is one of the high command in the policy group."

Earlier Somersett had said of Milteer: "He is one of the most violent-minded men in the country."

Several times during his debriefing, Somersett referred to "the national hidden hand of this organization." He theorized that it included Milteer, several admirals and ex-generals and assorted rightwing big shots.

As he gave the testimony about New Orleans, Somersett was earning respect and credibility with Miami authorities. The FBI, in its documents about the incidents, called Somersett "a source who has furnished reliable information in the past." Gelber characterized his informant in even more respectful terms: "Somersett frequently uses the expression 'the most violent man I know' in describing a particular person (Milteer) . . . I am beginning to suspect he is intuitively separating the talkers from the doers. Whereas we can only guess, Somersett obviously senses who among them spells danger."

Somersett smelled danger at the COF meeting. Toward the end of the questioning about his New Orleans trip, he said, "If the Congress of the U.S. doesn't cut the UN out, if it continues that way for twelve months, there has got to be some violence. You could tell if you had been there and stood around and seen the people, the expression on their faces, heard the way they talked. Those people are people of means, financially, and educationally. They are not there just for an ice cream party. This can't continue on, with the people financing these things, something must happen. I will bet my

head on a chopping block there will be some people killed by this time next year and it will be in high places."

Somersett encountered Milteer again in early October at a meeting in Vero Beach. At that meeting, Milteer again proposed violence and announced that "the National States Rights Party is going to move in Miami fast."

At Vero Beach, Milteer promoted an impending convention of the Constitution Party the following week in Indianapolis. As a member of that group's board of directors, Milteer helped formulate "plans to put an end to the Kennedy, King (Martin Luther), Khrushchev dictatorship over our nation."

Gelber's diary reveals that "before they parted, Milteer confided to Somersett he was certain that Dixie Klan Imperial Wizard Jack Brown . . . either placed the bomb, or engineered the act, which caused the death of four children in the Birmingham church bombing." (The case remains unsolved today.)

In Indianapolis, Milteer persisted in calling for violent action. Jack Brown, the man Milteer had blamed for the Birmingham bombing, was there. According to Somersett and another informant, Stanley Pospisil, Brown implicated himself in the Birmingham bombing, and was "virtually bragging about his role there." Brown, according to Harold Weisberg, was a gas station operator extremely active in the Klan. "He was reported to be a 'contact man' for the United White Party; to have been an NSRP presidential elector; to have died of a heart attack in 1965."

After the Indianapolis meeting, Gelber suggested Milteer be tape-recorded during his upcoming visit to Miami.

Milteer arrived in town the weekend of Nov. 9 and scheduled breakfast with Somersett at his apartment. Detective Everett Kay, Somersett's police contact, set up a tape-recorder in a broom closet off the kitchen early, then left. Somersett was to plug the recorder in when Milteer knocked on the door.

The well laid plans of the Miami PD almost went awry when Milteer showed up unexpectedly and caught Somersett outside the apartment. Willie kept his cool, however, and plugged the tape-recorder in as he looked at the nearby refrigerator, saying, "This damn box gets all frosted up if I let it run overnight. I just pull the plug at night and put it back in the morning." With that, he

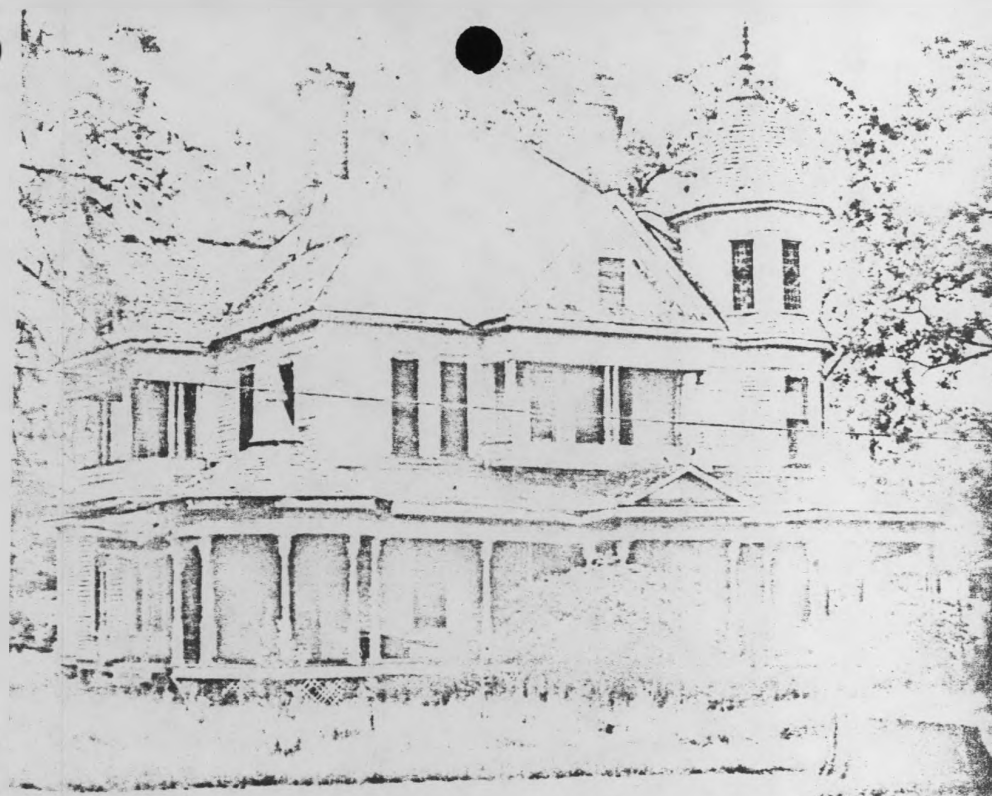


Photo by Dan Christensen

Ramshackle mansion where Joseph Milteer wrote racist, anti-Kennedy tracts

and Milteer began their notorious talk.

As Somersett led his duped friend through a series of loaded questions, startling revelations emerged. Not only did Milteer implicate Brown in the church bombing again, he also told how Brown had tried to kill Martin Luther King. "He followed him for miles and miles, and couldn't get close enough to hit him."

Then he dropped his tape-recorded bombshell.

Somersett: . . . I think Kennedy is coming here on the 18th . . . to make some kind of speech . . . I imagine it will be on TV.

Milteer: You can bet your bottom dollar he is going to have a lot to say about the Cubans. There are so many of them here.

Somersett: Yeah, well, he will have a thousand bodyguards. Don't worry about that.

Milteer: The more bodyguards he has, the easier it is to get him.

Somersett: What?

Milteer: The more bodyguards he has the more easier it is to get him.

Somersett: Well, how in the hell do you figure would be the best way to get him?

Milteer: From an office building with a high-powered rifle. How many people does he have going

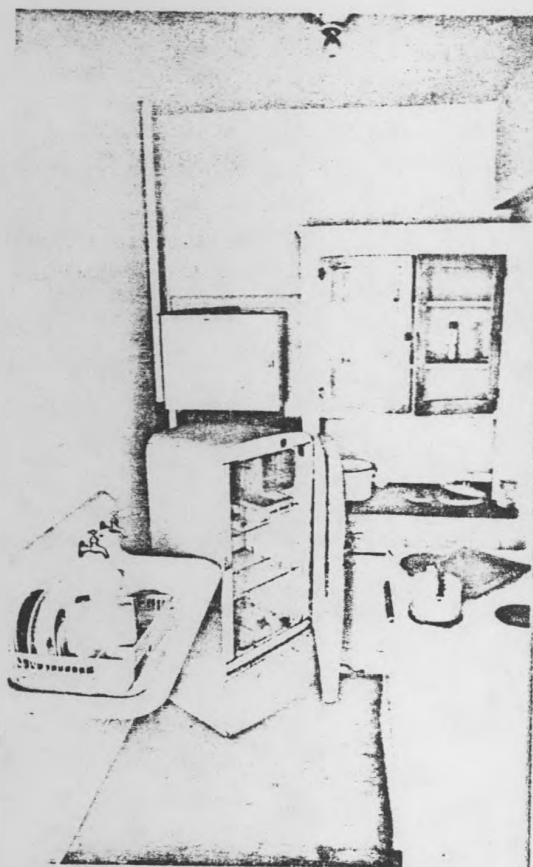


Photo by Ken Schiff

Tiny hotel room where Milteer threats were recorded

around who look just like him? Do you know about that?

Somerset: No, I never heard had anybody.

Milteer: He has about fifteen. Whenever he goes anyplace, he knows he is a marked man.

Somerset: You think he knows he is a marked man?

Milteer: Sure he does.

Somerset: They are really going to try to kill him?

Milteer: Oh, yeah, it is in the working. Brown himself, Brown is just as likely to get him as anybody in the world. He hasn't said so, but he tried to get Martin Luther King.

After a few more minutes of conversation, Somerset again spoke of assassination.

24 **Somerset:** ... Hitting this Kennedy is going to be a hard proposition, I tell you. I believe you may have figured out a way to get him, the office building and all that. I don't know how the Secret Service agents cover all them office buildings everywhere he is going. Do you know whether they do that or not?

Milteer: Well, if they have any suspicion they do that, of course. But without suspicion, chances are that they wouldn't. You take there in Washington. This is the wrong time of the year, but in pleasant weather, he comes out on the veranda and somebody could be in a hotel room across the way and pick him off just like that.

Somerset: Is that right?

Milteer: Sure, disassemble a gun. You don't have to take a gun up there, you can take it up in pieces. All those guns come knock down. You can take them apart.

Before the end of the tape, the conversation returns to Kennedy.

Milteer: Well, we are going to have to get nasty. . .

Somerset: Yeah, get nasty.

Milteer: We have got to be ready, we have got to be sitting on go, too.

Somerset: Yeah, that is right.

Milteer: There ain't any countdown to it, we have just got to be sitting on go. Countdown, they can move in on you, and on go they can't. Countdown is all right for a slow prepared operation. But in an emergency operation, you have got to be sitting on go.

Somerset: Boy, if that Kennedy gets shot, we have got to know where we are at. Because you know that will be a real shake. . .

Milteer: They wouldn't leave any stone unturned there. No way. They will pick up somebody within hours afterwards, if anything like that

would happen, just to throw the public off.

Somerset: Oh, somebody is going to have to go to jail, if he gets killed.

Milteer: Just like Bruno Hauptmann in the Lindbergh case, you know.

The entire tape-recording lasts roughly a half-hour and much of it is either garbled or irrelevant. Each voice is distinctly unique. Somerset spoke his words quickly, infusing each syllable with a thick Southern accent. Milteer's high pitched, effeminate voice dilutes the deadliness of his words.

Kennedy came to Miami Nov. 18, 1963 for the Inter-American Press Association convention at the Americana. The Secret Service, alerted about the tape by Miami authorities (and certainly by the FBI who received the information directly from Somerset), abandoned a planned motorcade. Instead, the President helicoptered to Miami Beach.

In his diary, Gelber says a police detective assigned to the case assured him the Secret Service knew where Brown and Milteer were. Bob Newbrand, a local Secret Service spokesman, says that he doesn't understand Gelber's statement: "I know for sure we didn't put him (Milteer) under surveillance. We were never that much involved with that. If anybody made a threat we wouldn't put him under surveillance, we'd lock him up!" (What really happened?) The contradictions of Newbrand's statement and Gelber's diary are staggering. If Milteer and Brown weren't under observation, why weren't they? Was this simply considered a frivolous threat? Miami PD took it seriously.

Milteer and Somerset were to meet once more. On Nov. 23, the day after the assassination, Somerset traveled to Jacksonville where he rendezvoused with Milteer before making a quick trip to Columbia, S.C. for a session with KKK members. When he returned to Miami, he reported to the police what he had learned: "During the journey to S.C. he (Milteer) told me that he was connected with an international underground. He said there would be a propaganda campaign put on how to prove to the Christian people of the world that the Jews, the Zionist Jews, had murdered Kennedy.

"He was very happy over it and shook hands with me. He said: 'Well, I told you so. It happened like I told you, didn't it? It happened

from a window with a high-powered rifle.' I said, 'That's right. I don't know whether you were guessing or not, but you hit it on the head pretty good.' He said, 'Well, that is the way it was supposed to be done, and that is the way it was done.'

"From the impression he gave me, and what he told me, the Oswald group was pro-Castro. This group was infiltrated by the patriot underground who arranged from there to have the execution carried out and drop the responsibility right into the laps of the Communists. I don't think there was any agreement with this little flim-flam organization that Oswald belonged to. . . I don't believe Milteer did it, but it might be a possibility that he knows who engineered it. The impression I get from him, I think the thing was set up to kill Mr. Kennedy in the South, in some southern state. . . Milteer is too much enthused about it, before hand and after, not to know something about it."

Later, Miami authorities tried to get Milteer and Brown to come to Miami where they again could make tape-recordings. On Dec. 4, Somerset got a shock when he called Milteer and discovered the FBI had questioned Milteer and Brown as part of a mass roundup of extremists. From Gelber's diary: "Somerset is extremely concerned about this turn of events. Milteer did not accuse him of being an FBI informer, but inasmuch as the questioning appeared to be based on the statements made to Somerset, suspicion would inevitably rest on him. . . There is no chance of getting Milteer and Brown to Miami now and there is a possibility they will show considerable caution in future conversations in Somerset's presence. . . I wonder why the FBI picked these people up after the President's assassination rather than before the act? All this manages to do is jeopardize the safety of our undercover agent. Based on the Milteer tape, I had anticipated such government action prior to the President's visit to Miami. . . I did not expect it as an afterthought. . . There is nothing of substantial value to be gained by this dramatic move except to scare hell out of Milteer, Brown and a few others. . . It ruins our investigation and further weakens the effectiveness of the undercover agent, not only for us, but also for the FBI."

Declassified FBI documents, obtained by Harold Weisberg under

In 1967, a "super-secret investigation" of a threat against Kennedy turned up interesting information which an FBI probe apparently had failed to note

the Freedom of Information Act, prove the Bureau was doing just what Gelber's diary suggests. Without naming him, they identify Somersett as the informant.

Perhaps the most fascinating document the FBI released deals with its interview of Joseph Milteer by agents from the Atlanta office. Milteer, in that report, "emphatically denies ever making threats to assassinate President Kennedy or participating in any such assassination." He said he didn't know Lee Oswald or Jack Ruby.

A 1968 Miami police memo on Somersett relates how he traveled to New Orleans and spoke with some of then-District Attorney Jim Garrison's agents. Garrison was conducting his JFK assassination probe and requested Somersett's help. Somersett told his story and mentioned a letter he had received from Milteer, dated Nov. 18, 1963 and postmarked Valdosta, Ga. Garrison's men wanted the letter, but the memo never indicated whether Somersett gave it to them. He never revealed its contents, but Detective Kay confirms the existence of the letter. Neither he nor anyone else knows where it is today.

Other unusual disappearances of information have hampered our investigation. The state attorney's office, which keeps all its records of old cases on file in a North Miami warehouse, says the records on this case, and all others pertaining to the JFK assassination are missing, despite a thorough search. No one can account for their absence.

The Miami police intelligence unit, now called the Special Investigations Section, says there are no files on the assassination. Kay, however, says he looked at such files only six months ago, before his retirement. We have no reason to doubt his word. Do the files exist or don't they? In a quote that sounds as if it could have come from "Catch 22," former special section chief Major Herbert Breslow said: "If I found out where it (the file) was, I wouldn't tell you anyway. I'd just say nothing. You must believe me when I tell you we don't have any files, even though I wouldn't tell you if I did." The FBI

added a strict "no comment" on all questions.

The Parrot Jungle incident involved different characters. Initial information in this case came from former Dade Circuit Judge Alfonso Sepe, whom I contacted about the Milteer tape.

During our discussion, Sepe revealed a "super-secret investigation" he had directed as assistant state attorney in 1967. He had initiated it because of exciting information he received from a friend.

What he discovered was disturbing. In sworn testimony taken by Sepe, Mrs. Lillian Spingler, an employee of the Parrot Jungle gift shop in 1963, told how a Cuban man had entered the shop in late autumn and "initiated a conversation with her in which he stated that he could write with both hands simultaneously and that he was a sharpshooter. This Cuban male allegedly told Mrs. Spingler that he had a friend named Lee who could speak Russian and German and was living in Texas or Mexico, and that Lee was also a sharpshooter. Mrs. Spingler told some friends, but the conversation she had with the Cuban male was passed off until the night of President Kennedy's assassination (22 days later) when Mrs. Spingler was riding in a car with her husband, a close friend and a relative from New Jersey, on their way back from Key West to Miami. Mrs. Spingler said that before she heard the name of the President's assassin, she remarked that she knew who the assassin was. Because she had told several friends, the incident was reported to the FBI.

"I interrogated Mrs. (Ruth) Bastholm, Mr. (William) VanderWyden (Mrs. Spingler's boss at Parrot Jungle), and Mrs. (Aliese) Trigg. Mrs. Trigg remembered learning of Spingler's conversation from Mrs. Spingler prior to the assassination, and corroborated to some degree Mrs. Spingler's version."

He also said he hated the President and "could shoot Kennedy between the eyes."

Sepe said the incident was relayed to the FBI in late December 1963 when Mrs. Spingler called

them. After a quick investigation, FBI agent in charge, James O'Connor told her to "just drop it and not mention it." Mrs. Spingler is still taking O'Connor's advice and has refused to comment, saying only, "They told me not to talk about it. Goodbye." The FBI would say nothing.

The investigation the FBI conducted bears examining. Several months after the threat relayed by Mrs. Spingler, the man who made the threat was identified when he returned to the Parrot Jungle and was spotted. Alertly, Parrot Jungle employees wrote down the license number of his car. They informed the FBI.

Several weeks passed before Special Agent O'Connor called Mrs. Spingler to tell her that he had in custody Jorge Soto Martinez. O'Connor told her that Martinez, at the time of the threat, had been employed as a Fontainebleau Hotel bellhop.

Martinez didn't deny having a conversation with Mrs. Spingler. He did deny making threats against the President or saying he knew Lee Oswald.

From Sepe's report: "Agent O'Connor asked Mrs. Spingler if she wanted to come to the FBI office and identify the man. Agent O'Connor and Mrs. Spingler both state that Mrs. Spingler refused to go to the FBI office to identify Martinez because she was afraid of personal harm." Still, O'Connor was satisfied that Mr. Martinez was not involved in an attempt to assassinate President Kennedy and did not know Oswald. So the FBI closed its investigation.

In 1967, Sepe threw some light on the FBI's earlier report. He called O'Connor and received the opinion that Martinez had nothing to do with the assassination. O'Connor offered the theory that Mrs. Spingler had "exaggerated the conversation she had with Martinez and that in all probability (had) misunderstood Martinez when he said that he would like to kill Castro." O'Connor also obligingly pointed out that because of Martinez' heavy accent, Mrs. Spingler thought Martinez said "Lee," when he had said "he."

Please turn to page 42



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Continued from page 25

"Lee" could certainly be mistaken for "he," but "Kennedy" doesn't rhyme with "Castro," even when spoken with an accent. Or by an FBI man.

In her statement to Sepe, Mrs. Spingler reasserted her belief that she had heard Martinez correctly. "I know — was sure he said Lee because I associated General Lee with it . . . That's my way of remembering, like 'He's a sharpshooter, General Lee,' you know."

Mrs. Spingler told Sepe she had never been contacted by anyone representing the Warren Commission. "Mr. Conley (sic) told me to forget it all and I figured, well, I told what I knew to the FBI. If they want to further investigate it, then do it. I was just following his instructions."

Curiously, the FBI never even had her identify the man she saw. She was shown some pictures of possible suspects, but never one she could identify. Sepe asked her if she was certain the FBI had picked up the man she had talked to.

"I really don't know for sure," she replied. "It didn't even dawn on me until now that you are questioning me. I just had the license number and I never met him again or saw his picture."

Sepe probed, trying to learn how the FBI had identified the man they had picked up. He asked Mrs. Spingler why she hadn't gone to the FBI office and identified him through a one-way mirror. She answered that the agent-in-charge had never suggested it.

Mrs. Spingler finally identified Martinez as the man she had talked to, in 1967, when Sepe located Martinez and obtained a photo.

Martinez was totally cooperative during Sepe's investigation, even submitting to a lie detector examination. During the test, he denied all Mrs. Spingler's allegations. Warren Holmes, nationally recognized polygraph expert, determined that Martinez probably was telling the truth "with the exception that in a temperamental outburst to Mrs. Spingler, (he) might have said some unkind things about President Kennedy which he had originally denied to (Sepe). Specifically, he showed deception in his denial to the question: "Did you tell the woman at the Parrot Jungle that you were going to Washington and shoot the President between the eyes?" He later admitted to Holmes, following the examination, that he recalled making some stupid statement like that

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... He stated he had a habit shooting his mouth off, but vehemently denied mentioning the name of Lee."

Sepe still thinks Mrs. Spingler was truthful in her statements concerning Martinez.

If the FBI had chosen to check into Martinez' life more thoroughly, his alleged remarks might have been taken more seriously.

Martinez had gotten his job at the Fontainebleau because of a plug given him by a Mike McLaney. McLaney had been Martinez' employer in Havana. He had hired Martinez to clean out slot machines at the casino he operated at the Nacional Hotel. When Castro banned gambling, both McLaney and Martinez fled to Miami. McLaney lived in a houseboat docked across Collins Avenue from the Fontainebleau and prevailed on them to help get Martinez a job. Both McLaney and Ken Humphreys, Martinez' boss at the Fontainebleau, confirmed McLaney's role in the hiring.

Told of the allegations against Martinez, McLaney said that he knew nothing about any assassination plot and offered his impression of Martinez. "George (Jorge) wouldn't harm Mickey Mouse. He has the courage of a little less than a mouse. It's startling to me to hear this." He said he doesn't know where Martinez is now. I made repeated efforts to locate Martinez to no avail.

Do the tangled facts that surround both the Milteer and Martinez incidents mean anything? Perhaps not, but the fact that they were never sufficiently explained is unsettling.

There are numerous implications that have been raised by this investigation. Ponder this list of questions that still need answers.

● Why were Milteer and Brown picked up after Kennedy's assassination and not before?

● If, as Gelber says, Milteer and Brown were under surveillance during the President's Nov. 18 trip to Miami, were they also being watched on Nov. 22? If they were, why doesn't the FBI say so?

● Why did the FBI round up the two extremists for questioning on Nov. 27, ruining a Miami police plan to spy on them?

● Why did the FBI take Milteer's denial that he threatened the President when they had him on tape saying the opposite?

● Why did it also take him at his word when he denied knowledge of the Birmingham bombing? ➔



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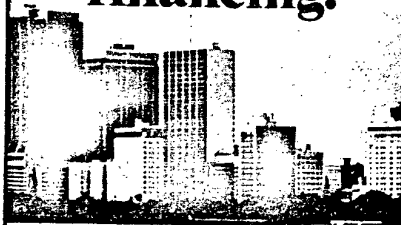
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- Why didn't they investigate the threats he made in New Orleans and Indianapolis?
- What was the significance of Milteer's Utah bank account?
- Why did he use an alias?
- Why are there still unanswered questions about his death?
- Why does the FBI continue to withhold evidence concerning the tape?
- Why did the Warren Commission report fail to mention this Miami connection?
- Why did the FBI tell Mrs. Spingler to forget about the Parrot Jungle incident and not to mention it to anyone?
- Why do Warren Commission files fail to make mention of it?

Sepe thinks the Martinez incident is important. "It is far more significant in hindsight than it was at the time," he believes. "So many facts have surfaced, and so much intrigue has been suggested, that it gives rise to challenges to the authenticity and thoroughness of the Warren Commission investigation. I believe a new investigation is fully warranted, and all records should be unsealed and everybody who has any relevant information should be questioned exhaustively."

Judge Gelber thinks the information about this case bears further examination by the federal government. "I think an oversight committee should be established which would re-evaluate all the new evidence that has come to light recently. If for no other reason than to satisfy the general public. This data about Milteer is raw intelligence, and should be treated as such, but it is important. It cannot be ignored. This information has never had any priority consideration. The authorities didn't consider it serious enough when it was first available. I think that when Oswald was arrested, activity in other areas diminished, particularly in this one."

State Attorney Gerstein was more subdued in his comments about the Milteer incident but said, "The overwhelming majority of the people of the United States do not believe that Oswald acted alone and are not satisfied with the conclusions of the Warren Commission. As to whether or not it will be fruitful (to reopen the case) or not, I leave to someone else's judgment."

Next month: Miami Magazine's inquiry into apparent Dade County links to the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads to more reasons to believe that King's killer wasn't alone.



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King Assassination:

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FBI ignored its Miami informer

Told of information uncovered in our investigation, a Justice Department attorney — obviously taken aback — called the previously unpublished police memo 'as interesting a piece of information as I've ever heard'

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By Dan Christensen

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B. Johnson

At 6:01 p.m. on April 4, 1968, a single shot rang out in Memphis, Tennessee. In that moment, the civil rights movement lost its greatest leader.

The assassin(s) who struck was not alone in knowing that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was destined for violent death. A Miami police/FBI informer had learned of a plot and warned his superiors the previous day.

This astonishing revelation is one of several previously unpublished facts contained in a series of 1968 Miami Police Department memoranda obtained by Miami Magazine in its probe of Dade County's link to the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Last month Miami Magazine exposed new evidence and raised new questions concerning the Kennedy killing. Much of our information came from materials provided to law enforcement agencies by professional informant and two-bit union organizer, Willie Augustus Somersett. In this



report of King, Somersett, who died in 1970, is again the chief provider.

Copies of Somersett's debriefings, contained in police memos on King, were furnished us, almost as an afterthought, by Dade Circuit Judge Seymour Gelber while he was aiding our investigation of the Kennedy assassination. The Dade State Attorney's office cannot find its files on the matter, despite an exhaustive search undertaken several months ago at Miami Magazine's request. Miami police, through a public information officer, would only say, "We don't have any files on that subject at all. I don't know if it was destroyed or what."

Martin Luther King Jr. first went to Memphis in March, 1968 to help organize the 1,300 mostly black sanitation workers who had been striking since Feb. 12 for higher wages and better working conditions. While there, he led a parade on behalf of the strikers, represented by Local 1733 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Courtesy of Miller & King Gallery

Violence flared and one black youth was killed, 60 were injured and 200 arrested. Deeply disturbed, King suspended his activities, but promised to return to Memphis when the situation calmed.

Somersett's dour prediction in Miami came in a confidential memorandum dated April 25, 1968, written by former police Lt. Charles H. Sapp and addressed to Miami's late Chief of Police Walter E. Headley.

The memo begins:

"On Wednesday, April 17, 1968, informant '88' (Somersett's police code name) went to Atlanta, Ga. in an effort to find more information concerning the death of Martin Luther King. This informant remained in Atlanta until April 22 and returned to Miami on April 23, 1968. Informant contacted me (Lt. Sapp) and we met in the downtown area of Miami. This informant states that on April 1, 1968 he was in Washington, D.C., attending a (National) Labor Relations Board meeting, and when it adjourned he overheard a conversation between members of the Longshoremen's Union and the Sanitation Workers' Union in which they discussed the sanitation workers' predicament in Memphis, (the crisis that brought King to Memphis). One spokesman stated that 'when Martin Luther King returns to Memphis, we don't have any alternative but to kill him. He has stopped being a preacher and is interfering as a labor organizer and has caused one riot in Memphis and one man's death and that he is hurting the labor cause rather than helping it.'

"When the informant returned to Miami on April 4, he heard by the news media that Martin Luther King had in fact returned to Memphis and was going to lead a parade the following day. This informant feared that he might be a suspect and questioned concerning anything that might



Richard Gerstein: big assist

happen to Martin Luther King. He went to a filling station and garage operated by Mr. Frank Love, on the corner of NE 1st Avenue and 10th Street, and during a conversation, told him that he believed that Martin Luther King would be assassinated that night and stated his reasons for believing so. This statement was allegedly made in front of Frank Love (now dead) and two or three of his Negro employees at the garage. This occurred at approximately 4 p.m., after which King was murdered at approximately 7 p.m. (EST).

"On April 25 this reporter (Lt. Sapp) contacted Frank Love at his place of business and Mr. Love reluctantly verified the statements made by the informant. Also, one of the Negro employees, at this time known only as George, verified the informant's statement (George remains unidentified today)."

What Sapp doesn't say in the memo, but told me when I asked him was that Somersett had made the same



Photo by Edward Reduna

Seymour Gelber: initial leads

prediction to him, as well, the day prior to the murder.

"He called me at my home the night before King was killed to let me know that if something happened he didn't want to be connected to it," Sapp recalled. (Apparently, Somersett feared his background as a KKK member and blatant racist made him a suspect.)

"I don't think that I told the FBI before Martin Luther King was assassinated because the information he gave me was so vague," Sapp continued, "but I know I definitely did (tell them) after. We also passed on all subsequent information developed."

Did Willie Somersett, a veteran FBI undercover informant, give the news directly to the FBI prior to the shooting? Says Sapp, "I couldn't even guess if he did... but he certainly was working for the FBI during that time, as well as with us."

Martin Luther King Jr. returned to Memphis on April 3, 1968, and along with his entourage, checked into the Lorraine Motel.

That night, in a fiery speech before 2,000 followers, King seemed to know what fate awaited him. "It really doesn't matter with me now," he shouted, "because I've been to the mountaintop! And I don't mind. Like anybody I would like to live a long life; longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will! And he's allowed me to go up to the mountaintop, and I've looked over and I've seen the promised land... So I'm happy tonight; I'm not

Sen. Kennedy's name pops up, too

An interesting sidelight appears in the April 25 memo in which Willie Somersett's prediction of Martin Luther King's assassination is recorded. In the fifth and final paragraph of that memo, Somersett speaks of another person who would soon be cut down by gunfire, Robert F. Kennedy.

The memo states: "Informant also learned that for some reason Senator Robert Kennedy is being 'guarded' by members of the KKK at all of his public appearances throughout his presidential campaign. At this time it is not known if Senator Kennedy is under surveillance for his own protection or for other motives."

Kennedy was shot to death on June 5, 1968, in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

Continued from page 31

worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man!"

Within 22 hours this Nobel Peace Prize winner would be killed on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel by a sniper's bullet that would rip into his neck and jaw and sever his spinal column. He would die instantly.

Two months later, after an international manhunt, James Earl Ray — habitual criminal, penny-ante hood and escapee from the Missouri State Penitentiary — was captured at London's Heathrow Airport. On March 10, 1969, he pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in Dr. King's death and was sentenced to 99 years in jail. In what has come to be called his 'mini-trial,' Ray hinted of a conspiracy.

By 1968, Willie A. Somerset's relationship with the FBI had been a long and enduring one. Independent accounts given by his brother, Rufus, and Miami Detective Sgt. Sapp, indicate the relationship began in the early 1950s while Somerset served time for white slavery in a federal prison in Atlanta. In return for his good works as a stool pigeon on the inside, he was released early and continued to sing for the federales whenever they called. He later expanded his clientele to include the Miami PD, ostensibly, says Sapp, because he feared and mistrusted the Bureau.

Perhaps his most important role came on Nov. 9, 1963 when he and right-wing extremist Joseph A. Milteer were tape-recorded by Miami police undercover agents as Milteer described President Kennedy's impending murder in Dallas. Almost incidentally during that conversation, Milteer spoke of an earlier plot to kill King in Atlanta by one Jack Brown, a Klan member who reportedly died in 1965.

After King's death in 1968, this 1963 tape-recording would help trigger the Miami PD and Dade State Attorney's investigation into his death. Judge Gelber, then an assistant attorney general for Florida, says another reason was a similar threat made in May, 1964 by a former Miami housepainter, (name withheld), who Somerset reported, planned to kill King on May 17, 1964 in Mobile, Ala.

In a letter dated April 9, 1968 Gelber wrote then-U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, telling him of these threats. A reply, sent the following week by one of Clark's aides, indicated the FBI had been informed of Gelber's statements. Gelber, however,

never heard from either Clark or the FBI again.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1968, at the State of Florida's expense, Somerset continued to explore the King assassination in trips around the South. In the additional memos we have obtained (dated April 30, June 11, July 3, July 8 and August 29) no mention is ever again made of Somerset's prediction. The proposal for Somerset's undercover investigations, contained in the April 30 memo written by Sgts. Everett Kay and E.W. McCracken, simply refers to the 1963 Milteer tape as the basis for action.

"Informant '88' feels that by contacting such persons as the above (Milteer and Brown) information will be gained as to what extent these people, if any, are involved in this assassination."

The use of "concealed electronic devices" to tape-record Somerset's conversations also was suggested.

It appears that Somerset, out of contact with Milteer and Brown since the Kennedy assassination when they began to suspect he was an informant, did not know of Brown's death in 1965. Despite using the tape-recording as a rationale for investigating, there is no real indication that Somerset ever contacted Milteer on the Martin Luther King Jr. matter.

According to former Miami Police Sgt. Everett Kay, surreptitious taping was tried only once, in Atlanta, and failed to produce any results. No memorandum on this particular incident was ever located.

Perhaps Somerset's suspicions about Milteer were valid. In a trip to Milteer's home in Quitman, Ga., in late July, I found a letter dated April 19, 1968 written to Milteer by Woody Kerns, his close friend and political ally (they both belonged to the right-wing Constitution Party).

In the first paragraph, Kerns, a West Virginian, makes a cryptic reference, apparently to the King assassination.

"Looks as though you (Milteer) and the hunted suspect were in the capital area about the same time. They found a car there — they say." Kerns evidently was referring to Atlanta, where the FBI had recovered a car that purportedly belonged to King's killer.

That brief statement is the only reference to King's death found amid the detailed correspondence Milteer kept. More might have been expected because Milteer hated King. But no gloating . . . nothing.

Getting back to Somerset, the



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June 11 memo describes trips he made to South Carolina, New Orleans and Alabama. In South Carolina, Somerset met with Belton Mims, whom he called the first assistant to the Grand Dragon of the South Carolina Klan. The memo indicates Mims said nothing of King, but did say a plot to kill the late Congressman Adam Clayton Powell was in the works, and suggested Somerset see Leander Perez, an extreme racist and political boss in Louisiana, while he was in New Orleans. When Perez, who died in 1969, couldn't be found, Willie Somerset moved on to Mobile, Ala., where he talked with the former Miami housepainter referred to earlier.

The painter didn't speak of King either, at this time, but did describe to Somerset some terrorist acts he claimed to have participated in recently. He also told Somerset plans were being formulated to kill Charles Evers, brother of the slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

In the July 3 memo, events turn once again to Martin Luther King Jr.'s killing. In it, "88" states that he traveled again as an agent of the Miami PD to Memphis on June 21 "and began circulating around in order to obtain information in regards to the assassination of Martin Luther King. ...

"After getting settled in (a) room, I went to the neighborhood where King was killed and made friends with a number of people, both Negro and white, and had a few drinks with them and began discussing this incident along with other racial matters. I was introduced to a man by the name of Charles O. Stevens (sic) at Jim's Club... who said that he had been questioned with regards to the killing of Martin Luther King and he had lied to the police and FBI, saying he knew something about it, whereas he did not."

Charles Q. Stephens, to whom Somerset apparently referred, was one of the State of Tennessee's chief witnesses against James Earl Ray. Harvey Gipson, Stephens' lawyer, claims, "He is the only witness who can directly connect Ray to the crime. They couldn't have extradited Ray (from England) without Stephens' identification."

Somerset's statement severely impeaches Stephens' credibility, which has already been under attack by many critics because of his excessive drinking. If Stephens truly perjured himself, the already shaky case against James Earl Ray is further damaged. (As a result of his testimony, Stephens is currently fighting a legal

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battle to collect assorted reward monies offered in this case totalling \$100,000.)

In the same July 3 memo, Willie Somerset also tells of side trips he made to Whitehaven, Tenn. and Southaven, Miss., suburbs of Memphis.

"I attempted to locate a fellow (name withheld) who works as a private detective and ham radio operator in Whitehaven, Tenn. and is supposed to be racially involved. I could not locate him, but my conversation with people around there made insinuations to the fact that this (man) and an unknown deputy sheriff may have been involved in jamming the radio somewhere in the Martin Luther King case."

Somerset was confused about this incident. The CB radios were not jammed after the shooting, rather false broadcasts were sent out which drew attention away from the south side of the city, where, Ray claims, he fled during his escape from the scene. (Perhaps it should be noted here that Ray, who has long since renounced his guilty plea, does not deny having been at the site of the crime. He contends that he was simply an unwitting accomplice and that he was later coerced by his attorney, the famed Percy Foreman (whom Miamians will recall from the sensational Candy Mossler murder trial here) to plead guilty. Ray's latest efforts to win a new trial have been quashed, and he has stopped appealing.)

Returning to the memos, we find that on the morning of July 8, 1968, Somerset received a call from the previously mentioned Miami housepainter. The painter spoke of his rage at the death of a young schoolteacher, Kathy Ainsworth, who was shot by police as she allegedly participated in an attempt to blow up the home of a prominent Jewish citizen in Meridian, Miss. Her companion, Thomas Albert Tarrants III, was wounded. "X (the housepainter) said that they are going to set up things in Mississippi and he is going to kill all the Jews, niggers and the policemen if they interfere. . . 'We will burn Mississippi if necessary,' " X raved. Tarrants is now serving a 30-year sentence in Mississippi.

In the final memo of August 29 Somerset describes a meeting with X in Mobile during which the Ainsworth-Tarrants incident was discussed. According to X, not only was Tarrants being held in the Mississippi bombing attempt, he also was being investigated in connection with the



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King murder. "X says that the car that was used to jam the police cars on relaying messages of the killing of King on Aug. 4 (sic) was a car used by Thomas Tarrants. X says that they have information from the police that Tarrants is talking to the FBI and it looks as if several people may be indicted by the federal government in connection with a bank robbery and murder in the state(s) of Mississippi and Tennessee, including himself, X, who allowed Tarrants to stay at his home a week or ten days after the killing of Martin Luther King." Miami Magazine has been unable to determine if X's information proved true.

In that same memo of August 29, Somerset also tells of a meeting with representatives of Jim Garrison, the New Orleans district attorney who gained notoriety for his sensational JFK murder conspiracy trial. Garrison's people were eager to obtain the fruits of Somerset's 1963 labors, but there is no indication that he ever cooperated with them.

As in the case in Miami Magazine's story last month on President Kennedy's assassination, we can only speculate on the real significance of all this. The list of specific questions raised is practically endless, but revolves around one central issue: What did the FBI do about this information?

There is no evidence, on the record or off, to indicate the FBI did anything, for no mention of these incidents has ever been made publicly before. When given the opportunity to comment on our findings, the FBI refused.

Thomas L. Wiseman, FBI special agent in Washington, "assigned in a supervisory capacity to the Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts section of the Records and Management Division," says, in an affidavit filed in response to a Freedom of Information lawsuit by assassination researcher Harold Weisberg, that "the only suspect in the Martin Luther King assassination was Eric Starvo Galt, subsequently identified as James Earl Ray."

How can this be? Willie Somerset was a long-time FBI informant and, according to declassified FBI documents, the G-men considered him "reliable." If so, how could FBI agents simply ignore the bombshells he was dropping in their collective laps? They must have had more suspects if, as they

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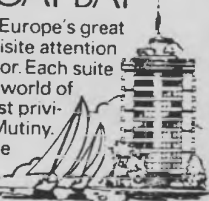
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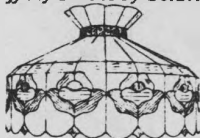
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claim, they conducted a thorough investigation. They must also have had grave doubts about the reliability of star witness Charles Stephens.

No one has been as accurate as Willie Somerset in predicting political assassinations since the Soothsayer warned Caesar to "beware the Ides of March" two millennia ago. The FBI knew this, but apparently did nothing about it.

Motivation for this non-action by the Bureau may have come from the late J. Edgar Hoover. It is no secret that Hoover despised King and used all the power in his command to try and thwart King.

This climate was hardly one in which to conduct an impartial investigation.

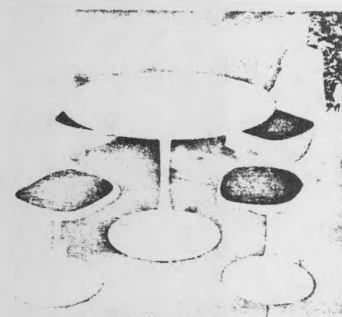
Because of the revelation of the attempts to harass Dr. King, the Department of Justice has been reviewing the files compiled on King both before and after his assassination. Until now, Justice officials have been saying that nothing has been uncovered which would suggest that the FBI's investigation of the assassination was less than thorough. Told of Miami Magazine's findings, most specifically about Somerset's prediction, Michael Shaheen Jr., the Department of Justice attorney in charge of internal investigations in Washington, was stunned.

"This is as interesting a piece of information as any I've ever heard," he said. "I am very interested in receiving it."

There are also other people who feel, for these and other reasons, that the King case should be fully and publicly reopened. The Rev. Bernard Lee, executive vice president of Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, said, "We believe Ray is not the lone assassin and that Dr. King was the victim of a well thought-out conspiracy. We had hoped Ray would get a new trial, but that did not materialize. There should be some kind of new investigation."

Judge Gelber believes, "All the avenues haven't been explored in the King assassination. The investigation was cut short by Ray's guilty plea. There was no Warren Commission to publicly air the facts. What is necessary is a legislative investigation to satisfy the public that everything has been looked into."

Finally, State Attorney Richard Gerstein, who has spent several hours aiding us in our dual investigations, noted wryly, "I don't believe any person with even minimal intelligence believes Ray acted alone or without help."



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March 25, 1977

RE: HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON ASSASSINATIONS

An article appearing in the "Miami Herald" newspaper, Miami, Florida, dated March 14, 1977, captioned "KING Panel Might Call Miami Man", is attached hereto.

In regards to certain allegations and statements contained in the "Miami Herald" newspaper article, the following is noted:

Miami Office files contain no reference reflecting receipt of the information allegedly furnished by WILLIAM SOMERSETT relative to his claim that he overheard a death threat at a union affair in Washington as set forth in said article.

In connection with the statement in the article by CHARLES SAPP, formerly of the Miami Police Department, a review of Miami files does not show the receipt of any information from CHARLES SAPP furnished to him by WILLIAM SOMERSETT.

On March 23, 1977, Supervisor LEONARD C. PETERSON of the Miami Office of the FBI, who was in periodic contact with personnel of the Miami Police Department, Intelligence Division, during 1968, advised that he did not receive and knows of no other FBI employee who received any information concerning a death threat against Reverend MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., during that period.

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