

## **OSWALD'S JOB – Exposing the Setup** by John Manning

### Background

The Warren Commission portrayed the way Lee Harvey Oswald obtained his job at the book depository as a matter of chance and fate. Marina Oswald was staying with Ruth Paine in Irving, Texas in October of 1963. On October 14 the two went next door to the house of their neighbor Dorothy Roberts for coffee. Another neighbor, Linnie Mae Randle, dropped in at some point.

The discussion between the four women turned to the question of where Lee Harvey Oswald, who needed work, might find employment. Linnie Mae mentioned that her brother, Buell Wesley Frazier, had recently gotten a job at the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas. When Ruth Paine went back home after the "coffee klatch" she phoned the depository and spoke with Roy Truly, the superintendent, who agreed to interview Oswald. Oswald was interviewed the next day and started work at the depository on October 16.

The official story left the impression that Oswald had gotten his job in the book depository as the result of an innocent discussion between four women in Irving, Texas. If this were true it would seem to discount the possibility of a conspiracy in the assassination of President Kennedy. There were only five weeks left until the assassination. If Oswald were placed in the depository as a matter of fate it left little time to incorporate him into a conspiracy, or on the other hand frame him for the assassination. If a conspiracy existed, Oswald had to have been placed in the book depository by the unseen hand of conspirators who engineered the placement.

Given the official story, it is evident that Oswald was placed in the book depository by a two-stage process. Buell Wesley Frazier got his job in the book depository on September 13, through a nearby employment agency in Irving. This led directly to Oswald getting his job one month later as a result of the October 14th coffee klatch and the actions of Ruth Paine.

Any true investigation into the way Oswald got his job would require a thorough examination of how Frazier came to be employed at the depository. The possibility exists that conspirators engineered Frazier's placement and that he served as a "stalking horse" for the placement of Oswald. The goal was to create the illusion that Oswald's placement in the depository occurred as a matter of fate and therefore could not be part of a conspiracy. The authorities provided no documentation on how Frazier got his job, giving little attention to the matter. This, despite the fact that on the day of the assassination Frazier was considered a potential accomplice by the Dallas police.

### Buell Wesley Frazier "Steers" Truth

Buell Wesley Frazier recently released his book entitled *Steering Truth*. Some fifty-eight years after the assassination Frazier has belatedly admitted that he obtained his job at the book

depository through the *Manning Employment Service* in Irving, Texas. In his Warren Commission testimony, Frazier misrepresented this important information, claiming he had gotten his depository job through a nonexistent *Massey* employment agency. Given that Frazier's placement in the depository in mid-September led directly to Oswald's placement there one month later this is no minor correction.

Frazier writes, *"During my testimony for the Warren Commission, Joseph Ball, the senior counsel, asked me about the name of the employment agency, and I told him I thought it was named Massey's. While doing research for this book, I reviewed that testimony and noticed that I spoke incorrectly. The employment agency on Shady Grove Road was called Manning's, not Massey's, as I previously stated."*

Frazier fails to explain what "research" he did fifty-eight years after the fact that led to his realization that he had misrepresented how he, and subsequently Oswald came to be employed at the book depository. Frazier in his testimony actually spelled out the name Massey. He demonstrated no indecision about the name of the agency that got him his depository job, but rather only how the agency's name was spelled:

**Mr. Ball.** *What--where is the employment agency and what is its name when you first applied for a job?*

**Mr. Frazier.** *Well, I went to several but, see, this one got me this job the main one was Massey, the employment agency, and it is over there on Shady Grove Road.*

**Mr. Ball.** *How do you spell that name, the name of the employment agency?*

**Mr. Frazier.** *I believe it is M-a-s-s-e-y.*

It is difficult to believe Frazier's testimony about a nonexistent *Massey* employment agency was anything other than a scripted moment. Given the intertwined nature of the Frazier and Oswald hirings at the depository, it is implausible that Frazier's hiring was not investigated by the FBI. The Warren Commission must have been fully aware that the Manning employment agency was responsible for Frazier's hiring at the depository but did not correct his false testimony.

Frazier's admission that he got his job through the Manning agency begs the question as to the relationship between the book depository and that agency. Did superintendent Roy Truly have a history of using this small employment agency in Irving? Or was the Frazier hiring the first time Truly ever used them?

While Frazier has finally admitted that he got his book depository job through the Manning agency he has altered the story of how he discovered the agency in the first place. In 2014, Frazier gave a talk in which he detailed how he came to visit the Manning agency.<sup>1</sup> He stated, *"So there was this little, small agency down on Shady Grove Road and I had noticed it going by.*

*So, I said I'm going in there. I went in there and talked to the person, matter of fact they did T.V. repair, radio and T.V. repair, and they had an employment agency. Well, I filled out the papers and the lady liked me and the next day she called over to my sister's house [with the book depository job position]."*

Frazier implied that his visit to the Manning agency was a completely random and chance event, and that no one directed him to visit that agency. He signed a contract with the agency and was informed of the book depository job the very next day.<sup>2</sup>

Yet in his recently released book Frazier describes a very different series of events. He writes, *"One day, I drove past a place named Manning's off Shady Grove Road in Irving. I went home to ask Linnie about it because I figured she might have some information about the business. She told me Manning's fixed TVs and radios in one part of the store and on the other side was an employment agency."* Fifty-eight years after the fact, Frazier is able to recall the exact conversation he had with Linnie Mae in 1963. Remarkably, he remembers Linnie's Mae's precise description of the Manning employment agency whereas, in his 1964 testimony before the Warren Commission, Frazier was unable to even remember the agency's correct name.

Frazier now states that he spoke with his sister about the Manning agency before going there. It appears Frazier's sister had detailed knowledge of the Manning employment agency, being aware that two businesses were conducted on its premises.<sup>3</sup> Did other individuals influence Frazier's decision to visit the Manning agency, or otherwise maneuver him into the depository job? Frazier now writes that it was *"within a week"* that he heard about the depository job rather than *"the next day"* as he previously stated.<sup>4</sup>

Linnie Mae surely would have mentioned the Manning agency at the October coffee klatch as a place where Oswald might find work, as her brother had found work there. Yet the name of the company that employed her brother and led to Lee Harvey Oswald's placement in the depository was not revealed in any Warren Commission testimony and remained a mystery for fifty-eight years. The owner of the Manning employment agency was Emeline Manning. Both Emeline and her sister, Martha Willhoite, lived in the Irving community. It was probably Martha Willhoite who placed Frazier in the book depository as Emeline Manning passed away one month before Frazier obtained his job. Martha, who lived a mile from her sister's agency, likely ran the Manning agency temporarily until it was sold to one of the Manning employees.

If it was Martha Willhoite running the Manning employment agency when Frazier wandered in, then she had a hand in preparing the ground for Oswald's placement in the depository.

Martha, like her sister Emeline Manning, owned an employment agency. Martha and her husband operated the Suburban Employment Agency in Oak Cliff. Their agency was located in the Jefferson Tower 450 ft. from the Texas Theatre where Oswald was apprehended after the assassination. Depending on which direction their 6th floor office faced the Willhoites might have had a view of the unfolding events at the Texas Theatre that day. It would be a strange twist of fate if Martha Willhoite helped place Buell Wesley Frazier in the book depository, then

had a ringside seat to Oswald's apprehension.<sup>5</sup>

Martha Willhoite and her husband may have had information on an important witness/suspect working in the book depository at the time of the assassination. Depository employee Jack Dougherty was hired through the Suburban Employment Agency in 1952, prior to the Willhoite's ownership of the agency.

Dougherty testified to having been alone while using one of the two freight elevators at the rear of the book depository at the time of the shooting. This rear elevator was probably the only escape route for any non-employee in the building given the number of people on the back stairs after the shots rang out. Dougherty was in a position to have aided unknown individuals in a pre-planned escape via the elevator. The Willhoites perhaps inherited information about Jack Dougherty from their Suburban Employment Agency files.

According to her 2009 obituary, Martha Willhoite was a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). The UDC has been called a white supremacist group. The group championed the creation of Confederate monuments in the southern United States. They lobbied for textbooks that portrayed the South in a more favorable light with regards to slavery.

For fifty-eight years Buell Wesley Frazier misrepresented how he got his job at the book depository, making it difficult to determine the means by which the fateful Frazier/Oswald placement in the depository occurred. It has been speculated that Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union was a false defection on behalf of an intelligence agency. Establishing which intelligence agency Oswald worked for might shed some light on who maneuvered Oswald into place in the depository while using Frazier as a stalking horse.

A small group of individuals who had knowledge of Oswald's true identity would, in theory, be in a position to set him up. Examining Oswald's initial actions upon his return from his Soviet defection would seem to be a logical place to start in determining his intelligence connections.

### Oswald's Return: Fred Korth and the Office of Naval Intelligence

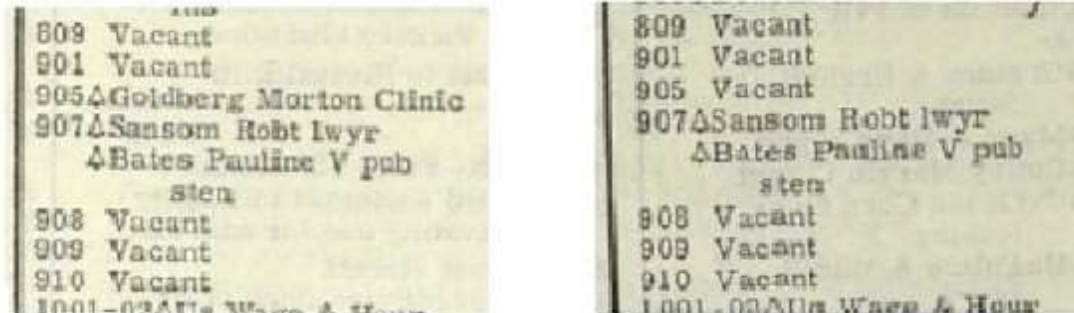
Lee Harvey Oswald returned from his defection to the Soviet Union on June 13, 1962. The next day he travelled to Fort Worth to live with his brother. If Oswald were part of a false defection program, the intelligence agency he worked for would presumably want a report from him on a timely basis. Upon his return to Fort Worth it appears that Oswald began finalizing information for such an agency from notes he had taken while in the Soviet Union.

Five days after his return Oswald visited the office of stenographer Pauline Bates. He spent June 18th, 19th, and 20th getting his "Russia notes" typed by Bates at her office. His notes were extremely negative regarding the Soviet system. Oswald was supposedly going to write a book about his time in the Soviet Union, but instead was probably preparing preliminary notes for a future intelligence debriefing. In her Warren Commission testimony Pauline Bates claimed that Oswald had randomly selected her name from the phone book. New information casts

considerable doubt on this having been the case.

As recorded in his address book, Oswald visited Bates in office 907 of the Burk Burnett building to get his Russia notes typed. *What the FBI failed to report was that Pauline Bates shared office 907 with attorney Robert Sansom, a close relative of U.S. Navy Secretary Fred Korth.*

*Below: The 1962-1963 Fort Worth directory listings for office 907 in the Burk Burnett building. (all of the 1962-1963 listings provided by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission)*



The 1962 and 1963 Fort Worth directory listings above confirm that stenographer Pauline Bates shared office 907 with attorney Robert Sansom at the time Oswald visited that office. Pauline Bates and Sansom had shared office 907 for seven years, from 1955 until the day Oswald walked into the office on June 18, 1962, to get his "Russia notes" typed.

Robert Sansom and Fred Korth had known each other for thirty years. Fred Korth married into the prominent Sansom family when he married Vera Sansom Connell in 1934. Robert Sansom was the first cousin of Vera Sansom Korth. Fort Worth newspapers often reported on Fred Korth and Robert Sansom's attendance together at Sansom family events. They were both members of the prestigious Fort Worth Club and River Crest Country Club, reserved for the elites of Fort Worth society.

The FBI concealed the information that Pauline Bates shared an office with Robert Sansom as this would have raised questions about Oswald's ties with the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and Navy Secretary Fred Korth. They also falsely claimed that Oswald had randomly chosen Pauline Bates' name from the phone directory when that clearly was not the case.

Oswald did not actually visit Pauline Bates' office at all, but rather, that of attorney Robert Sansom. Robert Sansom had worked out of office 907 since 1943, long before Pauline Bates even moved to Fort Worth. As illustrated in the directory listings for 1962 and 1963 there were at least four vacant offices on the 9th floor of the Burk Burnett building. Pauline Bates could have located her business in any one of them, but likely could not afford an office of her own.

Pauline Bates probably worked as a legal secretary for Robert Sansom and other lawyers in the Burk Burnett building as payment in-kind to Sansom for some portion of the office rent for 907. Her secretarial business was listed separately in directory listings, but she ran her business out

of Robert Sansom's office. Sansom was an attorney from a prominent and wealthy Fort Worth family and presumably could afford to rent an office of his own.

Oswald's visit to an office shared by Robert Sansom and Pauline Bates was not a chance event. Of the numerous places Oswald could have chosen to get his Russia notes typed, he chose an office with a close connection to Navy Secretary Fred Korth. Oswald's visit, a mere five days removed from his return from the Soviet Union, confirms that his "Russia notes" were in fact preliminary notes needed for a future debriefing session.

Oswald's false defection to the Soviet Union must have been orchestrated by ONI. It is difficult to see how the Fred Korth/Robert Sansom connection to office 907 could mean anything else. Upon his return from the Soviet Union, Oswald would have initially come under the jurisdiction of Navy Secretary Fred Korth and ONI. Fred Korth may well have received information about Oswald's Soviet adventure and known that Oswald's Pro-Communist statements were an act.

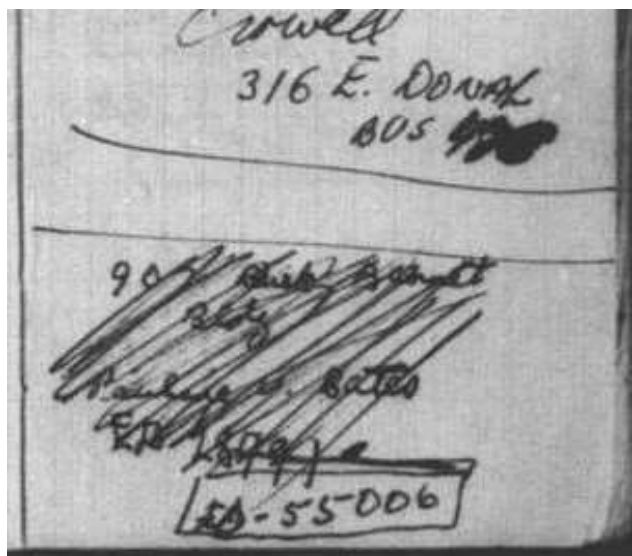
In retrospect sending Oswald to the Bates/Sansom office would seem to have been somewhat careless, since this could reveal a link to Fred Korth if discovered. However, the 9th floor of the Burk Burnett building was almost deserted except for Bates and Sansom. Oswald's visit there had little chance of being witnessed.

According to Pauline Bates, Oswald had numerous scraps of paper detailing his two-and-a-half-years' experience in the Soviet Union. Oswald needed a more organized accounting of his Soviet experience than his hastily written notations. Of course, if Oswald obtained information in the Soviet Union worthy of intelligence classification, he would not have shared it with Bates, saving that material for his eventual debriefing.

Oswald was directed by someone to office 907 in the Burk Burnett building. He showed up at the Bates/Sansom office without having phoned ahead, yet Pauline Bates started immediately typing his notes. Oswald apparently hovered over her like a hawk, keeping all copies of her typing as well as the carbon sheets from the typewriter. Oswald spent some eight hours at office 907 over the course of three days having his notes typed. The obvious question is where was Robert Sansom during those three days while Oswald was in his office getting those "Russia notes" typed?

The FBI concealed Oswald's ONI connection as best they could. The FBI could not (and did not) file any report revealing the fact that Pauline Bates shared an office with a relative of Navy Secretary Fred Korth. The Bates/Sansom 907 office number was seldom mentioned in FBI reports. It could not be completely avoided however as that office number appeared in Oswald's address book with Pauline Bates' name and phone numbers. It is almost surprising Hoover didn't have the page removed.

Below: Pauline Bates' name, phone numbers and 907 office number in the Burk Burnett building as they appeared in Oswald's address book. Presumably Oswald scratched the entries out for some reason, other than one of the phone numbers.



Below: Pauline Bates confirmed to the FBI that Oswald's address book entry reflected his visit to office 907. The FBI avoided using the 907 office number as much as possible given the Bates/Sansom/Korth connection. The section below was buried within other information.

**RE FOLLOWING PHONE NUMBERS IN LEE HARVEY OSWALD'S ADDRESS BOOK:**

ED 2-8797 and ED 5-5006 - Mrs. PAULINE V. BATES, public stenographer, 907 Burkburnett Building, advised that these two numbers were formerly her office number and home phone number, and that she gave these numbers to OSWALD at the time she did some typing for him. PAULINE V. BATES has been interviewed by Bureau Agents.

FBI agent B. Tom Carter interviewed Pauline Bates about Oswald's visit to office 907. Agent Tom Carter had at one time been J. Edgar Hoover's administrative assistant. He then became second in charge at the Dallas FBI office before becoming the resident agent in charge at Fort Worth.

Agent Carter would become responsible for the FBI's cover-up of Oswald's intelligence connections in Fort Worth, likely on behalf of Hoover.

Agent Carter's report of his interview with Pauline Bates did not mention that office 907 was the office visited by Oswald, nor that Pauline Bates and Robert Sansom shared that office. He simply stated that Bates was, "a public stenographer with offices in the Burk Burnett building."

Two days after agent Carter interviewed Pauline Bates, Secret Service agent Maurice Miller

conducted an interview with her. Curiously, on December 2, 1963, agent Miller recorded Bates' office number as being office 1004 in the Burk Burnett building. Had Pauline Bates moved to a different office in the building after having typed Oswald's notes in office 907 in 1962? At the time that Bates was interviewed in 1963, office 1004 in the Burk Burnett building was occupied by a company by the name of the Empire Heavy Equipment Operators School. This would seem to have been an unlikely fit for Pauline Bates who for many years had been a legal secretary. She described herself as such at her Warren Commission testimony of March 25, 1964.

It is possible that after Oswald's 1962 visit Pauline Bates moved out of office 907 for some innocent reason. It is also possible that agent Miller's report erroneously stated Bates' office number as 1004, either because he or Bates lied about it. Then again, someone may have managed to get Bates to move out of office 907, perhaps quickly, fearful that her seven-year association with Robert Sansom in his office might lead to undesirable inquiries.

Regardless, the reports filed by agents Carter and Miller on Pauline Bates leave the distinct impression that a cover-up was underway. It would be expected that the two investigating agents would have immediately discovered from questioning Pauline Bates that she had typed Oswald's Russia notes during the time she occupied office 907 in the Burk Burnett building. Further to that would follow the information that Bates had shared that office with Robert Sansom, indeed that it was actually Robert Sansom's office. This should have been included in the two agents' reports, with Robert Sansom subsequently being interviewed about any interactions he had with Oswald. Fred Korth would be next on the list of those who should have been questioned about the Oswald office visit.

It should be pointed out that FBI agent Tom Carter together with agent John Fain were the only two individuals in any intelligence organization who ever officially attempted to debrief Oswald over his supposed defection. This occurred on June 26, 1962, about a week after Oswald got his Russia notes typed at the Bates/Sansom office. Post assassination, Carter immediately began a cover-up of that Oswald office visit since it so clearly pointed to an Oswald connection with Navy Secretary Fred Korth.

The FBI and Warren Commission successfully passed off the fabrication about the nature of Oswald's visit to the Bates/Sansom office. Far from being the erratic and drifting loner he would come to be painted as; Oswald was diligently going about his work preparing his preliminary debriefing notes for the country that had sent him to the Soviet Union to gather information.

It is difficult to assess how much Pauline Bates knew about the true identity of Lee Harvey Oswald. After the assassination Bates collaborated with her friend, Fort Worth Press reporter Caroline Hamilton, for a newspaper column that appeared November 29, 1963.<sup>7</sup> In the article Bates speculated on Oswald's intelligence ties. The article read, *"He [Oswald] never said he was a U.S. secret agent either. But he left that impression. And the impression raised questions in Miss Bates' mind: Why would a secret agent have a public stenographer type his notes?"*

Of course, Oswald went to the Bates/Sansom office because of Robert Sansom's connection to



Navy Secretary Fred Korth. However, Bates' suggestion that Oswald was involved in intelligence activity was not something the authorities could allow to gain traction with the public through media reports.

By the time Pauline Bates gave her Warren Commission testimony, significant pressure must have been applied to her by the authorities. Bates stated in her testimony that reporters had gotten her impressions of Oswald wrong. Her interviewer, Albert Jenner, made sure Bates stated that, *"the radio and television [reporters] was trying to put words in my mouth."* Bates claimed to have spoken to reporters of a possible State Department connection to Oswald's Russia trip, *"as a student or something. From that, they [reporters] got that he was a secret agent for the ....."*<sup>8</sup>

Despite bowing to pressure from the authorities Pauline Bates gave a parting shot to Jenner towards the end of her testimony. As her interview was ending Bates inquired about obtaining a copy of her testimony and was told payment was required. Bates responded, *"Well, I'll ask Mr. Sansom-he's a very prominent lawyer over there-and he said he wanted a copy of it [her testimony]."* The Commission would not have wanted the Sansom name mentioned given the relationship of Navy Secretary Fred Korth to the Sansom family.

Fred Korth's tenure as Navy Secretary was short lived due to numerous scandals. He became Navy Secretary on Jan. 4, 1962. Prior to that Korth had been president of the Continental Bank in Fort Worth. Korth's Continental Bank made loans to financially troubled General Dynamics who bid on the seven billion-dollar TFX-F111 aircraft contract in 1962. As the Navy Secretary, Korth supported the General Dynamics bid over Boeing when many regarded the Boeing bid as superior. Korth had maintained over \$155,000 in stock holdings in the Continental Bank while Navy Secretary. He resigned amid conflict-of-interest charges. The contract was awarded to General Dynamics in October 1962 but was under investigation in the U.S. Senate at the time of Korth's resignation.<sup>9</sup>

Fred Korth resigned as Secretary of the Navy on October 14, 1963. This coincided with Oswald allegedly moving into a rooming house at 1026 N. Beckley in Oak Cliff. This was also when the ever-helpful Ruth Paine phoned book depository superintendent Roy S. Truly about a job for Oswald at the depository. Researcher Greg Parker observed that Truly's full name was Roy Sansom Truly. This led to the discovery that Roy S. Truly was another [cousin to Korth's wife](#). Roy Sansom Truly was a fourth cousin to Vera Sansom Korth and their common family history was evident in Fort Worth.

Roy Sansom Truly had three uncles who had lived in Fort Worth. Two of them were cotton brokers who moved to Dallas in the 1920's. The relationship between one of Truly's uncles and Vera Sansom Korth's side of the Sansom clan was recognized in a Fort Worth newspaper which read, *"Wesley W. Sansom, 25, [Truly's uncle] was employed by a large cotton firm in Fort Worth ..... He is a nephew of Marion Sansom Sr." (Fort Worth Telegram, Aug. 31, 1917).*

Marion Sansom was Vera Sansom Korth's grandfather and the patriarch of the Sansom family.

The connection between Roy Sansom Truly's side of the Sansom family and Vera Korth's side was apparently common knowledge in Fort Worth at one time.

One of Oswald's first acts upon his return from the Soviet Union was to visit the Bates/Sansom office with its obvious connection to Navy Secretary Fred Korth and ONI. A year and a half later the Korth/Sansom link would be in evidence again when Roy *Sansom* Truly hired Oswald to work at the book depository.

### Oswald's Book Depository Job: The Fort Worth Connection

While Oswald was getting his Russia notes typed, he wasted no time forging other contacts of a probable intelligence nature. On his second day at the Bates/Sansom office, Oswald found the time to meet with White Russian Peter Gregory at the Continental Life Insurance building a short distance away. Oswald had gotten Gregory's name while visiting the offices of the Texas Employment Commission. The anti-communist White Russians should have had nothing to do with the supposed Marxist Lee Harvey Oswald. It has been theorized that they were part of Oswald's initial intelligence contacts or handlers.

The Continental Life Insurance building where Oswald met with Peter Gregory is of some interest. Attorney Sterling C. Holloway organized a group of investors to create the Continental Life Insurance company in 1948. Holloway stepped down as board chairman of the company, likely in 1961, but his numerous connections with people and places associated with Oswald deserve mention.

Sterling Holloway practiced law with future Navy Secretary Fred Korth in the 1940s at the law firm of Thompson and Barwise. Holloway was also a pilot, and during that period he was an intelligence officer in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) serving directly under the command of Harold Byrd. As has often been noted Byrd, a friend of LBJ, was one of the original commanders of CAP and the owner of the book depository building at the time of the assassination. Oswald served with CAP for a few months in 1955 while living in Louisiana.

Sterling Holloway and his son, Pat Holloway, were active in Republican politics. Pat Holloway became the campaign manager for George H.W. Bush's unsuccessful Senate bid in 1964. Pat Holloway's father-in-law was Kenneth Wickett who lived next door to White Russian Peter Gregory from 1945-1960. Gregory's son, Paul, became active in Kenneth Wickett's tennis programs. Paul Gregory took time out from his tennis game in the summer of 1962 to take Russian lessons from Marina Oswald. Peter Gregory used his son's Russian lessons as a cover story for his continued interaction with Oswald who was introduced to numerous members of the White Russian community.<sup>10</sup>

In his second week after returning to Fort Worth, Oswald visited the office of the Commercial Employment Service located directly across the street from Peter Gregory's office. Oswald signed an employment contract with Sidney Richey, the owner of the agency. Sidney Richey's employment agency was originally owned by Sterling Holloway's wife, Jean Holloway.<sup>11</sup> Richey

started at the Commercial employment agency as Holloway's clerk in the 1940s. Holloway at some point presumably sold her employment business to Sidney Richey, perhaps in the 1940s.

Oswald's visit to Sidney Richey's employment agency occurred on June 26, 1962, the same day FBI agents John Fain and Tom Carter questioned Oswald about his defection to the Soviet Union. Sidney Richey did not find work for Oswald, but she was not an insignificant witness. One of Richey's associates may have played a role in the placement of Buell Wesley Frazier in the book depository via the Manning Employment agency in Irving.

Emeline Manning and Sidney Richey's employment agencies belonged to the same employment association known as the *Southwest Employment Board*. The association was created in 1948 by private sector employment agencies in Texas. Sidney Richey was a founding member of the association along with one of Lyndon Johnson's political cronies, attorney Elias DeGeurin, who became the permanent director of the association.<sup>12</sup>

Mildred Babich, one of Sidney Richey's former business partners, was president of the *Southwest Employment Board* in 1963. Richey was also in an executive position with the association that year. Sidney Richey and Mildred Babich would have come to know Emeline Manning through the yearly conferences that were held by the *Southwest Employment Board*.

Mildred Babich operated her employment agency out of the Continental Life building where Oswald met with White Russian Peter Gregory. Prior to opening her employment agency, she had worked in the defense industry as a personnel manager.<sup>13</sup>

Mildred Babich lived in an executive townhome complex in Fort Worth. Her next-door neighbor was John Douglas Jr. who, coincidentally, was the cousin of Emeline Manning and Martha Willhoite. As previously noted, it was likely Martha Willhoite who actually placed Buell Wesley Frazier in the book depository through her sister's Manning Employment agency.

*Below: The 1962 and 1963 Fort Worth directory listings. Mildred Babich and John Douglas Jr. lived in adjacent townhomes. John Douglas Sr. lived in the townhouse complex with his son.*



Mildred Babich was a close associate of Sidney Richey, whom Oswald visited in June 1962. It seems a strange coincidence that Mildred Babich would have a connection to the manner by which Buell Frazier found employment at the book depository. Yet Frazier's placement in the depository was likely carried out by a relative of Mildred Babich's next door neighbor. Did Babich and John Douglas Jr. play any role in the placement of Frazier in the depository through

Douglas' cousin at the Manning agency?

John Douglas Jr. had been an engineer at Convair/General Dynamics since 1944. One of his longtime colleagues at General Dynamics, Mason Lankford, provides a tie-in with Oswald's likely connection with the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI).

Mason Lankford was employed in the security division of Convair/General Dynamics from 1948-1972, starting there around the same time as John Douglas Jr. The Lankford and Douglas families enjoyed a close relationship with each other dating back to at least 1930. The close relationship between the two families takes on added significance given that Mason Lankford was also a special agent with the Office of Naval Intelligence. Oswald's false defection appears to have been on behalf of ONI as demonstrated by his Bates/Sansom office visit.

Mason Lankford's mother, Grace Lankford, was an acclaimed pianist responsible for the creation of the world renowned Van Cliburn Competition. John Douglas Sr.'s sister, Marian (Douglas) Martin, was also a concert level pianist. Grace Lankford and Marian Douglas played together in concerts for decades, beginning their musical collaboration around 1930.

Marian Douglas and Grace Lankford created the Fort Worth Piano Teacher's Forum in 1950. Through that organization they collaborated in creating the first Van Cliburn Competition in 1962. Grace Lankford and Marian Douglas were on the executive committee organizing the Van Cliburn competition. Navy Secretary Fred Korth was on the board. White Russian Peter Gregory, who introduced Oswald to the White Russian community, was a translator.

*Below: The close relationship between Grace Lankford and Marian Douglas.*

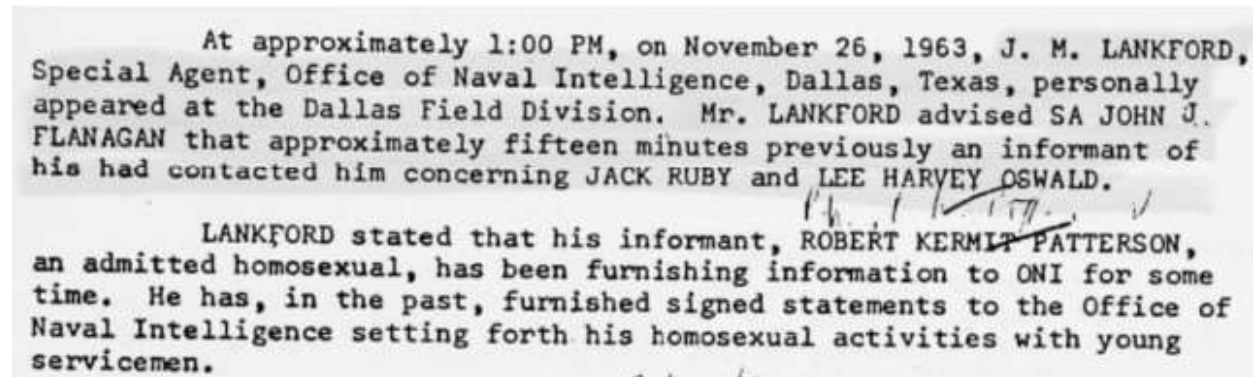


Mason Lankford was involved in some of the security planning for President Kennedy's trip to Texas. He worked with his "old acquaintance" Secret Service agent Mike Howard for two weeks on security measures for the Fort Worth leg of the president's trip.

Post assassination Mason Lankford became involved with the security arrangements for Marina Oswald. Lankford is credited as being the individual who decided that Marina should be taken

to the Inn of the Six Flags, where she faced intense questioning. Lankford became part of the security detail surrounding Marina during that week. While there he shared a room with Robert Oswald, whom he may have known through Robert's past employment at Convair. Mason Lankford was also active in his capacity as an ONI agent. As detailed below, he received information from one of his informants shortly after the assassination.

*Below: One of Mason Lankford's ONI informants reported a false Oswald/Ruby sighting.*



At approximately 1:00 PM, on November 26, 1963, J. M. LANKFORD, Special Agent, Office of Naval Intelligence, Dallas, Texas, personally appeared at the Dallas Field Division. Mr. LANKFORD advised SA JOHN J. FLANAGAN that approximately fifteen minutes previously an informant of his had contacted him concerning JACK RUBY and LEE HARVEY OSWALD.

LANKFORD stated that his informant, ROBERT KERMIT PATTERSON, an admitted homosexual, has been furnishing information to ONI for some time. He has, in the past, furnished signed statements to the Office of Naval Intelligence setting forth his homosexual activities with young servicemen.

Information on Ancestry suggests that John Douglas Jr. (1923-2003) was a gay man like Mason Lankford's informant in the previous document. John Douglas Jr. could have been subject to pressure from Lankford and the authorities to cooperate.

If the plan to place Oswald in the book depository had its roots in Fort Worth, then ONI agent Mason Lankford would have to be considered a prime candidate for having been involved in the scheme. Given his close association with John Douglas Jr., the lines of communication with the Manning agency in Irving were already established. Some pretext could be found to place Buell Wesley Frazier in the depository, with Oswald's employment following shortly thereafter. Mildred Babich was in a position to have aided in the placement of Frazier via the Manning agency if so directed. In 1963 she was the president of the employment association that the Manning agency belonged to and probably knew Emeline Manning through that organization. She lived next door to John Douglas Jr. who was Emeline Manning and Martha Willhoite's cousin. Her neighbor, John Douglas Jr., was close to ONI agent Mason Lankford. The Manning agency provided a readily accessible means for these individuals to place Frazier in the depository as the preliminary step in securing Oswald's employment there.

If Sidney Richey, Mildred Babich, and Martha Willhoite were responsible for placing Buell Wesley Frazier in the book depository, they might have been unsuspecting players in the larger goal of securing Oswald's employment there. Unless the women followed the post-assassination details closely, they may not have even realized that their actions in placing Frazier in the depository led directly to Oswald's employment there a month later.

There was another person of interest living close to Mildred Babich in her townhome complex. As seen in the 1962-1963 directory listings below, Ruth Harkrider was living two townhomes

away from Babich. Ruth Harkrider was Fred Korth's personal secretary at the Continental Bank prior to his becoming the Navy Secretary in January 1962.

*Below: The 1962-1963 directory listings. Ruth Harkrider, Fred Korth's personal secretary at the Continental Bank, lived two townhomes from Mildred Babich.*



Ruth Harkrider's name appears in the news clipping below where she is identified as Fred Korth's personal secretary. Fred Korth was receiving "Boss of the Year" honors in 1959. The woman congratulating Korth in the photograph was Olive McMurray who was the business partner of Sidney Richey and Mildred Babich in 1959. The three women partnered in a joint venture that year while continuing to operate their own employment agencies.

It appears from the photograph that Olive McMurray had a close relationship with Fred Korth. McMurray ran her employment agency out of Fred Korth's Continental Bank building. She likely supplied Korth's Continental Bank with personnel through her agency. Prior to running her employment agency Olive McMurray had been the personnel officer at Reese Airforce base in Texas, and Barksdale Field in Louisiana. It seems business partners Olive McMurray, Mildred Babich, and Sidney Richey had some degree of familiarity with Fred Korth, as did Lee Harvey Oswald.

*Below: Olive McMurray congratulates Fred Korth on being selected "Boss of the Year". Korth introduced his own secretary, Ruth Harkrider. (Fort Worth Star-Telegram Nov. 18, 1959)*



**SECRETARIES PICK BOSS**  
Mrs. McMurray and Korth

## Secretaries Name 'Boss of the Year'

Executives' Secretaries, Inc., of Fort Worth named Fred Korth, president of Continental National Bank, their "boss of the year" at an executives-night dinner in Hotel Texas Tuesday.

Korth was selected by a vote of the group's 58 members. He learned of his selection at the time he was introduced by last year's boss of the year, Dr. Ike Harrison, of TCU.

It was the secretaries' sixth annual executives night dinner. Previous bosses, in addition to Harrison, have been Frank Kent,

Grover Cole, A. L. Myrick and I. C. Parker.

Korth expressed himself as being "pleased, surprised and gratified" at his selection, and promised the secretaries all of his support during the year he will serve.

He introduced his own secretary, Miss Ruth Harkrider. A total of 150 persons, including executives and their wives, attended the dinner.

Dr. Harrison, dean of the School of Business at TCU, was introduced by Mrs. Olive K. McMurray, president of the secretaries.



The connections of Sidney Richey and her colleagues were a source of concern for someone.

This is evident by the way Oswald's visit to Richey's employment agency made its way into FBI files. A false storyline was created so that the incident would fall under the radar, with little scrutiny falling upon Richey.

Sidney Richey did not step forward to notify the FBI of Oswald's visit to her employment agency. Instead, the story passed from Richey through three other women before being reported to the FBI. The last two women who passed along the story had husbands who were executives at Bell Helicopter where Michael Paine worked. The woman who reported the Oswald/Richey story to the FBI was Jo Fischer who knew Ruth and Michael Paine personally through her own husband's employment at Bell Helicopter.

That Ruth Paine had any connection whatsoever to those who reported the Oswald visit to Sidney Richey's employment agency is extremely peculiar. It suggests that the reporting of the Oswald/Richey incident was fabricated, with the goal of protecting Sidney Richey and her colleagues from scrutiny.

The details of the Oswald/Richey cover-up will be outlined in a later section. First Oswald's relationship with the FBI will be examined, beginning as it did on the same day Oswald visited Sidney Richey's employment agency.

## Oswald and the FBI

FBI agent John W. Fain contacted Oswald by phone the morning of June 26, 1962, requesting an interview with him about his defection to the Soviet Union. Despite his impending FBI interview that day, Oswald still met with Sidney Richey before presumably making the ten-minute walk to the FBI offices. The day may have marked the beginning of a transition for Oswald in which he became an FBI informant while in Fort Worth.

After Oswald reached the FBI offices, a supposedly contentious two-hour interview occurred between Oswald and agents John Fain and Tom Carter. Agent Fain, in his Warren Commission testimony, characterized Oswald as being insolent and uncooperative at his June 26th FBI interview. According to Fain, Oswald stated that he, "*Was not recruited at any time while in Russia by Soviet Intelligence.*" As for why he had gone to Russia, Oswald exhibited a, "*show of temper*" stating that, "*He did not care to relive the past.*"

Given agent Tom Carter's post assassination cover-up of Oswald's visit to the Bates/Sansom office, the FBI may have known all along of Oswald's false defector status. It is questionable whether such a confrontational interview with Oswald ever actually took place.

Three weeks after the FBI interview Oswald was hired at Leslie Welding in Fort Worth. He was sent on the job interview by Virginia Hale of the Texas Employment Commission. Virginia Hale was the wife of I.B. Hale, who was the head of General Dynamics security division and a former

FBI agent. Hale and his wife were separated at the time.

I.B. Hale appears to have been a desperate individual. On Aug. 7, 1962, Hale had his twin sons break into Judith Campbell Exner's apartment in California. The FBI was conducting surveillance on Judith Campbell's apartment due to her association with mobster Johnny Roselli when they witnessed the break-in. Judith Campbell also claimed to have been the mistress of President Kennedy. The break-in looks like a desperate attempt by I.B. Hale to secure the TFX-F111 aircraft bid for General Dynamics by getting dirt on President Kennedy.

Oswald moved to 2703 Mercedes St. in order to be within walking distance of his job at Leslie Welding. This move placed him close to the Montgomery Ward department store. Oswald began cashing his Leslie Welding cheques at Montgomery Ward on a regular basis. From July 1962 to the end of September, Oswald cashed a total of ten cheques. Oswald apparently purchased a television set from Montgomery Ward on credit and filled out a credit application.

Emner L. Carter was the credit manager of Montgomery Ward department store. In another remarkable coincidence, *Emner Carter was the brother of FBI agent Tom Carter who had interviewed Oswald just three weeks prior.*

Oswald may well have been dealing with Emner Carter's credit department when cashing his cheques at Montgomery Ward. He cashed them at the cashier's office and was required to show identification. Oswald possibly had become an FBI informant and was being paid at Montgomery Ward. As will be seen, the actions of the Carter brothers and the FBI post assassination tend to support this premise.

Oswald quit his job at Leslie Welding on October 8, 1962. He sought out work in Dallas and filed a change of address to Post Office Box 2915. The Carcano rifle would supposedly be shipped to that post office box on March 20, 1963. Emner Carter at Montgomery Ward claimed to have received Oswald's change of address, presumably within a few weeks. If so, Emner Carter, the brother of FBI agent Tom Carter, had the address where the supposed assassination weapon would be shipped months before it was sent.

The FBI would have had a great deal of trouble explaining the foregoing information if it had become public. Lee Harvey Oswald had been sent to his job interview at Leslie Welding by the wife of ex-FBI agent I.B. Hale. Oswald then began to frequent Montgomery Ward department store where the credit manager was Emner Carter, the brother of the FBI agent who had just interviewed him. Oswald began to cash his cheques at Montgomery Ward and applied for credit there. Emner Carter was notified of Oswald's post office box where the Carcano rifle would be shipped months before it was shipped. If made public, this information would have generated great suspicion about Lee Harvey Oswald's relationship to the FBI.

J. Edgar Hoover had a big problem to deal with. Public perception could not be allowed to develop that the alleged assassin of President Kennedy had been an FBI informant.



## The FBI/Carter Brothers Cover-up

FBI agent Tom Carter had successfully covered up the true nature of Oswald's visit to the Bates/Sansom office. He now had a second cover-up to perform, this time involving his own brother at Montgomery Ward department store. Agent Carter took exclusive control of the information about Oswald that his brother, Emner Carter, provided to the FBI. This suggests that Oswald's frequenting of Montgomery Ward was not a chance event. If Oswald did in fact become an FBI informant in Fort Worth, agent Tom Carter was at the center of the post-assassination cover-up.

The Carter brothers engaged in behavior outside of the bounds of the FBI investigation into the assassination. Their actions are revealed in a [Secret Service report](#) of Dec 1963. The details of the report relative to Emner Carter of Montgomery Ward are as follows:

The Secret Service contacted the Retail Merchants Credit Association on December 3, 1963, to check on financial transactions Oswald may have made. The Secret Service spoke with Grace Scruggs, the assistant manager of the association. Grace Scruggs informed them that, *"Mr. E.L. Carter, Credit Manager of Montgomery-Ward Co., had called on her since the assassination of the President to inquire about Oswald's credit. During this conversation he [Emner Carter] stated his office had been unable to locate a credit file on Lee Oswald."*

The Secret Service called Emner Carter of Montgomery Ward the next day. Contacted by phone, Emner Carter informed the Secret Service that he *"has now located an application for credit and has furnished the information to the FBI. The application shows that at an unknown date Oswald's address was changed to P.O. Box 2915, Dallas..."*

It is highly unlikely that Emner Carter was making inquiries about Lee Harvey Oswald post-assassination without the knowledge of his brother Tom Carter of the FBI. They must have collaborated on the inquiry at the credit agency. How did Emner Carter so miraculously find the information detailing Oswald's address change to P.O. 2915, where the Carcano rifle was supposedly shipped?

Emner Carter probably "found" Oswald's change of address to P.O. Box 2915 with some timely help from his brother at the FBI. The document below suggests that agent Tom Carter provided the Oswald address change that was supposedly recorded at Montgomery Ward.

**DL 100-10461 On December 2, 1963, Superintendent J. M. REDDING, U. S. Post Office Branch, Arlington Heights, Fort Worth, Texas, displayed to SA's JOSEPH L. SCHOTT and B. TOM CARTER the Verifax copy of the change of address order postmarked Dallas, Texas, October 10, 1962, and signed LEE H. OSWALD, directing that mail for 2703 Mercedes, Fort Worth, Texas, OSWALD's former address, be redirected to Post Office Box 2915, Dallas, Texas. This order was shown to have been made effective on October 12, 1962.**

Agent Tom Carter's brother at Montgomery Ward probably never had Oswald's change of

address to P.O. Box 2915, but the Carter brothers conspired to make it appear that he did. As the above document shows, agent Carter checked Oswald's change of address card by fax on December 2. Proceeding with caution, he wanted to be certain of Oswald's address change to P.O. Box 2915. After having viewed the fax, Carter could then relay the address change to his brother, Emner Carter, knowing the information was accurate. The Secret Service duly phoned Emner Carter at Montgomery Ward two days later on December 4. Unsurprisingly, Emner Carter had now found Oswald's credit report as well as Oswald's change of address to P.O. Box 2915. Emner Carter had already reported the address change to the FBI, presumably to his own brother, who had supplied him with the information.

Agent Carter was probably working behind the scenes at J. Edgar Hoover's direction, given he had been Hoover's personal assistant in the past. Not content to merely conceal Oswald's likely status as an FBI informant Hoover got agent Tom Carter to fabricate evidence of Oswald's change of address. Hoover's next actions with regards to the Carter brothers problem may have amounted to obstruction of justice.

*J. Edgar Hoover had FBI agent Tom Carter interview his own brother about Oswald's change of address to P.O. Box 2915 where the supposed assassination weapon was shipped. Of course, there was no disclosure that the two were brothers. Agent Tom Carter interviewed his brother, Emner Carter, in the absence of a second FBI agent and [filed a report](#).*

In the interview Emner Carter reported, to his brother, that Oswald had purchased a television set on credit and had given his address as 2703 Mercedes, Fort Worth. Emner Carter further stated, *"Sometime later, he [Oswald] changed his address to Post Office Box 2915, Dallas, Texas."*

Hoover had effectively buried the potentially damaging Carter brothers information from ever being made public. Unfortunately, Hoover was more concerned about protecting his position with the FBI and promoting the lone gunman narrative than getting at the truth of the assassination.

Hoover and the Carter brothers may well have had some assistance in fabricating the evidence of Oswald's address change. The owner of the Retail Merchants Credit Association that the Secret Service contacted was Howard G. Chilton. The Chilton family operated forty-two credit associations in Dallas, Fort Worth and the Southwest. Howard Chilton had been a close friend of Navy Secretary Fred Korth for many years.<sup>14</sup>

The close relationship between Korth and Chilton dated back to 1934. That year Howard Chilton married Margaret Wynne Harrison. Fred Korth's soon to be wife, Vera Sansom Connell, was a bridesmaid at the Chilton wedding. Margaret Chilton in turn was a bridesmaid for Vera when she married Fred Korth at the Sansom family ranch three months later. Both weddings were high society events attended by the elites of Fort Worth and Dallas.

Margaret Wynne Harrison was a member of the prominent Wynne family. She was the niece of

Angus Wynne and the cousin of Bedford Wynne. Angus Wynne created the first Six Flags amusement park in Texas. After the assassination Marina Oswald was taken to the Inn of the Six Flags for intense questioning.

In the 1957 news clipping below, longtime friends Fred Korth and Howard Chilton are seen presenting an award to Grace Scruggs, the assistant manager of Howard Chilton's credit bureau. It was this same Grace Scruggs, post assassination, who would so conveniently point the Secret Service towards Emner Carter at Montgomery Ward in search of Oswald's credit report and change of address. This contrived act would of course result in Emner Carter affirming to the Secret Service that he had found Oswald's change of address to P.O. Box 2915. All that was left to do was to have FBI agent Tom Carter secretly interview his own brother.



—Star-Telegram Photo.  
**CREDIT BUREAU REACHES GOAL.**—Mrs. Grace Scruggs, second from right, assistant manager of the Credit Bureau of Greater Fort Worth, receives the United Fund's first bronze plaque from Fund President Fred Korth. Howard Chilton, right, is manager of the Credit Bureau, and Miss Sammie Bell represents the United Fund's public service division, of which the Credit Bureau is a member.

In 1978, FBI agent Tom Carter was re-interviewed by the HSCA. He continued to withhold and cover-up the information with regards to his own, and his brother's involvement with Lee Harvey Oswald. Agents John Fain and Tom Carter re-affirmed their Warren Commission affidavits that there had never been any attempt to recruit Oswald as an FBI informant.

The HSCA of course did not have all the facts and concluded that, *"there was little reason that he [Oswald] would have been considered by these agents for use as an informant."* If the HSCA had been aware of the cover-up orchestrated by J. Edgar Hoover with regards to the damaging Carter brothers information, it would have been impossible to come to the same conclusion. Oswald became an FBI informant in Fort Worth, was the victim of fabricated evidence, or both.

### [The Oswald/Richey Incident: The Cover-up](#)

Agent Tom Carter and the FBI successfully concealed Oswald's intelligence ties at the Bates/Sansom office and Montgomery Ward department store. The FBI was responsible for another fabricated report, this time concerning Oswald's visit to Sidney Richey's employment

agency. Agent Tom Carter was, by all accounts, quite busy. It fell to FBI agent Joseph Myers, a Hoover loyalist, to interview Sidney Richey about Oswald's visit. The story took a circuitous path before being recorded by agent Myers.

Sidney Richey was instructed by someone not to step forward to notify the FBI about Oswald's visit to her agency. Instead, it appears that a false storyline was created so that Oswald's visit could be slipped into the record, under the radar, with little scrutiny falling upon Richey. The individuals involved in this false narrative had connections with Bell Helicopter and the Paines.

The description of how the Oswald/Richey story came to light is found in [this FBI document](#). As noted in the document Sidney Richey did not go to the FBI with the information about the Oswald visit to her agency but, after the assassination, told her colleague Nedra Middlebrook about it. Middlebrook, in turn, told the story to Virginia Veres, an employee at Middlebrook's Arlington employment agency. Virginia Veres then passed the information along to Jo Fischer who was the personnel director at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Dallas.

It was the fourth woman, Jo Fisher at the Hilton Hotel, who finally reported the Oswald/Richey visit to the FBI. Jo Fischer did this while she was being questioned by the FBI about false Oswald job hunting sightings at the Hilton and Adolphus hotels in downtown Dallas. The reports on that inquiry can be found in [these FBI documents](#).

On the face of it the manner in which the Oswald/Richey story got passed along to the FBI looks like an artificial construction. Why would the story of Oswald's visit to a Fort Worth employment agency on June 26, 1962, pass through four women, before eventually being reported to the FBI by the personnel director of the Hilton Hotel in Dallas?

In fact, the last two women in the chain of communication, Virginia Veres and Jo Fischer, were both married to longtime executives at Bell Helicopter, where Michael Paine was employed. Agent Joseph Myers filed the FBI report on the Oswald/Richey visit and failed to mention the Bell Helicopter connection between Veres and Fischer. He surely knew of the connection, never asking Virginia Veres the reason why she passed the Oswald story along to Jo Fischer.

Jo Fischer, personnel director at the Hilton, was married to Ed Fischer, an engineering executive at Bell Helicopter since the company started operations in Texas in 1952. Virginia Veres was married to Stephen Veres who moved to Texas in 1952 to help open the Bell plant as liaison lead engineer. The Veres and Fischer families became close, lifelong friends as a result of their association with Bell Helicopter from its early beginnings in Texas.

After contacting a relative of Jo Fischer (1923-2017) on Ancestry, it was discovered that Ed Fischer was still living in Texas. The Fischers did in fact know Ruth and Michael Paine through Bell Helicopter. An intelligent and alert 97-year-old, Ed Fischer consented to answer a few questions about how he and his wife, Jo Fischer, came to know the Paines.

Jo and Ed Fischer lived in Irving, Texas prior to the Paines moving there in the latter part of

1959. The Fischers got to know the Paines through monthly dinner parties that were held among Bell Helicopter employees. At some point Ed Fischer and Ruth Paine decided to play tennis at one of the community courts in Irving. The tennis games went on until the spring of 1963 when Ruth told Ed that she could no longer continue with the games.

Ruth Paine informed Ed that she now had a Russian woman living with her and wanted to take the opportunity to improve her Russian language skills. More than likely Ruth was about to drive Marina to New Orleans to reunite her with Oswald. Ed Fischer's association with Ruth Paine ended in the spring of 1963 when the tennis games ceased. Ed was unsure whether Stephen Veres would have had reason to interact with Michael Paine at Bell Helicopter.

Ed Fischer was aware that his wife, Jo Fischer, was questioned by the FBI about what turned out to be false sightings of Oswald at the Hilton Hotel. However, Ed was not aware that his good friend Virginia Veres and Jo were named in FBI files as two of the individuals who reported the Oswald/Richey incident. Ed Fischer questioned the veracity of the report on the basis that if Virginia Veres had ever been questioned by the FBI, he would certainly have heard about it. This leaves many unanswered questions as to the authenticity of that FBI report.

The idea that Virginia Veres had worked at Nedra Middlebrook's employment agency was met with surprise by Ed Fischer and his family. In fact, calls made by Fischer family members failed to confirm that Virginia Veres had ever worked in the private sector. Veres was believed to have been strictly a housewife who had not worked outside of the home. There was no mention in her obituary of 2015 that she ever worked at any employment agency.

Research established that Virginia Veres and Nedra Middlebrook lived a few homes apart from each other on the same street in Arlington, Texas. That the two women were neighbors leads to one of two conclusions. Veres may have worked at her neighbor's employment agency on a very limited basis and not told her good friends, the Fischers. Alternately, Virginia Veres was hired temporarily at the Middlebrook agency, post-assassination, for the sole purpose of having her pass along the Oswald/Richey story to the FBI. Someone wanted to shield Sidney Richey from having to step forward herself and avoid the scrutiny that would have followed.

Virginia Veres may have been pressured to pass along the Oswald/Richey story. Her son had encountered serious legal problems in 1961-1962 and this could have been used as leverage to gain her cooperation. The story involving Virginia Veres' son is as follows:

In January 1961 Virginia's son, Clinton Veres, was involved in a tragic episode in Arlington's history. Clinton Veres and three of his friends from Arlington High School burnt down a wooden bridge one night on the Arlington-Bedford Road. As a result of their actions three girls in a car of six were killed a week later when their car careened into the forty-foot ravine where the bridge had been. The four boys confessed to having burned the bridge.

Two grand juries were convened, one in 1961 and a second in May 1962. The second grand jury indicted Clinton Veres and the others. Clinton Veres if convicted could have faced two to seven

years in prison on felony charges. However, no trial was ever held, and the charges must have been quietly dropped with no publicity.

It was Mason Lankford, Tarrant County Fire Marshall, and ONI agent, who investigated what became known as the "screaming bridge" incident of Arlington. Lankford was assisted in the investigation by Lon Evans, the sheriff of the county. Mason Lankford took the confessions of Clinton Veres and the others responsible for the bridge burning. Mason Lankford and Lon Evans were the two individuals who would later decide that Marina Oswald should be taken to the Inn of the Six Flags for questioning after the assassination.

Virginia Veres would likely have been willing to help the authorities in the Sidney Richey matter if pressure was applied to her over her son's past legal problems. If that is what happened, Jo Fischer probably decided to help out her close friend by reporting the Oswald/Richey story to the FBI.

If the reporting of the Oswald/Richey visit was a fabrication, then ONI agent Mason Lankford and the ever-present Paines were in a position to help the authorities with its construction. Ruth and Michael Paine knew Jo Fischer, and possibly the Veres family, through Bell Helicopter. Mason Lankford had the confession of Virginia Veres' son in his back pocket. It appears that someone went to a lot of trouble to protect Sidney Richey from the spotlight.

It is remarkable that Ruth Paine would have known the individual, Jo Fischer, who told the FBI about Oswald's 1962 visit to Sidney Richey's employment agency. It was Ruth Paine's phone call to Roy Truly that led to Oswald's employment at the book depository. Why would Ruth Paine have any connection at all to the fabricated story of how the FBI learned of Oswald's visit to Richey's Fort Worth employment agency? Oswald's visit to Richey's agency occurred long before the Paines even met the Oswalds. Perhaps the Paines were being advised of Oswald's movements in Fort Worth before they actually met him.

It has to be wondered why the authorities would have gone to so much trouble with this particular fabrication. While Oswald had visited Sidney Richey's employment agency, she had not gotten him a job, so outwardly she would not appear to have been an important witness. However, the FBI, or someone, must have felt Sidney Richey's connections were significant enough that they warranted concealment.

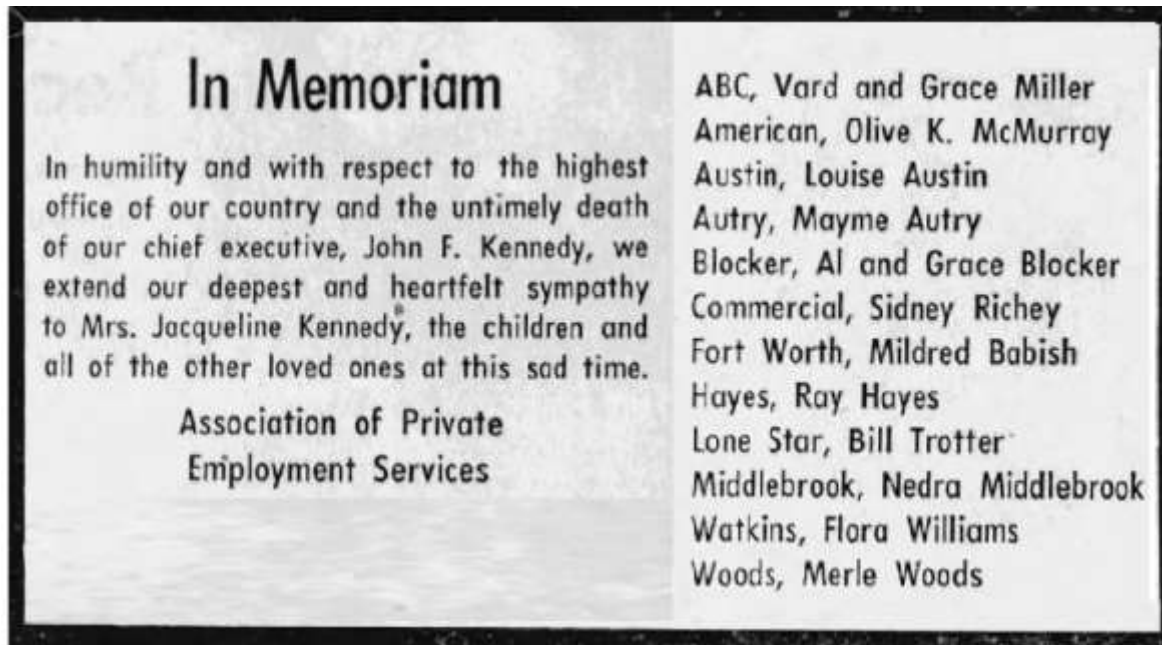
The reason for the concealment may have been twofold. As previously noted, Sidney Richey and Mildred Babich had a connection to the Manning Employment agency and, potentially, the placement of Oswald's stalking horse, Buell Wesley Frazier, in the depository. In addition, one of Sidney Richey and Mildred Babich's colleagues had a connection to Textitalia Films and a large financial offer made to Marina Oswald post-assassination.

## Textitalia Films

A letter of condolence to Jacqueline Kennedy ran in a Fort Worth newspaper the Monday



following the assassination. Former business partners Sidney Richey, Mildred Babich, and Olive McMurray were among the employment agency owners who sponsored the message. Nedra Middlebrook also participated. One of the agency owners listed in the message had a connection to a large financial offer made to Marina Oswald for the movie rights to her story. Together the individuals listed in the memorial below constituted the Fort Worth chapter of the *Southwest Employment Board*. The association was comprised of only these twelve employment agency owners.



*Fort Worth Star Telegram, Monday, Nov*

It would be thought that these individuals rushing to produce a condolence message to Jacqueline Kennedy the Monday after the assassination would have had no connection to Lee Harvey Oswald or his activities.


Of course, this was not the case with Sidney Richey and Nedra Middlebrook. Hypocritically, the two assigned their names to the condolence message to Jacqueline Kennedy, but did not step forward with the information they had about Oswald's visit to Richey's employment agency. Of those listed in the condolence message Mayme Autry is of particular interest. Autry was a longtime associate of Sidney Richey and Mildred Babich.

Mayme Autry's maiden name was *Blankenship*. Mayme (Blankenship) Autry was a close relative of Wesley Blankenship, who was the financial backer behind a firm called Texitalia Films. Post assassination Marina Oswald was offered \$75,000 by Texitalia Films for the movie rights to her story. This large financial inducement might have bought some degree of "cooperation" from Marina during her questioning.

The following news clipping illustrates that Mayme (Blankenship) Autry was close to the Blankenships of Lubbock. Mayme Autry is identified as the niece of the matriarch of the family.

She was a first cousin of Wallace Blankenship who operated the Wallace Theater chain.<sup>15</sup>

*Below: Mayme Autry was related to Wesley Blankenship, financial backer of Textitalia Films. The article mentions Mayme Autry as being a successful Blankenship like her cousin Wallace.*

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>MRS. BLANKINSHIP</b></p> <p><b>Woman, 76,<br/>Runs Estate<br/>At Lubbock</b></p>  <p>—Star-Telegram Photo.<br/><b>MRS. A. W. BLANKINSHIP.</b></p> | <p><b>BY MARLYN AYCOCK.</b></p> <p>A woman who spent eight days traveling from Stephenville to Lubbock more than 54 years ago was in Fort Worth Friday looking for an architect.</p> <p>She is Mrs. Andrew W. Blankenship, who at 76 still actively manages an estate consisting of 2,400 acres of farmland, residential rental property and a brand new shopping center across the street from Texas Tech in Lubbock.</p> <p>In Fort Worth she consulted with an architect about a 100-room luxury-type hotel and motel she plans to build on the 40-acre tract now shared by the shopping center.</p> | <p><b>Grandsons Help.</b></p> <p>Her responsibilities would keep many a younger person busy. But she takes time out each year to spend a few months at her Ruidoso, N. M., summer home.</p> <p>Two grandsons, W. B. and Royce Blankenship help her in her businesses.</p> <p>"But I'm still the boss," she said in manner that's easily understood.</p> <p><b>Successful business ventures seem to be the practice in the Blankenship family. A son, Wallace Blankenship of Lubbock, owns a chain of 26 movie theaters across the South Plains.</b></p> <p><b>A niece, Mrs. Mayme B. Autry, who was formerly a Blankenship, operates an employment agency in Fort Worth.</b></p> |
|--|---|--|

*Below: Wesley Blankenship, Mayme Autry's cousin, was listed in FBI files as the financial backer of Textitalia Films.*

Allegation received that Cinema International Productions (CIP), also known as Tex-Italia Productions (TIP) is planning to produce film on life of Mrs. MARINA OSWALD. This firm represented by CHARLES A. LASATER, GEORGE V. DOUGLAS and reported financed by **WESLEY B. BLANKENSHIP**, rented office space at Samuel Goldwyn Studios, Hollywood, California, February, 1963, until February, 1964, when ousted for non-payment of rent. Sources advised no knowledge of any filming activity by this firm or specific interest in producing film regarding life of MARINA OSWALD.

It is unclear whether Marina Oswald ever got much, if any money, from the Textitalia Films contract. Marina sued her business manager, James Martin, who had arranged various media deals totaling about \$132,000. In an out of court settlement the contracts Martin signed on behalf of Marina were declared null and void.

However, before Marina removed Martin as her manager, the \$75,000 Textitalia offer may well have provided her with some added incentive to cooperate with the authorities. On the one hand if Marina decided to cooperate, a significant amount of money would come her way. On the other hand, Marina faced the prospect of deportation back to the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

As Robert Oswald wrote in his book, Marina Oswald had feared the possibility of deportation



even before the assassination. Post assassination, "*Her fear of deportation was increased by the bullying tactics of the two FBI men who questioned her at the Inn of the Six Flags.*" Given the alternatives Marina may have simply decided to tell the authorities what they wanted to hear. Under pressure, Marina claimed her husband shot at General Walker among other things. The placement of the condolence message in the Fort Worth Star Telegram the Monday after the assassination could have been a defensive, and poorly thought-out strategy by those who carried it out. Some in the group of Fort Worth employment agency owners in the memorial clearly had connections to the Oswalds, though this was probably known to very few people. Sidney Richey and Nedra Middlebrook knew of Oswald's visit to Richey's employment agency and failed to report it. Their longtime colleague, Mayme (Blankenship) Autry, was a member of the family connected to Texitalia Films who made the largest financial offer to Marina Oswald post assassination. As previously noted, Mildred Babich lived next door to the cousin of Emeline Manning whose agency placed Buell Wesley Frazier in the depository. Emeline Manning's cousins, in the Douglas family, had close ties to ONI agent Mason Lankford. It is difficult to believe that all of the Oswald connections to this group were purely coincidental.

## Conclusions

That Oswald was associated with U.S. intelligence is apparent from actions he took upon his return from the Soviet Union. The facts on the ground indicate that his false defection was done on behalf of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). A mere five days back from the Soviet Union, Oswald got his "Russia notes" typed at an office shared by attorney Robert Sansom and Pauline Bates. The FBI and Secret Service conspired to make it appear that Oswald had only visited Pauline Bates' office when that was not the case.

The authorities concealed the fact that the office Oswald visited was in fact that of Robert Sansom, a relative of Navy Secretary Fred Korth. Sansom had worked out of office 907 for ten years prior to Pauline Bates even moving to Fort Worth. Fred Korth had known Robert Sansom for some thirty years having married Sansom's cousin. The connection to Fred Korth and ONI is clearly evident in Oswald's office visit. There can be no other explanation, but that Oswald's defection was done on behalf of ONI.

Oswald was directed to the Bates/Sansom office to compile preliminary notes for a future debriefing session for ONI. That the FBI and Secret Service worked so hard to conceal the true nature of Oswald's office visit supports this conclusion.

In particular, FBI agent Tom Carter was instrumental in concealing Oswald's intelligence ties. Agent Carter was first on the scene to hide the truth behind the Oswald office visit. Carter then had to conceal information regarding his own brother, Emner Carter, at Montgomery Ward department store. Only three weeks after agents Carter and Fain questioned Oswald about his defection, Oswald began to frequent Montgomery Ward where Emner Carter was the credit manager. It is possible that Oswald had become an FBI informant at this point and was being paid at Montgomery Ward while cashing his Leslie Welding cheques.

Agent Carter took sole control of the information his brother Emner provided to the FBI about

Oswald, to the point of interviewing his own brother in the absence of a second agent. Hoover was not content to simply hide Oswald's possible links with the FBI. He had the Carter brothers conspire to fabricate information on Oswald's change of address to P.O. Box 2915 where the assassination weapon was supposedly shipped. Fred Korth and his friend Howard Chilton, owner of the Fort Worth credit bureau, probably assisted in the fabrication of evidence.

A framework existed by which Buell Wesley Frazier could be placed in the depository as a stalking horse for Oswald's employment there. Sidney Richey's colleague and business partner, Mildred Babich, was well positioned to play a role in the placement of Frazier in the depository via the Manning employment agency. ONI agent Mason Lankford was the most likely individual to have engineered the scheme since he had a close relationship with the relatives of Emeline Manning and Martha Willhoite.

A fabricated storyline was created by someone so that Sidney Richey would not have to step forward to report Oswald's visit to her agency. The authorities wanted the story to enter the record under the radar. It speaks volumes that Ruth Paine and Mason Lankford had connections to two of the women who reported the Oswald/Richey story. Ruth Paine personally knew the woman, Jo Fischer, who reported the story to the FBI. Mason Lankford investigated the incident involving Virginia Veres' son. Why would Ruth Paine have the slightest connection to the Sidney Richey story? Oswald's visit to Richey's employment agency occurred long before the Paines even met the Oswalds. Were the Paines receiving information on Oswald before they actually met him?

Probably few people involved in Frazier's placement in the depository realized that his employment would be used to secure Oswald's job. Frazier himself may have been a "useful idiot" manipulated by those who wished to place Oswald in the depository while covering their tracks. The placement of Oswald in the depository with the end goal of portraying him as the "lone assassin" required intricate acts of deception.

If Frazier was a "useful idiot" and had declined to take the depository job, there would have been someone to take his place. The Randle family business could have provided an alternative to Frazier if needed. The business, Irving Countertop, had an indirect link to Bill Shelley who became Oswald's supervisor at the depository. Bill Shelley's niece lived in Irving and was married to Tommy Zinn. Marvin Randle worked with Tommy Zinn at a kitchen countertop business run by Zinn's neighbor. After Marvin Randle started Irving Countertop, Zinn became a forty-year employee at the Randle family business. It is unclear if Zinn started at Irving Countertop in 1963 or in the following two years.<sup>17</sup>

Given the inconsistencies surrounding Frazier's stories through the years, it is difficult to judge when he is telling the truth as opposed to "steering" it. One story Frazier has told for twenty years has a direct bearing on the degree to which Ruth Paine maneuvered Oswald into the depository. Frazier has claimed, at least as far back as 2002, that he checked on whether there were any job openings at the depository after Linnie Mae asked him to do so.

The clearest statement Frazier has given on this was at a talk he gave before the Assassination

Archives and Research Center (AARC) in 2014. Frazier stated, "*My sister, she'd have coffee with the ladies in the neighborhood where we lived and that's where she met Mrs. Paine. Mrs. Paine was asking, does anybody know of anybody doing any hiring? My sister said my brother's working a lot of overtime, I'll ask him. She asked me and so the next day I went in [to the book depository] and I asked Mr. Shelley, and he asked Mr. Truly, he had to go up to see Mr. Cason. So they said, yeah, if you know somebody who's looking for work send him by. So I told my sister, tell Mrs. Paine, whoever is looking for a job they can come by and fill out an application. I did not know at that time they was talking about Lee.*"

Was Frazier describing the October 14<sup>th</sup> coffee klatch in which Oswald's job prospects were discussed at Dorothy Roberts' house? If so, there are obvious timing problems with the story. Linnie Mae would have asked Frazier to check on openings at the depository after the October 14<sup>th</sup> coffee klatch. If Frazier went in the "next day" to check with his superiors about job openings, this would have been on the same day Oswald went into the depository and was hired. Such a nonsensical situation most likely never occurred.

For Frazier's story to be true, Ruth Paine must have questioned Linnie Mae about depository jobs in advance of the October 14<sup>th</sup> coffee klatch. When the coffee klatch eventually took place, it was the culmination of prior communication between Linnie Mae and Ruth Paine. Linnie Mae was simply reporting back on what she found out from her brother about job openings at the depository. Ruth Paine knew full well there would be a job waiting for Oswald at the depository. However, she needed a public forum for the Oswald job discussion to give her sufficient cover to phone Roy Truly.

In his book Frazier still maintains that he checked with his superiors at the book depository about job openings. Predictably he has decided to "*steer the truth*" though, removing Ruth Paine from the discussion. In 2014 Frazier stated that he told his sister to, "*tell Mrs. Paine, whoever is looking for a job they can come by and fill out an application.*" In his book Frazier has sheepishly removed any reference to having instructed his sister to tell Ruth Paine about depository jobs. But Frazier fails to explain why he would have gone to the trouble of checking on job openings at the depository if not to have the information reported back to Ruth Paine. It would be of no surprise to anyone if Ruth Paine played a much larger role in getting Oswald his book depository job. The possible intelligence connections of Ruth's father, [William Avery Hyde](#) and her sister, [Sylvia Hoke](#) have long been documented.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Frazier gave his talk to the Assassination Archives and Research Center (AARC) in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The Manning Employment Service that Frazier signed his contract with was a member of an employment association called the *Southwest Employment Board*. Oswald signed a contract with Sidney Richey's employment agency in 1962, also a member company of that association. Oswald would have owed 40 percent of his first month's wages to Richey's agency if work was found for him. If Frazier owed a similar amount of money to the Manning agency for securing

his depository job, how could he have gotten the company's name wrong at his Warren Commission testimony?

<sup>3</sup> Some members of the Randle family did attend Irving High school with Emeline Manning and Martha Willhoite's children. Somehow Linnie Mae Randle became aware of detailed information about the Manning employment agency.

<sup>4</sup> Irving resident Cliff Shasteen might have had a hidden interest in having Frazier take a job at the depository. An airplane mechanic turned barber, Shasteen had worked for 18 years in four aircraft companies. Two of those companies, Temco and Chance Vought, were owned by Harold Byrd the owner of the book depository building. Shasteen had been an [informant](#) at the plants, claiming one of his co-workers had communist sympathies. Frazier could well have met Cliff Shasteen at the small congregation of the Oak View Baptist Church that Frazier, the Randles and Shasteen attended.

Also living in the Irving neighborhood at the time of the assassination was Mafia strongman Russell Douglas Matthews. He claimed to be only an "acquaintance" of Jack Ruby when questioned. R.D. Matthews was living with a prostitute in a house directly across the street from the pastor of the Oak View Baptist Church, Reverend E.W. Campbell.

The nephew of Dallas Police homicide detective Elmer Boyd lived on the same street as Ruth Paine and within viewing distance of her home. The nephew, Bill Morse, lived next door to musician William Simmons, who worked at Jack Ruby's club.

<sup>5</sup> Emeline Manning and Martha Willhoite had another strange connection to the assassination. The two had a sister in Denison, Texas by the name of Pearl Noe. Two of Pearl's stepsons, Clifford and Paul Noe, became famous bank fraud artists on an international scale. The brothers executed their first bank fraud in Texas in 1963. The fraud had not yet been exposed when Clifford Noe became part of a group attempting to purchase the Texas School Book Depository building. In 1964, Clifford Noe was a member of the *American Memorial Institute* who tried to buy the depository. The idea was quickly rejected by Harold Byrd.

<sup>6</sup> A number of the River Crest Country Club members had some association with Oswald including: Navy Secretary Fred Korth and Robert Sansom; White Russian Peter Gregory who introduced Oswald to the White Russian community; I.B. Hale and his wife Virginia who sent Oswald on his job interview at Leslie Welding; and Sterling C. Holloway.

<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to judge what Pauline Bates knew about Oswald's true identity. The business card of another Fort Worth stenographer was found in Oswald's possessions after the assassination. That stenographer, Lillie McKamy, had been Pauline Bates' business partner until 1961. How Oswald ended up with the business card of Bates' former business partner is unknown.

<sup>8</sup> It is highly unlikely that Caroline Hamilton of the Fort Worth Press would have misinterpreted Pauline Bates' statements to her. The two were friends and had ample time to discuss what information went into Hamilton's news article.

<sup>9</sup> At the time the TFX-F111 contract was awarded, Henry Crown was the controlling shareholder of General Dynamics. He had been accused of being a mob financier by mobster James Ragen in 1946, a claim which was never verified. On the day of the assassination, Don Reynolds testified in the Senate Rules Committee that he had heard that Lyndon Johnson got a \$100,000 payment for securing the TFX contract. Reynolds claimed to have been told this by Bobby Baker, Johnson's former right-hand man.

<sup>10</sup> In 1960 Kenneth Wickett sold his house to Edward E. Stocker, an executive at Fred Korth's Continental Bank. Edward Stocker had served in the Navy as a legal officer and Naval Intelligence investigator. He was Peter Gregory's next-door neighbor during the time of Oswald's visits with Gregory.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Holloway became second in command to aviator Jaqueline Cochrane in a program to train female pilots for the war effort in 1942. Jaqueline Cochrane's husband was investment banker Floyd Odlum who purchased Convair in 1947 and sold it to General Dynamics in 1953. The Odlum's friends included President Eisenhower, LBJ, Howard Hughes, Curtis Lemay, and Conrad Hilton.

<sup>12</sup> Elias DeGeurin was part of a group of LBJ's political associates including John Connally and Jake Pickle.

<sup>13</sup> Mildred Babich served with the U.S.O in California during WW2. After moving to Fort Worth, she became the personnel manager for a defense company, the Marine Aircraft Corporation.

Mildred Babich started her employment agency in 1953 out of the Continental Life building. In 1956 she was a Republican delegate with Sterling Holloway, one of the founders of Continental Life. In 1960 Mildred Babich worked on the same floor in the Continental Life building as attorney Carey West. Mrs. Carey West was a Republican delegate with Babich. The Wests were close to White Russian Peter Gregory and his family as their sons played tennis together at Arlington High school and Oklahoma University. In 1963, after her divorce, Mrs. Lucy West got remarried to I.B. Hale the head of General Dynamics security.

Mildred Babich was secretary treasurer of the Good Neighbor Council in 1961. Judge Jesse Duvall used the Good Neighbor Council to contact George De Mohrenschildt, one of Oswald's White Russian handlers. Judge Duvall, a former intelligence officer, had De Mohrenschildt discuss his Mexico/Central American hiking trip at one of the group's meetings. Duvall met with De Mohrenschildt a second time in February 1963 around the time the Oswalds were handed off to the Paines. It has not been determined if Babich was a member of the Good Neighbor Council at the same time as Judge Duvall.

<sup>14</sup> The Chilton family had another odd connection to P.O. Box 2915. When Oswald opened P.O. Box 2915 in October 1962, he used the address of Gary Taylor's apartment on the application. Gary Taylor was married to the daughter of George De Mohrenschildt, Oswald's White Russian handler at the time. The address entered on Oswald's post office box application was 3519

Fairmount Ave., Gary Taylor's address (it was incorrectly written as 3519 Fairmore).

Members of the Chilton family lived at that small apartment complex on Fairmount Ave. for many years, prior to 1945. By 1945 Howard Chilton's mother, Evalyne, was the last remaining member of the family living in the building. Evalyne Chilton lived at the building until 1953 and was the apartment manager for the last six years she was there. She appears to have become the apartment manager of the eighteen unit building around the time it was purchased by Richard Burdick and became the Burdick apartments. There was a business relationship between Evalyne Chilton and Richard Burdick, at least during that time period. Evalyne Chilton died in 1959. It is not known whether there was a Burdick/Chilton relationship beyond that of Howard Chilton's mother having managed the Burdick apartments until 1953.

After the assassination, Howard Chilton's son was questioned by the FBI about threatening statements he had made about the government and, perhaps, President Kennedy. Howard Chilton Jr. attributed his comments to "letting off steam" after having been drinking. The FBI report can be found [here](#).

<sup>15</sup> In 1963, the Dallas office of the Wallace Theatre chain was close to that of Rowley United Theatres, owners of the Texas Theatre where Oswald was apprehended. Rowley's offices were at 314 South Harwood St., while the Wallace Theatres office was at 312<sup>1/2</sup> South Harwood St.

This may have been the same building, which was owned by Rowley Theatres.

Mayme Autry was related to the family of Claire Chennault of the Flying Tiger's fame. She was the first cousin of Bessie Blankenship who married William S. Chennault, Claire Chennault's brother. Roy Truly also had a connection to the Chennault family. His father-in-law was a third cousin of Claire Chennault.

<sup>16</sup> The Texitalia offer to Marina may have been designed to fall apart. Somehow Dallas fraud artist, Charles Deaton, got involved and signed the contract. He was arrested in New York in May 1964 on a separate matter with a copy of the contract.

<sup>17</sup> Tommy Zinn was in the same class year at Irving High school with Dial Ryder. Marvin Randle was two years ahead of them. Zinn and Ryder played football together and were pictured side by side in a singing group they belonged to. Dial Ryder became a gunsmith in Irving. He claimed shortly after the assassination that he had mounted a telescopic scope on a rifle for an "Oswald." This was at a time when it was erroneously believed the rifle had been shipped to Oswald's post office box without a scope. That Zinn knew Ryder could simply be a small-town coincidence. It would still be of interest to know when Tommy Zinn began working at Irving Countertop since he was married to Bill Shelley's niece.