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A reading alternative without limits

There are strong indications that four men were in Chicago to assassinate John F. Kennedy on November 2, 1963, twenty days before Dallas. Here's how it happened:

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But first...

Five years ago, on commission from Atlantic Monthly, I began investigating a Chicago conspiracy to assassinate President John F. Kennedy just twenty days before Dallas. When I asked the wrong questions and came too close to sensitive information, I was followed and investigated by a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) operative. By examining my own file, I identified him and embarrassed the DIA into halting the harassment. There's a record of their "project" in the credit bureau where it began, Credit Information Corporation (named Cook County Credit Bureau at the time). The DIA's inquiry listed my employer as Atlantic Monthly, although that assignment was my only work for the magazine.

Unfortunately, the harassment didn't end until *after* my apartment was broken into. No valuables were taken. But all my files were obviously and clumsily searched.

But that was five years ago, before Watergate, a different era. Today, when reporters edge close to dirty government secrets, it is the agencies who become nervous. And they think thrice before attempting the retaliation and tactics once common to the game.

My investigation, revived within the past eight months, took me to New York, Long Island, Houston and Washington as well as through courts, warehouses, police stations and federal offices in Chicago. Hundreds of hours scrutinizing federal, state and local documents, dozens of interviews, hundreds of leads. And always with the Secret Service and FBI working against me. Doing what they could to make the investigation tedious, time-consuming and expensive. Perhaps they hoped the investigation would just disappear for all the obstructions.

I hope they now know they *must* come up with the answers. It is simply unacceptable to wait until the 21st Century for the release of seventy or so top secret Warren Commission documents.

edwin

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investigated by Edwin Black

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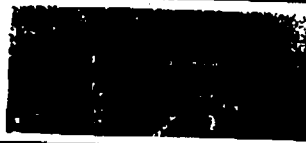


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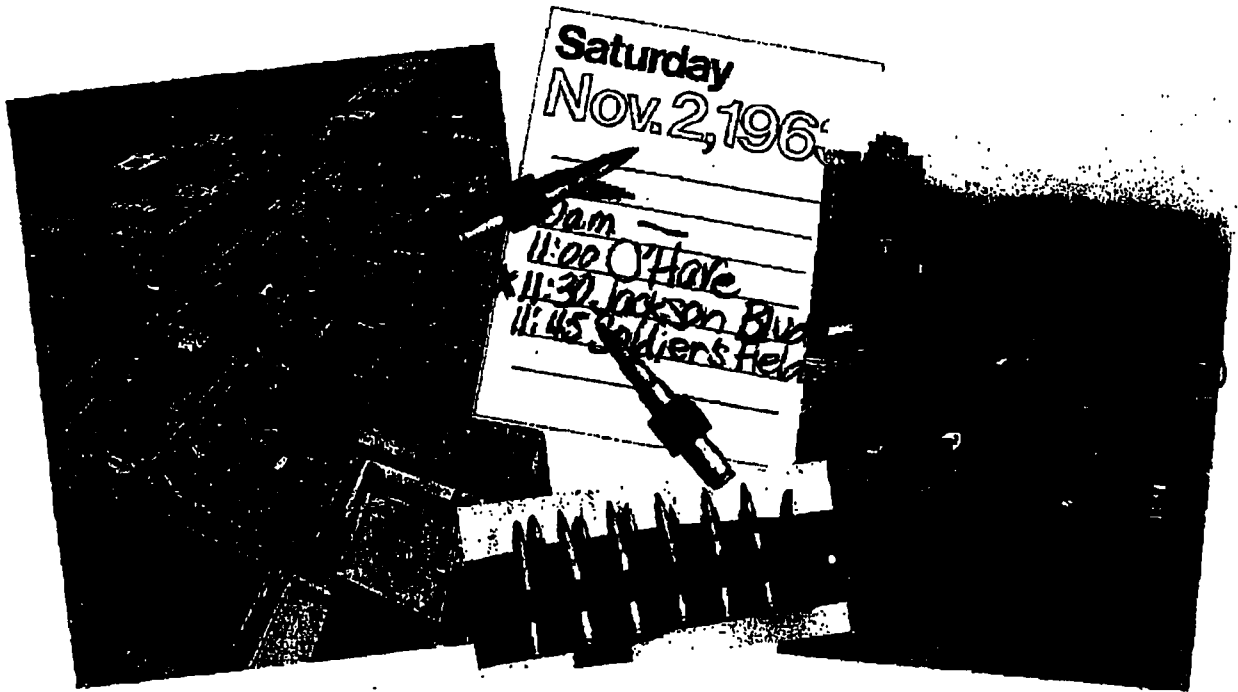
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THE PLOT TO KILL JFK IN CHICAGO



I. The Scenario

A maze of evidence developed by other journalists and investigators has totally discredited the Warren Commission and its claim that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone and with no particular motive, assassinated John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 in Dealey Plaza. The shabby work of the Commission's investigation, the improper evaluation of ballistics and trajectories, photographic evidence... any school boy can look at the Zapruder film and see that JFK was fatally shot from the front right. So we BEGIN from the assumption that the President was murdered by a conspiracy in Dallas, one which has not yet been precisely detailed, but one which has been clearly outlined. A man's shadow reveals his presence even though his identity is unknown.

Our contribution to the on-going national search for the truth has nothing to do with Dallas. But by indicating a conspiracy in Chicago, just shortly before JFK was shot in Texas—a conspiracy which the government preferred to forget—we hope to encourage others with information to step forward.

Our work is divided into three sections: Scenario, Investigation, Cover-up. They must be read in order.

Don't read one and neglect the others. Don't accept anything you read in the Scenario until you have read the Investigation of that information and the basis for our conclusions.

There are strong indications that four men were in Chicago to assassinate John F. Kennedy on November 2, 1963, twenty days before Dallas. Here's how it happened:

November 2, 1963, JFK was scheduled to attend the Army-Air Force game at Soldiers Field. Plans called for him to arrive at O'Hare around 11 a.m., motorcade down what was then known as the Northwest Expressway to the Loop.

At Jackson, the caravan would lumber up the Jackson exit, make that slow difficult left-hand turn onto the street and shuttle over to the stadium. The Jackson exit would be crowded with no fewer than 45 local school and civic organizations anxious to see the President. As in Dallas, JFK's limousine would pass through a warehouse district—which Secret Service advance men consider ten times more deadly than any office building corridor. As in Dallas, JFK's limousine would be forced to make a difficult 90-degree turn that would slow him to practically a standstill.

As in Dallas, triangulation of fire would be simple because of the unobstructed view. As in Dallas, the crowd would panic, allowing the assassins to escape unnoticed.

Wednesday, October 30, three days before, a coordination meeting was held in the anteroom to Mayor Daley's fifth floor City Hall office. Attending were various Secret Service officials, three Deputy Chiefs of Police and Captain Robert Linsky, the security liaison between the Chicago Police and the Secret Service. As the security plans for Kennedy's visit were mapped, each Deputy Chief was assigned an area of responsibility. Patrol Deputy Rochford took the airport; Traffic Deputy Madl took the motorcade route and its precarious passage under those deadly overpasses; Captain Linsky took the Conrad Hilton, the stadium itself and various street security functions. Mayor Daley's special events man, Jack Reilly, stopped in to extend his boss' hope for a safe visit.

A few hours after that meeting adjourned, the phone rang in the Chicago office of the Secret Service. Agent Jay Lawrence Stocks was for a few hours the ranking agent, so he took the call. It was the Federal Bureau of Investigation calling from Washington. The FBI man warned

NOV. 6, 1963 — TWENTY DAYS BEFORE DALLAS

Investigated by Edwin Black

Stocks of a serious and dangerous four-man conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy at the Army-Air Force game. The suspects were rightwing para-military fanatics, armed with rifles and telescopic sights. The assassination itself would probably be attempted at one of the Northwest Expressway overpasses. This information came from an informant named "Lee."

Stocks turned to the other people in the office and with disbelief related the information, adding words to the effect that the FBI wasn't sure how to handle the threat. These men were not the typical nuts with a cheap handgun or some irrational score to settle. They were organized, para-military assassins. It wasn't a federal crime to kill a president or even threaten him (at that time). And J. Edgar Hoover had decided since it was the Secret Service's province to protect the President, the FBI would not, could not, participate in the investigation.

Shortly thereafter, the TWX, or inter-office teletype, clanged out confirmation of the conspiracy from the office of Chief James Rowley, head of the Secret Service in Washington. His instructions were to call every available man in from every other detail and concentrate them in a coordinated blanket investigation to locate the assassins. The teletype added that this would not be an FBI matter, but would be handled strictly by the Secret Service. The buck had officially been passed.

The Chicago office was critically understaffed and unprepared for such a crisis—only eight men for all assignments—counterfeiting, presidential protection and so on. So reinforcements were sent in from other offices around the country: most notable, Myron Weinstein, a crack agent called in from Minneapolis.

A break came the next day, Thursday, October 31. A near north rooming house landlady telephoned the Chicago Police with a tip. Four men were renting rooms, and in one of them, she observed four rifles with telescopic sights. Inasmuch as she knew the President was coming to Chicago in two days, perhaps there was some threat here. Would the police look into it. The police immediately informed the Secret Ser-

vice. Acting agent-in-charge Maurice G. Martineau scooped up the message and made the connection. This was it.

A 24-hour surveillance was set up on the rooming house. Agent Jay L. Stocks spotted and followed two men fitting the landlady's description, all the time maintaining radio contact with Martineau. Stocks was growing tired when the subject's vehicle headed back to their rooming house in the vicinity of Clark and Division. Stocks, maintaining a discreet distance, followed their car into an alley behind the rooming house. Unfortunately, it was a one-way alley. When suddenly the subjects decided not to park in the alley and turned around to exit, they were forced to squeeze past Stock's car.

Stocks saw the men driving his way. Tried to maneuver his car around in time, but couldn't. A message came across the radio before Stocks could reach over and turn the volume button down. As the suspects passed Stock's car, they heard the radio message, looked him in the eye and took off. Stocks reluctantly reported to Martineau that the surveillance was blown—before any real evidence could be amassed.

Martineau thought. Bust them now, with or without the evidence.

The two men were taken into custody (but not actually arrested or booked) in the very early Friday hours and brought to the Secret Service headquarters. There are no records that any weapons were found in their possession or back at the rooming house.

The interviews and interrogation were conducted by Agent Stocks in the front interrogation office and Agent Robert Motto in the rear interrogation office. Motto's suspect was of large build with an extremely large head and mangy hair, wearing a short waist-jacket. By 10 a.m., the interviewing agents had coaxed nothing out of their suspected assassins. The only record of their effort was the dozens of half empty styrofoam coffee cups scattered throughout the office.

When the other agents in the office heard of Stocks' rookie error, they couldn't believe it. Every time Stocks emerged from interviewing his suspect, the agents would drop comments, crack jokes and make fun. Blocking the alley on a surveillance

Thomas D. Strong, who fashioned himself above such mistakes, led the ribbing. Over and over again he took the opportunity to get a little dig. Stocks hated it.

The patsy

Meanwhile, two other agents had been following up a highly suspicious yet bum lead. The man's name was Thomas Arthur Vallee, a 30-year-old ex-Marine classified extreme paranoid schizophrenic by military doctors. Vallee worked as an apprentice at IPP Litho-Plate at 625 West Jackson. As a patsy, he was perfect—as perfect for the Chicago assassination plot as Lee Harvey Oswald was for the Dallas assassination plot.

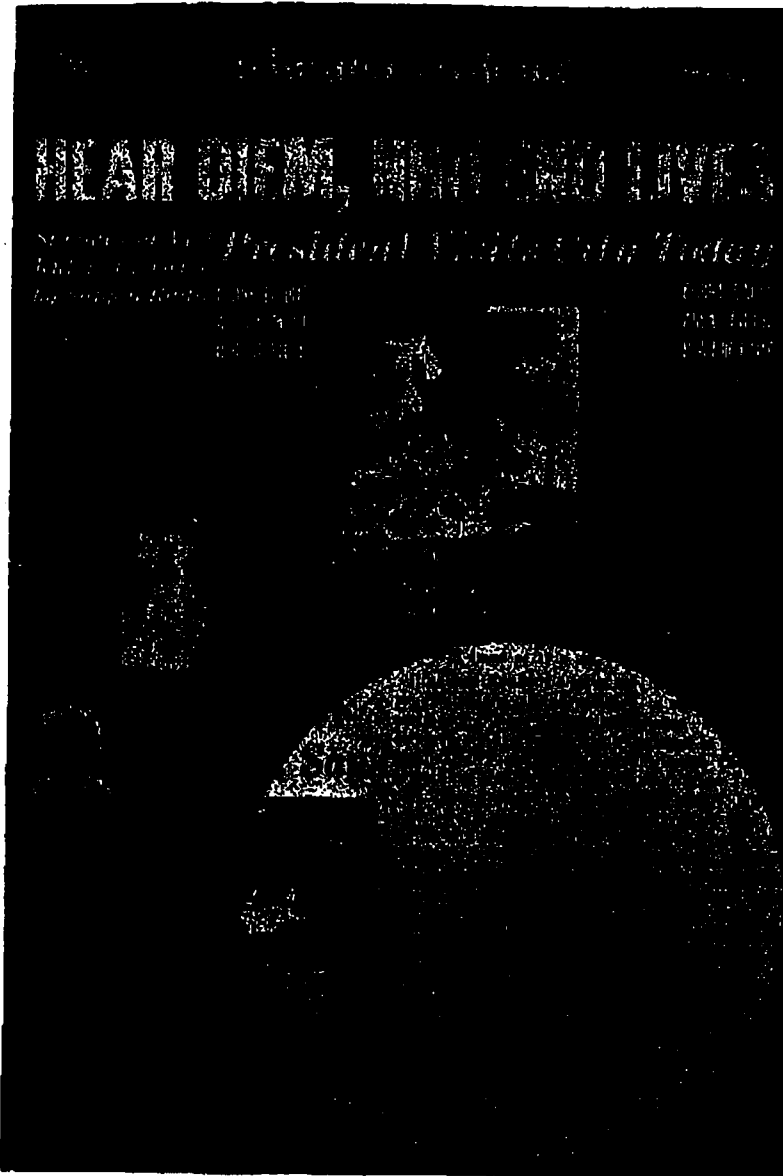
Vallee was born and raised in Chicago. Like Oswald, he joined the Marines in the mid-fifties during the Korean War period. Like Oswald, Vallee was assigned to a U-2 base in Japan; Oswald at Camp Atsugi, Vallee at Camp Otsu. The cover reference for the U-2 project at these bases was Joint Technical Advisory Group (JTAG). Since the CIA exerted a strong presence at these two bases, they were prime recruitment stations.

Both Vallee and Oswald appear to have been recruited by the CIA for "black missions" or otherwise unsavory, personally discrediting assignments. In Oswald's case, at the height of the cold war, he was instructed and helped to defect to Russia. With him he carried top secret radar codes. Oswald's mission, probably unbeknownst to him, may have been to reveal this information for some complex CIA intelligence strategem. Warren Commission testimony documents that all these radar codes had to be revised because of Oswald's defection.

Vallee was recruited about the same time to train members of a fiercely anti-Castro guerrilla group. Objective: the assassination of Fidel Castro. Training locale: in and around Levittown, Long Island.

Neither Vallee nor Oswald received money for their clandestine duties. The surreptitious nature of the business was ego-building to their personalities... inherently rewarding.

Both Vallee and Oswald had recently taken jobs in warehouses at the



planned assassination sites. Oswald at the fifth floor book depository on Elm Street in Dallas. Vallee on the third floor IPP Printing Company looking out over the Jackson Street exit ramp where Kennedy's limousine would have been hit.

Both Vallee and Oswald could be shown to have extremist political views. Both owned rifles. Both were basically loners, basically drifters. Basically lowlife. The drags of society. Perfect for the work they were recruited for. Perfect for a frame-up.

They even resembled one another physically.

Arrested by Daniel Groth

While Agent Stocks was chasing his suspects around town, two other agents were acting on their tip about Thomas Arthur Vallee, a violence-prone John Bircher. Information

received accused Vallee of threatening to assassinate Kennedy during his Chicago visit. The source of the tip is unknown. But whoever pointed out Vallee knew his history and personality and how law enforcement would react to him.

In fact, Vallee had spoken bitterly of JFK, blaming him for pulling air support off the Bay of Pigs invaders. "We lost a lot of good men down there," Vallee would say. In his mental state he may have verbalized death threats against the President. But he does not appear to have been connected to the real threat: four other men referred to in the Secret Service teletype.

Problem was, when two Secret Service agents surreptitiously visited Vallee's Uptown fleabag at Paulina and Wilson, they observed weaponry that classed Vallee as more than a loudmouth. An M-1, a carbine, a

handgun and 2500 rounds of ammunition.

With the other members of Chicago's dimly understaffed Secret Service office following other leads, the two agents telephoned Captain Robert Linsky for 24-hour surveillance on Vallee, requesting he be "gotten off the street." Linsky was just about to enter a second special security coordination meeting, this one in the auditorium of police headquarters at 11th and State. The President was due in tomorrow and Linsky had the massive security task of Soldiers Field, the Conrad Hilton and downtown streets to cope with.

He made some telephone calls, requesting two "sharp cops." One of the city's "sharpest" teams was selected: Daniel Groth and Peter Schurla, both working out of the Task Force. Specifically, the "pickpocket detail." They were alert, sensitive, street-tough, efficient. They took orders like sponges take water.

Groth and Schurla dropped everything and whipped over to 11th and State to attend this second security conference. Linsky gave them their instructions. They left the meeting and set out to find Vallee. He hadn't committed any crime yet. Remember, in those days, threatening a President's life was no specific crime. The gun laws probably allowed him to keep the weapons in his home. The surreptitious visiting agents had nothing more on Vallee than a tip. But Groth and Schurla knew their job. "Get Vallee off the street."

November 2, Saturday morning, Groth and Schurla had been tailing Vallee for some time when they decided the moment was right. Vallee's white Ford Falcon was curbed by their unmarked car as he turned west onto Wilson from Damen, heading toward the expressway entrance. Excuse: a left turn without a proper signal. Time: 9 a.m., just two hours before Kennedy was scheduled to parade down the Northwest.

On Vallee's front seat, in open view, a hunting knife. Perfect. Groth charged Vallee with unlawful use of a weapon, the knife, and failure to signal a left turn. A search of Vallee's person and the front of his car revealed no firearms. But when they opened the trunk, they found 750 rounds of ammunition. Vallee had purchased the ammo at the Lawrence Avenue Sears just a short time before.

Diem brothers assassinated

The international dateline places an imaginary day between Chicago and

Saigon. Our November 2 is their November 1. And it was very early that Saturday morning, November 2, when the news hit Chicago. The Diem Brothers—the corrupt rulers of South Vietnam—had been assassinated by a CIA-backed coup, by CIA-sponsored assassins. Obviously, the situation there could no longer be tolerated by a powerful rightwing military faction in America. The Diem Brothers just weren't running an efficient anti-Communist campaign. They refused to operate as American powers-that-be dictated. They were an obstacle. They were eliminated. Method: Executive Action, terminate with extreme prejudice.

At home, the same powers were frustrated and unbelieving. This JFK must be some sort of traitor! In addition to this Civil Rights nonsense; this silliness about moving to repeal the oil depletion tax; this traitorous deal with Khrushchev promising never to invade Cuba and in so doing selling out the Cuban people and tacitly endorsing Dr. Castro—in addition to all that, this sonovabitch Kennedy was soon to announce that Vietnam was a great mistake for America. The bastard was soon to announce all our troops would be home by Christmas!

First he sold out Cuba to the Russians. Now South Vietnam to the Red Chinese.

Like Diem, Kennedy was an obstacle.

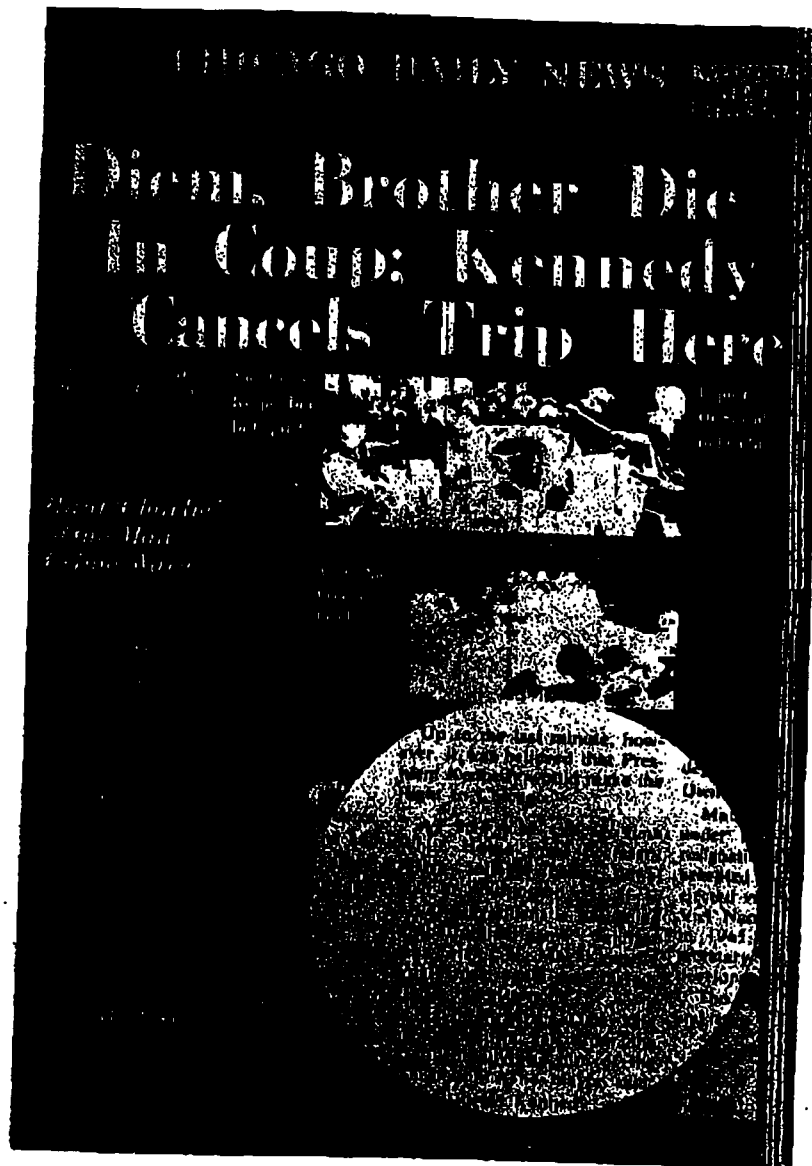
At the last minute

Captain Linsky was in his downtown office when his phone rang with the notice of Vallee's capture.

Groth and Schurla were already escorting Vallee to the Damen Avenue police station where he was interrogated about his political views by Detectives John Madden and Lawrence Coffey. Vallee warned them that the country was in "serious trouble" unless Barry Goldwater would be elected over Kennedy, and ranted about how "only Mayor Richard Daley's crooked machine could insure Kennedy the ghost votes" he needed to beat the conservative Republican.

Madden "invited" Vallee to take them back to his Paulina Street apartment and permit them to search. There was no time for a warrant, the President would be in Chicago in under an hour.

When Vallee refused, Madden threatened to drag Vallee into the "back room." Vallee chose to open his apartment to their search. Madden and Coffey sped with Vallee over to the Uptown address, not knowing they were worried about the wrong man.



With information supplied by the two Secret Service men, they knew exactly what they were looking for. They seized Vallee's M-1, his matched carbine and 2500 rounds, all purchased in New York.

Vallee was transported to the 20th District where he was locked up during the hours the President was expected to be in town.

Back at Secret Service headquarters, Motto and Stocks still couldn't break their suspected conspirators. The minutes were counting down til Kennedy's arrival at O'Hare. Less than an hour away. And still the two remaining conspirators—if they existed—couldn't be found, couldn't be traced. The two suspects pinched the day before remained in custody while Motto and Stocks hit the streets. Motto raced over to Soldiers Field, checking the area around Kennedy's seats. Two sections were reserved for him. One on the Air Force side. A

second on the Army side. The President was scheduled to change sides during halftime.

Word from Washington

The assassination of the Diem brothers shocked Kennedy and his close advisors. But the Chicago visit would not be cancelled. Instead, Pierre Salinger announced at 9:30 a.m., a special communications facility would be rush-constructed under the Soldiers Field bleachers to keep the President informed on up-to-the-minute developments in coup-torn South Vietnam. He reiterated Kennedy would not cancel the trip.

But developments in downtown Chicago apparently were far more threatening than what was going on in Saigon. Two men were in custody in Secret Service headquarters. This Thomas Arthur Vallee character was in custody, his weapons confiscated. But if the original FBI information

was accurate, two of the four alleged conspirators were still at large, probably armed. They were not frenzied maniacs racing across hallways or intersections with cheap pistols in their hands. They were cool, militarized assassins. Identity completely unknown. Waiting somewhere in Chicago with loaded rifles.

JFK cancels

10:15, Saturday, November 2. People in Washington, aware of the unsettled security problem in Chicago, absolutely refuse to allow the President to fly to Chicago. The visit is cancelled at the very last moment. The press corps jet has even taken off. The excuse: Kennedy had to stay close to developments in Southeast Asia.

Phones rang in Chicago bringing the news of JFK's cancellation. This was unheard of! No notice at all? Someone hired soundtrucks to cruise up and down the motorcade route announcing the cancellation over loudspeakers to the waiting crowds. Mayor Daley was piqued. Thousands more who had lined the streets especially on Jackson Boulevard were sorely disappointed.

But a handful of agents and investigators were intensely relieved. The two suspects could no longer be held without an iota of evidence. They were released from Secret Service custody.

However, the shadow of the assassins followed JFK wherever he went from that moment on. An identical warning of an assassination conspiracy was teletyped to the New Orleans office of the FBI just before Kennedy's planned visit there November 17. (A copy of the teletype was recently acquired by CBS news and televised along with an interview of the man on duty when it came across.) That plot was probably assigned to a second team. There is no record of any New Orleans arrests. But obviously the plot was either neutralized or aborted for some reason. It didn't stop JFK from safely visiting New Orleans.

It also didn't stop him from visiting Dallas, November 22, just twenty days after Chicago. As he drove over the most precarious of routes, through a warehouse district on Elm Street that had not even been covered by the Secret Service advance men, as the motorcade lumbered to a fatal pause in Dealey Square, shots split through the cheering crowd, Kennedy's head exploded into tremendous bloody bits.

They finally got him.

II. The Investigation

Obviously, the information related to Chicago Independent by numerous sources and pieced together in the preceding scenario was shocking. Every word of the scenario is predicated on information gained from documents and interviews. All documents were doublechecked for authenticity. All interviews were compared to other independently-gained information. Where individual claims could not be either substantiated or discredited, the sources were subjected to either polygraph or voice stress analysis to indicate truthfulness. There is no supposition, except in one area. We know Thomas Arthur Vallee was arrested and that his background is accurately described. However, we have no way of knowing that the people behind the conspiracy to kill JFK actually set Vallee up as a fall guy, as Oswald was set up for a patsy in Dallas. We do not know who supplied the original information leading to Vallee's arrest. We speculate the conspirators were behind it. Now follows a complete documentation and investigative profile of all the information in the scenario.

Documenting anything in the conspiracy to assassinate John F. Kennedy is practically impossible. Worse, theoretical, often false, statements have a way of reinforcing themselves and slowly transforming into truth in the eyes of investigators.

Problems: 1) The biggest problem is sources. Most of them are insane, emotionally disturbed, seeking attention or unreliable because of their illicit activities.

2) Key sources in a position to confirm or deny critical information are often dead. Not necessarily because some grand conspiracy wanted to "X" off every viable witness. There is good reason to suspect the deaths of 90 important witnesses in rapid succession during the first few years following the assassination. Generally, they died under bizarre circumstances (frequently suicide), usually on the day they were to render some important testimony or deposition to an

investigative body. But in the Chicago plot, at least, people died from ordinary circumstances, most of them during the past five years.

3) Reporters have distorted facts to sell newspapers. Assassination theories make great headlines. Unfortunately, follow-up for authenticity is scarce.

4) Most of the routine documents such as flight tickets, arrest reports, weapons receipts, and so on have been destroyed—either intentionally or because of normal purging procedures.

5) The government is covering up the facts. Specifically, the FBI and the Secret Service. Not because they were in on the plot. But because they botched the protection of the President and the investigation of his assassins. They are covering up their own stupidity. Their own ineptitude.

The disclosures about threatening letters Oswald delivered to the FBI ten days before the assassination are only now surfacing. An agent has admitted destroying the evidence just hours after the killing of JFK in Dallas. Former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's closest aide, William Sullivan, is quoted by Time Magazine as claiming ten top FBI officials, including himself, were ordered to withhold information about the Oswald threat from the already misguided, bluffable Warren Commission investigators.

In any man's book, such cover-ups are accessory to murder after the fact.

The one single foremost guiding principle we pursued in this investigation was trust no source, trust no document, trust no government official, trust no eyewitness, trust nothing until it had been so severely challenged, it could not be discredited.

Our main source

Our main supply of information was one of the Secret Service agents on duty at the time of the conspiracy. In cooperating with us, he broke the "old boy system" of the Secret Service and regulations forbidding press contacts among individual agents. His terms: total

Our source agreed to submit to a polygraph test, as long as he could do so without being discovered.

anonymity. His motives: a desire to set the record straight. We agreed. He is afraid that if his cooperation were uncovered by the Secret Service or the FBI, they would move against him in small but powerful ways—as organizations can do to their disloyal. "They can make life very difficult," he explains.

To verify his information, our source agreed to submit to a polygraph test, as long as he could do so without being discovered. An unlogged appointment was arranged with John E. Reid & Associates, the most respected lie detection and polygraph service in the nation. Under an assumed name, our man flew from the East Coast to O'Hare, where he was met, then shuttled to the Loop.

The polygraph technician interviewed our man for about 45 minutes, then conducted actual polygraph examinations for about 30 minutes. Our man was tested for his knowledge of the original teletype he claims was received by Secret Service in Chicago warning of a four-man conspiracy; his knowledge that the informant's code name was "Lee"; his knowledge of Secret Service Agent J.L. Stocks' surveillance and the suspected assassins' discovery of that surveillance; and related information.

The test was inconclusive. Reid's tester explained 15-20 percent of the subjects examined must return for a second shorter test before their truthfulness can be certified. He added that deceit is generally quite easy to detect, especially among law enforcement personnel who already bear an emotional respect for the polygraph. And in our man's case, the lie detector didn't come close to the deceit range, but did fall just short of the total truthfulness range, requiring the second shorter session.

The Reid laboratory panel of experts explained that these indefinite tests are generally due to subtle doubts in the subject's mind. For this reason, polygraph questions are structured with extreme care. Reid's panel ventured that the subtle doubt could be regarding the date *October 30*. Our man remembered it more as a "Wednesday before the President's Saturday visit" rather than October 30. In fact, when the Reid examiner detected the indefinite response, he queried our man about any doubts. Our man replied only that the specific date October 30 troubled him.

Unfortunately, because our man had been interviewed and tested in a tiny cubicle for nearly one and a half hours, he was physiologically unsuitable for additional testing at that time (testing which would repeat the questions in a different phrasing to ignore the date and concentrate on the main issue—the teletype itself).

After the test, the Reid panel pleaded with us to somehow return for a second short 20-minute test—that's all they'd need to positively certify our man's truthfulness, assuming he was telling the truth. It was painful to tell them that it was impossible.

Persuading our source to go as public as flying to Chicago and submitting to a polygraph examination was extremely difficult. He's already gone through a lot in his attempts to bring the details of the Chicago plot to light. Regretfully, we can't expose that entire story here, lest we identify our source.

His wife and family were against the polygraph. His minister was against it. His best friend was against it. He was against it. He projected that the lie test would be just the first step. More testing, then grand juries, Senate sub-

committees, reporters, and more reporters would eventually follow.

His life and his family's life would become public property. The sole basis under which he finally consented, after long appeals, was that the single test be his last involvement. From then on, it would be up to the rest of the country to scratch away at the facts. We promised him that under no circumstances would we let any other investigative body get near him. There would be no additional tests.

John E. Reid's tester even agreed to meet our man in a neutral spot—such as a motel room. Certifying his truthfulness was very important to the polygraph institute, especially in light of our man's far-reaching disclosures. But our source would not come in again. He wouldn't even discuss it.

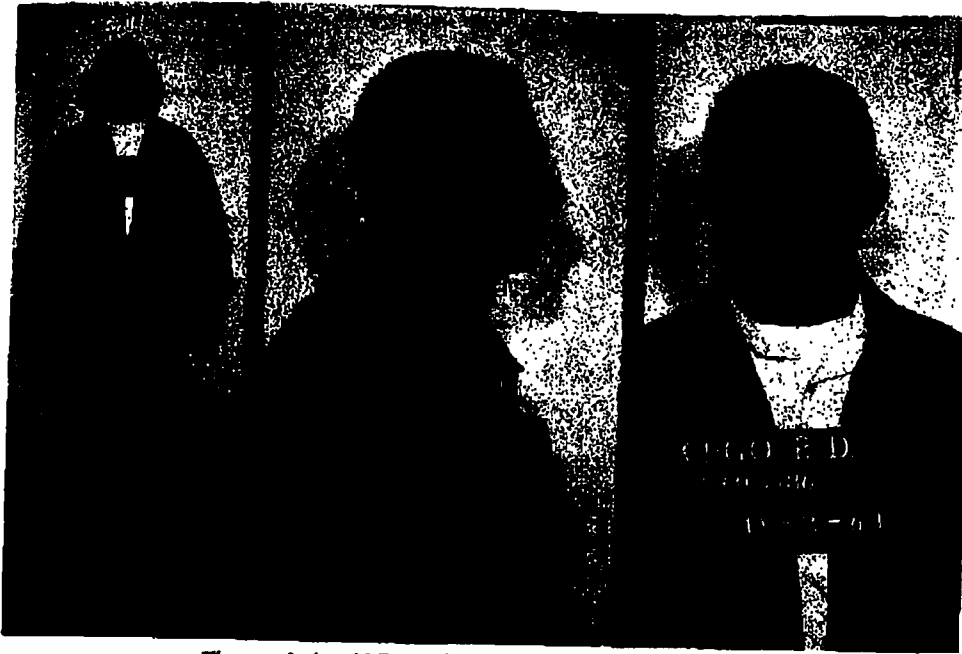
Checking out our source's version of the events at the Secret Service office just before JFK's November 2 visit involved tracking men and documents. We began at the southside home of court activist Sherman Skolnick. Skolnick, whose local reputation has suffered within the past few years, at one time held an admirable score of direct hits against corrupt politicians and judges. It was Skolnick who began the investigation into Otto Kerner's racetrack deals.

Skolnick had developed some leads on the Thomas Arthur Vallee arrest years ago, that never went beyond the question mark stage. He even filed a Freedom of Information Act suit against the government to release more facts. He was ignored.

It was 2 a.m. on a Saturday night as we drank coffee and reviewed documents in his possession that at least proved there was a man named Thomas Arthur Vallee, the Secret Service was concerned about him and Dan Groth and Peter Schurla of the Chicago police had arrested him.

I took copies with me.

We promised we'd let no other investigative body get near him.



Thomas Arthur Vallee as he was booked November 2, 1963.

Records are gone

Next step was to scour local records. We discovered that Judge Walter J. Kowalski's Rackets Court was one of several handy depositories for security risks like Vallee or perhaps any of the four men. In those days, federal agents without enough evidence for a federal warrant, would drag their suspects into a cooperative judge's courtroom. Some trumped charge would be entered, say disorderly conduct, reckless driving or vagrancy. Just enough to keep the man off the streets. Then depending on the judge's demeanor that morning, he would order a suspended sentence, a fine or a dismissal.

In a warehouse on Lake Street and in Civic Center storage rooms, the County preserves all the old dockets, the court records, from ten, fifteen, twenty years back. Each docket is encased in a massive 80-pound ledger. After two days of searching for Kowalski's November 2, 1963 docket, we finally found it. Vallee's name and charge was located. In addition, we checked out the records of every other defendant during the three or four days in question. Dozens of good leads. No other results.

Then we checked every arrest in the entire city on those days. Who arrested them? Why? Any weapons? It took weeks. In the process, we'd develop leads: Look for Cuban names. Look for the name "Bradley." Look for the name "Braden." Nothing came of it.

Well, if Vallee was the only one arrested, maybe arrest records were the wrong route. Let's think about the weapons. All weapons are inventoried when seized. The crime lab routinely tests them, and issues a weapons receipt. We found the confidential weapons inventory records. Vallee's rifles were registered. So were other long guns, but it was impossible to identify them without the corresponding receipts. When we went looking for the receipts, we discovered they had been routinely destroyed several years ago.

Working against us was not a conspiracy, but a bureaucracy. It was impossible to cope with.

Tracking Motto and Stocks

Still, we did have *some* documents to show. With them we might convince a few agents to cooperate. We'd have to track the original group, who had moved several times from city to city in the

intervening twelve years.

First a word of background. We're told Secret Service men possess remarkably good memories, especially where it concerns major conspiracies or other important crimes. Furthermore, we're told that while serious, elaborate conspiracies are rather commonplace in the counterfeiting business, which Secret Service investigates, they are quite uncommon with regard to protection of a president. Most threats against presidents are from basically unorganized, emotional, frenzied individuals easy to locate and put away — not conspiracies.

Secondly, Secret Service men who have served protection detail for presidential visits generally recall the incidents clearly. In particular, November of 1963 was of course the fateful month for the Secret Service. In talking to agents and former agents, I perceived their special awareness of where they were at the time of the assassination and how they helped protect JFK on any of his immediately preceding visits, including the planned November 2 appearance.

One of the most important men to contact was Jay Lawrence Stocks, the man said to have first received the phone call from Washington about the four-man assassination conspiracy and the man who later conducted the blundered surveillance of the two suspects in the alley. We tracked Stock's movements within the Secret Service from the Chicago office, to the Kansas City office, to the Detroit office where he is today. I located Stocks at his home in the Detroit area.

In a telephone interview, Stocks recalled the planned November visit but hedged on the subject of conspiracy. At first he claimed to remember "something about a guy called Vallee." Then he stopped himself and recited, "All I can say is I have no specific recollection one way or the other. Maybe it happened, maybe it didn't. I just don't remember." Pressed as to whether he flubbed the surveillance on two of the four suspects, thus incurring the general office ribbing the next day, he answered with irritation, "I just can't remember one way or the other. You'll have to

We found the confidential weapons inventory records. Vallee's rifles were registered.

tion." We were eager to challenge our informant's information about Stocks and told him so, urged him to think about it and please indicate whether our story was false. Stocks said he could have no more comment.

Next we tracked Robert Motto, the man said to have interviewed one of the two suspected conspirators November 1 in the Secret Service office. Motto retired from the Secret Service several years ago but still lives in Chicago. After some checking, we located him working as an investigator for the Cook County Public Administrator's office, handling probate cases. A meet was arranged in a parked car at Diversey and Broadway.

Motto well recalled the planned November 2 visit. He affably told where he was on November 2—checking seats in Soldiers Field and related other details. But when the question of conspiracy came up, Motto also suffered a memory lapse. "Gee, I'd really like to help you. For all I know maybe there was

sure. I have nothing to be afraid of. The Secret Service can't touch me. My pension is in. But I just don't recall."

Well, yes or no, did he interview a suspect? "I wish I could remember. I just can't."

Documents from D.C.

Initial leads were all turning up dry. We would have been happy to disprove our source's information. But all the "I can't remembers" were just too convenient. It's easy enough for a man to say "No, that never happened" when you're asking if he was investigating a major assassination plot. So something was there.

I called a friend in Washington, DC who knew a lot about Secret Service and FBI records and filing systems. He would help me gain access to some original files and reports relating to the Warren Commission. The next flight to Washington was in 45 minutes. I was on it.

I began going through the documents at 10 a.m. There were

thousands of them. About 1500 separate reports, each one anywhere from a single page to a hundred pages. Many of these had been classified for years. Hour after hour I studied the FBI and Secret Service approach to presidential protection and investigation of threats.

The striking feature was the incredible diligence, the incredibly exhaustive level of investigation. A telling example of Chicago investigations: somebody had heard a rumor that their homosexual boyfriend had slept with Oswald several weeks before the assassination. An agent worked day and night, tracing the source of the rumor, from homosexual to homosexual, until seven persons later he located the source, a bi-sexual who claimed he had really remarked, "Wouldn't it have been nice to sleep with Oswald."

Even more exemplary: A girl reports her friend who works at the Cokesbury Bookstore on Wabash Street recalls talking to a "strange" customer a few days before JFK

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Kennedy

continued from page 11

was murdered. The strange man was "an avid fan of science fiction paperbacks." On the day in question, he remarked that "Martians were likely to invade Earth and assassinate all world leaders." Presumably, that included Kennedy. No fewer than a dozen interviews were conducted. When the customer was finally located, he admitted he enjoyed science fiction and really wasn't predicting such a worldwide catastrophe as much as relating an interesting storyline he'd read somewhere.

On and on, the investigations of kooks, nuts. Then Oswald, Ruby. Interviews with everyone they'd ever known. Every phone call they'd made for six months before Dallas. Every check they ever received.

In depth. Leaving nothing to guesswork. Exhaustive.

Then I happened on some reports of the Vallee incident. The reports were strangely second-hand. Based on the single surreptitious visit of the Secret Service agents to his apartment and police accounts. His weapons were never checked. The serial numbers were never checked to see if they were in sequence with any others uncovered in the Dallas investigation. Vallee himself was not interviewed about his possible connections to anything in the Dallas investigation. . . unlike the homosexual, the science fiction

lover. . . unlike anyone else of the thousands that came to the attention of the Secret Service as they investigated Jack Kennedy's murder. They didn't even ask the routine question they asked all potential threats: where were you on November 22? They merely reported that his employers claimed Vallee was in Chicago on November 22 (a statement these sources later denied to me.)

Why? Why was everything being cut short on the Vallee case? What were they afraid to find?

It was late, about 9:30 at night. My eyes hurt. I stretched them to stay awake. I hadn't moved from the little table where I was sitting for nearly twelve hours. There was nothing more on Vallee anywhere. There were three strange top secret memos regarding Lee Harvey Oswald dated in Chicago that I couldn't get my hands on. Other than that, zero. Nothing on any conspiracy of four men—and records on that were more important to me than anything on Vallee, especially since he was probably a side issue.

Then just at the end, I almost glossed over it. Unlabeled. Just a few terse sentences without elaboration. Ten days after the Dallas assassination, FBI agents in Chicago paid a discreet visit to Jose Mills, a Mexicana ticket agent at O'Hare airport. The question: on Flight 800, November 1, did a foreigner named Lee Martin fly from Mexico City to Chicago? The answer: No. But one M. Lee and one R. Martin were passengers on that flight. (Lee Harvey Oswald used

many aliases, a favorite of which was O.H. Lee.) Second question: on Flight 800, November 12, did a foreigner named Wilfred Oswald fly from Mexico City to Chicago. Answer: No, but J. Oswald was a passenger on that flight.

On a second sheet, a report dated the same day. Ernest R. Tobin, an immigration inspector at O'Hare was asked how the I-94 forms, required of all such entering aliens, could be examined. Tobin told the agents where to find them.

But the file indicates they never looked. They never tried to locate Lee or Martin or the man known as Oswald. Later, we checked with immigration. If the FBI or Secret Service had followed up that week, they could have traced M. Lee, R. Martin and J. Oswald. Now that those I-94 forms have been added to the master file—organized alphabetically, not by date or flight number—it is virtually impossible to locate a single name (without more detailed personal data) from the tens of millions of I-94 names listed.

Seeing this after all those exhaustive investigations, it appears someone asked some wrong questions, received right answers and decided they didn't want to know any more. A similar federal investigative pattern was to reappear over and over again throughout the next decade until in Watergate someone got caught. Obviously, the FBI didn't want to uncover any complications. Why should they? Oswald was clean and neat. Leave it alone.

I took the last flight out of Washington back to Chicago.

FBI agents received good positive leads in response to inquiries about foreigners named Lee Martin and Wilfred Oswald flying from Mexico City to Chicago. But they never followed up, even after pinpointing the records they needed. The basis for the inquiry about the critical November 1 date has never been explained.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
 Date 12/2/63
 1
 JOSE MILLS, Ticket Agent, Mexicana Airlines, International Terminal, O'Hare International Airport, advised that passenger manifests for Flight 800 from Mexico City to Chicago on November 1, 1963, failed to reflect one LEE MARTIN as a passenger. However, they do reflect that one M. LEE and one R. MARTIN were passengers.
 Mr. MILLS also advised that on the same flight, that is, Flight 800 from Mexico City to Chicago on November 12, 1963, no passenger by the name of WILFRED OSWALD is listed. However, one J. OSWALD is listed as a passenger.
 Mr. MILLS states that no further data concerning these passengers is available in Chicago.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
 Date 12/2/63
 1
 ERNEST R. TOBIN, Inspector in Charge, Immigration and Naturalization Service, O'Hare International Airport, advised that all passengers arriving by airline from Mexico are required to fill out I-94 forms which would give an address where they could be located. He stated, however, that the records for the dates November 1 and 12, 1963, have been placed on microfilm and are now in the possession of Immigration and Naturalization Service, Appraisers Building, 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco, California. He stated that in order to further identify passengers arriving from Mexico on Mexicana Airlines on those dates, the microfilm records should be consulted.