

Follow-up interview regarding the Prouty allegations.

Background. As previously mentioned, Prouty has never given the name of his contact at the 112th or 316th in any of his public writings. In our interview with him, Prouty once again declined to name his source, even after being shown a roster of both the 316th INTC Detachment and the 112th INTC Group. He even ventured that he was beginning to doubt that the person was really “in the business.” We were very interested, then, when a short time after our interview with him, Prouty began naming his source on the “Col. L. Fletcher Prouty Reference Web Site (http://mindlink.bc.ca/craig_nelson/fletch3.html). Prouty directly quoted William McKinney, whom he lists as having been a member of the 112th INTC Group, as having told him that the 112th was told to “stand down.” We thus located and contacted McKinney and conducted an interview with him.

Interview results. William McKinney was interviewed on May 1, 1997. Our goal was to determine a) whether McKinney had knowledge of any such “stand down” order and from where it might have been issued; b) whether McKinney was aware of any documents or other records which might be added to the JFK Collection; and c) to determine the accuracy of the quotes and allegations attributed to him by Prouty.

(1) McKinney confirmed for us that he had been a member of the 316th INTC Detachment, not the 112th INTC Group. He characterized the 316th as a small STRAC (Strategic Army Command) outfit that “painted rocks” as often as anything else. McKinney was a PFC at the time of the assassination, just out of basic training. On the day of the assassination, McKinney was receiving training at Ft. Holabird, Maryland, which he characterized as introductory intelligence work, such as lock-picking, bugging and debugging, and defense against methods of entry. This is important to note: McKinney was *not* in Texas on November 22, 1963, and therefore was in no position to have any firsthand knowledge of anything that may have happened that day.

(2) McKinney remembered both Lt. Col Reich and Major Cabaza as his superiors. Asked how closely he worked with them, he said, “They were in the inner office, I was in the outer office.” Again, this is important because it implies that McKinney would not have been in a position to hear of any heated arguments over any alleged stand down orders.

(3) McKinney said that the 112th had been trained in what he characterized as “third ring, perimeter security” for visits by visiting dignitaries. Asked if it was a regular duty he had, he said that the 316th never fulfilled such a function, and that the 112th was trained in this area only so it could provide that service if needed. When asked if the 316th ever drilled on security tactics (which would be expected of an Army unit with protective responsibility, in order that they be prepared when called upon to execute that duty); he said they never had. Asked if at any point in his service with the 316th, he or his unit had provided a security supplement for VIP visits, he said they had not.

(4) McKinney said that when he reported to the unit in January 1964, he found that people were “still upset... angry... or unhappy that the 112th... had been told that perimeter security was not needed by them.” Later, he was presented with two alternatives, and asked which he felt was more accurate: one, that the 112th *could* have provided extra security (not primary security, only supplemental perimeter security) and just was told that it would not be necessary; or two, that the 112th *should* have been providing security as part of its regular duties and was specifically told to stand down. He was fairly emphatic that the second option did not occur, and that he believed the first option far more likely.

(5) Regarding his contact with Fletcher Prouty, McKinney acknowledged having called him once in 1977 or 1978, under an entirely unrelated circumstance. By that time, McKinney had left the Army and was then a newspaper reporter in Erie, PA. Apparently there had been a series of train derailments in the Erie area which may well have been caused by poor track conditions. In an attempt to get a statement from the rail companies, McKinney called one of them and asked to speak with the public affairs officer. Fletcher Prouty is the person he eventually talked to. After a period, they began talking to each other about other subjects, and in what McKinney termed a “tangential conversation,” the subject of Prouty’s interest in the Kennedy assassination came up. McKinney mentioned his affiliation with the 316th in Texas, and told Prouty of the discord mentioned above. McKinney stressed that this was a brief diversion in a conversation which was occurring for an entirely separate reason. He also stressed that he has never had further contact with Fletcher Prouty.

(6) McKinney said that the next time he recalled his conversation with Prouty was upon seeing the film JFK by Oliver Stone. McKinney said that during the “Man X” scene, in which Donald Sutherland was describing to Kevin Costner a massive plot by the military-industrial complex, he recognized elements of his story. However, he said that the movie had “gotten it ass-backwards.” [sic] He said that the elements of his original story had been mistaken in the film, such as Reich’s rank, which unit Reich commanded, and so on. Asked if he knew of any “stand down” order as presented in the film, or had ever spoken of one to Prouty, McKinney said he did not. He then told the story of how someone connected with the film (he thought one of the writers or producers; he could not remember which one) had come to a college in Erie to participate in a discussion of the assassination. McKinney recalls approaching the man afterwards and “challenging him” on the inaccuracies or misleading statements in the film; he said that the man “didn’t want to hear it,” and walked away from him. McKinney said that shortly afterward, he wrote a column for his paper saying, in effect, “if you can’t get the basics right, how are we supposed to believe the rest of the film?”

(7) Asked if there was anything he wished to add, McKinney said ruefully that, “...I wish anybody else would have been their [the rail company’s] p.r. person, and not Prouty.”

Conclusion.

Based on our conversations with Fletcher Prouty, Ed Coyle, William McKinney, and Rudolph Reich and others, what follows is an approximation of the probable course of events regarding the Fletcher Prouty allegation. [Note: this is *not* a conclusion on the assassination itself; this only applies to the Prouty allegations.

In Texas. We have learned that there were sometimes meetings among the different aspects of the intelligence community. We also know that there was professional rivalry, perhaps even uncooperative jealousy, between the different branches of the intelligence community in Dallas (Secret Service, FBI, Dallas PD, Army intelligence, ATF, and others). It seems likely that during the joint intelligence meeting just prior to the President's visit that the Secret Service, knowing that while it wasn't required, other aspects of the community *could have* provided supplemental security if they were asked, made a statement to the effect that they had the situation under control and needed no extra help. Given the nature of relations among the community, the other aspects of the community, Army intelligence included, took this as a sign of hubris or arrogance on the part of Secret Service. After the assassination, other branches of the community, especially Army intelligence, reflected on the day and wondered why the Secret Service had told them they were not needed. The feeling was likely one that perhaps things would have been different had they been there. However, this is not to say that they were *supposed* to have provided supplemental security; there is no evidence that this was a standard and common duty for either the 316th or the 112th, or that a "stand down" order was ever issued, or would ever have been necessary.

Prouty's allegations. Prouty remembers a telephone call from a member of the 112th "a couple of years" after the assassination (i.e., 1964 or 1965), and that the purpose of the conversation was to discuss this aspect of what happened on November 22, 1963. In public, he cites William McKinney as the source of this call, though he declined to name a source when questioned by ARRB. We can confirm that this call did take place. However, it appears that the call took place in 1977 or 1978, as McKinney remembers it, and was a diversion in an unrelated conversation. It also appears that somewhere in the re-telling, the statement that the 112th *could have* provided supplemental security but were not asked somehow became that they were *told* not to perform their *scheduled* protective duties. Again, there is no evidence to support such a contention.