

## JAMES POWELL REDUX

A recent discovery of James Powell's high school yearbook photo has helped confirm that my 2010 speculative identification of him standing in the Elm/Houston intersection was correct. A review of his story, and its falsities, indicates his complicity in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. And implicates the United States military high command.

### AN ARMY INTELLIGENCE AGENT IN DEALEY PLAZA



Special agent James Wesley Powell was an investigative photographer for the 112<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Corps Group based in Dallas in the Rio Grande Building about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of Dealey Plaza. This was one of seven regional commands of the 112<sup>th</sup>, which was headquartered along with the Fourth Army down at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. "Approximately 30 seconds after the last shot,"<sup>1</sup> he snapped a photo of the façade of the Texas School Book Depository, which remained unknown until the HSCA investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> WCD 206, p. 19



Powell's was the only-known photograph or film of the Depository taken from a west-looking perspective for 15-20 minutes after the assassination. In the 1990s a photo surfaced that had been taken by Stuart Reed- a government employee under the auspices of the military- at approximately 12:45. It captured the Marsalis St. bus, mired in traffic beside the Dal-Tex, as well as the Beckley St. bus a block behind. Reed's previous photo captured the Marsalis 1213 a couple of minutes earlier, while Oswald was still on it. The Rio Grande building can be seen in the background.

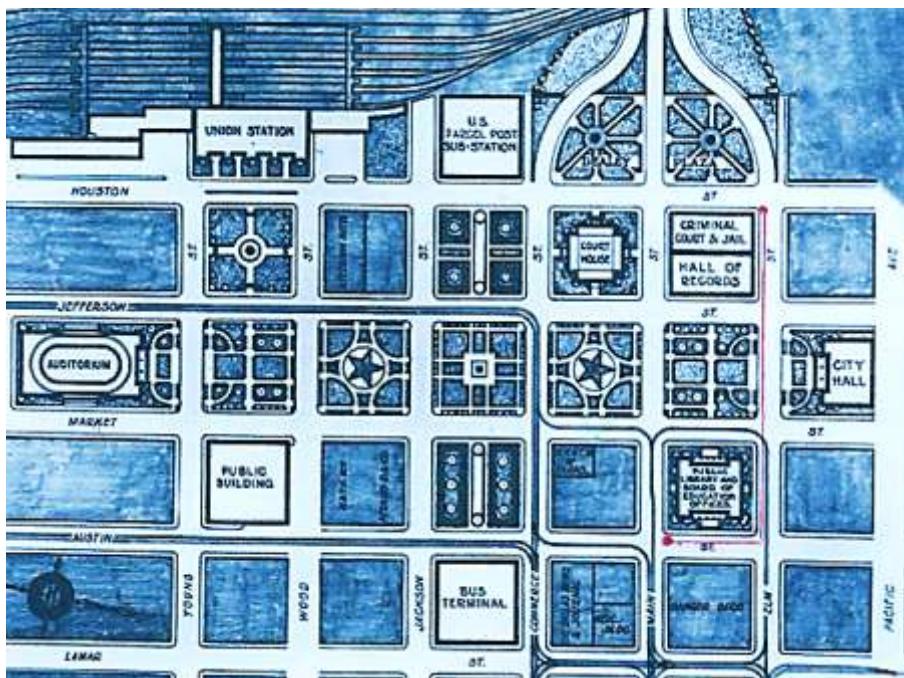


Powell took his photo kitty-corner across the Elm/Houston intersection from the Book Depository. But the details of how he arrived at this location depended upon the source.

Not until a 1978 HSCA interview at the Los Angeles Holiday Inn did he admit that he had “taken three photos of President Kennedy’s arrival at Love Field.”<sup>2</sup> And he elaborated for the ARRB that “I was a pretty good distance away, and unfortunately without a telescopic lens. You see these very small people coming off this great big plane...”<sup>3</sup> But these 3 photos have never been made public.

When Powell returned to the Rio Grande on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, at approximately 2:00 PM, he composed a Memorandum for the Record, which began by stating that “at approximately 1225 hours, I was standing at the corner of Austin Street and Main Street, Dallas, where I had just taken a picture of the late President John F. Kennedy and his wife as they passed in a motorcade. Hoping to get one more picture, I ran one block back to Elm Street, and down Elm towards the intersection...”<sup>4</sup>

Yet there is no indication that he had said anything regarding this Austin St. photo when he spoke to the FBI in 1964. He told the Church Committee, in a 1975 telephone interview, that he “photographed the President several blocks away from the TSBD and then went down a side street toward the TSBD to catch up with the President’s car.”<sup>5</sup> But he acknowledged at the Holiday Inn that “I don’t believe I have that photo as the picture came out extremely dark.” And another alleged photo from Powell’s JFK sequence never made it to the public.



<sup>2</sup> Report on HSCA interview of James W. Powell by Al Maxwell & Joseph Basteri, 1/12/78, p.1

<sup>3</sup> ARRB interview of James W. Powell by Timothy Wray, 4/12/96, p. 5

<sup>4</sup> James W. Powell Memorandum for the Record, November 22, 1963

<sup>5</sup> HSCA 157-10008-10031, interview of James Powell by James Johnston, 12/17/75

The Austin & Main corner is approximately 1500 feet from the Houston & Elm corner. In his November 22<sup>nd</sup> memorandum Powell continued: “...As I approached this intersection, at approximately 1228 hours, and was about one block away, Kennedy’s motorcade was just turning West off Houston Street. At this point, I heard at least two loud explosions...” In a January 3, 1964 FBI interview Powell described himself as “approximately one-half block east of the intersection of Elm and Houston... when he heard the shots fired at President KENNEDY.”<sup>6</sup> His Church Committee phone call re-iterated that when he was “about half a block from the TSBD he heard shots.”

But in the HSCA summary of his Holiday Inn interview Powell seems to have confused his location at the time of the shots: “Mr. Powell, who was alone at the time and in civilian clothes, said that he had just arrived at Dealey Plaza after having taken three photos of President Kennedy’s arrival at Love Airport. The fourth photo he took of the motorcade when it was several blocks away from the depository. He again ran ahead and positioned himself on the S.E. corner of Elm and Houston Street and arriving there when President Kennedy’s car had just passed this location proceeding East on Elm Street. Suddenly he heard two shots...” HSCA investigators Basteri & Maxwell unfortunately mistook S.W. for S.E., and had the limousine traveling backwards, but they were the ones who underlined Powell’s shooting-sequence location.

This inkling of confusion magnified by the time of the ARRB hearings. Powell recalled that, after leaving Love Field, “If I’m not mistaken, I parked in the regular parking lot where we parked our government cars, which was near the Rio Grande Building, and then walked a few short blocks away to where the motorcade was going to be coming down Elm Street. I stationed myself there waiting for the motorcade to come by.”<sup>7</sup>

And he didn’t mention anything about the Austin St. photo. When asked as to his whereabouts at the time of the shots, Powell corrected himself: “...you know, I was on Main Street because I went one block back to Elm Street and I was coming down this way [pointing to a diagram of Dealey Plaza] and I was almost at this intersection when the motorcade came around and started down Elm Street, down the hill. I was probably halfway down the block when I heard the shots fired.”

Had Powell’s November 22<sup>nd</sup> memorandum been merely a cover story? The Secret Service had interviewed him, in the wake of Oswald’s mis-identification of WFAA newsman Pierce Allman as a Secret Service agent, on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1964: “Mr. Powell was interviewed relative to his location at the time of the assassination and his actions subsequent to the assassination. Mr. Powell stated that he had been watching the parade from a position near the corner of Houston and Elm Streets...”<sup>8</sup> When police sealed the Book Depository, Powell had inadvertently been trapped inside- after calling his 112<sup>th</sup> office a second time. He had later been interrogated by Police Intelligence and hence became a person of interest in this Secret Service investigation.

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<sup>6</sup> WCD 206, p. 20

<sup>7</sup> ARRB interview of James W. Powell by Timothy Wray, 4/12/96. P. 6

<sup>8</sup> WCD 354, p. 1



In 2010 I posted at JFKLancer that, based upon the above contradictions, there was good reason to suspect that the man in a crop of Altgens 5, in the street crowd beside the Dal-Tex, was in fact James W. Powell. He is in a dark suit and sunglasses holding a 35mm camera at his waist. He was a rough match to the 1978 physical description of him taken by the HSCA: white, 5'7", 155 lbs, with brown hair showing baldness, and was 24 years old in 1963.

Powell did not comply with an ARRB request to provide any relevant records, notes or photos in his possession to the National Archives. I personally checked on this in 2011. And no personal or military photos of him ever surfaced, to give an idea of what he looked like. A couple of years ago JFK photo-researcher Linda Zambanini discovered Powell's high school yearbook photo. Notice the exact match of his hairstyle & hairline, even 6 years later. Look at the similarly soft-defined cheek and prominent nose.

Powell's camera was a Minolta 35mm Rangefinder, and from this parade-watching spot only had to step 20-25 feet to his left to snap his famous color photo of the Depository, 30 seconds after the assassination. In the immediate aftermath he said he joined up with some sheriff's deputies and helped search the railyard area, behind the grassy knoll. Powell told the Secret Service he was there "for about six or eight minutes. He then entered the front door of the Depository, in search of a phone from which to call his office."



He rushed into the warehouse and saw Pierce Allman using the phone outside of Roy Truly's office. So he went up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to telephone his region commander- according to his Memorandum- Lieutenant Colonel Roy Pate. Powell relayed what he had just overheard from Allman- that the President had been hit.

He returned downstairs and just outside ran into construction worker Howard Brennan, who had witnessed rifle shots from the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. Brennan told him Kennedy grabbed his chest and slumped forward and Jackie tried to jump out of the limo before being quickly ushered away by Inspector Herbert Sawyer into a DPD squad car. Powell hastened back upstairs to tell his office this additional information. But he was trapped inside the front lobby when police sealed the building.

Down at the Rio Grande, the 112th's security officer Edward Coyle had just returned from a meeting with Frank Ellsworth and the FBI's James Hosty at the ATF offices at 912 Commerce Street. The AM radio suddenly went blank and after a while the phone rang and it was Powell telling them that the President had been shot.

*"...he asked us to bring a camera down there because he was going to take some pictures. I can remember one of the things that he said. He felt the shots that got Kennedy came from the grassy knoll, because he saw a lot of people, a lot of skirmishing up there..."*

*"...The colonel told this kid- he had to pick up the extension in his office, our boss did. He told this kid to make damn sure that the president was shot before we passed this information on to higher headquarters..."*

*"So this kid turned around and he hung up the telephone, and he went and he talked to somebody and he called back and told the colonel that definitely the president had been shot and he would like a camera brought down to him. Well, we had to get a camera out of the supply room, we had to get film in it; and there was no sense in trying to drive down there, so we ran down the five blocks..."<sup>9</sup>*

Coyle recognized Powell standing inside the front lobby and pointed him out to DPD Lieutenant Jack Revill of Police Intelligence. Detective V.J. Brian took down his personal data and testified that once his intel unit left the building "*we gave a man a lift... he was some type of,*

<sup>9</sup> ARRB interview of Edward J. Coyle by Timothy Wray, 7/29/96, pp. 6-7

*as I recall, Army Intelligence man... we let him out a couple blocks, if I recall, up about Field Street, somewhere along in there. Lieutenant Revill knew him, who he was, and he rode up there with us.*"<sup>10</sup>

Revill was the Police Intelligence liaison to the 112<sup>th</sup>.<sup>11</sup> But he never mentioned Powell in his WC or HSCA testimonies. And Powell told the ARRB: "*This is interesting. I'll be again very candid with you, I don't recollect the name.*"<sup>12</sup>

Powell's color slide of the Depository was given to his commanding officer, Lt. Colonel E.E. Boyd, who loaned it to the FBI on 1/2/64. But its existence was generally unknown until the time of the HSCA investigation. 112<sup>th</sup> Operations Officer Robert Jones was unaware of it until a few months before he testified.

HSCA: If you had been aware of that picture, what action would you have taken?

JONES: Well, Captain Powell would have been ordered to report to headquarters where he would be completely debriefed.

HSCA: Would that picture have been sent along to any government agencies?

JONES: If I had received it, it would have. As I say, I do not have knowledge of this photo.

HSCA: Would you say that Mr. Powell violated his duty by not making you aware of this picture?

JONES: I would have to assume that there was a photo. Is there a photo that Captain Powell did take and has it been established that he did have one and on what day he took it, and so forth?

I would state that if he did take a photo and he did not bring it to my attention that he would have been negligent.

One very obvious reason it wasn't publicized was the discrepancy between the sniper's nest as photographed by newsman Tom Dillard (about 5-7 seconds after the last shot) and Powell (about 30 seconds). There were boxes seen in the center of Powell's nest that are not in Dillard's. The HSCA was forced to conclude that "the additional boxes visible in the Powell photograph were moved during the interval between" the two photos.<sup>13</sup> This box-stacking would have irreparably delayed Oswald's mythical flight down to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor lunchroom.

Not only did the FBI hide this evidence from the Warren Commission. Anyone with the 112<sup>th</sup> who knew about it- at a minimum Powell and Boyd- never came forward.

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<sup>10</sup> WCH V p. 57

<sup>11</sup> Deep Politics and the Death of JFK, p. 276

<sup>12</sup> ARRB interview of James W. Powell by Timothy Wray, 4/12/96, p. 15

<sup>13</sup> HSCA IV p. 423; HSCA VI p. 115



Edward Coyle's ARRB testimony raises a more ominous spectre- Powell never intended to give up any photo in the first place. Here was an investigative photographer for the 112<sup>th</sup>, half a mile from his office, with the President in town- and he needs somebody to bring him a camera?! Did he intend to pocket the Minolta he was carrying? It is unlikely that we would even know about his now-famous photo unless he had been inadvertently trapped inside the Book Depository when police sealed the building.

Veteran JFK photo-researcher Jack White once suggested that Powell was on assignment that day. And I understood that as implying that his photo of the Depository façade, so soon after the shooting, was insurance for any mistakes- such as people in the windows- that needed to be covered up in the official narrative. A similar assignment would explain why Stuart Reed, up for a visit from the Panama Canal Zone, would just so happen to take photos of Oswald's bus, the Book Depository, and the Texas Theater arrest.

Powell will be 80 years old this year. He left the Army in 1964 and served three years in the inactive reserves. By all indications he has lived a quiet life in the Pacific Palisades section of Los Angeles since 1969, raising two daughters and working as a sales representative for a furniture company. He still lives there.

## **ARMY VIDEOGRAPHERS IN DEALEY PLAZA**

Before one presumes that Powell had chosen a random spot for viewing the motorcade, one should consider the ARRB testimony of researcher Steve Osborn. In 1992, during the invigorated quest for truth achieved by Oliver Stone's *JFK*, Osborn said he "came across an individual who claimed to have been very near Dealey Plaza during the assassination."

The man had been stationed at Fort Hood and on "the day of the assassination his group, a communications group, was **assigned the task of observing and videotaping the presidential motorcade as it moved through the Plaza.** This unit had no similar assignment in any other Texas city during the President's visit, and they were only to tape that portion of the motorcade as it proceeded through Dealey Plaza."

"...the camera signals were transported by wireless means back to **the control studio, which was actually a semi-tractor-trailer...**"

"This military communications group had several cameras stationed around the Plaza. The signals from the cameras were sent back to a semi-tractor-trailer acting as **a mobile studio parked a short distance from the Plaza.** Each camera had a preview monitor and videotape machine associated with it inside the trailer recording the view of each camera. There was no sound recorded in this assignment."

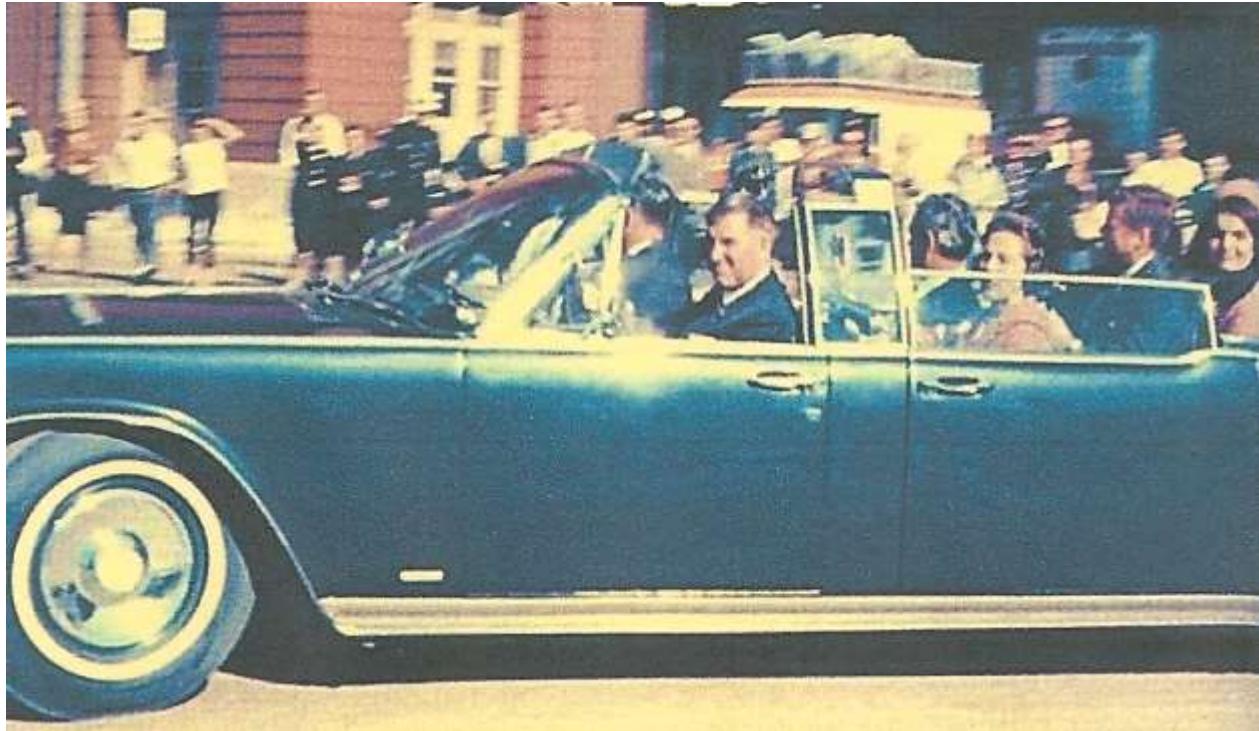
"Each videotape position had a single person responsible for its operation. Each position these men occupied was shielded from the others so that they could only see the preview for their individual camera. **Each man saw the assassination occur from a different perspective on their monitors.**"

"About 15 minutes after the assassination, a group of men appeared who identified themselves as FBI agents. These agents seized all the equipment used to videotape the motorcade. Each man was put on a bus which had been summoned to the scene and they were all driven back to their base. Upon their arrival, they were simply told to forget it."

Osborn said he had three conversations with this individual, who would not divulge the name of his unit and "advised me that his 201 file was inaccessible."

"I was impressed that he realizes that he probably said more things to me than he should have revealed. At one point, he mentioned to me that he was allowed by a letter from the military to discuss some things in relation to his duties on the day of the assassination, but I believe he probably went further than he was allowed."

*“You should know that there is some possible photographic evidence of this communication group being in Dealey Plaza that day... If you would look at the cameras, this is a fully transistorized camera. It comes with a backpack transmitter...”<sup>14</sup>*



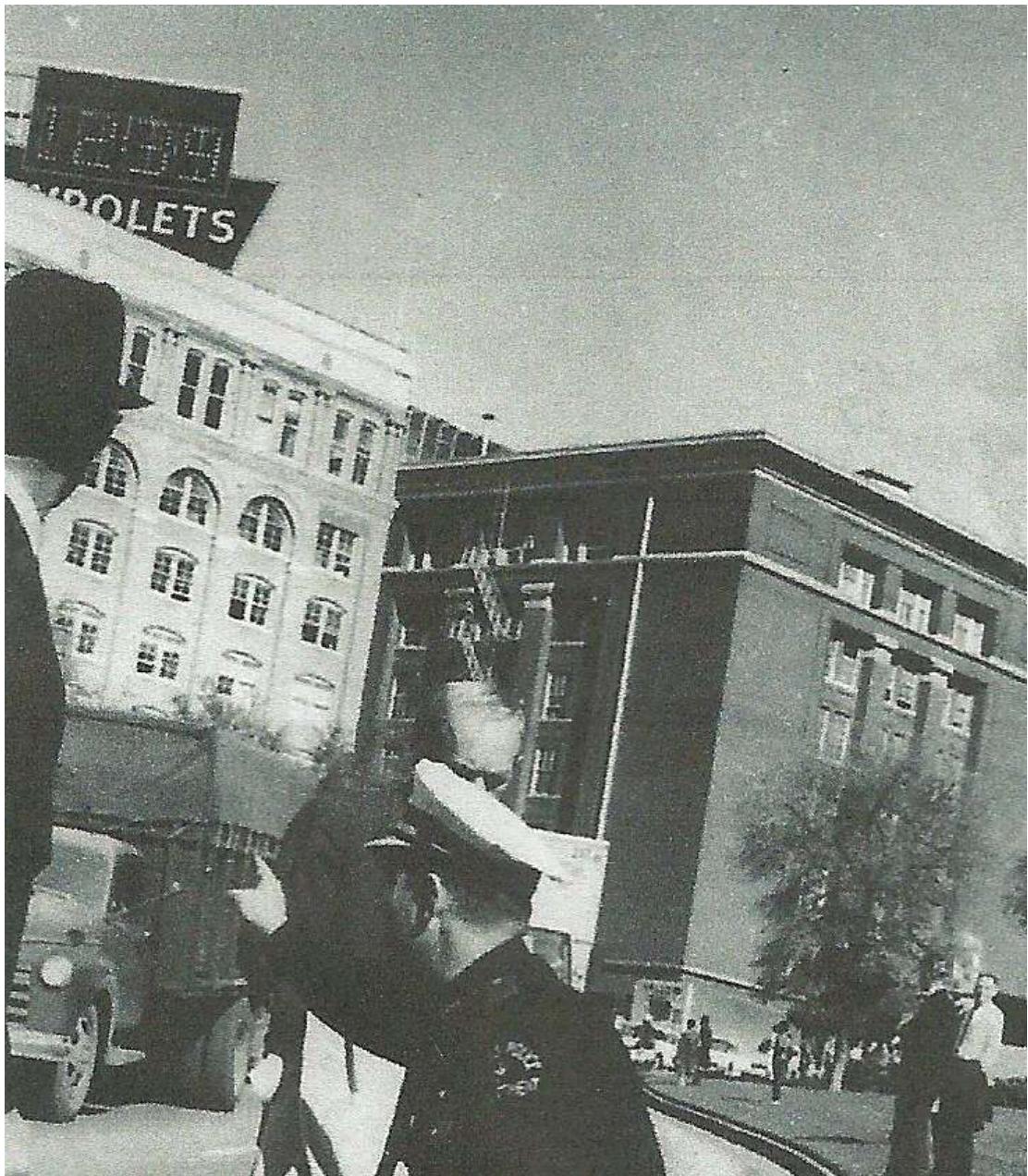
The Towner film shows an unmarked silver trailer beside the Dal-Tex building. It is parked directly behind that white laundry van that Powell positioned himself nearby. The researcher may search high and low but there aren't any other trailers parked in the vicinity of Dealey Plaza when the President's motorcade was passing through. This silver trailer was the **mobile studio parked a short distance from the Plaza.**

It had a porthole built into its front face and a person standing inside would have a perfect view into the kill zone down Elm Street. A row of consoles, receiving signals from the individual wireless cameras, would fit neatly inside. **This was the control studio**, receiving multiple-angle video feeds of the murder of John F. Kennedy.

By 12:39 at the latest, as the Hertz clock reads in the Jim Murray photo, both the white laundry van and the silver trailer had driven away from the Dal-Tex. At the latest. My opinion is that the van was used by a hit team inside the Dal-Tex, whose actions were necessarily coordinated to those of the trailer. Whoever was planning the activities of this silver trailer had intimate knowledge of the actions of the Dal-Tex hit team.

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<sup>14</sup> ARRB testimony of Steve Osborn, 11/18/94, pp. 1-5



FRAZIER: It was a military thing, because, uh- a military experience. A military experience. And they would- and someone, I think they would notice that. And eventually- where you know where a military person in that area- or maybe it's up to the police or something. Or you know where something- you know where you people look at the Dallas police.

MORIARTY: I wish there was some way for a person that had some information- or maybe some way with the police or a person or someone...<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> HSCA interview of Wesley Frazier by Jack Moriarty & Maxwell Day, 10/21/77, Tape 2, II-3

## TRACES OF A MILITARY COUP

The assassination of President Kennedy was a land-based assault whose logistics were handled by military professionals whose expertise was in clandestine operations. Black ops specialists from Army Intelligence decided on the kill zone, determined the sniper sites and coordinated the timing and number of rifle volleys. These were the masters of precision crossfire- not Central Intelligence, who probably provided the assassins. And their mission was astonishingly successful. The target was terminated with extreme prejudice.

And they disappeared with nary a trace. The inconsistencies in James Powell's story arrive at a spooky culpability alongside Steve Osborn's account. Here was an Army Intelligence agent positioning himself in the crowd just in front of an unmarked silver trailer used as the central video terminal for multiple concealed films of the President's execution. And without the misfortune of getting trapped inside the sealed Depository, we likely wouldn't even have Powell's story and its inconsistencies.

Let's dispense with any notion that the Dealey Plaza black op was organized by some rogue faction comprising elements within the 112<sup>th</sup> and from Fort Hood. Any such unit would have been soon found out and faced military tribunals and court-martial for murder & treason. They could not possibly have operated independently from their Deep State commanders. This was a military mission that required authorization from the highest level of its power structure- the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

President Kennedy had been in the crosshairs of their anger since the Cuban Missile Crisis. They were furious that he had maneuvered behind their backs and made a secret deal with Krushchev, offering to dismantle Jupiter missiles in Turkey if the USSR removed its missiles from Cuba. The Soviet Premier needed something tangible to save face with his own generals, and the Joint Chiefs were too stubborn-minded to grasp this political necessity.

Krushchev's 1970 memoirs revealed the warning he received, on the eve of resolution, from RFK: "The President is in a grave situation... Even though the President himself is very much against starting a war over Cuba, an irreversible chain of events could occur against his will... **If the situation continues for much longer, the President is not sure that the military will not overthrow him and seize power. The American military could get out of control...** There are many unreasonable heads among the generals... itching for a fight... A real war will begin, in which millions of Americans and Russians will die."

Not until the 1990s did the Soviets admit that they'd deployed 161 nuclear missiles in Cuba. These were under the command of General Issa Pliyev, hero of the defense of Stalingrad and Moscow. He had 42,000 troops stationed there- twice what the U.S. had estimated. The Joint Chiefs' aggressive plans for air strikes would have virtually guaranteed the annihilation of numerous American cities.

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*David Shoup, Earle Wheeler, Curtis LeMay, President Kennedy, Maxwell Taylor and George Anderson in January 1963*

In the winter of 2010 I had a series of hour-long telephone conversations with 1<sup>st</sup>-generation researcher Jones Harris. In one of them he conveyed to me that he'd lived in the nation's capitol for a while, and got to know a high-level Washington insider. He would not specify whether this was a career intelligence agent.



*Kennedy facing Bolshakov in Hyannisport in November 1961*

This insider told Harris that after the Cuban Missile Crisis President Kennedy continued to use Georgi Bolshakov as his personal back-channel to Nikita Krushchev. Bolshakov was a 41-year-old military intelligence officer posing as a journalist, who had been meeting with RFK on a fortnightly basis since May of 1961. And the unprecedented thermonuclear danger the President had narrowly averted brought him to resort to unprecedented diplomacy to prevent it from happening again.

Kennedy began sharing the contents of his Daily Intelligence Brief- which was provided to him each morning by the CIA- with Nikita Krushchev, through their private back-channel. This was tantamount to treason to the hard-line patriots in the military, without whom any conspiracy to eliminate Kennedy would not succeed.

This insider also told Harris that Army Intelligence had control of the Executive Branch of Government until the 1964 election.



Richard Gilbride

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