

THE SECRET SERVICE INTERVIEWS

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“Many of the agents take to the grave what they know,” said Jerry Parr, the Special-Agent-in-Charge (SAIC) of the White House Detail (WHD) during parts of the Carter and Reagan years who began his career in the Secret Service shortly before 11/22/63. During the course of my more than seven year odyssey of heavily researching the actions and words of the United States Secret Service, I have interviewed and corresponded with over twenty-five different agents who protected President Kennedy. The fruits of much of my labor are made manifest primarily in my book The Third Alternative- Survivor's Guilt: The Secret Service and the JFK Murder and, to a certain extent, in several of my conference presentations and articles. However, I felt it would be appropriate to give a sort of "sneak preview" of my work and present highlights of my interviews with the agents themselves. I believe the reader will see the importance of taking a much closer look at the Secret Service, especially in relation to the tragic events of 11/22/63.

Not including the former agents who passed away after they were interviewed by me, the following agents were deceased years before I pursued this endeavor: Emory P. Roberts (late 1960s), Stewart G. Stout, Jr. (shortly after Dallas), Thomas J. Kelley, John J. “Muggsy” O’Leary (1987), William R. Greer (1985), Roy H. Kellerman (1984), and Henry J. Rybka (unknown). Although others passed away before my pursuits, these are the agents better known to researchers as having some direct bearing on the tragic events of November 22, 1963, in Dallas. (For what it’s worth, the other agents known to be deceased from JFK’s time are Lubert F. “Bert” deFreese, William B. Payne, Morgan L. Gies, Dennis R. Halterman, Andrew M. Hutch, Burrill Peterson, Urbanus “U.E.” Baughman, and Harvey Henderson.)

In the summer of 1996, Tom Samoluk of the Assassinations Records Review Board (ARRB) requested that my Secret Service interview audio tapes and any relating correspondence be submitted for inclusion in the JFK Collection at the National Archives. I responded promptly and soon received a Deed of Gift signed by David Marwell of the ARRB and John Carlin, Archivist of the United States. I was thrilled and am honored to have a part of my work donated to the public and to history. Here are a few highlights:

ARTHUR L. GODFREY was one of the three Shift Leaders of the WHD during the Kennedy years (the others were the aforementioned Stout and Roberts, both long since deceased). Art did advance work on several major

trips for JFK before Dallas, including Rome and New York in 1963. During the Texas trip, Art’s shift (12Midnight to 8AM: SA Gerald S.

Blaine, Kenneth S. Giannoules, Gerald W. O’Rourke, Paul A. Burns, and Robert R. Faison) guarded JFK at the Hotel Texas and then waited for him to complete his Trade Mart speech while they were stationed in Austin at the Commodore Perry Hotel. I spoke to Art in late May and early June of 1996; incredibly, I am the only one to interview him (the other two ATSAICs, Stout and Roberts, died without speaking to anyone)!

When I asked Art if it was true, according to “official” history, President Kennedy had ever ordered the agents around, including having them dismount the rear portions of the limousine, Godfrey told me on two occasions : “That’s a bunch of baloney; that’s not true. He never ordered us to do anything. He was a very nice man...cooperative.” Asked if Aide Ken O’Donnell did any similar ordering, Art said emphatically that “he did not order anyone around.” As just one example, Art was on the Italy trip and agents frequently rode on the rear of the limousine -- one of the agents was none other than Winston G. Lawson . When JFK was killed, Godfrey flew back to Washington with the aforementioned agents in his command plus SAs Robert R. Burke, William B. Payne, John F. Yeager, and a PRS agent named Norton who would go on to photograph the bloody limousine on 11/23/63 with James K. “Jack” Fox.

CHARLES T. “CHUCK” ZBORIL, also never interviewed by anyone before me, was a new member of the WHD when Kennedy went to Dallas. Before I spoke to Mr. Zboril on 11/15/95, his wife had told me “Chuck had just joined the Secret Service at that time and hadn’t been in very long. [The Tampa, FL trip] was the last trip he took with [JFK].” Chuck then told me that “I normally don’t talk to anybody and I haven’t talked to anybody -- you’re the first one that I’ve talked to and I’m a little hesitant about saying a lot...I’d like to help you.... You’ve done a lot of research to come up with all those names and all.” Zboril confirmed he was one of the two agents who did indeed ride on the rear of Kennedy’s limousine on the Florida trip of 11/18/63 (the other was Donald J. Lawton -- more on him in a moment). Chuck went on to tell me: “We were close-mouthed for so long...the

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only one who really did any of the talking was Clint Hill."

Regarding the Warren Commission, Zboril said: "Well, Don Lawton and I are just sub-notes [sic] because somebody else testified in behalf of us about what happened in Tampa": that "somebody else" was Clint Hill, testifying to Arlen Specter about why agents were not on the rear of the car during the assassination [see [The Third Alternative](#), pp. 4-8]. When I asked him if it was true JFK had really ordered the agents off the limousine four days before Dallas (which I already knew not to be true!), Chuck got emotional: "WHERE DID YOU READ THAT? I...If--if you read it in the Warren Report, that's what happened...DO YOU WANT ME COMMENTING OFFICIALLY? I'm speaking to someone I don't know... I gave you more than I would give someone else." Zboril then gave me his address and requested that I send him anything on this matter and he promised to respond to me...he never did.

DONALD J. LAWTON, as mentioned above, was the other agent who rode on the rear of the limousine in Tampa on 11/18/63 (as verified in unpublished photos by Cecil Stoughton obtained by this author from the JFK Library; a small part of the start of the Tampa trip can be found in the David Wolper film "[Four Dark Days](#)"). Lawton was a member of Roberts' 8AM to 4PM shift (along with SAs John D. "Jack" Ready, William "Tim" McIntyre, Clinton J. Hill, Paul E. Landis, Jr., George W. Hickey, Jr., PRS Agent Glenn A. Bennett, and driver Samuel A. Kinney. Lawton, known for his protective work during JFK's trips to Chicago (3/23/63) and Tampa (11/18/63), was inexplicably left behind at Love Field on 11/22/63 with Dallas agents Roger C. Warner and William H. Patterson (and agent-in-name-only John J. "Muggsy" O'Leary from Kennedy's Senate days who handled luggage).

When I told Lawton what fellow agent Kinney told me, that JFK never ordered the agents off the rear of the limousine, he said "It's the way Sam said, yes." Asked to explain how he dismounted the rear of the limousine in Tampa, he said "I didn't hear the President say it, no. The word was relayed to us -- you know, 'Come back to the follow-up car.'" ASAIC Floyd M. Boring, riding in the front seat of the limo next to William R. Greer, radioed to ATSAIC Emory P. Roberts, who then told SAs Zboril and Lawton to fall back, a common occurrence, but one blamed on JFK after-the-fact to sell the idea that JFK was responsible for no agents being posted on the rear of the limo in Dallas four short days later. According to Lawton, JFK was "very personable...very warm." Asked about the tragedy in Dallas, Lawton said, "Everyone felt bad. It was our job to protect the President. You still have regrets, remorse. Who knows, IF THEY HAD LEFT GUYS ON THE BACK OF THE CAR...You can hindsight yourself to death." (emphasis added) As for ATSAIC Stout's presence on the Texas trip, Lawton said "I didn't know he was on the trip; I didn't know that...I didn't know that." Other agents doubted his presence on the trip, despite "official" documentation [see the author's article in the latest issue of [JFK/Deep Politics Quarterly](#)]. I am also the first one to interview Lawton about the assassination, although the HSCA did have his work address.

ROBERT E. LILLEY was a member of JFK's detail from Election Night, 1960 until October, 1963, when Lilley went to the Boston Office. Interviewed three times between 1992 and 1996, Lilley spoke to no one else before me (sounds familiar, huh?). Lilley was emphatic to me on all three occasions that JFK never ordered the agents to do anything. "Oh, I'm sure he didn't. He was very cooperative with us once he became president. Basically, 'Whatever you guys want is the way it will be.'" As just one example out of many, Lilley added that he rode on the rear of the limousine with Roy Kellerman in Caracas, Venezuela, and that the car reached speeds of over 50 miles an hour and the bubbletop was ON (it was a bright, humid day, as well). Regarding

the bubbletop, Lilley said he believes the top might have deflected a bullet.

Lilley told me Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, who normally made these trips, was "extremely knowledgeable" about motorcade planning and security concerns, because the Secret Service had "worked with Pierre on all of our advance work" -- except for Dallas....

SAMUEL A. KINNEY was the driver of the follow-up car on 11/22/63. Interviewed three times between 1992 and 1994, Kinney was a rich source of information. Regarding the notion that JFK ever ordered the agents to do anything, Sam said "That is absolutely, positively false....No, no, no, he had nothing to do with that [ordering agents off the rear of the limo]....No, never -- the agents say, 'o.k., men, fall back on your posts'....President Kennedy was one of the easiest presidents to ever protect; Harry S. Truman was a jewel just like John F. Kennedy was....99% of the agents would agree...[JFK] was one of the best presidents ever to control -- he trusted every one of us."

In regard to the infamous quote from William Manchester, whereupon Kennedy allegedly said "Keep those Ivy League charlatans off the back of the car" ([The Death of a President](#), p. 37, 1988 version), Kinney said, "That is false. I talked to William Manchester; he called me on the book [sic]....For the record of history that is false. Kennedy never ordered us to do anything. I am aware of what is being said but that is false." Finally, just to nail down this issue, I asked Sam if an exception was made on 11/22/63: "Not this particular time, no. Not in this case." Sam also told me JFK had nothing to do with the limiting of motorcycles during motorcades, and that Ken O'Donnell did not interfere with the agents: "Nobody ordered anyone around." Sam told me he did NOT speak to Gerald Posner!

As for the critical and controversial removal of the bubbletop on 11/22/63, Kinney was adamant: "I am the sole responsibility of that...Yes, I was." Asked if Kennedy ordered it off, Sam said "that is not true." In regard to SAIC of the Dallas office, Forrest V. Sorrels, who was alleged to have removed the top by Jim Lehrer ([A Bus of My Own](#), p. 83), Sam was equally adamant: "I knew him very well; he had nothing to do with it." As far as any regrets over his decision, Sam said "That's one of my thirty-year concerns -- whether I made the right decision or not." Kinney went on to say that the top "came in 7 pieces" and that the "only thing the bubbletop may have prevented- it may have distorted Oswald's sight [sic] or possibly caused a ricochet...it might deflect a bullet." Sam said the reason he took it off was that "We were down there on a political move," meaning a presidential movement that was POLITICAL in nature, as opposed to one that was merely for

Kinney was explicit: "He had no brain left-- it was blown out...there was nothing left...(it was) the back of the head. I saw it (the shot) hit and I saw his hair come out...I had brain matter all over my windshield and left arm, that's how close we were to it...it was the right rear part of his head...because that's the part I saw blow out."

the public, a matter in some dispute (i.e. between the Connally camp and the O'Donnell faction).

Sam said Kennedy "Would have survived the first one, probably. The second shot hit Connally right in the back; I remember talking to Connally and I've talked to him since then-- I said 'Governor, I'm the one who called you a son-of-a-bitch.' He said, 'I wondered who that was, but I knew I had to be taken out of there before you got the president out.' I saw all three shots hit" [without acknowledging the (known) missed shot (s)!]. In regard to JFK's head wound, Kinney was explicit: "He had no brain left. It was blown out...there was nothing left...[it was] the back of the head. I saw it [the shot [hit and I saw his hair come out...I had brain matter all over my windshield and left arm, that's how close we were to it...It was the right rear part of his head, because that's the part I saw blow out. I saw hair come out, the piece blow out, then the skin went back in -- an explosion in and out." After I told him that's where the Parkland doctors also saw the wound, Sam elaborated further stating, "I would say that, too...it involved half his head." Asked to explain the 1500 gram brain at the autopsy, Sam seemed perplexed, saying, "there was brain matter all over the place."

If that wasn't enough, Sam said, in regard to the "Today" show interview of 11/22/93, "I told them 'I'm going to tell you some things that haven't been in books yet: I brought a piece of the President's skull back in my suit pocket.' Now, all these books are wondering about this hole, this unbelievable missing part--I got the answer to that, but nobody's called me. I went over that automobile coming home. I found it [the skull fragment] on the plane (C-130) in the car and I put a phone patch in to Admiral Burkley who was a very good friend of mine--he was one hell of a man; I've got his picture on my wall along with the presidents and I thought just as much of him as I did them." Returning to the skull fragment, Kinney added that it looked "like a piece of a flowerpot, clean as a pin...like piece of a clay pot -- there wasn't blood or hair or anything on it...I don't know what else it could have been but the back of his head...mine was a big piece...I told him [Burkley], 'I may have something that is crucial to the autopsy...I gave [the fragment] to one of his aides.'" Interestingly, Sam was aware of the separate "Harper" fragment found 11/23/63.

"I believe there was a conspiracy," Kinney told me: "This thing was so well set up- whoever did the shooting -- he picked that area where he knew there wouldn't be any men by the car [!]." Sam told me PRS Agent Glenn A. Bennett was making his first trip, and that Assistant Press Secretary Mac Kilduff was (like ASAIC Roy H.

Kellerman) a third-stringer and HE was making his "first trip -- first official debut" without Assistant Press Sec. (#2) Andy Hatcher or Press Secretary Pierre Salinger. In regard to SAIC Gerald A. "Jerry" Behn's absence from

the Texas trip, leaving ASAIC (#2) Floyd M. Boring to be the agent in charge of the Texas trip, Kinney said: "I'll tell you how that happened. We got, as agents, federal employees, 30 days a year annual leave, but they couldn't let us off....There was only x amount of agents back then in the whole country. Jerry Behn probably worked three years without annual leave, so he decided to take some time off....Roy Kellerman was third in charge--he's qualified. Floyd Boring stayed home -- he could still handle whatever came about from his house; there was very little correspondence between because Win Lawson had the advance...Jerry Behn doesn't know anything because he wasn't there."

Amazingly, when I told Kinney there was a book- High Treason - that alleged that "Emory Roberts ordered the men not to move," Sam said, "Exactly right!" Interestingly, Kinney told me that Roberts became the "Off-Records Secretary to Johnson" [a Mrs. Juanita Roberts was LBJ's Chief Private Secretary]. In regard to Roberts' fellow ATSAIC Stout, Kinney told me that he died shortly after Dallas. Finally, while confirming that there were alternate routes, Sam would not give me a straight answer as to why the motorcade could not have travelled straight down Main Street to Industrial Blvd.

In- **F**LOYD M. BORING was the Assistant.-Special-Agent- Charge (ASAIC) of the WHD during the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and part of the Johnson years; he was the #2 man, behind SAIC Behn and ahead of #3 man Kellerman. I spoke to Boring twice from 1993 to 1994, and I am the only person to get Boring to talk in detail about the JFK years (U.E. Baughman's book Secret Service Chief, David McCullough's Truman, and Boring's Truman Library oral history deals almost exclusively with Harry S. Truman. The quote attributed to Boring in Manchester's book is false -- Floyd told me "I never told him that....No, no, no-- that's not true"). When asked, point blank, if JFK had ever ordered the agents off the rear of the limousine, including in Tampa on 11/18/63, Boring told me, "Well, that's not true. That's not true. He was a very nice man; he never interfered with us at all." In regard to Tampa, Floyd said "He actually -- No, I told them....He didn't tell them anything...He just -- I looked at the back of the car and I seen these fellahs (Zboril and Lawton) were hanging on the limousine -- I told them to return to the (follow-up) car...He [JFK] was a very easy-going guy; he didn't interfere with our actions at all."

As for his involvement in the planning of the Texas trip, Floyd told me simply "I was involved in that, yeah." In fact, he also told the Truman Library in 1988: "I was on all the advance work out of there....I did all of the advance work, sort of an administrator." [see also The Day Kennedy Was Shot by Jim Bishop, p. 558 (1992 edition) and my interviews with Sam Kinney mentioned above]. Incredibly, even more so that agent Lawton above, Floyd seemed to doubt that ATSAIC Stu Stout was even IN Dallas: "Oh, gee, I don't think so...then again, I guess I should have known he was there cause he died shortly thereafter."

GERALD A. "JERRY" BEHN was the SAIC of the WHD from September 1961 until January 1965, and had served in the Secret Service from 1941 until 1967. I spoke to Jerry Behn three times on 9/27/92. I was the first private researcher to interview Behn. Other than the FBI and the HSCA [documents only recently released], no one else had spoken to Behn in detail about 11/22/63, and the JFK administration. Behn joined many of his notable colleagues mentioned above denouncing the whole mythology of JFK ordering the agents off the rear of the

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limousine: "I don't remember Kennedy ever saying that he didn't want anybody on the back of his car. I think if you watch the newsreel pictures and whatnot [sic] you'll find agents on there from time to time." As just one of many examples, Behn cited the June 1963 trip to Berlin.

Although Behn was on the very next trip, El Paso, Texas, 6/5/63, riding in the limousine with Greer and Governor Connally, he did NOT make the Texas trip in the fall (El Paso was in the initial planning stages FOR the Texas trip; as we know, Behn took his first-ever vacation in the three years under JFK). When I asked Jerry what the HSCA asked of him in Executive Session [not the staff interviews just released], Behn told me he was asked two things: they wanted to know about the Florida trip (manned by ASAIC Boring) AND WHY THE ROUTE WAS CHANGED FOR DALLAS! (author's emphasis) Behn told me "I know it was changed, but why...I've forgotten completely -- I don't know." Interestingly, Jerry considered his January 1965 transfer out of the WHD a "demotion." Jerry passed away in April, 1993.

Other agents I interviewed were Rufus W. Youngblood (ASAIC of the LBJ detail on 11/22/63; interviewed 1992-1994; deceased October 1996), Robert I. Bouck (SAIC of PRS; interviewed 1992), Abraham W. Bolden, Sr. (WHD, 1961; Chicago Office, 1961-1964; interviewed 1993-1996), Maurice G. Martineau (SAIC of Chicago Office; interviewed 1993 and 1996), Winston G. Lawson (advance man, WHD; interviewed 1992), P. Hamilton Brown (Joe Kennedy, Sr. detail; interviewed 1992), Forrest V. Sorrels (SAIC of Dallas; interviewed 1992; deceased 1993), Richard E. Johnsen (keeper of CE399; interviewed 1992), Robert A. Steuart (Dallas office; interviewed 1992 and 1994); James J. Rowley (Chief, 1961-1973; interviewed 9/27/92; deceased 11/1/92), H. Stuart "Stu" Knight (SAIC of LBJ detail on 11/22/63, later Chief, 1973-1981; interviewed 1993-1994), Gerald S. "Jerry" Parr (SAIC of WHD, Carter-Reagan; interviewed 1995), and Bill Livingood (rookie Dallas agent, later WHD; interviewed 1992). I also interviewed Richard Greer (son of the late William R. Greer; interviewed 1991-1992), June Kellerman (wife of the late Roy H. Kellerman; interviewed twice in 1992), Sandra Kane (daughter of the now-deceased Jerry Behn; interviewed 1995), Jean Brownell Behn (wife of the now-deceased Jerry Behn; interviewed 1995), Marty Underwood (DNC advance man for Houston and Austin trips; interviewed 1992 [responsible for Livingstone's interview]), Dave Powers (aide, riding in follow-up car on 11/22/63; corresponded 1993), Cecil Stoughton (WH photographer on Texas trip; corresponded 1996), Gerry Patrick Hemming (intelligence operative; interviewed twice in 1992), and Jerrol Custer (x-ray technician at Bethesda on 11/22/63; interviewed with Livingstone, 11/22/91).

Needless to say, this was a rich body of primary-source information; luckily many of these people will not now go to their graves without revealing what they know about the tragic events of 11/22/63.

Mr. Palamara is a graduate of Duquesne University where he earned a degree in Sociology. In his research, he has contacted over twenty different former Secret Service agents,

White House aides, and surviving family members, resulting in the manuscript entitled [The Third Alternative- Survivor's Guilt: the Secret Service and the JFK Murder](#), (now re-published by JFK Lancer). Since 1991, His articles have been published in the following journals: [The Third Decade](#), [The Fourth Decade](#), [Investigator](#), [Back Channels](#), [Lobster](#), [JFK/Deep Politics Quarterly](#), and [Kennedy Assassination Chronicles](#)

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