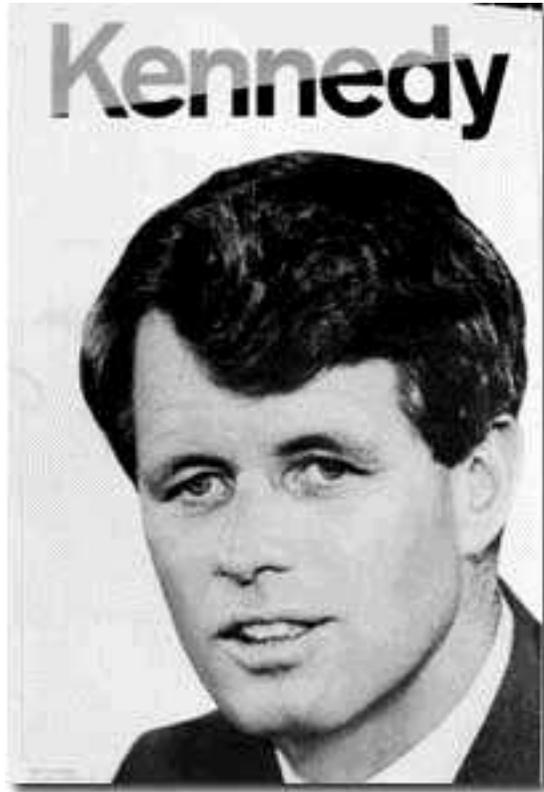


**The Girl in the Polka Dot Dress:
New Light on the Assassination
of Robert F. Kennedy**

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Carl Wernerhoff



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*To Sirhan Sirhan
and all other victims of
J. Edgar Hoover's
long reign of terror*

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New Light on the Assassination of RFK

Introduction

Senator Robert F. Kennedy, scion of the Kennedy dynasty which produced the country's best loved president, John F. Kennedy (assassinated in 1963), emerged as one of the most progressive voices in the United States in the late 1960s. As one of the few politicians capable of reaching the presidency who had both the heart and the brains to create a better society, Kennedy represented a serious threat to the corporate-controlled behemoth into which the United States has degenerated since the Civil War.

As the brother of President Kennedy, and President Kennedy's Attorney-General, Bobby Kennedy was very much a political animal. It was widely assumed that sooner or later he would run for the presidency in his own right. Until President Lyndon B. Johnson announced his decision not to stand for re-election in 1968, it looked like Kennedy would not run until 1972. But after Johnson unexpectedly stood down and he won the California primary, Kennedy was on track to win the presidency in 1968.

If Kennedy had escaped assassination, he would certainly have won the Democratic party's nomination for its presidential candidate. If he had contested the 1968 election against Republican candidate Richard M. Nixon, he would almost certainly have won. Although in the end Johnson's vice-president, Hubert Humphrey, lost to Nixon by only a very narrow margin, Bobby Kennedy had many assets Humphrey did not have that would have taken him over the line. Not only did Kennedy possess the Kennedy family charisma, he was an

opponent of the Vietnam War. His elevation to the presidency would also have been seen by many Americans as a means of righting the grievous wrong that occurred in 1963, when John F. Kennedy's presidency was terminated just as it was hitting its stride. In short, Bobby Kennedy possessed a number of assets which would have significantly boosted the Democratic party vote. There can be no doubt that he would have become the second Kennedy to defeat Nixon, who narrowly lost to John F. Kennedy in 1960.

In his short, 85-day presidential campaign, Kennedy became the most beloved political figure in American history. The reason for the immense popularity he enjoyed in his lifetime was that by 1968 he represented the vision of a better America that had been lost when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, despite President Johnson's success in following through on a number of key JFK initiatives. But Bobby also represented the new face of America, an America that was, arguably for the very first time, seeking to come to grips with the legitimate demands of the country's oppressed minorities. Grappling with these profound issues was something that JFK was only beginning to do before he was martyred at Dallas.

Along with that of civil rights leader Martin Luther King - who might even have become his vice-president - killed only two months before, RFK's death meant the end of the dream of the United States as the 'last best hope of the human race.' The victory of the Nixon forces in 1968 accelerated the degeneration of the United States to its present status as the most reactionary and morally debased country in the developed world. The cumulative effect of Kennedy's murder and the other political assassinations of 1963-72 period rendered the country subject to the archaic values of the racist South, the only force that was

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capable of sustaining the corporate-controlled Republican party as a political force during the otherwise progressive, Democrat-friendly '60s. There is a straight line from the infamous deed perpetrated at Los Angeles early on the morning of June 5, 1968, to the current debacle in Iraq and the countless slimy deceits of the administration of President George W. Bush.

Bobby Kennedy's murder remains a mystery for no more substantial reason than that it was never properly investigated. Although the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) boasted that it had set in motion one of the most exhaustive criminal investigations in American history, the truth is that the LAPD's investigation served as a vehicle for foisting upon the public the mendacious legend that the crime had been perpetrated by a Palestinian American, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan. All other leads were ignored or shut down. The exception was the LAPD's quest to identify the woman seen with Sirhan shortly before the assassination whose most memorable feature was a white dress with black polka dots. The LAPD went through the motions of trying to identify the polka dot girl, but clearly with the purpose of discrediting the idea that she had any relationship to Sirhan or the assassination. In the end, the LAPD tried to sell the public the idea that the polka dot girl was simply the 'hallucination' of an 'overwrought' young Kennedy campaign worker.

Because the official investigation was so transparently a coverup – a fact which became blatantly obvious after the LAPD documents were made publicly available in 1986 - the RFK assassination has remained a subject of intense interest from independent researchers who are convinced that it represented one of the turning points in modern American history. Bobby Kennedy's assassination all but ensured that a

reactionary rather than a progressive occupied the White House during one of the most crucial periods in its history. Many of these dedicated researchers believe that the renewal of American democracy requires disclosure of the full truth about the country's history of political assassinations, of which Bobby Kennedy's is in fact only one of the best known and most sensational. They believe that the discovery of the truth about Kennedy's assassination would serve as a lever by which their country's Pandora's box of national security secrets might finally be prized open, clearing the way for root-and-branch reform of the American political system.

Although most reasonable people today would probably draw the conclusion that, on present performance, the United States is headed for self-destruction rather than renewal, there are good reasons to wish such researchers well and to pray that one day they will be in a position to compel the American state to come clean about its sinister past. That said, the writing of this short book was not prompted by political concerns of any kind – I simply do not believe that the United States government has the capacity to change its spots.

This book exists not because I bear any hopes for the reformation of the American state but because I believe I have stumbled upon the truth about RFK's assassination by pursuing a connection to the assassination no one else had pursued before. As I reveal in this book, this happened entirely by chance. My adventure began when, in a fit of idle curiosity, I found myself wondering whether anyone had yet identified the girl wearing a polka dot dress. The question occurred to me mainly because I had just finished reading William Pepper's book *Act of State* (2003), a book in which he relates tracking down – and actually speaking on the phone with – 'Raul', the

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man who handled James Earl Ray in order to set him up as the patsy in the King assassination, who is still alive and living with his family near New York.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the mysterious polka dot girl was a member of the conspiracy that killed Bobby Kennedy; the recollections of multiple eyewitnesses make it a virtual certainty that her role was that of Sirhan's handler. Not only did numerous individuals see her with Sirhan, both at the Ambassador Hotel and on previous occasions at other RFK-related locations, Sirhan himself admits drinking coffee with a woman who answers the description of the polka dot girl a few hours before the assassination itself. Yet the LAPD was never able to locate her. Of course, this is because it was not seriously looking for her. But private investigators have been no more successful. Unlike Raul, no William Pepper has ever tracked her down, spoken with her on the phone, or had the effrontery to appear on her doorstep. She has simply vanished into history.

All that has now changed. Based on the chance discovery of a lead, this book sets out a theory of who the notorious 'girl in the polka dot dress' was. If I am correct in my identification – and I believe I have been able to identify her beyond reasonable doubt – then the reason for her failure to surface is simple: she's dead. If my identification is secure, we also emerge from this investigation knowing the name of a second person who was almost certainly also involved in the assassination conspiracy. This individual, who I name in this book, and who is still alive, could even have been the gunman who actually killed Kennedy while most eyes were focused on decoy Sirhan Sirhan.

1

The Sirhan Enigma

The assassination of presidential aspirant Senator Robert F. Kennedy at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968, is memorable as the most impeccably executed of the politically-motivated murders that rocked the 1960s. The murder took place in a crowded room – the pantry of the Hotel – ensuring that most witnesses were not in a position to see clearly what happened, who was shooting and who was not.

Unlike the assassination of Senator Kennedy's brother, President John F. Kennedy, which has generated sufficient leads to inspire several hundred volumes, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, which has very largely been unraveled in two important books, *Orders to Kill* (1995) and *Act of State* (2003) by William Pepper, the RFK assassination is a conspiracy that seems to have left researchers virtually nowhere to turn.

Leaving aside the matter of the concealment and/or destruction of evidence by Los Angeles police, including some 2,400 photographs that were burned in a hospital incinerator less than 3 months later, the impenetrableness of the conspiracy to kill RFK can largely be attributed to the fact that the putative assassin, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, carried out the crime while in an hypnotically-induced trance. He quite genuinely possesses no memory of killing Robert Kennedy. He remembers nothing between having coffee with a pretty girl 'with brown hair' a couple of hours before the shooting and the moment shortly afterwards when he was subdued by Rafer Johnson and Karl

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Uecker.¹ Everything else has been completely blocked out of his memory, presumably as a result of memory blocks inserted deliberately during his earlier hypnoprogramming.²

¹ The chief source of my presentation of the facts concerning the assassination of Robert Kennedy is William Klaber and Phillip H. Melanson, *Shadow Play: The Murder of Robert F. Kennedy, The Trial of Sirhan Sirhan, and the Failure of American Justice*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1997. Further information has been gleaned from a major essay by Lisa Pease, "Sirhan and the RFK Assassination." This two-part essay, which appears in Jim DiEugenio and Lisa Pease (eds.), *The Assassinations*, Los Angeles, Feral House, 2003, can also be read online at <http://www.webcom.com/ctka/pr398-rfk.html> and <http://www.impioustdigest.com/lbj/ProbeV5N4.htm> However, on account of its tendency to impute the assassination to the CIA, I have used Pease's account extremely selectively. This book alleges rather that the assassination was an FBI COINTELPRO operation almost certainly carried out directly on orders from FBI head J. Edgar Hoover. I regard Pease as an unwitting victim of disinformation. I find myself astounded that she even concludes her article with a quote from Hoover in order to bolster her argument that the assassination was a CIA operation!

² For those new to the subject of mind control, the best introduction is an article "Operation Open Eyes: Five Easy Steps to Create a Manchurian Candidate" by Rayelan Russbacher based on information from her husband Gunther, who was formerly employed by the CIA. The article is available online at the following location:

<http://www.rumormillnews.com/operation.htm>



Sirhan Sirhan being led away from the scene of the crime he still does not remember having committed.

Sirhan does not even remember why, around 12.15 am, he was seen firing a gun in Kennedy's general direction. Curiously, he recalls having been a Kennedy supporter. An American of Palestinian origin, he now believes that he must have turned against Kennedy when he promised to sell fifty bombers to Israel.

However, this seems to have been a theory suggested to the highly suggestible Sirhan after the assassination by those complicit in the plot who realized that the public would not swallow another motiveless patsy like Lee Harvey Oswald. Sirhan was therefore retrospectively endowed with a motive for his act, one that even Sirhan himself considers plausible. Unfortunately for the theory, Kennedy said little, either on or

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shortly before May 18, that would offend a supporter of the Palestinian cause. There is still no explanation why, on that day, Sirhan wrote in his notebook that Kennedy should be assassinated.

Sirhan's hypnoprogramming was so successful that he also has no recollections of the other individuals involved in the conspiracy. We simply do not know who hypnotized him - although it is sometimes stated that Dr. William Joseph Bryan, Jr. (d. 1978), President of the American Institute of Hypnosis, has taken the credit in a number of private conversations - or who the other four persons were that he was seen with when he gatecrashed the Kennedy event at the Ambassador Hotel on the night of June 4-5, 1968.³ We only know that on at least two earlier occasions he was seen in the company of two men in a San Gabriel gun store, the Lock, Stock 'n' Barrel, while on two other occasions he was seen in the company of an attractive girl at RFK campaign-related locations. The central aim of the following chapters is to secure a convincing identification of the attractive girl – a girl whose polka dot dress was regarded by most eyewitnesses as the most memorable thing about her.

³ Peter Evans, in his recent book *Nemesis*, states that Bryan was indeed the psychologist who hypnoprogrammed Sirhan. Evans claims that RFK's assassination was planned by Aristotle Onassis and carried out by a Palestinian terrorist named Mahmoud Hamshari.

2

An infamous five

At least five people - four men and a woman - carried out the conspiracy to kill Robert Kennedy at the Ambassador Hotel. Lisa Pease has recorded the impressions of two witnesses who saw four people standing with Sirhan. Roy Mills, she writes, 'observed a group of five people, one of which was female, standing outside the Embassy Room as Kennedy was speaking. He claimed that Sirhan was one of the four males in the group, remembering him distinctly for his baggy pants. He thought one of the other men was a hotel employee.'

Another witness, Darnell Johnson, who was in the pantry when the shooting took place, saw the group make an inconspicuous exit while all eyes were on Sirhan. He told the police that 'While I was waiting [for Kennedy], I saw four guys and a girl about halfway between Kennedy and where I was standing. The girl had a white dress with black polka dots. During the time that a lady yelled, "Oh, my God," they walked out. All except the one - this is the guy they grabbed [Sirhan]. The others [i.e., three males and a female] that walked out seemed unconcerned at the events which were taking place.'⁴

A number of witnesses have left descriptions of the three males in the group. A police report made just before 12.30 am furnished the description of 'male Caucasian, 20 to 22, 6' to 6'2", built thin - blond curly hair, wearing brown pants and a light

⁴ <http://www.impiousdigest.com/lbj/ProbeV5N4.htm>

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brown shirt.' This was almost certainly the man glimpsed earlier in the evening by Irene Gizzi. She told the LAPD that the man she had seen with the polka dot girl around 9 pm was a 'male, possible Latin, dark sun bleached hair gold colored shirt, and possible light colored pants, possibly jeans.' Gizzi's friend Katherine Keir and another witness, Jeanette Prudhomme, also saw a man in a gold coloured shirt. This would be the 'tall thin man' George Green saw standing with the polka dot girl near the entrance to the pantry area at about 11.30pm.

Allowing for confusion regarding clothing, this must have been the 'boy' in a white shirt and gold sweater seen following the aforementioned female down the fire stairs of the Ambassador Hotel by RFK campaign worker Sandy Serrano. The source of the police description was Sergeant Paul Schraga who obtained it, just minutes after the assassination, from the Bernsteins, an elderly Jewish couple he encountered in the hotel carpark. It seems that the tall young man in the gold shirt and his female companion in the polka dot dress had run headlong into the Bernsteins in their indecent haste to depart the scene.

Earlier in the evening, Serrano had seen the tall young man and the polka dot girl together with a very short man with bushy dark hair. This was presumably the man referred to in a 12.34 am police radio report. In the broadcast, mention was made of 'a male Latin, 25-26, 5-5, bushy hair, dark eyes, light build, wearing a blue jacket and blue levis and blue tennis shoes.' What is striking about this description is that the man resembles Sirhan himself, although Sirhan was already in custody. Indeed, one eyewitness thought he could have been Sirhan's brother, while his choice of co-ordinated blue clothing

was apparently intended to mimic Sirhan's own. No American conspiracy, it would seem, is complete without the presence of a double, a figure whose presence seems intended to confuse witnesses about exactly who and what they saw. It is possible, moreover, that some persons who, on earlier occasions, thought they had seen Sirhan had actually seen an impersonator.⁵

The remaining individual was the man Roy Mills thought was a hotel employee. Thanks to another eyewitness, we have a good idea who he was. According to Lisa Pease, the witness took note of a young man who was so keen to gain entrance to the event that he purloined a waiter's suit to do so. 'A Hungarian refugee "with absolutely no credentials at all" named Gabor Kadar had been turned away from the Embassy Room during the night, but found a waiter's uniform, and donned it,' she writes. 'Kadar later involved himself directly in the struggle to wrest the gun from Sirhan.' In view of the strange circumstances leading to his presence at the event, the fact that he was seen standing with Sirhan and three others involved, and the fact that he played a role in subduing Sirhan, the most reasonable conclusion to draw is that his role had been to create a scuffle around Sirhan that would distract the crowd while the conspirators made their escape. He can therefore be ruled out as a gunman.

⁵ E.g., the 'Sirhan' seen firing a pistol from shortly after 11am to 5pm on June 4 at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club in Duarte, California. It is hard to see what the real Sirhan would have had to gain from shooting for nearly six hours apart from a sore trigger finger. On the other hand, it made damn sure that anyone who happened to be at the Gun Club that day would have remembered 'Sirhan' only too well.

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The all-important question is whether Sirhan shot Kennedy. The only fact about the case that has been established beyond reasonable doubt is that few if any of Sirhan's shots actually hit Kennedy, and any that did would not have injured him seriously. (It is even possible that Sirhan was only shooting blanks.) Although Sirhan was standing only a few feet in front of Kennedy, the fatal shots were fired into the back of his head from very close range. This is one reason many students of the case believe that Kennedy's real killer had to have been security guard Thane Eugene Cesare, a self-admitted supporter of the campaign of RFK's segregationist opponent, George Wallace, a mysterious individual with connections to Lockheed Corporation who got the job of 'protecting' Kennedy at short notice.



Thane Eugene Cesare

The question of what really happened to Kennedy's immediate rear while most eyes were on Sirhan is impossible to answer today, mainly because numerous photographs taken during the murder that would clear things up once and for all were destroyed by the LAPD (at least officially).

However, by far the most important description of the shooting is that furnished by Don Schulman, a runner for Los Angeles TV station KNXT, which went out over the radio within minutes of the assassination. Speaking in short grabs, a breathless Schulman told Continental News Service reporter Jeff Brent that 'a Caucasian gentleman stepped out and fired three times ... hitting Kennedy all three times.'⁶

Despite the unique importance of his testimony, Schulman has never subsequently expanded on his frustratingly vague description of the 'Caucasian gentleman.' However, his choice of the descriptor 'Caucasian' suggests that Kennedy's assassin was the tall young man rather than the Sirhan lookalike in the matching blue clothes, who was generally described as Latin, Mexican or Arabic looking.⁷ Although the Sirhan 'double' was observed rushing away from the crime scene with a pistol partly concealed under a newspaper, it is not necessarily the

⁶ Klaber and Melanson, *Shadow Play*, p. 118.

⁷ However, one witness, Nina Rhodes, told the FBI in 1968 that it was an individual wearing a 'powder blue jacket' who shot Kennedy. However, Rhodes' 1968 testimony is at odds with a statement she made in 1992, which suggests that she did not see who was actually shooting. Her testimony seems to have been altered by the FBI to implicate Sirhan, who was wearing a blue denim jacket. See Klaber and Melanson, *Shadow Play*, pp. 126-28.

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case that the weapon was actually fired. Unless Schulman used the word 'Caucasian' rashly, which seems unlikely, the tall young man would seem to have been Kennedy's real assassin.

Schulman has been more helpful in establishing who did not fire at Kennedy. In 1973, he explained that he had seen neither security guard Thane Eugene Cesare nor Sirhan shooting at Kennedy.⁸ If Schulman had seen neither Cesare nor Sirhan shooting at Kennedy, but had seen a 'Caucasian gentleman' shooting at Kennedy - rather than the Arabic looking Sirhan double - then the only possibility left is that the individual he saw shooting Kennedy was the tall young man in the gold shirt.

Of course, by focusing on the group of five people seen by Mills and Johnson I do not mean to suggest that no one else in the room was involved in the conspiracy. The participation of at least two other individuals seems all but certain. First, there are compelling reasons to conclude that Thane Eugene Cesare was involved. Although Cesare denies having fired his pistol at all that night, he has been caught out lying with respect to several matters about which an innocent person would not have needed to lie.⁹ Yet it is not necessarily the case that he is

⁸ Many people have confused two statements Schulman made immediately after the assassination, first, that he had seen a Caucasian man fire three shots at Kennedy and, second, that he had seen the security guard fire his weapon. Schulman has subsequently clarified his remarks, and the appropriate conclusion to draw is that he saw the security guard firing at Sirhan.

⁹ The problems with Cesare's story are discussed in Klaber and Melanson, *Shadow Play*, pp. 119-21. Dan Moldea's book, *The*

lying when he insists, as he does, that he did not shoot *Kennedy*. As have already seen, Don Schulman says the man he saw shoot Kennedy was not Cesare. We need to add here the information that Schulman says he saw 'the security guard' fire shots at Sirhan.¹⁰ Whether Schulman's account of the shooting is accurate is, of course, a matter which it is not possible for the independent researcher to establish. He could certainly be a disinformationist whose role is to substantiate Cesare's own story. But what renders this a remote possibility is that he says he saw Cesare firing at Sirhan, something Cesare does not even admit to having done.

The likelihood, therefore, is that Cesare was involved in the conspiracy, but he had the job not of murdering Kennedy but of eliminating Sirhan before he could be taken into custody. If Sirhan had been murdered, then Sirhan's notebook, which was recovered from his bedroom within hours of the shooting, would have represented the sole insight posterity would have received into the alleged perpetrator's motives – leaving us all permanently baffled. If this is the way the assassination plot

Killing of Robert Kennedy, New York, Norton & Co., 1995, which is the only work on the assassination available in most popular bookstores, seems unusually concerned with vindicating Cesare against allegations that he was involved. Given that Cesare is clearly lying about many matters related to the assassination, one can only regard Moldea's work with great suspicion. On this subject, see Jim DiEugenio, "The Curious Case of Dan Moldea." Part of this article can be read online at <http://www.webcom.com/ctka/pr598-mold.html>.

¹⁰ Klaber and Melanson, *Shadow Play*, p. 118.

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was meant to pan out, then this is the one aspect that backfired, for Sirhan left the scene without any life threatening injuries.

Once Cesare and the Sirhan double are excluded as suspects, therefore, only one candidate for the actual assassin remains: the tall young man in the gold shirt. There is no reason to conclude that Cesare, just because he was standing close to Kennedy, was the only person who could have shot him. Although Kennedy seems to have clutched at Cesare as he fell, it is perhaps reading too much into the situation to assume, as some researchers have, that he tore Cesare's tiepin off as a means of identifying his killer. Cesare was standing behind Kennedy but he was firing at Sirhan – thereby providing cover for someone to shoot Kennedy behind the right ear.

By way of concluding this chapter, it is worth pointing out that a member of Kennedy's own party can reasonably be suspected of involvement in the murder. According to a witness who claims to have been working for the Kennedy campaign, RFK's press secretary Frank Mankiewicz 'was insistent that Bobby leave through the kitchen, rather than the ballroom.' If Kennedy had not walked through the jampacked pantry he almost certainly would not have been shot. The same source reveals that, according to the book *Final Judgment*, by Michael Collins Piper, 'Mankiewicz started his career as a public relations man for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith in Los Angeles.'¹¹ Although the source for the claim that Mankiewicz was responsible for taking Kennedy into the kitchen is the far rightwing *Barnes Review*, a publication with an

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http://www.barnesreview.org/July_2003/Robert_F/robert_f.htm
1

overt antisemitic bias and perhaps also a motive for wanting to cover up the truth about the assassination, we will see in the course of this investigation that there are reasons to conclude that it was a joint ADL/FBI operation. If so, Mankiewicz's ADL connection makes the allegation against him perfectly plausible.

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3

The girl in the polka dot dress

A unique feature of the RFK assassination is the participation of a young woman who was apparently Sirhan's handler. Known to history simply as the 'girl in the polka dot dress,' the hitherto unidentified female was apparently seen with Sirhan on a number of occasions prior to the evening of the assassination. She was seen at Robbie's Restaurant in Pomona, where Kennedy held a campaign luncheon for 400 guests on May 20, at the RFK campaign office in Azusa on May 30, and at the Ambassador Hotel on June 2, the Sunday before the assassination. (Although Sirhan was also seen there on June 2, the witness did not see the two people together.)

On the night of Kennedy's assassination, the polka dot girl was noticed by a good many people. She was noticed mainly because she had an excellent figure and because, as she and the tall young man in the golden shirt fled the crime scene (closely followed by the Sirhan double in the blue suit and one or two other men), she was overheard exclaiming 'We shot him! We shot him!' - a boast that was bound to attract attention in a venue full of Kennedy supporters.

The girl's most recollectable feature, however, was her dress. It is clear from the convergence of eyewitness statements that she was wearing a flowing white dress with small ('quarter-size') black polka dots. A couple of particularly observant eyewitnesses have provided further details such as that the dress was made of a voile material, had 3/4 inch sleeves and 'ruffles around the neck and front.' The dress seems to have

attracted attention on account of its dubious taste. When interviewed by the Los Angeles police, Ambassador Hotel busboy Vincent DiPierro, who had seen the girl with Sirhan shortly before the murder, dismissed it as 'kind of lousy.'

The girl herself remains a mystery. Invariably described as 'beautiful,' 'attractive' or 'good looking' with 'a good figure,' those who saw her were able to give fairly detailed descriptions afterwards. The matter of her ethnicity is easily resolved. She was Caucasian. Between them, Klaber and Melanson and Pease cite five witnesses who chose the word 'Caucasian' to describe her, while the same descriptor is found in the LAPD description that derived from the Bernsteins. Another witness, Darnell Johnson, described her as white. Of the witnesses who provided a description of the girl seen wearing a polka dot dress at the Ambassador Hotel on the night of June 4-5, therefore, the only ethnic descriptor used was Caucasian. Those who did not use the word Caucasian either said she was white or said nothing about her ethnicity at all. (See Table below.)

It is true that the descriptor 'Caucasian' is sometimes used in police reports for persons of Mediterranean, Hispanic or Arab appearance. Yet 'Caucasian' is used by several witnesses in direct speech, not in LAPD reports. Furthermore, not one of the witnesses who heard her speak that night makes mention of a foreign accent. It is therefore extremely unlikely that she was anything other than a white American.¹²

¹² However, John Henry Fahey claims to have spoken with a girl he believes to have been the polka dot girl at around 9.15 am on June 4. He says she had a 'slight accent.' I must admit to finding his story implausible. See <http://www.impiousdigest.com/lbj/ProbeV5N4.htm>

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One witness present at the time of the assassination, Roy Mills, added the information that the polka dot girl was wearing a press pass, which explains how she managed to penetrate the Kennedy event, while Karen Ross, who believes she saw the same girl at the Ambassador Hotel the previous Sunday, June 2, recalled that she had a 'round face.' According to one witness, she had olive skin. As we shall see, the person who I identify as the polka dot girl came from mixed Italian-Hungarian parentage. Her maiden name, Capomacchia, apparently derives from Campania, the region in the vicinity of Naples in Italy. It would not be unusual for a person of southern Italian origin to possess olive skin.

Estimates of the polka dot girl's height range from 5' 3" to 5' 8", while those for her age vary from 20 to 30. Her hair is also the subject of some confusion. Although some witnesses recall blonde hair, by far the majority state that she was a brunette. As for her hairstyle, she had 'bouffant type hair.' Despite being considered attractive, the polka dot girl had a less flattering feature: a 'strange,' 'pudgy,' or 'turned up' nose. Karen Ross thought that her nose might have been 'fixed'¹³; nasal reconstruction would probably explain the peculiar appearance of her nose.

On the following pages, I have appended a table summarizing what we know about the polka dot girl's appearance.

¹³ <http://www.impioustdigest.com/lbj/ProbeV5N4.htm>

TABLE: THE APPEARANCE OF THE POLKA DOT GIRL

NB: The witnesses listed are only those who saw her at the Ambassador Hotel on the night of the assassination.

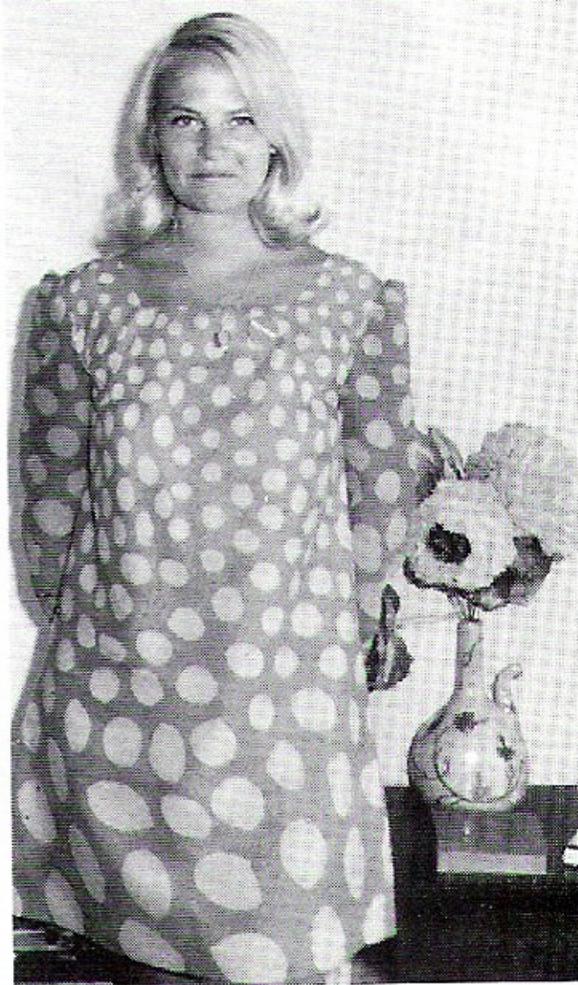
WITNESS NAME	ETHNIC ID	OTHER DESCRIPTORS	SOURCE
Vincent DiPierro	Caucasian	Aged 20-24, brown hair, good looking, peculiar or 'pudgy' nose	Klaber and Melanson, pp. 140, 153; Pease [= Pease, "Rubrick's Cube"]
Sandy Serrano	Caucasian ('light skinned')	Aged 23-27, dark brown hair, 5'6", a 'funny' nose	Klaber and Melanson, p. 15; Pease
Dr Marcus McBroom		Aged 20-26 (or 22-24), brunette, 5'3"-5'4", fairly attractive, 'proportionate'	Klaber and Melanson, pp. 130-31; Pease
George Green	Caucasian	Aged early 20s, good figure, blonde hair	Klaber and Melanson, pp. 123, 131; Pease
Jack J. Merritt		5'5", light coloured hair	Klaber and Melanson, p. 131
Darnell Johnson	White	Aged 23-25, light brown hair, 5'8", 145 lbs, well built	Klaber and Melanson, p. 131

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Susan Locke		Aged early 20s, well-proportioned	Klaber and Melanson, p. 132
Ronald Johnson Panda		5'6"	Pease
Eve Hansen		Dark brown hair, turned-up nose	Pease
Conrad Seim	Caucasian	Olive complexion	Pease
Jeanette Prudhomme	Caucasian	Aged 28-30, brown shoulder-length hair, 5'6", 130 lbs	Klaber and Melanson, p. 132; Pease
The Bernsteins (Police report via Paul Sharaga)	Caucasian	Aged 23-27, 5'6", bouffant type hair	Klaber and Melanson, p. 140

4

Possible identifications



Valerie Schulte

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Despite numerous sightings and highly specific descriptions, the polka dot girl remained elusive. During Sirhan's trial in early 1969, the LAPD came up with the preposterous theory that she was Kennedy campaign worker Valerie Schulte. However, Schulte, who in any case has blonde hair and nothing peculiar whatsoever about her nose, was never seen standing near Sirhan. What's more, she was wearing a green dress with yellow splotches that she admits she never thought of as polka dots until the idea was suggested to her by the LAPD! Schulte, who had recently had a skiing accident, was also getting around that night with the help of a crutch. If anyone had seen her with Sirhan, the crutch would have been her most memorable feature.

Valerie Schulte quite clearly was not the infamous polka dot girl. More plausible is the theory that she was Shirin Khan, daughter of Khaibar Khan, an Iranian who, surely not by coincidence, was seen at RFK campaign headquarters in the days immediately prior to the assassination. According to campaign worker Eleanor Severson, Khan, who claimed to be a Kennedy supporter from New York, appeared in the office every day between May 30 and June 2. Most significantly, Severson claimed that on June 2, Khan appeared together with four other foreigners of Middle Eastern appearance, including Sirhan. Her claims were corroborated by her husband, as well as fellow campaign worker Larry Strick. Estelle Sterns, another Kennedy volunteer, claims that on June 4, she saw Sirhan, three other men of Middle Eastern appearance, and the polka dot girl at campaign headquarters. She says that Sirhan and one of the other men were carrying guns. She also says that the day after the assassination, she received a phone call from a man who sounded muffled, as though he was speaking through a towel,

telling her "Under no circumstances give out any information to anybody as to the number of people or their activities at your desk on Tuesday."

There is a prima facie reason to admit that an Iranian origin for the RFK conspiracy is possible. The Shah of Iran was bitterly opposed to Robert Kennedy's brother, President John F. Kennedy, and reputedly indulged in a celebratory tippie when he learned of JFK's death. The Shah might well have taken steps to preclude the possibility of another Kennedy reaching the White House. Yet there are problems with the Khaibar Khan story that suggest that the Middle Eastern connection could be a hoax.

First of all, Khaibar Khan registered at the Kennedy HQ in his own name and, moreover, does not deny that he brought his daughter there on June 3. If Khaibar Khan and his daughter were involved in the conspiracy, it stands to reason that he would have used a pseudonym and would not have drawn attention to his daughter, which he did not need to do, since her visit to the RFK campaign HQ does not seem to have been registered or recalled by anyone else. Since Khaibar Khan was an intelligence figure with past links to both British and Iranian intelligence (he was apparently involved in the CIA coup which overthrew Iranian prime minister Dr Mohammed Mossadegh in the early 1950s), Khan would have known how to hide his tracks if he had wanted to. It was also very strange for such men to have unnecessarily displayed their guns. Such recklessness could have attracted enough attention to betray the conspiracy.

A further problem is that there was no sense among eyewitnesses in the Ambassador Hotel that the group as a whole presented a Middle Eastern appearance or, indeed, a

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homogeneous ethnic appearance of any kind at all. The same is true of those who saw Sirhan in the company of two other men at the Lock, Stock 'n' Barrel. Although one or two witnesses at the Ambassador Hotel suspected that the group consisted of Latins, the only individual who is consistently referred to as foreign looking - apart from Sirhan himself - is that of the man who seems to have functioned as Sirhan's double. Interestingly, by far the most likely identification for this individual is, as Pease relates, Michael Wayne - a 21-year old Englishman! However, Wayne's links turned out to be with Keith Duane Gilbert, an 'extremist and militant who has previously been involved in a dynamite theft,' rather than Iran. (In fact, LAPD Sergeant Manuel Gutierrez subsequently learned that Gilbert was a 'radical Minutemen activist.')

Finally, it should be emphasized that the polka dot girl and the tall young man with sunbleached hair who was possibly Kennedy's real killer are generally referred to as Caucasian. What's more, no one who overheard the girl shouting 'We shot him!' recall her saying so with an accent - nor did witnesses who actually spoke with her in more normal circumstances on earlier occasions recall an accent, with the exception of a man (Fahey) who claims to have spoken with her on the morning of the assassination. It is hard to believe that a foreign accent would have passed unnoticed by so many other people. The likelihood, therefore, is that she did not have a foreign accent.

My conclusion is that Khaibar Khan and a few other Iranians were linked to the conspiracy, but as part of a sophisticated charade designed to lead conspiracy researchers in the wrong direction - the Middle East. Since Khan and his friends seem to have been concerned with drawing a great deal of attention to themselves, not least by sporting guns on the day of the

assassination itself, the most reasonable conclusion is that they went there precisely to get noticed. If their purpose had only been to get hold of a copy of Kennedy's itinerary, it would have been far more effective to have sent an inconspicuous plain American to do the job. Instead, the RFK staff encountered obvious foreigners.

Furthermore, nothing could be more designed to inflame suspicions than a phone call ordering someone not to reveal information about 'the number of people' and 'their activities' the preceding Tuesday." If Estelle Sterns had not found anything suspicious about that Tuesday's events, she certainly would have done so now. Clearly, the idea was to intensify suspicion as much as possible. But why? The only reason such individuals would have tried to attract attention would have been to foster a 'safe' conspiracy theory, one that helps to perpetuate American illusions that everything bad that happens in the country is the work of foreigners (or, in the case of Lee Harvey Oswald, disloyal Americans who have enlisted in foreign causes).

As has been the case in American history since the Red Scare - when a wave of bombings probably orchestrated by the young J. Edgar Hoover were blamed on foreign-born leftists - violence has been depicted by American officialdom as a foreign importation. In the same spirit, the RFK assassination was represented as the intrusion of a foreign conflict. Sirhan is said to have assassinated Kennedy because of his stance he took on a question relating to his own Middle Eastern background.

This interpretation has never seemed plausible, however. Although of Palestinian parentage, there is no hint in Sirhan's background of active support for the Palestinian cause. In any case, Robert Kennedy was one of the more even-handed

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American politicians in relation to the Zionist conflict. The Sirhan 'Palestinian' scenario is as inherently misleading as the Oswald 'Communist' scenario. In this respect, Sirhan's double is the Rosetta Stone of the case. Michael Wayne's 'Arabic' appearance - which turned out to be due to Jewish ancestry - seems to have been exploited by the conspiracy as a means of masking its domestic origins. Since, as we shall see, there is good reason to suspect ADL involvement in the assassination, we find ourselves looking at a Zionist 'black op' which may at least partly have been intended to discredit the Palestinian cause in the eyes of Kennedy's supporters.

If, as I believe, Lisa Pease and others who favour a 'Middle Eastern' scenario have been wholly misled, then the question of the polka dot girl's identity remains wide open. The real problem is whether it can be possible after 37 years to ascertain her true identity. To my knowledge, no one has come forward with a plausible identification for the girl other than Shirin Khan. But, as I will proceed to relate in the following two chapters, there is a strong domestic contender for the part. Although it is not possible to connect her with Keith Duane Gilbert, we will also see that both the Minutemen and dynamite form part of her story.

5

The schoolteacher from Jackson

When I first pondered the mystery of the polka dot girl, I assumed that somewhere in the United States today there would still be living, unsuspected by anyone, a woman in her early 60s with fond memories of the role she played in changing the course of history back in the tempestuous year of 1968. I imagined, in my reverie, that pride of place in her wardrobe would be occupied by a flowing white dress with black polka dots. And, after all these years, a triumphant voice would still be reverberating inside her head, 'We shot him! We shot him!'

Yet a chance discovery led me to draw the conclusion that the polka dot girl has been dead for a very long time - indeed, if my suspicions are correct, she died only a few weeks after Kennedy. The aim of this book is to reveal her identity, and to show that her identification leads to the identification of an individual close to her who may also have been involved.

In early 2004, after reading Klaber's and Melanson's *Shadow Play* for the third time, I took down a volume from my bookshelf entitled *Political Assassination and Political Violence*. Published in 1970, this was a work that was designed to explain, if not also reconcile, Americans to the disturbing role assassination and violence seemed increasingly to be playing in American history. Browsing for something related to the RFK assassination, I chanced upon a page in which it was stated that, in January 1966, the *Minutemen Bulletin* advised killers to use a .22 semi-automatic pistol. 'It's true that the .22 lacks the

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"shock" effect of a more powerful cartridge,' the *Bulletin* explained, 'but this is largely compensated for by the ease of putting a well-placed shot into heart or brain. When needed for a second well-aimed shot can be fired quicker from a .22 than from a more powerful weapon.'¹⁴

As the author of the chapter did not fail to note, .22 pistols were used in the RFK assassination. Not only was Sirhan's gun a .22, so was Thane Eugene Cesare's. This passage from the *Bulletin* was a clue to the origins of the RFK conspiracy among the extreme right wing, the milieu of the aforementioned Keith Duane Gilbert. Surprised to find something that possibly shed light on the RFK conspiracy, I read on in the hope of finding further insights. Then, on pages 355-56, mention is briefly made of a young woman - a member of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan - who, on June 30, 1968, died in a police shootout in Meridian, Mississippi. Early on the morning of June 30, the female Kluxer was helping Thomas Albert Tarrant III dynamite the house of Meyer Davidson, a local Jewish businessman. According to the short summary of the episode given in this book, the woman died when police officers surprised the pair in the act. Ainsworth was killed and Tarrant was seriously wounded. Afterwards, a search of her home yielded literature from many major rightwing groups, including the Minutemen and the National States Rights Party. The woman's name was Kathy (sometimes spelt 'Kathie') Ainsworth, and she was a fifth-grade schoolteacher from Jackson. In June 1968, she was aged 26, which is roughly the

¹⁴ Cited in James F. Kirkham, Sheldon Levy and William J. Crotty (eds.), *Assassination and Political Violence*, New York, Praeger, 1970, p. 354.

middle of the age range specified by eyewitnesses for the polka dot girl (estimates varied, as I showed in Table 1, from 20 to 30).

Instantly, I found myself wondering whether 26-year old Kathy Madlyn Ainsworth could have been the polka dot girl. What intrigued me about the Meridian episode was that it occurred only a few short weeks after Kennedy was killed. The possibility occurred to me that, with so much unwelcome publicity being given to the polka dot girl, plot leaders may have decided that the wisest course was simply to get rid of her. By the end of June 1968, therefore, the polka dot girl may have been removed from the scene, bringing an abrupt end to the danger of her being identified - perhaps with the assistance of Sirhan himself - and the dimensions of the assassination plot exposed.

The possibility that Ainsworth was the polka dot girl was based on a suggestive coincidence of five facts: Ainsworth 1) was the right age; 2) was described as attractive; 3) possessed far right wing views; 4) had been a willing participant in acts of political violence; and 5) was murdered only a few weeks after the RFK assassination, when the matter of the polka dot girl riveted the attention of the nation. In other words, Ainsworth not only fulfilled the basic requirements to be the polka dot girl, she was also killed at a time when the girl's removal from the scene was clearly advantageous to those struggling to keep the lid on the existence of a conspiracy.

But to corroborate my identification of the polka dot girl and substantiate my theory as to the timeliness of her elimination, I had to resolve two matters. First, I had to find a photograph of Ainsworth in order to establish whether she bore a convincing resemblance to eyewitness descriptions of the polka dot girl. If

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Ainsworth did not resemble such descriptions at all, the likelihood - short of an impressive makeover - is that she had not been Sirhan's handler. Second, I needed to establish whether Ainsworth could have been set up, that is to say, whether her and Tarrants' plan to dynamite the Davidson home could have been a pretext to bring about her elimination. After reading the brief account in *Political Assassination and Political Violence*, I had to find a fuller account that would indicate whether she had died in a set up operation.

To my surprise, it proved easy to find out about Kathy Ainsworth and the circumstances that led to her death. She is, as it happens, is a hero of the American extreme right. Several racial pride websites contain eulogies of her; it would not be going too far to say that she has the status of a martyr in nativist circles.¹⁵ What did she do to merit her enduring reputation among racial extremists? Quite simply, Ainsworth, who joined the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as soon as she graduated from college, was at once an elementary school teacher and a KKK terrorist. She was so committed to the cause of segregation that she left Florida, where she had been raised, and moved to Mississippi, the most segregated state in the country, for the purpose of turning the state into a bastion of segregationist resistance.

It was in Mississippi that, in 1966, she met Tom Tarrants, an angry young racist from Mobile, Alabama, and together they joined White Knights leader Sam Bowers in his quest to hold back the forces of racial progress in Mississippi. On a number of occasions, Ainsworth apparently joined Tarrants in the long

¹⁵ For example,
<http://women.freespeechsite.com/heroines/ainsworth.html>

series of terrorist acts he committed against Jews and persons affiliated with the civil rights movement, whether they were black or white, in 1967-68.

Their first action together was one of their most daring. On September 18, 1967, they bombed the newly-built Beth Israel synagogue in Jackson - totally destroying it in the process. In the end, as we have already learned, on June 30, 1968, Ainsworth died while on a mission with Tarrants to dynamite the house of a leading Meridian Jew, Meyer Davidson.

Although there is no evidence that Ainsworth actually killed anybody, it is obvious that a woman of such extreme rightwing views - one, moreover, with a track record of extreme violence - would have had no qualms about involving herself in a plot to assassinate Robert Kennedy. For Bobby was, like his brother killed in 1963, fiercely loathed by extreme rightwingers of the sort that furnished the momentum of the Wallace campaign in 1968. After Martin Luther King was gunned down in April 1968, he would have occupied pride of place on any American rightwinger's kill list.

Yet for my theory to be correct, Ainsworth would have to have died in a set up. She and Tarrants would have to have been encouraged to make this bombing attempt in Meridian precisely to create an opportunity for the elimination of the girl who, unknown to the general public, had been instrumental in setting Sirhan up as the patsy in the RFK assassination. Fortunately, the facts about Ainsworth's death in Meridian are among the subjects covered in Jack Nelson's important book *Terror in the Night* (1993). In this detailed narrative of the events that led to her death, I found answers to some of my most burning questions about Ainsworth and the manner in which she met her death.

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6

Does she pass the 'looks' test?

The matter of the identification of Ainsworth as the girl in the polka dot dress obviously depends upon her appearance, which must be consistent with witness testimony. As we saw, the book *Political Assassination and Political Violence* provided the useful information that Ainsworth was 'a popular and attractive fifth-grade teacher.'¹⁶ Reading through the nativist hagiographies, it became apparent that Ainsworth was regarded not only as pretty, but also as having a good figure. (One website refers to her 'shapely legs.')

The crucial task was locating a photograph of Ainsworth. The photo printed below, captioned "Kathy Ainsworth entering her classroom," was rapidly located on the Internet. A second photo was located in Jack Nelson's book *Terror In The Night*. These two photos are sufficient to answer the main questions about Ainsworth's appearance.

As we had been led to expect, Kathy was pretty. Although she was no Jane Fonda, there can be no doubt that she possessed the sort of looks that were highly regarded in the 1960s. Two questions remain to be answered. Did she have a 'strange,' 'pudgy' or 'turned up' nose? In my opinion, the answer is yes. However, the photo that appears in *Terror In The Night* shows an almost perfect nose. It is rather the photo of her entering her

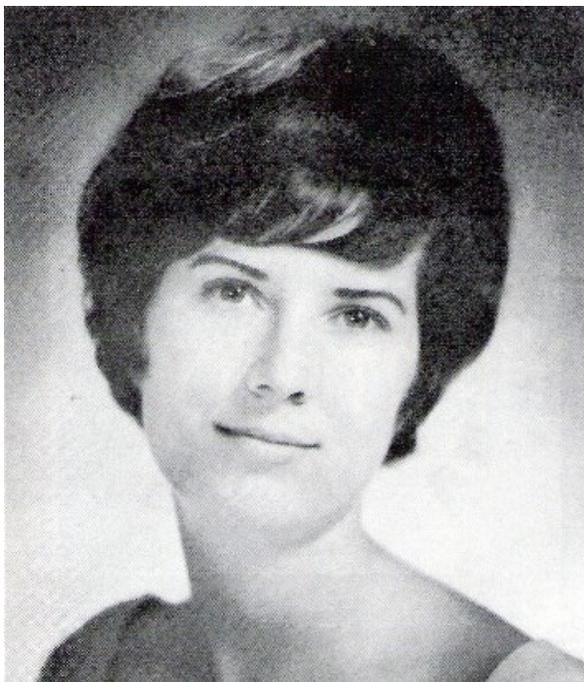
¹⁶ James F. Kirkham, Sheldon Levy and William J. Crotty (eds.), *Assassination and Political Violence*, New York, Praeger, 1970, p. 354.

The Girl in the Polka Dot Dress



Kathy Ainsworth entering her
classroom

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classroom - which would be the later of the two photos - that shows a strange nose. My guess is that at some stage Ainsworth's face was damaged (perhaps in an incident arising from her terrorist activities) and the shape of her nose was altered as a result of subsequent nasal reconstruction, tallying with the view of eyewitness Karen Ross that it looked 'maybe fixed.' Second, did Ainsworth wear her hair in 'bouffant' style? The answer, as the classroom photo makes clear, is yes.

A final consideration is the matter of her hair colour and height. According to eyewitnesses, the polka dot girl was between 5'3" and 5'8" tall and the colour most commonly cited for her hair was brown. These matters cannot be resolved by means of black and white photos of her face, but fortunately, Jack Nelson provides the information on the very first page of

Terror In The Night that Ainsworth was 5'4" and a brunette. An overwhelming number of coincidences, together with the suspicious circumstances of her demise in an FBI ambush (on which, see the next chapter, "Murdered in Meridian") have led me to conclude that Mississippi schoolteacher and Klan activist Kathy Ainsworth was the girl in the polka dot dress.

In all such investigations, researchers run the risk of confirmation bias, that is, they can be so set on confirming their theories that they disregard conflicting information. In my case, I believe I have identified Kathy Ainsworth as a perfect match for the polka dot girl without making any unwarranted steps. But what clinches the identification for me is a description of Ainsworth written by someone who did even consider the possibility that she had been the polka dot girl, Jack Nelson. Nelson, it should be noted, only mentions the RFK assassination in passing and seems to have no inkling that the events he recounts in *Terror In The Night* could have been related. What's more, his description of Ainsworth was published in the early 1990s and therefore cannot have been influenced by my theory, which I only developed in 2004. *Terror in the Night* opens with a description of Ainsworth on the eve of the FBI ambush that ended in her death. Nelson describes her as follows:

"She was twenty-six years old, five feet four and buxom, with a pretty oval face and brown eyes that matched her thick brunet hair. If any of her friends had seen her, especially any of the teachers she worked with at the Lorena Duling Elementary School or the parents of her fifth-grade pupils there, they might have been surprised at the way she was dressed. Tight-fitting, high-cut shorts and a low-cut jersey top were unusual attire for

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a quiet young schoolteacher going out for a dinner on a Saturday night. But then, as her friends were soon to learn, there had been a good deal about Kathryn Madlyn Ainsworth they did not know."¹⁷

This description speaks for itself, containing as it does the essential features of the girl seen with Sirhan at the Ambassador Hotel. Ainsworth was a perfect match for the polka dot girl: she was pretty, buxom, and the right age; she had the right height, the right hair colour, and the right (a 'funny') nose. She is even described by Nelson as possessing an 'oval' face (recalling Karen Ross, the witness who said that she had a 'round' face). What's more, Ainsworth was a sex bomb, to use a good '60s phrase - precisely the sort of girl who we can believe would have been capable of using her looks to entice Sirhan Sirhan into the web of intrigue that ended in the death of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. All that's missing from Nelson's description, in fact, is a polka dot dress. We shall see on a succeeding webpage that she even had the 'right' boyfriend.

¹⁷ Jack Nelson, *Terror In The Night: The Klan's Campaign Against the Jews*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1993, p. 140.

7

Murdered in Meridian

I stated above that for my theory to be correct, Ainsworth would have to have died in a set up operation, what is referred to in Mafia parlance as a 'clean up operation.' And, in fact, the police shootout in which Ainsworth died bears all the hallmarks of an elimination plot. For Tarrants and Ainsworth were surprised while attempting a terror attack – the bombing of the house one of Meridian's most prominent Jews – that had been thought up by the local FBI!

According to *Terror in the Night*, the plot to dynamite the Davidson home was devised by FBI Special Agent Frank Watts as a means of laying a trap for Tom Tarrants after Tarrants and Danny Joe Hawkins had bombed the Meridian synagogue on May 29, 1968. (p. 147) Although Nelson affirms that the operation was Watts's baby, a curious fact is that FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover monitored its progress with the kind of intense concern that suggests extraordinary personal involvement. 'Hoover decreed that every morning, seven days a week, Watts was to file a Teletype to Washington keeping the director abreast of every development.' (pp. 140-41) Hoover's intense interest in the plan to snare Tarrants suggests the possibility that the plan was actually instigated and guided through to completion by the viciously anti-RFK FBI director.

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J. Edgar Hoover, photographed here in 1967, told FBI agent Jim Hosty in 1964 that Robert Kennedy 'disgusted' him. 'As I listened to him talk about Bobby Kennedy,' recalls Hosty, 'it was easy to hear how much he loathed him.' (Hosty, *Assignment Oswald*, p. 154.) Hoover would have stopped at nothing to prevent Kennedy reaching the presidency - or to cover up his tracks after having had him killed.

Yet an important point to note is that the FBI set up was also a joint operation with the ADL. While the FBI orchestrated it - and drew upon the assistance of the Meridian Police Department as well as an ONI bomb demolition squad - the ADL put up the money that was required to trick Tarrants into action as well as the ostensible victim. The conspiracy unfolded as follows. First, two putative Klansmen, Alton Wayne Roberts - who murdered civil rights activist Michael Schwerner in 1964

- and his brother Raymond, were enlisted as informants.¹⁸ This was done through a combination of the carrot and the stick. While the ADL raised a substantial amount of money to offer the Roberts brothers as 'reward money' - they were promised \$75,000 altogether - Watts and the FBI used a variety of forms of intimidation (including death threats) to prod them into cooperating.

Second, the Roberts brothers were turned into agents provocateurs (if they weren't already). On June 13, Raymond Roberts met with Danny Joe Hawkins and persuaded him to carry out a violent act against a Jewish target before June 29, 1968. The pretext for the attack was that he (Raymond Roberts) was feeling the heat from the FBI, which suspected him of involvement in the May 29 synagogue bombing. 'If he and Alton Wayne could just be somewhere else with an ironclad alibi when another major attack occurred in Meridian, it would help' relieve the pressure. (p. 162)

Hawkins acceded to Roberts' request for a 'favor' and promised to execute the mission by the required date. Roberts

¹⁸ Alton Wayne Roberts never served any prison time for his involvement in the notorious Mississippi Burning murders of 1964 until the early 1970s. Although convicted in 1967, he was released 'on an appeal bond' and worked as a car salesman and nightclub bouncer in Meridian. Given the unusual circumstances, which include not just the lack of prison time after he was convicted but also his early release from prison in the early 1970s, it is likely that Roberts managed to avoid imprisonment in return for helping to set up Klan members for use in various COINTELPRO operations, in particular, the assassinations of Dr King and Robert Kennedy.

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suggested to Hawkins that he should bomb the house of a Meridian Jew, and in the end the house of a local ADL official, Meyer Davidson, was selected. The bombing was planned for the night of June 27, that is to say, early on the morning of June 28. The plan was to leave the bomb in the carport, which was adjacent to Davidson's bedroom. When the bomb was due to go off, Roberts would be in a nightclub somewhere, where there would be plenty of witnesses to testify to his presence there.

Third, what was clearly most important to the FBI, Hawkins decided that Tarrants also had to be involved. For this to happen, Tarrants had to be coaxed out of hiding. (According to Nelson, Tarrants had been in his mountain hideaway in North Carolina since the May 29 bombing.) Nelson does not explain how Tarrants became involved, but after White Knights boss Sam Bowers gave him permission to leave his hiding place, Tarrants made for Meridian. On the evening of June 24, the FBI learned that Hawkins and Tarrants had been seen together in Meridian.

The fourth development is by far the most intriguing. The date for the bombing was changed to the night of June 29, a change that apparently obliged Hawkins to drop out of the operation. One of the most serious weaknesses of *Terror In The Night* is that it glosses over the apparently last minute change of plan that brought about Ainsworth's involvement. Quite simply, Danny Joe Hawkins' abstention obliged Tarrants to rely on his other partner, Kathy Ainsworth. Curiously, Tarrants was still able to use Hawkins' vehicle - a green Buick Electra - as he had on many earlier occasions. It is certainly strange that whatever it was that precluded Hawkins' participation in the June 29 bombing attempt, it was something that did not require

him to have his own vehicle.

Although the FBI and the Meridian police officers who took part in the shootout that ended with Ainsowrth's death claimed to have had no idea until shortly before the shooting that Tarrant's partner that night was a woman, this is probably a cover story. By removing Hawkins from the picture, it had to have been a foregone conclusion that Ainsworth would take his place. If the set up was Hoover's plan to eliminate Ainsworth and Tarrant's, as I believe, then Hawkins' sudden withdrawal from the plan was preordained.

Finally, on the night of June 29, as the Roberts brothers made for a bar attached to the Meridian Motel (where they planned to stage a fight to draw attention to themselves), Tarrant's and Ainsworth made their final preparations in a secluded wood several miles north of Meridian. After Tarrant's had checked the circuitry and set the detonator for 2am, the pair drove to Meyer Davidson's house on the corner of 29th Avenue and 36th Street. Hawkins' Buick was laden with 29 sticks of dynamite and a detonator. Tarrant's was armed with a 9mm Browning automatic pistol and a German Schmeisser submachine gun, while Ainsworth had a Belgian-made .25 calibre automatic pistol hidden inside her purse. What they did not know, as they drove back into Meridian at about 12.30am, was that, several hours earlier, Davidson and his family had been moved to the local Holiday Inn. They were walking into a trap.

At about 12.50am, Tarrant's parked the Buick in the front entrance to Davidson's home. He got out of the car with the bomb and began walking, apparently on tip toe, towards the Davidsons' carport. All of a sudden, Detective Luke Scarbrough called out to him, 'Halt! Police!' Whether or not Tarrant's really fired his weapon first (as Nelson states), he was soon on the

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receiving end of a fusillade of shots fired from at least four different weapons. As Tarrants ran back to the car braving a hail of bullets, Ainsworth tried to open the driver's door for him. She was hit by two bullets and killed virtually instantly.

Tarrants, on the other hand, managed to get behind the steering wheel. He drove off, initiating a police chase that lasted for fifteen blocks. But after its tyres were hit, the Buick skidded to a halt at the corner of 21st Street and 30th Avenue. Here the gun battle resumed. Finally, Tarrants collapsed after he tried to climb over an electrified fence. Four gunmen kept shooting at him until they saw no signs of life. As they approached the subdued body, the four officers were shocked to find that Tarrants was still breathing. After a hasty debate about whether to kill him or not, the officer who decided to kill him found that he had run out of bullets. But it didn't really matter anyway, because Tarrants was so badly wounded that no one expected him to live. He was taken to the Matthey Hersey Hospital, where the doctor gave him only about 45 minutes.

However, in a remarkable turnaround, Tarrants recovered from his wounds. He stood trial in November 1968 and was imprisoned for thirty years. After a failed escape bid in 1969 or 1970, he experienced a religious conversion, as well as an intriguing shift to a more politically correct pro-Zionist worldview. Thanks to the intervention of FBI Special Agent Frank Watts, the man who had orchestrated the set up (I suspect on Hoover's behalf), Tarrants was released prematurely from prison in 1976 – only a few years after Hoover had died. Although the sincerity of Tarrants' conversion to Christianity is usually cited as the factor responsible for his early release, his decision to sign a statement exonerating the FBI from the

charge of having entrapped him was probably much more important. Tarrants is still alive today. He heads a Christian religious organization, the C.S. Lewis Institute. He has written a book that discusses the shootout in Meridian, but says very little about the rest of his career as a KKK terrorist.

Kathy Ainsworth, on the other hand, was buried in Magee, Mississippi, in early July at a funeral with a significant Klan presence. Her Hungarian mother, Mrs Capomacchia, from whom it is believed she inherited her hardcore racist views, told one of Ainsworth's fellow schoolteachers that 'Kathy was put here for a purpose and she died for that purpose.'

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8

The tall young man in the gold shirt

If Kathy Ainsworth was involved in the assassination of Robert Kennedy, as I believe, then there is a high probability that Tom Tarrants, who was apparently the primary target of the Meridian shootout, was also involved. What seems to reinforce this possibility is an intriguing statement made by Mrs Bernstein, who, as readers will recall, spoke to Sergeant Paul Scharaga in the carpark of the Ambassador Hotel only minutes after she saw the polka dot girl and the young man fleeing. According to Scharaga, Mrs Bernstein 'said that they were coming out of the Ambassador Hotel by the Embassy Room, when a young couple in their late teens or early twenties, well dressed, came running past them.'

If by the phrase 'young couple' Mrs Bernstein intended to convey the impression that the two seemed to her to be romantically involved (perhaps they were holding hands as they ran), this would match the description of Tarrants and Ainsworth. For, at the time of the assassination, the pair *were* romantically involved. Not only was Ainsworth pregnant with Tarrants' child, they were planning, after the Meridian bombing of Meyer Davidson's home, to drive to Miami together. They were, very definitely, a couple in the romantic sense. If Ainsworth was the polka dot girl, and the polka dot girl was with a man with whom she was romantically involved, then the man has to have been her boyfriend, Tom Tarrants. If so, Tarrants was the tall young man in a gold coloured shirt, and therefore the prime candidate for the actual assassin of

RFK. Although descriptions of the tall young man are not as detailed as those of the polka dot girl, they are sufficient to determine whether the man could have been Tarrant (although, of course, they shed no light on whether he shot RFK).

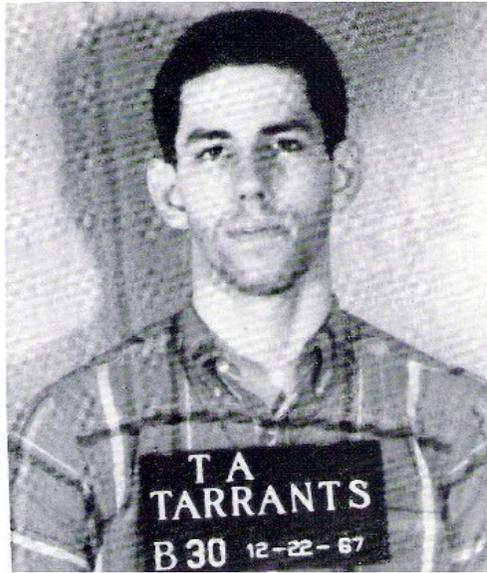
When I started researching the possibility that Ainsworth was the polka dot girl, I gave little thought to Tarrant, who I viewed simply as her accomplice. I also assumed that the man who shot RFK had to be either Thane Eugene Cesare, who is by far the most popular contender, or the man in the blue suit who closely resembled Sirhan (the man who has subsequently been identified as Michael Wayne). Yet Lisa Pease's important two-part article on the assassination forced me to confront the fact that the shooter was probably a tall young man wearing a gold shirt with what Irene Gizzi described as 'dark sun bleached hair.' If Ainsworth was the polka dot girl, the obvious question to ask is whether the young man who fled the Ambassador Hotel with her was Tarrant.

What made the identification seem possible was that Tarrant was, at the time of the RFK slaying, 21 years of age - which is exactly right for the LAPD description of the tall young man (20-22). What's more, Tarrant was an outstanding shooter. He was, according to Jack Nelson, 'a marksman capable of hitting a plastic milk jug at one hundred yards with a machine gun.' (p. 21)

A difficulty was admittedly presented by the fact that Tarrant had (and apparently still has) black hair. Yet hair colour is one of the easiest of physical characteristics to alter. There is no reason to assume that it would not have occurred to any of the conspirators to alter their appearance in some way, and it may well be that Tarrant chose to affect a Californian 'look' while

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he was in Los Angeles. A perm plus some colouring work would have been all that was required to make his hair conform to witness descriptions.



Tom Tarrants in 1967 (police photo)

The question of identification therefore hinges on Tarrants' height and build. Witness descriptions were clear that the young man in the gold shirt was extremely tall, with the earliest police description giving a height of 6' to 6'2". The man in the gold shirt was also described as very slim.

It was with considerable excitement and trepidation, therefore, that I opened my copy of *Terror In The Night* in search of a physical description of Tarrants. Quite simply, I was afraid that I would soon learn that Tarrants was of average height or heavy build and that would be the end of my theory. But, to

my astonishment, the very first page of Nelson's narrative supplied a description of Tarrant's that perfectly matches eyewitness descriptions. 'He was tall and trim,' Nelson states. '[A]bout six feet three and 170 pounds' (which is of course very slim for someone so tall). (p. 17) Baptist minister Ken Dean, who visited Tarrant's in prison in 1970, described him as 'a tall, thin man.' (p. 244) In short, there are strong reasons to believe that Tarrant's was the young man in the gold coloured shirt who may have shot RFK.

Facts from Tarrant's own biography make the identification even more likely: he was, or he aspired to be, in the business of political assassination. One of the nuggets of useful information dispensed in *Terror in the Night* is that Tarrant's hated Martin Luther King enough that he planned to kill him. 'That was my ambition, to shoot Dr King,' Tarrant's told Nelson. 'I hated Dr King.' In March 1968, Tarrant's actually drove to California to purchase a gun from Wesley Swift, head of the Christian Identity movement, for that very purpose. (p. 140) Not many people have admitted driving across the United States to obtain a rifle for the purpose of killing Dr King, and Tarrant's is one of those rare people! Tarrant's even admits that it was a 30.06 – which is precisely the gauge of the weapon used to kill King.

Intriguingly, there is more to the King connection that Nelson lets on. An article published by the *Miami Magazine* in 1976 stated that a reliable FBI informant – Willie A. Somersett – learned in July 1968 that Tarrant's was suspected of involvement in the assassination of Dr King. Specifically, Tarrant's car had been used to jam police radio broadcasts as a

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means of facilitating James Earl Ray's escape from Memphis.¹⁹ The source of Somerset's information was an otherwise unidentified 'Miami housepainter.' However, thanks to Nelson, this man can now be identified: he was Sidney Crockett Barnes, a housepainter of far rightwing views who moved with his family from Miami, Florida, to Mobile, Alabama, in 1964. (pp. 143-44)

There is no reason to doubt what Barnes told Somerset. Not only was Barnes himself an adherent of Christian Identity, his daughter, Bonnie Barnes, shared a room with Kathy Capomacchia while both were studying at Mississippi College, Clinton, and he gave Kathy away when she married Ralph Ainsworth in August 1967. (pp. 143, 145) According to Nelson, Ainsworth and Tarrants both regarded Barnes as their mentor. (p. 144) Whatever story Tarrants told Jack Nelson – who writes in *Terror in the Night* that at the time of the King assassination Tarrants was 'staying with friends who were followers of Swift and connected with right-wing radicals in Miami' in the mountains near Franklin, North Carolina – there is at least one well-connected source who places him (or, at least, his car) in Memphis, Tennessee, the very night Dr King was murdered there.

Whether Tarrants shot Dr King, or whether he played a more modest role in the King conspiracy, are matters which we cannot resolve here. But what can be said here is that anyone

¹⁹ Dan Christensen, "King Assassination: FBI ignored its Miami informer," *Miami Magazine*, Vol. 12, No. 12 (October 1976). Available online at:
http://cuban-exile.com/doc_101-125/doc0114.html

who reached the stage of procuring a weapon in California for the purpose of staging one political assassination can scarcely be ruled out as a key suspect in a similar crime committed against a figure of similar stature only a few weeks later in the very same state.



Tom Tarrants at his November 1968 trial

What seems to seal my identification of Ainsworth and Tarrants as key members of the conspiracy that killed RFK is not in the description of either individual alone, but the *conjunction* of their two descriptions. It could be a coincidence that, among the party involved in the assassination, were two people whose physical descriptions closely match those of Ainsworth and Tarrants. But when one takes into consideration the fact that they fled the Ambassador Hotel together, giving the impression to at least one eyewitness that they were a

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couple, and correlates this with the fact that Ainsworth and Tarrants were romantically involved, it becomes obvious that we have left the realm of coincidence far behind.

Even the ages attributed to the polka dot girl and the tall young man are consistent with those of Ainsworth and Tarrants. With one exception – a witness who thought the polka dot girl was only about 19 but was made up to look older – the best age for the polka dot girl is mid-20s. The man in the gold shirt, on the other hand, was generally described as ‘young’, with guesses in the very early 20s. This information corresponds perfectly with Ainsworth and Tarrants, who were, in age terms, an ‘odd couple’ - a 26yo female with a 21yo male.

When you add in the height factor (and not many people are 6’3" tall), as well as the violent racial politics Ainsworth and Tarrants shared, you have a pairing that seems beyond statistical probability. The chances, in short, of a 26yo female answering the physical description of the polka dot girl being involved in a relationship with a 21yo male answering the physical description of the tall young man in the gold shirt being anyone *other* than Ainsworth and Tarrants seem to me absolutely astronomical. How many such couples could one expect to find in far rightwing circles involved in political assassinations and terror attacks that would answer that specific combination?

What’s more, this unusual pair has the distinction of being lured by the FBI into a death trap only three weeks after Robert Kennedy was assassinated. Given that in their entire career as KKK terrorists Tarrants and Ainsworth *hadn’t actually killed anybody* (at least according to the official account of their crimes), the Meridian set up seems like a case of extraordinary overkill. We should note that not even Sam Bowers, the man

the FBI claimed had masterminded nine murders and three hundred bombings, burnings and beatings, was ever subjected to such treatment. Given the circumstances, the question, surely, is what Tarrants and Ainsworth had done to deserve entrapment and instant execution? Although they could have been involved in a great many crimes that remain hidden, the fact that their physical descriptions closely match those of the girl in the polka dot dress and her boyfriend in the gold coloured shirt strongly suggests that they were two individuals the FBI and the ADL would have been in a hurry to discard.

Leaving aside the RFK assassination to refer to the general context in which it occurred, the following seems significant. In the 1960s, the FBI was ostensibly concerned as much with fighting the extreme rightwing as the extreme left. Yet, as Brian Glick points out, the FBI's COINTELPRO-WHITE HATE programme - which ran from 1964 to 1971 - was actually 'a cover for covert aid to the KKK and similar right-wing vigilantes, who were given funds and information, *so long as they confined their attacks to COINTELPRO targets*. FBI documents also reveal covert action against Native American, Chicano, Phillipine, Arab-American, and other activists, apparently without formal Counterintelligence programs.'²⁰ The background to the Meridian shootout fully suggests the use of COINTELPRO agents provocateurs (Alton Wayne Roberts? Danny Joe Hawkins?) to use KKK shooters to kill progressive political figures like RFK and Dr King, and then to

²⁰ My italics.

<http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/RANCHO/POLITICS/COINTELPRO/gjp3.html>

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use their rightwing links to set them up afterwards for elimination.

A tentative conclusion, therefore, is that the Meridian shootout represented an attempt by the FBI (and the ADL) to get rid of two Klansmen it had used to execute Bobby Kennedy (if not also Martin Luther King). While Jack Nelson has been concerned with the flagrant injustice of the FBI/ADL set up at Meridian, he has utterly failed to unravel its mysterious logic. By neglecting to pursue such important matters as why it was necessary to kill Tarrants and Ainsworth, despite the fact that they had apparently killed nobody, and why Danny Joe Hawkins did not accompany Tarrants on the fateful night of June 29, 1968, Nelson has given the world the erroneous impression that nothing was wrong other than the illegality of the methods used to snare Tarrants and Ainsworth. But the question that cries out for an answer is, Why this particular pair? Answering that question is the burden of the final, concluding chapter.

9

Anatomy of a death trap

The joint FBI/ADL operation that led to the death of Kathy Ainsworth and which was also meant to have led to the death of her accomplice, Tom Tarrants, is among the most perplexing events of the 1960s. As the *Executive Intelligence Review* pointed out in a study of the ADL, what happened, in a nutshell, is that the ADL hired Klansmen to bomb their own official's home and the FBI caught them in the act, triggering a shootout whose purpose was to murder them.²¹ If Tarrants and Ainsworth were guilty of terrorist activities and nothing more, they should have been taken into custody and placed on trial for whatever criminal acts they had perpetrated, just as White Knights leader Sam Bowers and eleven others were tried for the murder of negro leader Vernon Dahmer in 1966.

Yet we know that the operation was a murder trap: Tarrants, at least, was targeted for execution. That he survived over 70 bullets is nothing less than a miracle. When in 1998 he met Tom Tucker, one of the police officers involved in the operation, the officer was blunt: Tarrants had not been meant to survive. 'You were supposed to die right there,' he told Tarrants.²² Jack

²¹ <http://www.beyond-the-illusion.com/files/New-Files/990731/ugly-truth-about-adl.txt>

²²

<http://www.clarionledger.com/news/miss/reports/preacher/pkep.html>

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Nelson cites several persons involved who admitted as much.²³

The question therefore arises as to why the FBI and the ADL were determined to murder Tarrants and Ainsworth rather than apprehend them and subject them to the force of the legal system. Leading antisemite William Pierce interprets the problem purely from his concern with the ADL. He writes that 'Clearly the plan was to kill both Ainsworth and Tarrants, execution style, as a warning to the Klan not to mess with the Jews.'²⁴ Yet it is important - perhaps more important - to account for the FBI's willingness to orchestrate the murders. Why would the FBI have had an interest in ensuring the deaths of two antisemitic terrorists, when it was (apparently) satisfied with the court system for antinegro terrorists? The answer that stares us in the face is that the pair knew something or had been involved in something that the FBI could not allow to become public.

Given the timing of the ambush so closely on the heels of the assassination of Robert Kennedy - and, in particular, growing public awareness of the existence of the polka dot girl - an explanation that surely makes sense is that Ainsworth *was* the polka dot girl. That possibility has to be taken seriously when we take into account not only Ainsworth's strong physical resemblance to the polka dot girl, but also the strong resemblance of Ainsworth's boyfriend, Tom Tarrants, to the young man in the gold shirt who was seen with the polka dot girl at the Ambassador Hotel. When one learns, in addition, that Tarrants was: 1) an extreme rightwinger; 2) a crack rifleman; and 3) a participant of some kind in the assassination

²³ E.g., Nelson, *Terror In The Night*, pp. 219, 229, 231, 264.

²⁴ <http://www.natall.com/pub/1998/102498.txt>

of Martin Luther King, then his resemblance to the young man at the Ambassador Hotel becomes extremely significant.

As I anticipated, therefore, the clarification of the identity of the polka dot girl has therefore opened up further leads in this long dormant case. We have identified not just one, but two persons who were present at the Ambassador Hotel on the night of the assassination who were clearly involved. But the identification of the polka dot girl has also produced a connection which only reinforces the identification. The fact that Ainsworth's boyfriend was an extremely violent young man who either was (or planned to be) involved in the business of political assassination dramatically increases the probability that she would have become involved in an assassination herself. What reason is there to assume that she would have drawn the line at blowing up empty synagogues? And who better to play the role of Sirhan's handler than the girlfriend of one of the assassins?

If Ainsworth and Tarrant were involved in the sinister events of June 4-5, we can well understand why the FBI wanted to eliminate them rather than arrest them and place them on trial. In my judgment, the FBI and the ADL would have only needed to get rid of the pair by means of such a devious strategy if they had made use of them to carry out a top secret COINTELPRO operation such as the assassination of Robert Kennedy who, given the undying nature of Hoover's hatreds, we can be sure was a COINTELPRO target. If we review the essential features of the Meridian affair, as we will do in the next section, it becomes extremely obvious that Tarrant and Ainsworth had to have been very much more than lambs the FBI chose to slaughter to placate the wrath of the ADL.

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The Meridian affair reviewed critically

To recapitulate the main facts revealed by Jack Nelson in *Terror in the Night*: in early June 1968, Meridian FBI agent Frank Watts conceived the idea of a bribing two Klansmen suspected by Meridian police of having bombed the Meridian synagogue on May 29, 1968, to incite two other Klansmen, Danny Joe Hawkins and Tom Tarrants, to bomb the house of Meridian ADL leader Meyer Davidson. The FBI instigated this effort as a means of summarily executing Tom Tarrants. It is not clear whether the operation was also intended to lead to the death of Tarrants' partner, 26yo Jackson schoolteacher Kathy Ainsworth, but it seems likely that it was.

Until only a day or so before the operation, Tarrants' partner was to have been Danny Joe Hawkins. Hawkins' mysterious decision to drop out of the operation at the last minute left Tarrants no alternative but to involve Ainsworth, who had been his regular partner on a number of terrorist operations over the preceding eight months. Since Hawkins appears to have had no compelling reason to absent himself, the probability is that he manoeuvred himself out of the operation in order to manoeuvre Ainsworth in. The operation was designed to end with the deaths of both individuals, and the last minute switch was necessary because the plot might have been aborted if the Meridian police officers involved had been aware in advance that it was a female, rather than Hawkins, who was slated for execution along with Tarrants.

It is by no means obvious why Tarrants and Ainsworth were set up to be killed in a police shootout. The ADL, which put up the money that was needed to bribe Alton Wayne and Raymond Roberts to play their part, is depicted by Nelson as

having acted out of a spirit of vengeance toward the antisemites who had bombed the Meridian synagogue. Leaving aside the matter of whether the best way to get even with the perpetrators of the atrocity was by eliminating them in a police shootout (rather than by securing a conviction against them in court), the fact remains that it is *not* clear that Hawkins and Tarrants were the people who had actually carried out the bombing, whatever admissions Tarrants may subsequently have made as a means of getting out of jail after serving only a small portion of his term.

Meridian police told the ADL that the bombing had been carried out by the Roberts brothers, but Frank Watts, apparently without any evidence at all, decided that Hawkins and Tarrants had been the actual culprits. When on June 10 confirmation came that the bombing had been carried out by Hawkins and Tarrants, the source was one of the Roberts brothers - scarcely a disinterested party in the affair! The true reasons why Watts suspected Hawkins and Tarrants have never emerged, and no forensic evidence of any kind seems to have been used to decide the question. Certainly, Nelson does not bother to ask Watts whether he felt he had had sufficient grounds to make such a determination.

While Nelson apparently has no interest in such matters as forensic investigation, he is interested in the 'human factor,' that is to say, the participants' personal motives. *Terror In The Night* furnishes Watts with a personal motive for wanting Hawkins and Tarrants dead. According to Nelson, Watts found his own name on a KKK death list which had been passed to him by Raymond Roberts. (p. 103) Of course, Nelson does not bother to raise the question of the authenticity of the list or its authorship. Whether this list was authentic, and whether it had

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anything to do with Hawkins and Tarrants, are two of many matters relating to the Meridian affair that Jack Nelson simply does not bother to scrutinize. In fact, Nelson's book, while ostensibly functioning as an expose of what he and many others believe was an illegal entrapment operation, amounts to an apologia for the behaviour of all the leading protagonists. Nelson never presses them for a coherent explanation of their actions in 1968.

Most seriously, Nelson neglects to ask question the draconian nature of the set up. Even if Tarrants had been responsible for the May 29 synagogue bombing, the question has to be asked: Since when has a violent act been summarily punished by death? Aren't bombers entitled to a public trial? Strikingly, Nelson fails to convey to his readers the disproportionate nature of the crude frontier justice the Meridian operation was designed to dispense. First of all, Tarrants - whether working with Hawkins or Ainsworth - was far from being the 'mad dog killer' Watts says he was: in his entire career as a White Knights terrorist, Tarrants had never killed a single person, at least so far as the public record of his activities indicates. Second, if the shootout was retaliation for the May 29 bombing, the question has to be asked why Danny Joe Hawkins - like the man suspected of making the bomb, L. E. Matthews - got off scot free.

Third, if Tarrants was to be executed on account of a KKK death list, where is the evidence that Tarrants had anything to do with this particular list? That he was either its author or the man charged with killing the people on it? And even if this list was Tarrants' agenda, since when has it been lawful to execute someone for crimes he has yet to commit? Finally, the question of disproportionality, clear enough in the case of Tarrants'

alleged partner, Danny Joe Hawkins, is even more apparent in the case of Sam Bowers. Although everyone agrees that Bowers, who headed the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, was the Mr Big of antinegro and antisemitic terrorism in Mississippi in this era. Yet although- he masterminded, according to the FBI, no less than 9 murders and over 300 other violent acts, he was never subject himself to an elimination operation of the sort that was supposed to leave Tarrants and Ainsworth both dead. Compared to Bowers, Tarrants and Ainsworth were very small fish indeed, *so far as the public record of their activities shows.*

The way Nelson recounts it, the operation simply does not make sense. Nelson does not seem to see the fault lines in the narrative he constructed (based on interviews with many of the participants); indeed, he seems resolved to gloss over them, which is a conspicuous failure in a 'passionate muckraker' (as Nelson describes himself). A more critical reading of Nelson's narrative suggests other possibilities. The first possibility is that the operation was instigated by FBI director Hoover. Nelson tells us that Watts informed Hoover about developments daily, but he does not tell us anything about Hoover's reactions, such as whether he sent directives to Mississippi for the conduct of the operation. The sheer vehemence of Hoover's and the FBI's campaign against Nelson after he began investigating the entrapment operation – which is discussed in Nelson's "Epilogue" - is proof that a great deal was at stake in the case that the FBI director did not wish to see exposed.

A second possibility - the only one that makes entire sense of the affair - is that Tarrants and Ainsworth were both targeted for execution because they had been involved in something which the FBI could not allow to become public knowledge.

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That matter could well have been anything, except for one thing: the disturbing resemblance Tarrants and Ainsworth bore to two hitherto unidentified participants of the RFK assassination team.

If Tarrants and Ainsworth were involved in the assassination, it is not hard to see why the pair were targeted for elimination shortly afterwards. After the assassination of President Kennedy, a conspiracy that left the FBI (and other implicated agencies) involved in extensive operations to eliminate dozens of persons who knew too much, the FBI no doubt decided to make a clean sweep this time. By setting Tarrants and Ainsworth up as terrorists, perhaps by implicating them in terrorist acts actually perpetrated by others, the FBI and the ADL found a pretext to rid themselves of two persons who might have been sources of trouble in the future. The FBI is likely to have been preoccupied by such matters in mid-June, 1968, when there was a chance that the mysterious polka dot girl might actually be identified by somebody.

When I commenced my investigation of the RFK assassination I reasoned that the identification of the polka dot girl would open fresh leads into this unsolved 37-year old crime. However, I did not expect to succeed in identifying her, let alone also the man in the gold coloured shirt. (Least of all, did I expect to identify a suspect in the Martin Luther King case.) Whether we have uncovered the truth about Tarrants, Ainsworth and the Meridian affair, or whether I have been misled by a truly amazing coincidence, is for the reader to decide. What is clear, though, is that the only real obstacles to my theory as it is presently constituted are Tarrants' hair colour and whether Kathy Ainsworth's nose can reasonably be described as 'funny.'

The Girl in the Polka Dot Dress



A QUESTION:

Who is this man – pictured only minutes after Kennedy was shot - wearing a white tie with black polka dots?

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APPENDIX

Annotated Tarrants chronology

1947: December 20: Thomas Albert Tarrants III born.

1963: September: Leads violent student protests against school desegregation at Murphy High School, Mobile, Alabama. Is subsequently charged with disorderly conduct.

1964: Drops out of school to devote himself to the rightwing cause. Buys a .45-caliber Colt automatic pistol. Campaigns for Barry Goldwater, joins the Ku Klux Klan, and helps found the Christian Military Defense League. Is influenced by the conspiracy theories of the John Birch Society, J. Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit* and the Christian Identity movement.

1964: August: Police in Prichard, Alabama, seize his automatic shotgun. Soon afterwards, police in Mobile seize his .38 calibre revolver and sawn-off shotgun.

1966: Meets Kathy Capomacchia (Ainsworth).

1967: Moves to Laurel, Mississippi, to be near Sam Bowers, head of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

1967: August: Begins working as a maintenance worker at the Masonite plant in Laurel

1967: September 18: 10pm: He and Ainsworth bomb the newly-built synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi. The building is empty at the time and no one is hurt. Jackson police initially suspect

Joe Denver Hawkins, his son Danny Joe, and J. L. Harper.
Question: what evidence is there that Tarrants and Ainsworth were actually responsible?

1967: October 6: Bombs the house of Dr William T. Bush on the campus of Tougaloo College, near Jackson. Again, no one is hurt.

1967: November 15: Bombs the parsonage of black Methodist minister the Rev. Allen Johnson in Laurel, Mississippi. Again, no one is hurt.

1967: November 19: He and Ainsworth bomb the house of civil rights activist Robert Kochitzky in Jackson. Again, no one is hurt.

1967: November 21: He and Ainsworth bomb the house of Rabbi Perry Nussbaum in Jackson. Again, no one is hurt.

1967: December 20 (or 22): Charged with illegal possession of a machine gun in Collins, Mississippi.

1968: January: Enrols at Mobile College.

1968: March: Makes a trip to California, where he buys a rifle from Dr Wesley Swift of Lancaster. Swift has been described as 'the single most significant figure in the early years of the Christian Identity movement in the United States.' Tarrants told journalist Jack Nelson that he bought the 30.06 rifle for the purpose of assassinating Martin Luther King - quite an admission to make, when you recall that the bullet that killed

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King was a 30.06. But is procuring a rifle for the MLK hit the only reason Tarrants went to California? Or was the California trip also related to the events that took place in Los Angeles on the night of June 4-5?

1968: March 23: Returns from California to find his house under FBI surveillance. By this date, he possesses a pistol and a submachine gun in addition to the rifle purchased in California.

1968: March 28: Declares himself 'underground and operating guerrilla warfare.' This is exactly a week before Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

1968: March 30: By this date, he is allegedly in hiding in a safe house in the mountains near Franklin, North Carolina. Could he really have been on his way to Memphis to kill Dr. King?

1968: April 4: According to Jack Nelson, he 'danced with joy' when he heard at his North Carolina hideaway that Dr King had been assassinated. However, according to information passed on by a 'Miami house painter' [Sidney Crockett Barnes] to FBI informant Willie A. Somerset, his car was involved in the assassination. Given Barnes's close relationship with Ainsworth and Tarrants and Somerset's reliability as a source on the American right wing - he was the FBI agent who taperecorded Joseph Milteer speaking in early November 1963 about the forthcoming assassination of President Kennedy - William Pepper, author of two excellent books on the King assassination, should probably investigate Tarrants before he says anything further about the name of the shooter.

1968: April 11-15 (approx.): Seven to ten days after the King assassination, he stays at the home of Sidney Crockett Barnes in Mobile, Alabama.

1968: May 2: Fires a machine gun into the home near Jackson of a black woman active in the NAACP. Her niece suffers wounds to one leg. She is the only *known* casualty of his violent activities. For a 'mad dog killer,' as he was described by FBI Special Agent Frank Watts, Tarrant proves extremely unlucky. After eight months of terrorist activity, he has not claimed a single life, black or Jewish, so far as the *public* record of his activities is concerned.

1968: May 20: Earliest documented sighting of the polka dot girl in Los Angeles at Robbie's Restaurant in Pomona, where Kennedy held a campaign luncheon for 400 guests. If Ainsworth was already in Los Angeles, could Tarrant have already been there with her?

1968: May 29: 12.15am: He and Danny Joe Hawkins allegedly bomb the Meridian synagogue. Once again, no one is hurt.

1968: May 29-June 24: His whereabouts in this period are completely unknown. Jack Nelson assumes that once again he is in hiding in North Carolina.

1968: June 2: Meridian police officer and Meridian mayor tell the ADL that those responsible for the synagogue bombing were Alton Wayne Roberts and Raymond Roberts. However, FBI Special Agent Frank Watts is already convinced by early June that Tarrant is responsible, although he has no hard

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evidence to support his suspicions. What is the basis for Watts' belief? Could he have been instructed by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to focus on Tarrants as a cover for a cleanup operation that would lead to the elimination of Tarrants and Ainsworth?

1968: June 5: 12.15am: If the speculations in this website are correct, he and Ainsworth are involved in the shooting at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, California, that brought about the death of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. His appearance disguised by permed and bleached hair, he is seen wearing a gold coloured shirt by several witnesses. After shooting Kennedy three times at point blank range, he and Ainsworth leave the pantry while almost everyone else is preoccupied with Sirhan. They exit the Hotel via the fire stairs and the carpark, where in their haste they nearly collide with an elderly Jewish couple, the Bernsteins.

1968: June 10: Raymond Roberts, who is now an FBI informant, tells the FBI that Tarrants and Hawkins had been responsible for the May 29 synagogue bombing.

1968: June 24: Seen with Danny Joe Hawkins in Meridian.

1968: June 27: In a mysterious development, Hawkins drops out of the mission to bomb the house of ADL official Meyer Davidson. His inevitable replacement is Tarrants' regular partner, Kathy Ainsworth.

1968: June 28: 11pm: He and Ainsworth arrive in Meridian for the planned bombing.

1968: June 29: 12.50am onwards: Ainsworth is killed and he is severely wounded in an FBI/ADL set up. The ambush is a classic 'clean up' operation, with the attempted bombing providing the pretext for a massive shootout in which both Tarrants and Ainsworth were meant to be killed. After a dramatic 15-block police chase, he is captured and taken to hospital, where a doctor gives him just 45 minutes to live.

1968: July 8: In Mobile, Sidney Crockett Barnes, furious over Ainsworth's death, tells FBI informant Willie A. Somerset that Tarrants had been involved in the King assassination and that he had allowed Tarrants to stay at his home some 7-10 days after the murder.

1968: November 26-27: Tried and sentenced to 30 years in prison. Danny Joe Hawkins is subsequently indicted for his role in the Meridian synagogue bombing. Oddly enough, his case never went to trial. As Jack Nelson remarks, 'his case was put on the court's dead docket.' (p. 269) Why was one (alleged) perpetrator of the Meridian synagogue bombing lured into a death trap while the other never even needed to stand trial? Answer: because he had carried out the bombing at the behest of the FBI.

1969: July 23: Escapes from Parchman State Penitentiary. Is recaptured the next day and his prison term extended by a further 5 years. Experiences a religious conversion shortly afterwards and adopts (or affects) a politically-correct philosemitism. Sometime between 1970 and 1974, in response to intense and persistent FBI pressure, he signs a statement absolving the FBI of having entrapped him at Meridian.

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1974: He applies for early release from prison. Although his application is supported by FBI SA Frank Watts, Baptist minister Ken Dean, Al Binder of the ADL and penitentiary superintendent Bill Hollowell, the state governor, William Waller, decided against it.

1976: October: The *Miami Magazine* publishes an article revealing that Tarrant was suspected of involvement in the assassination of Martin Luther King. Specifically, Tarrant's car had been used to jam police radio broadcasts.

1976: December 13: Mississippi's new governor, Cliff Finch, approves his early release from prison.

1977-78: Studies at the University of Mississippi.

1979: Publishes a small book, *The Conversion of a Klansman*.

1980: Marries into a wealthy North Carolina family.

1990-1992: Is interviewed 12 times by Jack Nelson for his book *Terror In The Night* on the ADL/FBI set up in Meridian. Tells Nelson that his ambition, in March 1968, was to assassinate Dr King. But Nelson fails to elicit the details of his plan to kill Dr King. Nor does he ask questions about the Robert Kennedy assassination, a subject which is conspicuously glossed over in the book.

1994: Publishes book with John Perkins and David A. Wimbish, *He's my brother: former racial foes offer strategy for reconciliation*.