Oswald and Ruby by Dave Raitzes
Based on "Harvey and Lee" by John Armstrong

Did Lee Harvey Oswald know Jack Ruby? Were they both part of an assassination plot? Researcher John Armstrong believes the answer to both questions is yes. This writer is less certain, but Armstrong makes quite a case, and it's tied inextricably to his case for two Osawalds, as discussed in Armstrong's "Harvey and Lee" and my adaptation of Armstrong's work, "Constructing the Assassin."

Armstrong believes that while Lee Harvey Oswald was in the Marines in Santa Ana, California, in the summer and fall of 1959, someone else using the name Lee Oswald was in New Orleans. Captain Valentine Ashworth, who met Oswald in New Orleans, told the FBI, "[B]efore he went to Russia, Oswald and myself were both trying to join the Cuban exiles. We went from New Orleans to Columbus, Ohio together to join the Cuban exile army. I can show you the bar where I first met Oswald and where we roomed at for a while in New Orleans. I can show you the motel where we stayed."

Ashworth may have been referring to the McBeth Rooming House at 2429 Napoleon Avenue in New Orleans, where page 26 of the rooming house's guest book showed "Lee Harvey Oswald" registered on June 28, 1959, in room "D" (1).

"A month later, Mrs. Gladys Davis was introduced to "Oswald" at her home in Coral Gables, Florida. In September 1959, she was living with Martinez Malo, who had numerous Cuban associates who came to their residence. A Cuban exile named Francisco Rodriguez Tamayo, aka 'Mexicano,' had introduced Oswald to her. This is the same timeframe during which onetime Castro mistress and CIA asset Marita Lorenz claims she met Oswald in a CIA safehouse in Miami. She knew him as 'Ozzie.' Apparently, Lee Oswald continued associating with Cuban exiles and their handlers for the next three years, while Harvey Oswald was in Russia (2).

"William Huffman told the FBI he saw Oswald 'sometime after Castro came to power' (January 1959). Oswald and four or five Cubans fueled a 43-foot Chris Craft diesel boat at his dock. Oswald telephoned a 'Ruben' in Key West, who came to the dock and paid for the fuel. 'Ruben' may have been Jacob Leon Rubenstein, better known as Jack Ruby, who is known to have run a well-funded operation running arms to Castro in the late 1950s from a house in Kemah, Texas. Neighbors were quite familiar with Jack Ruby, and remember his weekend trips to Cuba in a 50-foot surplus military craft loaded with guns" (3).

James E. Beaird told the FBI he became acquainted with Ruby in 1957, and recalled Ruby hauling arms to Castro's revolutionary army, mostly on weekends (4). Beaird told A. J. Weberman in 1977 that he'd met Ruby playing poker. "What I can't understand," Beaird said, "... there was enough people like myself who know all about this. The doggone thing is that he was so open with it. Why nobody came forward with this information beats me." He added, "Ruby never talked about Castro. The boat would get loaded and Ruby would leave by car. It was a well known fact the boat was headed to Cuba" (5).

On November 25, 1963, an FBI confidential informant whose name has not been released reported having known a racketeer named "Rubin" in the late 1940s in Daytona Beach, Florida. He advised the Bureau that photographs of Jack Ruby appeared similar to the "Rubin" he'd known. The informant
suggested a number of people who, if still alive, might be able to verify whether "Rubin" is definitely Jack Ruby. These included a Daytona bookie/gambling operator/pimp, a Daytona nightclub owner, a member of the South Daytona Police Department, and Tom Johnson, former Chief of Police of South Daytona. The first man and another were described as "buddies of Batista of Cuba when Batista [was] in this country" (6).

An FBI informant designated AT T-1 recalled that Ruby had lived in Daytona, Florida, for a while in the late 1940s. Another FBI informant, designated as AT T-2, Blaney Mack Johnson, also told the FBI that Ruby was in Florida in the early 1950s and was smuggling weapons and counterfeit money to leftist rebels in Cuba (7), that "in the early 1950s, Jack Ruby held interest in the Colonial Inn, a nightclub and gambling house in Hollandale, Florida... Ruby... was active in arranging illegal flights of weapons from Miami to the Castro organization in Cuba. According to a 1964 FBI interview with Johnson, Ruby was part owner of two planes used for these purposes, and Ruby subsequently left Miami and purchased a substantial share in a Havana gaming house in which Carlos Prio was principal owner. Prio was in favor of former Cuban leader Batista, but was instrumental in financing and managing accumulation of arms by pro-Castro forces (8).

Evidence suggests that Rubensteins became directly involved with smuggling and with US military counter-intelligence through his military service during World War II. His brother Sam Rubenstein served in the Army Air Corps, acting as a counter-intelligence informer to "keep an eye on Communists and Nazis" in the US military (10). There are strong indications that Ruby acted as a cut-out between his brother and Air Corps counter-intelligence, a position through which he may have obtained entree to the world of cloak and dagger (11).

Concurrent with his military service, Rubensteins maintained an unusual sideline, apparently organizing Communist cells in Muncie, Indiana, out of a second and third stories of a three-story apartment house, with an office on the second floor and the third which housed a union hall and doubled as an unpunished gambling operation on evenings and weekends (12).

A resident of the building, George Fehrenbach, testified to the Warren Commission that the second and third stories of the building saw a lot of activity by "Russian Jews" who were Communists (13). Fehrenbach became fairly well acquainted with Rubenstein during the Jewish "Communist's" intermittent visits to Muncie. Fehrenbach noted that "very seldom would there be over three or four people at any one time" at these call meetings (14), but that when Jack Rubenstein came to Muncie, "there was a meeting that apparently had some significance to it, because there were so many people coming in" (15).

Fehrenbach saw Jack Rubenstein for the last time in about early 1947, when Rubenstein visited the second-story office. Some days later, Fehrenbach found an unlabeled list of more than 100 names that was left by mistake on the third floor. The list included local people suspected of Communist sympathies. Fehrenbach stole the paper and turned it over to his father-in-law, a local police officer. For about six months during the second half of 1947, Fehrenbach was subjected to intensive surveillance. Every day when he left work, a car would follow him out to his rural home and park across the street for several hours. Fehrenbach's wife has confirmed this (16).

Ruby was discharged from the Army on February 17, 1946. In about October
1946, he was in Dallas, Texas, where his sister Eva Grant had been living since about 1943. He built a log cabin where he hosted a private nightclub open mainly on weekends. He also maintained a residence in Chicago. He was also spending a lot of time in Florida in the late 1940s, involved in various embryonic Mafia smuggling operations (17). Jack Rubenstein was a busy man.

In 1948, when the Communist Guatemalan government hired several hundred veterans of the Spanish Civil War, trained by the Soviet police in Spain to spy and inform on subversives, to burglarize and break up anti-Red centers, and to beat or assassinate political opponents, the United States embargoed all arms sales to Guatemala and convinced many other nations -- including Great Britain, Denmark, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, and Switzerland -- to break off sales agreements. Smugglers like Jack Ruby stepped in to fill the void, many of whom flew to Guatemala on small airplanes. FBI informant Blane Johnson reported that Joe Marrs Aircraft, Miami, Florida, contracted with Ruby to make flights to Havana. Leslie Lewis, formerly Chief of Police, Hialeah, Florida, and then employed by the Dade County, Florida, Sheriff's Office, knew of Ruby's activities, as did Clifton T. Bowes, Jr., formerly Captain of National Airlines, Miami, Florida. Johnson also indicated that the Colonial Club, in which Jack Rubenstein had an interest until its 1948 closing, was a conduit for counterfeit money (18).

Around January 1956, a pimp named James Breen met with Ruby to discuss collaboration in managing three prostitutes. However, Ruby was primarily interested in discussing narcotics smuggling. This was "a large narcotics setup operating between Mexico, Texas, and the East." A few days after that first meeting, Ruby returned with another man, and the two showed Breen a film of border guards, narcotics agents, and a Mexican contact. Breen was "enthused over what he considered an extremely efficient operation in connection with narcotics traffic." One typical load of narcotics was valued at about $350,000, and Breen received $2,400 (19).

Ruby's own role in the arms pipeline broadened when one of his Dallas gambling partners, Lewis J. McWillie, moved to Havana to become manager of the Mob-owned Tropicana Hotel. Ruby shipped weapons to Cuba through McWillie. Another Ruby associate from Dallas, Russell Douglas Matthews, a convicted narcotics smuggler, also opened a bar business in Havana in 1958 (20).

Mary Thompson met a man named "Jack" in May 1958 in Islamorada, Florida, through her brother, James Woodard. Jack, who also went by his middle name, Leon, was a stocky, dark-haired man who'd grown up in Chicago and now ran a bar in Dallas. Jack had a trunk full of guns, and made vague references to their intended recipients in Cuba. Jack spoke of arms caches hidden in the Florida marshes that were also destined for Cuba (21).

Thompson's daughter Dolores, who was with her on that occasion, confirmed the story. She added that her husband Richard Rhoads and her uncle James Woodard got drunk one night, and Woodard talked of his activities running guns to Cuba with Jack. "He said that Jack had a lot more guns than he did." Woodard admitted to the FBI he had participated in an invasion of Cuba prior to the Castro regime and also the Bay of Pigs invasion, and had furnished ammunition and dynamite to both Castro and Cuban exile forces, and later admitted to knowing Jack Ruby (22).

"In 1958, Ruby wrote a letter to the State Department's Office of Munitions Controls 'requesting permission to negotiate the purchase of
firearms and ammunition from an Italian firm." And the name "Jack Rubensteins" was listed in a 1959 Army Intelligence report on US arms dealers. Although located by clerks of these two federal agencies in 1963, both documents are today inexplicably missing" (23).

On January 1, 1959, Castro seized power in Cuba and arrested Santos Trafficante, the Mafia chief in Cuba. Until that time, the Communists, not the Castroites, had before that time been smuggling narcotics. The Castroites discredited and even legally charged the Communists for the past narcotics trading. The Mafia had been exporting weapons and importing narcotics from the Cuban Communists, not the Cuban Castroites. Trafficante told the HSCA that he simply had not expected Castro's victory (24).

Therefore, a new deal had to be negotiated. In the following weeks, Ruby tried to intercede through Robert McKeown, a personal friend of Fidel Castro's who had smuggled weapons to the Castro forces. Ruby asked McKeown, then living in Houston, to write a personal letter of introduction to Castro or otherwise help free Trafficante. Ruby later admitted to an attempt to send jeeps and "other similar equipment" to Castro as ransom for Trafficante's release (25). The deal with McKeown did not proceed past the discussion level, though the reference to jeeps may Shortly be significant.

Ruby was called in for questioning by the FBI several times, starting on April 28. In September 1959, Ruby traveled to Cuba twice, supposedly to visit Trafficante in prison on the pretense of visiting McWillie, who was now working at another Trafficante casino in the Capri Hotel in Havana. In prison with Trafficante was a Soviet agent named John Wilson, who had a CIA file stretching back to 1951. Wilson was outspoken as a pro-communist and foe of the United States, and, according to one CIA source in Chile, "very probably an intelligence agent" (26).

In prison in Cuba for attempting an authorized bomb raid against Batista, Wilson met Santos Trafficante who was avoiding several outstanding indictments in the US while living in relative luxury in a Cuban prison. Trafficante was visited frequently by Jack Ruby. One of Ruby's notebooks had this entry, which Dallas police located on the day Oswald was shot: "October 29, 1963 -- John Wilson -- bond." The FBI checked police and sheriff's records in Dallas to see if a John Wilson had made bond. The FBI also consulted two different private attorneys in Dallas whose names were John Wilson, but who had never had dealings with Ruby. The FBI could not explain the notebook entry (27). Wilson was connected to Guy Banister, David Ferrie, and Jack Martin -- all of whom knew Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963 -- through Martin's Old Roman Catholic Church, a bizarre CIA money-laundering front with agents literally dressed as priests, passing money to Cuban exiles in New Orleans (28).

The Warren Commission took a great deal of testimony from people who were little more than character witnesses for Jack Ruby. Despite the great heaps of paperwork available to them which characterized Ruby as a smuggler of arms and narcotics, a pimp, a man of some importance to the Chicago Mob, and an acquaintance of one Lee Harvey Oswald -- some of these reports actually published in the Commission's very own Hearings volumes -- the Commission was determined to prove that Jack Ruby was just as much the "loner" as Oswald was. Apologists for the Warren Commission such as Edward Jay Epstein have long argued that the Commission had neither the time nor resources to fully investigate the assassination (29). Yet of the hundreds of witnesses they could have called, most of
those they chose added little or nothing to the record.

One exception was a woman born Barbara Jean Zelidman in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on September 9, 1936, and rechristened at eight months by her adopted parents as Nancy Matthews. In 1963 she was Nancy Perrin, Perrin being the name of her third husband. By the time she testified before the Warren Commission, she was widowed and remarried. Nancy Perrin Rich had been a prostitute, Mob callgirl for the Genovese gang, "public relations person" for the liquor lobby in Boston and New Hampshire, and was currently a paid informant of the Oakland Police Department (30). She was the only person to speak candidly to the Warren Commission about Jack Ruby, and her testimony was dutifully recorded, transcribed, and ignored.

In early 1961 she was living in Belmont, Massachusetts with her third husband, Robert Perrin, when he ran out on her. She followed him to Dallas and then lost his trail. A friend of hers on the Dallas Police force got her a job bartending at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club. DPD Detective Paul Rayburn, a longtime acquaintance of Ruby's -- like virtually all Dallas cops -- admitted a close relationship with Perrin, but called her a "psychopathic liar" (31).

Rich wasn't thrilled with the Carousel Club. One part of her job that made her uneasy was serving liquor to a particular segment of Jack Ruby's clientele. She told Commission counsel Leon Hubert that, although it was illegal for Texas clubs to sell hard liquor, Ruby had issued a "standing order" that a "particular group of people" be served from a secret stash of spirits (32).

Mrs. RICH. . . . he would come in and say, "This is private stock stuff," that would mean for me to go where I knew the hard liquor was and get it out, and get it ready for the people in his private office.

Mr. HUBERT. What was the particular group -- who did it consist of?

Mrs. RICH. The police department.

Mr. HUBERT. Are you saying that Jack Ruby told you that when any member of the police department came in, that there was a standing order that you could serve them hard liquor?

Mrs. RICH. That is correct (32).

Did they pay? Mr. Hubert wanted to know. Of course not, she told him. Except when they came in with their wives (33).

When Rich's testimony addresses the claim that Ruby gained entry to the DPD's basement -- where he shot Oswald -- by sneaking in as a reporter, the reader can almost hear her eyes rolling.

Mrs. RICH. Anyone who made that statement would be either a damn liar or a damn fool.

Mr. HUBERT. Why?

Mrs. RICH. There is no possible way that Jack Ruby could walk in Dallas and be mistaken for a newspaper reporter, especially in the police department. Not by any stretch of the imagination.
Mr. HUBERT. Is that your opinion?

Mrs. RICH. That is not my personal opinion. That is a fact.

Mr. HUBERT. Well, on what do you base it?

Mrs. RICH. Ye gods, I don't think there is a cop in Dallas that doesn't know Jack Ruby. He practically lived at that station. They lived in his place. Even the lowest patrolman on the beat. He is a real fanatic on that, anyway.

Mr. HUBERT. When you say the lowest patrolman on the beat, what do you mean?

Mrs. RICH. Everybody from the patrolman on the beat in uniform to, I guess everybody with the exception of Captain Fritz, used to come in there, knew him personally. He used to practically live at the station. I am not saying that Captain Fritz didn't know him. I am saying he never was -- I have never seen him in the Carousel. He has always been, I think, a little too far above things for that.

Mr. HUBERT. Well, you have seen other high-ranking officers there?

Mrs. RICH. Yes; I have (34).

Rich had never cared for Ruby, but that wasn't why she quit her bartending job.

Mr. HUBERT. Are you suggesting that he did push you around?

Mrs. RICH. I am suggesting he threw me up against the bar and put a bruise on my arm, and only because Bud King and one of the dancers there pulled me off, I was going to kill him (35).

It seems the glasses weren't clean enough for Mr. Ruby, nor was Rich "pushing drinks to the customers fast enough" (36).

Mrs. RICH. . . . And I was refused the privilege of bringing an assault and battery suit against him.

Mr. HUBERT. Who refused you that?

Mrs. RICH. The police department. I went down for information and was going to Mr. Douglas . . . he is with the DA's office . . . I wanted to file suit against Ruby. And I was refused. I was told if I did that I would never win it and get myself in more trouble than I bargained for.

Mr. HUBERT. That was told to you by whom?

Mrs. RICH. By the Dallas Police Department (37).

At this time Rich's once-cordial relationship with the DPD cooled off rather suddenly. She was arrested and detained on several occasions: " . . . One time I was in jail for a couple of hours, the other time 5 hours, because they could not get hold of [her lawyer] . . . I was arrested for
investigation of vag, narcotics . . . vagrancy. Narcotics, prostitution, and anything else they could dream up. This is very shortly after I had threatened to go and bring suit against Mr. Ruby. I was told I might find the climate outside of Dallas a little more to my liking if I didn't take the advice of the police department" (38).

Rich describes an unusual employment opportunity she and her husband, now reunited, looked into during the summer of 1962. She describes a meeting the couple attended with University Club bartender Dave Cherry, where they were introduced to a US Army Colonel who offered the couple $10,000 to pilot a boatload of anti-Castro refugees out of Cuba into Miami. Nancy began to get cold feet when she learned that she and her husband wouldn't only be ferrying Cubans out of Cuba, but also bringing a load of Enfield rifles into Cuba, along with an unspecified lot of weapons that had recently gone missing at a nearby military base (39).

Ruby was involved with gunrunning through November 18, 1963, when he and three other men saw a transfer of machine guns go awry when one of the four turned out to be a law enforcement informant, and the transfer a sting operation. Two of the four received jail sentences while the informant's identity was kept confidential; the two men's court records were sealed, as they remain today. Ruby was never arrested, and there is no evidence that he was ever questioned about the arrangement, although even the fourth man, the informant, was in a Dallas holding cell on November 22, 1963 (40).

Rich told the Warren Commission she was beginning to "smell a fish" at this meeting with the colonel. Or more specifically, "I smelled an element that I did not want to have any part of."

Mr. HUBERT. And what element was that?

Mrs. RICH. Police characters, let's say (41).

Rich also sensed that the colonel had some financial worries, but these seemed to vanish when a new party arrived on the scene to give Nancy Perrin Rich "the shock of my life. I am sitting there. A knock comes on the door and who walks in but my little friend Jack Ruby," and Rich ascertained from the suddenly lightening of the colonel's mood that his economic woes were over, "like here comes the Saviour, or something. And he [Ruby] took one look at me, I took one look at him, and we glared, we never spoke a word . . . He bustled on in. The colonel rushed out in the kitchen or bathroom [with Ruby], I am not sure which. Ruby had -- and he always did carry a gun -- and I noticed a rather extensive bulge in his -- about where the breast pocket would be. But at that time I thought it was a shoulder holster, which he was in the habit of carrying" (42).

Ten or fifteen minutes later, Ruby and the colonel returned to the room, and Rich observed that the conspicuous bulge in Ruby's breast pocket had disappeared. Ruby departed, and oddly enough, the colonel suddenly announced that he was ready to go "down to Mexico to make arrangements to pay for the guns. All of a sudden just before Ruby came in they couldn't go, and right after Ruby left they were on the plane the next morning, so to speak" (43).

The Perrins decided to back out of the deal, and it was the last time Rich saw Ruby until he shot Oswald on live television (44).
In early 1964, Leon Hubert and Burt Griffin, the Warren Commission staff attorneys in charge of investigating Ruby, wrote a detailed memo to General Counsel J. Lee Rankin, bitterly protesting the lack of support their investigation was receiving, and warning Rankin that without thorough investigation, Oswald and Ruby's mutual interest in Cuban affairs would be an obvious target for critics upon the Report's publication. Their suggestions to subpoena witnesses largely ignored, their appeals falling on deaf ears, Hubert and Griffin went home, effectively resigning their positions with the Commission. When Earl Warren and Gerald Ford flew to Texas to interview Ruby, neither Hubert nor Griffin was invited along (45).

It may be said that there are two primary myths about Jack Ruby that need to be discarded. The first gives us little trouble, as few people believed it in the first place. This is the Warren Commission's claim that "the evidence does not establish a significant link between Jack Ruby and organized crime" (46).

The second myth is that Ruby was strictly small-time -- a "two-bit pawn." The House Select Committee studying the JFK assassination dismissed the first myth, but couldn't face the implications involved in dispelling the second. As historian Peter Dale Scott has noted, "... Blakey and the House Committee, even if more candid than the Warren Commission, had launched a new caricature of Ruby to replace the earlier one, both caricatures downplaying Ruby's relevance to local politics, to law enforcement, and even to narcotics" (47).

Scott writes, "... Blakey's omission of the Ruby-narcotics story was systematic, indeed total. He ignored, above all, a story from a reliable FBN [DEA-predecessor Federal Bureau of Narcotics] informant, transmitted back in 1956 by the Los Angeles FBI to the Dallas FBI, suggesting that Ruby was, as many other witnesses had suggested, a payoff or liaison connection between narcotics activities and the Dallas Police Department. The informant, Eileen Curry, reported that 'her husband [James Breen] had made connection with [a] large narcotics set-up operating between Mexico, Texas, and the East... In some fashion James got the okay to operate through Jack Ruby of Dallas" (48).

What action did the Dallas FBI take? An FBI form memo sent to the Special Agent in Charge from agent Charles Alier in Dallas, gives background on a "PCI", or Potential Criminal Informant. The "date developed" is March 11, 1959, and the informant described in detail is Jack Ruby, owner of the Vegas Club in Oak Lawn, Texas. In his 1996 book Assignment: Oswald, FBI agent James Hosty, who'd been in charge of the "Oswald case" in Dallas, admitted that Jack Ruby had been an FBI informant all the while he was engaging in narcotics smuggling, gunrunning, prostitution, and various operations in and out of Cuba (49).

There was a massive pipeline of drugs, guns, prostitutes and cash flowing back and forth between Mexico and the East, with keys connections in Dallas, New Orleans and Miami. The major players were hardly stereotypical drug "kingpins," making deals while somehow flying underneath the radar of the law enforcement community. The key men all were law enforcement figures, men like Guy Banister in New Orleans, who facilitated this same Mexico-Dallas-New Orleans-Miami pipeline with the help of New Orleans chieftain Carlos Marcello, but whose operation was deeply ensnared with the CIA, the FBI, the local police, and military intelligence. An employee of Banister's in 1963, Mary Brengel, was shocked to discover her boss was working with Marcello. Benister curiously informed her, "There are principles being violated [by Communists], and..."
if this goes on it could affect everyone in the United States" (50).

Not only did the Warren Commission have reliable information that Ruby "was supposed to have influence with the police" (51), that "in order to operate in Dallas it was necessary to have the clearance of Jack Ruby" who "had the 'fix' with the county authorities" (52). Peter Dale Scott sums it up best: "The 'two-bit pawn' portrait of Ruby, assuredly, was almost as defective as the 'loner' portrait, in its downplaying of Ruby's links to both local and federal law enforcement" (53).

We have heard a suggestion that Jack Ruby was acquainted with Lee Harvey Oswald. Here are some more:

"Robert Price, Dolores Price and a former Ruby employee saw Ruby and Oswald together at the Escapades Lounge in Houston on April 11, 1963. They stayed four hours and said they were scheduled to leave from Alvin, Texas, at 6:30 pm by plane for Cuba (54).

"George Faraldo, airport manager at Key West, Florida, took both movie film and still photos of a group of people, including both Ruby and Oswald, boarding a plane for Cuba" (55). HSCA investigator Gaeton Fonzi was unable to locate the film.

"Vern Davis, who had known Ruby for ten years, saw and spoke with Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald at Jack's bar on Exposition Street in Dallas" (56).

In the spring and summer of 1963, Dorothy Marcum dated Jack Ruby. She was certain that Oswald and Ruby not only knew each other, but that Oswald had worked for Ruby in June and July 1963. When Jack Ruby's Oldsmobile needed work, mechanic Robert Roy said it was Lee Oswald who delivered the car and whom Roy drove back to the Carousel Club, not once, but several times (57).

A December 11, 1963, DPD report signed by Detective S. W. Biggio states that Oswald reportedly had been seen driving Jack Ruby's car on several occasions. The source is an acquaintance of another mechanic of Ruby's. This was not Robert Roy, but another mechanic who'd worked on Ruby's car, William J. Chesher, who Detectives Biggio and Stringfellow attempted to contact -- apparently for the first time -- on April 2, 1964. Their April 3 report states that Chesher had indicated (presumably to the police's informant) that Oswald "had been driving Jack Ruby's automobile for approximately two months and that he (the mechanic) knew this because Oswald had brought Ruby's car to his garage for repairs." Unfortunately, "the officers were informed that subject [Chesher] had died on March 31, 1964, of a heart attack." (58)

"Ruby used to park his car at Gibbs Auto Service on Field Street. Leon Woods, the manager, kept a record of who borrowed Jack Ruby's car from the garage after receiving permission from Ruby. The FBI took the "check-out and check-in" book that reflected the use of Ruby's car and never returned it. When Dallas reporter Earl Golz asked the FBI about Gibbs Auto Service and the check-in/check-out book, they said they knew nothing about it" (58).

Frances Irene Hise, while visiting Ruby at the Carousel Club, saw a person enter through the back door. Ruby said, "Hi, Ozzie," and told him to go to the back room. When Ruby finished speaking with Miss Hise, he joined "Ozzie." On another occasion the man came into the club and asked Hise if he could buy her a drink. She later said there was "no doubt" in her mind that the man was Oswald (59).
"Clyde Limbaugh was another employee who had worked for Jack Ruby for three years. He recalled seeing Oswald in Ruby's office on three occasions" (60).

"On November 14, Ruby and Oswald visited the New Port Motel in Morgan City, Louisiana. Corrinne Villard, who had known Ruby since 1947, spoke with him for half an hour" (61).

Dozens of people saw Oswald and Ruby together in the summer and fall of 1963. William Crowe, an entertainer who'd performed at the Carousel Club, told the Associated Press that he was "positive" he'd seen Oswald in the Carousel Club (62). Crowe told the *Dallas Morning News* the same thing a few days later. One of Ruby's dancers, Janet Conforto, aka "Jada," told the Dallas *Times-Herald* shortly after the assassination she'd seen Oswald in the Carousel Club. Stripper Kathy Kay told several Dallas newsmen that she'd seen Oswald in the Carousel before the assassination and had even danced with him on one occasion. Bobbie Louise Merserele, who danced at the Carousel under the name Shari Angel, told researcher Jim Marrs that she remembers laughing with Kathy Kay about an incident when Ruby told Kay to dance with Oswald and do a flamboyant bump-and-grind to embarrass him (63).

Shari Angel's husband, Walter "Wally" Weston, was the Carousel's master of ceremonies until five days before the assassination. In 1976, he told the New York *Daily News* he had seen Ruby and Oswald together in the club at least twice. He recalls one especially notable occasion: "I was working in the club one night approximately three weeks before the assassination. . . . doing my bit, and this guy was standing near the back wall. . . . The guy walked right in front of the stage, and for no reason he said, 'I think you're a Communist.' I said, 'Sir, I'm an American. Why don't you sit down.' He said, 'Well, I still think you're a Communist.' so I jumped off the stage and hit him. Jack was right behind him. . . . Jack grabbed him and said, 'You son of a bitch, I told you never to come in here.' And he wrestled him to the door and threw him down the stairs" (64).

Weston said he recognized Oswald after the assassination as the man from the club, but did not say anything about it when questioned by the FBI. He had discussed the incident with others at the club: "Billy Willis [the Carousel's drummer] saw me hit him. When I discussed it with him [and Kathy Kay], he said, "Wally, the best thing to do is stay out of it. Don't say anything. That's what I'm going to do. I don't want any part of this." Bill Willis had seen Oswald in the club, too; he'd told Weston he remembered him sitting "right in the corner of the stage and runway." Weston visited Ruby in jail several times. He recalled, "The one time I mentioned it to him, I said, 'Jack, wasn't that the guy I hit in the club?' He just looked at me and didn't say yes or no" (65).

Stripper Karen Lynn Bennett, aka Karen Bennett Carlin, aka Teresa Norton, aka "Little Lynn," testified for the defense at Jack Ruby's trial; she was the stripper who Ruby had wired money mere minutes before arriving at the DPD to shoot Oswald. Carlin told FBI agent Roger Warner on November 24, 1963, that "she was under the impression that Lee Oswald, Jack Ruby, and other individuals unknown to her were involved in a plot to assassinate President Kennedy." This matter wasn't brought up at Ruby's trial (66).

There are so many accounts of Oswald and Ruby together that it's difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff -- if indeed wheat there
is. Momentous events virtually always bring forward a number of well-intentioned but mistaken or deluded witnesses who believe they have something to contribute, to say nothing of charlatans eager for attention or profit. The Warren Commission theorized that if anyone genuinely saw someone similar to Oswald at the Carousel Club, it was probably Larry Craford, a roostabug employed briefly by Ruby who bears a resemblance to Oswald. Craford, however, only worked for Ruby for a few weeks, and not a single person identified the photo of Craford as the man they'd seen—although it must be granted that by the time the Commission was taking testimony, Oswald's face had thoroughly saturated the print and television media.

There are dozens of alleged Oswald-Ruby sightings that have been filtered out of the literature over the years by researchers for any number of dubious elements. A few questionable "sightings" have made appearances here and there, however. For example, one story that John Armstrong doesn't cite in his work is that of Beverly Oliver, who says she was a stripper at a rival club who used to visit her friend Jada frequently at the Carousel Club. Oliver told the BBC in the mid 1980s that she had once been introduced by Jada to Jack Ruby and Oswald, and that Ruby had introduced him as "Lee Oswald of the CIA" (67). Oliver Stone chose to use Beverly Oliver's story in the film JFK (68). Researchers are often unresponsive to Oliver less for this particular tale than for others she's come up with over the years, some or even all of which may be true. However, it is safe to say her credibility is less than 100%.

There's also the story of Ester Ann Mash, which Jim Marrs reports in Crossfire. Mash says she was working as a hostess and "champagne girl" at the Carousel Club in the late spring of 1963 when Ruby had her serve drinks in a private room of the Carousel to a select group of men. In addition to Ruby, Mash says there were five men dressed in suits who "looked like gangsters out of some movie. There was another man, dressed real casual -- he didn't look like he fit in with the rest of the group at all... That man was Lee Harvey Oswald. I really remember him because he was so unusual from the rest. He kept ordering beer. Everyone else drank mixed drinks but not this wimpy-looking little guy. I might not remember a name, but I always remember a face... [A]lthough I did not overhear what they were talking about at the time, I am convinced that they were discussing killing Kennedy. I knew it had something to do with the Mafia because everybody in town in those days knew Ruby had something to do with that mob. Also, Jack asked me to take care of those guys, so later I played up to them a little and discovered they were Mafia guys from Chicago... [Later] I didn't want to be involved, so I kept quiet." She recalled Oswald staying behind to watch the club's strippers after the five mobsters and Ruby had left: "He couldn't take his eyes off them" (69).

Another story Marrs passes along comes "from a credible, if eccentric, attorney named Carroll Jarnagin. Jarnagin explained to Marrs in 1988 that he visited Ruby's Carousel Club on October 4, 1963, to discuss a legal case with one of Ruby's strippers. While seated in a booth at the club, Jarnagin overheard Jack Ruby -- whom he knew well -- talking with another man. Jarnagin heard the man tell Ruby, 'Don't use my real name. I'm going by the name of O. H. Lee.' This, of course, was the name used by Lee Harvey Oswald to rent a room on North Beckley in Oak Cliff" (70). Jarnagin continued:

These men were talking about plans to kill the governor of Texas. Ruby explained, "He [Governor Connally] won't work with us on paroles. With a
few of the right boys out we could really open up this state, with a little cooperation from the governor." Then Ruby offered Lee a drug franchise. Ruby also said that the boys really wanted to kill Robert Kennedy. Lee offered to go to Washington to do the job. They then discussed using public lockers and pay telephones as part of hiding their plot. Ruby assured Lee that he could shoot Connally from a window in the Carousel Club and then escape out a back door. Lee was asking for money. He wanted half the money in advance, but Ruby told him he would get one lump sum after the job was done (71).

Jarnagin took notes of this conversation, which are reproduced as CE 2821. He says he contacted the Texas Department of Safety on October 5, 1963, and reported the conversation. After the assassination he recognized Oswald as "O. H. Lee," and contacted both the DPD and the FBI.

John Armstrong believes this was indeed the man the world knows as Lee Harvey Oswald (72). However, Oswald did not rent the room at 1026 North Beckley as "O. H. Lee" until over a week later, on Monday, October 14. On October 4, 1963, he was staying with Marina at the house of Ruth Paine in Irving, Texas. Another man identified as Lee Harvey Oswald is believed to have been in southern Texas at this time, not in Dallas (73). This author does not endorse Jarnagin's story.

In early November, "Jack Ruby and a man believed to be Lee Harvey Oswald were at the Contract Electronics store in Dallas at 3 pm for approximately one hour. The store personnel, Kermit Patterson, Donald Stuart and Charles Arndt, discussed the buying and selling of electronic equipment with them. Patterson identified Lee Harvey Oswald from New Orleans Police photographs as the person he saw in his store. He said Oswald had a tattoo on his left forearm" (74). The Oswald we know had no tattoo, but another man using the name Lee Harvey Oswald was also reported to have a tattoo" (75).

At 9:00 pm on November 21, 1963, while Lee Harvey Oswald was in Irving, Texas, at the Paine house with his wife and daughters, there was a knock on an apartment door in Oak Cliff. Helen McIntosh, a guest in the apartment, answered the door. A man she would later identify as Lee Harvey Oswald asked her if a man named Jack Ruby was in. McIntosh asked her friend if she knew a Jack Ruby; her friend said that Jack Ruby lived in the apartment next door, and McIntosh relayed this information to the young man, Lee Oswald. She forgot the incident until she saw Oswald on the television the following evening (76).

On March 28, 1976, the Dallas *Morning News* ran an unusual story when four Dallas deputy constables decided to come forward to relate something that had been bothering them for a very long time. Shortly after the assassination the four had examined a box of handwritten notes and assorted other papers in the Dallas County Courthouse, a number of which apparently linked Oswald and Ruby. Deputy Billy Preston, Constable Robie Love, and deputy constables Mike Callahan and Ben Cash all recalled that this box had come from the apartment of a Dallas woman (77).

Preston said, "She was really scared because she had all that stuff. She wanted me to pick it up for her. And I just wished I had made some more copies now." The men couldn't for the life of them remember the name of the woman, except Preston thought her first name was Mary. He recalled that the papers were apparently written by Lee Harvey Oswald. Ben Cash disagreed, recalling that the woman had a live-in "Latin American"
boyfriend, and Cash thought the papers had been his. He told reporter Earl Golz that "... he mentioned Ruby and he mentioned Oswald in the writings. He didn't mention the third party but he kept referring to a third party. And the third party would have to be him." According to Preston and Love, the box was turned over to Dallas DA Henry Wade in late 1963 or early 1964; Wade told the Morning News that he had no recollection of such a box of papers (78).

The deputies tried to recall some of the box's contents. They named newspaper clippings from Mexico; a photocopy of a "Daily Worker" press card issued to Jack Ruby; a motel receipt from early November 1963 with both Ruby and Oswald's name on it, as well as references to phone calls made to Mexico City; papers mapping out a landing strip in Mexico; references to meetings with some kind of "agents" in McAllen and Laredo, Texas (near the Mexico border); a church brochure with handwritten notations concerning a trip to Cuba; and a handwritten note detailing a plan to assassinate President Kennedy during the dedication of a lake or dam in Wisconsin. No one has seen hide nor hair of this mysterious box full of papers since the deputies transferred custody of it (79).

On the evening of November 20, 1963, Lt. Francis Fruge of the Louisiana State Police, was on duty patrolling Highway 190, near Eunice, when he came upon a woman who'd been abandoned by the side of the road. She told Fruge that her name was Rose Cheramie, explaining that she was en route from Miami to Houston via Dallas. While stopped at a bar called the Silver Slipper, a heated argument developed between her and the two "Latin" men she was traveling with, whereupon they were ejected. Later the men abandoned her on the road, after which she was struck by another vehicle, but not seriously injured. Rose Cheramie, born October 14, 1923 as Melba Christine Marcades, had a State Police rap-sheet stretching back to 1941, detailing dozens of offenses, ranging from vagrancy to car theft to prostitution. By 1947 she was considered criminally insane (80).

Cheramie had minor abrasions consistent with being struck by a car, but she was suffering much more from narcotics withdrawal symptoms: she was a nine-year mainlining heroin addict, and had her last fix at 2:00 pm that afternoon. She was taken to the Eunice Jail to "sober up." At 10:30pm, as Cheramie's condition deteriorated, medical help in the form of the Assistant Coroner of St. Landry Parish, Dr. F. J. DeRouen, was summoned. The doctor administered a sedative, although he described the patient as being "coherent" at that time. DeRouen was recalled later that evening when Cheramie became violent and began repeatedly cutting herself. The doctor agreed to commit her to Jackson's East Louisiana State Hospital for treatment (81).

Fruge accompanied the patient on the hour-plus journey. When he asked about her business in Dallas, she replied that she and her companions had set out to "pick up some money, pick up her baby, and kill Kennedy." Although Fruge later described Cheramie as "quite lucid" at this time, he understandably chose to ignore this warning as being the ramblings of a dope addict (82).

Two days later, when Lt. Fruge heard the news of President Kennedy's assassination, he immediately telephoned the hospital and asked them not to release Cheramie until he had spoken with her. By Monday, Cheramie had recovered enough to be interviewed. She said that as a result of connections made while working for a Dallas-based narcotics trafficker named Jack Ruby, she had been on a drug run from Miami to Houston. Cheramie and her two companions were to stop in Dallas on the way to
Houston, where the two men had been contracted to kill the President. They would then collect $8000 from a person she refused to identify, and proceed on to Houston where the trio would purchase 8 kilos of heroin from a seaman who was bringing it in by boat to the port of Galveston. The final part of the plan involved escaping to Mexico (83).

Cheramie volunteered "that she once worked for Jack Ruby as a stripper, which was verified." When he had interviewed Cheramie at the hospital, Fruge said she had given him the names of her traveling companions. One, she divulged, had been called Osanto, the other was Sergio Arcacha Smith, a man who had once headed the New Orleans chapter of the CIA-backed anti-Castro Cuban Revolutionary Council in an office donated by rabid anti-Communist and alleged Oswald associate William Guy Banister (84). Years later, assisting the Garrison investigation, Fruge visited the Silver Slipper Lounge and interviewed the owner, Mac Manual. Manual remembered the incident with Cheramie and her two companions, and picked out mug shots of both Arcacha Smith and Osanto from the stack that Fruge showed to him. Manual recognized the two men as regular transporters of prostitutes in and out of Miami (85).

Cheramie furnished the officer with details of not only the names of her companions, but also the name of the ship that was bringing the drugs into Galveston and the name of the ship in Houston where the transaction would take place. Armed with this information, Fruge informed his superiors who told him to follow up on it. On Thursday Cheramie was released into his custody and placed under arrest (86).

Customs officers at the port of Galveston established that the ship Cheramie specified was due to dock at the time she'd stated, and the seaman she had named was indeed on board. (Customs officials trailed the seaman as he left the ship but lost him shortly after.) The customs officer in Galveston also verified the name of the man whom Cheramie had said was holding her son (87).

When Cheramie saw a newspaper with headlines that indicated that the police were unable to find a link between Oswald and his killer, Jack Ruby, Cheramie laughed out loud, telling the officer that she had worked for "Pinky" in his Dallas nightclub and that he and Oswald "had been shackling up for years . . . They were bed-mates" (88).

Fruge telephoned the Dallas Police Department and spoke to Homicide's Captain Will Fritz. Fritz was dismissive of Fruge's information and said that, as the assassin was dead and his assailant was in custody, he was "not interested." Fruge released Cheramie. The drug transaction Cheramie said would take place in the Rice Hotel in Houston came to pass without interruption (89).

In the early morning of September 4, 1965 she was involved in an accident on Highway 155, 1.7 miles east of the town of Big Sandy, Upshur County, Texas and died later that day of head injuries received: "Traumatic head wound with subdural & subarachnoid & Petechial Hemorrhage to the brain caused by being struck by auto." One of her injuries was described as a "deep punctate stellate [star-shaped] wound above her right forehead," consistent with a bullet wound fired at close range (90).

The Warren Commission tells us that Jack Ruby was not in Dealey Plaza during the assassination. But on that day "Jack Ruby had telephoned a friend and asked if he would 'like to watch the fireworks.' Unknown to Ruby, his friend was an informant for the criminal intelligence division.
of the Internal Revenue Service. He and Ruby were standing at the corner of the Postal Annex Building [in Dealey Plaza] at the time of the shooting," according to the informant (91). There are other unconfirmed reports of Jack Ruby in Dealey Plaza that day, though neither John Armstrong nor this author endorse all of them (92).

In the wee small hours of November 24, 1963, the Dallas Police Department received numerous telephoned threats on Oswald's life. Officer Billy Grammer was manning the phones that night when he received a call from someone with a familiar voice he couldn't place, warning him that Oswald would be killed if the police didn't bring him out secretly. Grammer was home the next morning watching the transfer on television when saw his longtime pal Jack Ruby shoot Oswald. He immediately realized that Ruby had been the caller of the previous night and swore an affidavit to this effect. The Warren Commission did not call Grammer as a witness (93).

For all Ruby's protests that he snuffed Oswald "for Jackie," on the weekend of the assassination, John Armstrong believes that Ruby was in it up to his eyeballs. When Dallas DA Henry Wade stumbled through one of several press conferences on November 22, he named Oswald as a member of the 'Free Cuba Committee.' A voice corrected him from the gallery: "That's the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Henry." The voice belonged to Jack Ruby (94). And he knew whereof he spoke.

NOTES:

Unless otherwise indicated, John Armstrong's source is the microfilm record of FBI assassination-related documents released in 1978.

2. JA 2, 21.
3. JA 2, 21.
4. FBI Phoenix 89-42; cited in Weberman Web site [LINK 1]; JA 2, 21.
5. Weberman Web site.
6. FBI Atlanta 44-1559-2; Weberman Web site.
7. CE 3063, pp. 634-35, 638; cited in Mike Sylwester, "Jack Ruby, Smuggling with and Spying on Communists" available here:
8. Ibid.
9. 14 H 503; Sylwester.
10. Sylwester.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. 15 H 289; Sylwester.
14. 15 H 300; Sylwester.
15. 15 H 316; Sylwester.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. 9 HSCA 524-86; Sylwester.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. David Scheim, *Contract on America,* 221; Sylwester.
25. Hall Exhibit No. 3; Sylwester.
26. Sylwester.
28. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. 14 H 341.
33. Ibid.
34. 14 H 359.
35. 14 H 343.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
40. Carol Hewett, "Methinks Thou Dost Protest Too Much!", available HERE

41. 14 H 349.
42. 14 H 349-50.
43. 14 H 350.
44. Ibid.
45. John Armstrong, JFK/Lancer November in Dallas conference (hereafter JA 8); Jim's Hargrove transcription of John Armstrong's 1998 JFK/Lancer November in Dallas presentation is available on-line at:

46. WR 801.
47. Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK,* 128.
49. Ibid.
51. 23 H 363: Scott, 131.
52. 23 H 372: Scott, 132.
53. Scott, 132.
54. JA 8.
55. JA 8.
56. JA 8.
57. JA 2, 22; JA 8.
58. JA 8.
59. JA 2, 22; JA 8.
60. JA 8.
61. JA 8.
66. Sylvia Meagher's *Accessories after the Fact* reports that Bennett was found shot to death in a Dallas motel under the name of Teresa Norton in August 1964; newsman Penn Jones' *Forgive My Grief* says she died in Houston during 1965. In the early 1990s, Texas researcher J. Gary Shaw began received several phone calls from a woman who said she was a friend of Bennett's, and that the onetime stripper was alive. Investigator Richard Waybright searched for Bennett's death certificate in Dallas and Houston, and couldn't find one under any of her names. She testified before the Warren Commission as late as August 24, 1964. "Teresa Norton had a baby boy on April 23, 1964, in Fort Worth (citing a report of the Associated Press, April 25, 1964). This baby still does not have a name. We would like to find him. A record of the birth is still unattainable" (Harrison Livingstone, *High Treason 2,* 84). A March 1964 photograph of Karen Bennett Carlin at Ruby's trial shows her visibly pregnant (Groden, *The Search for Lee Harvey Oswald,* 214), a condition discussed in her Warren Commission testimony.
68. Granted, it was one of his lesser mistakes.
70. Marrs, 409; also citing CE 2821, 26 H 254-57.
71. Ibid.
72. cf. 1997 Lancer script; Jerry Robertson's transcription of the 1997 presentation is available on-line here
73. See Reitzes, "Constructing the Assassin, Part 3."
74. JA 2, 24.
75. See Reitzes, "Constructing the Assassin, Part 3."
76. JA 8.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. 10 HSCA 201-3; Chris Mills, "Rambling Rose," available on-line at: Here
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. See Reitzes, "Oswald in New Orleans, Part 2."
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. JA 2, 26.
92. JA 2, 26.
94. 5 H 159, 223; 15 H 567.