

*Transcript of Interview of Col. Rudolph M. Reich (Ret.)
Conducted by Timothy A. Wray of the ARRB
July 24, 1996*

ARRB Staff present: Wray, Barger, Zimmerman, Gunn

Wray: I'd just like to clarify that you understand that we're taping our conversation.

Reich: I understand you are taping.

Wray: Okay, sir, as I told you in my letter, I'm a retired Army colonel, slightly newer vintage, I think, than you. *(Laughs)* Our job, of course, is to collect information about the Kennedy assassination, we're not doing any kind of an investigation or anything--

Reich: Go right ahead.

Wray: I guess to begin, the first thing I'd like to ask you, is just to recount for us once more the events, your experiences on the twenty-second of November, 1963.

Reich: I was in the office at the 316th Intelligence detachment. Just [a] routine day. We didn't expect anything except that we knew that the President is coming through. And that was in the morning. And at noon, my wife called me from home telling me that the assassination took place. And... *(pause)* it was just a regular working day, we were very sad about the situation, certainly, but there is nothing that we were involved in or were supposed to be involved in, to prevent this. *(Pause)* And, that's about all that happened on that particular day.

Wray: Okay, sir. Let me ask you this: did the... I understand that at that time, you were the commander of the 316th--

Reich: That is correct.

Wray: Do I understand-- I've seen part of your military record-- did I understand correctly that you were previously the S-3 of the 112th Intelligence Group?

Reich: That is correct, sir. Plans and training, you know, the typical S-3 work.

Wray: Yes, sir. Let me ask you this: for the--you sort of implied this, but I'd just like to

make it clear-- for the President's visit to Texas on the 21-22 of November...

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: ...did either the 316th or the 112th Intelligence Group play any role in providing additional security for that visit?

Reich: No sir. As the S-3 at that time, I would have been involved in any correspondence pertaining to that subject. No, there was no plan--the only thing that I could think of, that the commander at the G-2 did know about it, but didn't do anything about it, but I don't want to say that certainly, you know what I mean?

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: My staff knew nothing.

Wray: Yes, sir. When you say the commander of the G-2, you're referring to the commander of the 112th Group, is that correct?

Reich: [1]12th Group and the G-2 of [the] Army, you know...

Wray: Fourth Army.

Reich: Yeah, they were right across the street.

Wray: Yes, sir. Let me ask you another question. I don't know if you're aware of this, but various researchers have quoted you-- not quoted, but have alluded to the fact-- that you had offered additional security to the Secret Service or to some other agency, and that that had been declined.

Reich: Sir, that is--I wrote a letter; as soon as I read the book of Mark Lane, I wrote a letter to the Director of Intelligence, telling him that these statements... the man, I never knew who he was, he never spoke to me. He must have spoke [sic] to *somebody*, but not to me, because I would never have talked [about] some of these-- I would never have talked about a plan that I knew was in the making as part of the President's security, because I'm pretty sure it was at least for official use-- at least, I do not know. But there was no correspondence, no document, as far as myself or my staff knew, that there was such a thing as a group to lend support to the Secret Service. Furthermore, I never had liaison with Secret Service. If you talk about other

organizations, yes. But never Secret Service. The only Secret Service man I ever saw was about two years ago right here in Orlando, by accident. *(Laughs)* So...

Wray: *(Laughing)* Okay.

Reich: And then, this guy Mark Lane, when I wrote to the Director of Intelligence I made it **very clear** that this guy wrote these things up, either had the information from one of the privates, because the way the whole thing sounded, that we knew Oswald. **Everybody** in the intelligence field in this area knew Oswald. And everybody knew Ruby. And... I never had any liaison function as pertains to [the] group and the Secret Service.

Wray: Okay, sir.

Reich: In fact, it should be very clearly determined by-- into the files of the Secret Service: they might know my name, but that's about all that would show up.

Wray: Yes, sir. Let me ask you another question. You referred to a researcher named Mark Lane--

Reich: Oh, yes. *(pause)* That crook.

Wray: There's another one that has mentioned your name as well, I just wanted to know if you were familiar with this researcher, his name is--

Reich: Fletcher.

Wray: --Fletcher Prouty.

Reich: No, sir.

Wray: You don't know him?

Reich: Prouty is a man after-- I've read some of his stuff. He is basing every information that he gave [sic] to Mark Lane, or into the various books that he wrote-- to prove that it was a CIA affair, not an individual, or not a small group of people that assassinated the President. I don't know where he got my name from, however; before when I came back from Europe the last time-- I mean, the last... yes... I forgot now the day exactly... I was in charge of the Joint Interrogation Center, where we had FBI, CIA,

and all kinds of people; the Navy, and so on. So he may have-- somebody in this group may have told him about me, that, you know what I mean, that I am in Texas right now, I mean at that particular time.

Wray: Okay, sir.

Reich: I don't like what the man did, and I think I've traced him down to-- after all these years-- I've traced him down into Volusia County here in Daytona Beach. And as soon as I determine where he lives, I certainly shall contact him. I've never spoken to the man, I've never met him, and if he has documents, at least he should say when it was that he talked to me, if you could determine this. Because I was assigned--let's see... I forgot the days right now... I was assigned to the Ft. Benning Infantry Center, the Director of Intelligence, so I don't even think, if it's a certain day, he could not have talked to me anyhow.

Wray: Sir, according to your record, it appears that you departed Texas for Ft. Benning around--

Reich: October?

Wray: --October of sixty-four; yes, sir, October sixty-four.

Reich: Yeah, yeah, yeah; now it comes to me. That's correct, sir. That's correct-- I recall now.

Wray: Sir, let me back up on something you said. When you said you sent a letter to someone with respect to the--

Reich: Director of Intelligence, yes.

Wray: Do you by any chance have a copy of that in your personal records?

Reich: I sure do.

Wray: Sir, would it be possible for us to get a copy of that from you, by some means?

Reich: Yes. Can I..

Wray: We can arrange that.

Reich: (unintelligible) to you; can I address it to the Review Board?

Wray: Yes, sir. Or we can discuss that at the end of our conversation. I can work out with you--

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: --how we can do that. Let me just--you said this, but I just want to confirm it clearly-- that for the record, you've never spoken with Fletcher Prouty?

Reich: (chuckles) I don't know who he is, sir.

Wray: Okay. Sir, did you happen to see the Oliver Stone film, JFK?

Reich: I do not recall, sir, to be honest with you.

Wray: Because there's a segment in that movie in which a character is essentially represented as being you. And, there's this scene in which this individual claims to have offered the assistance of his military intelligence personnel to the Secret Service to provide additional security, and the Secret Service turned him down. I was just wondering whether, in the preparation of the film, anyone from the film production company had contacted you?

Reich: While I was the S-3 out there, there were a couple-- a couple, no, that was in 1964.

Wray: Oh, yeah, because the film would have been--

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: --much more recent than that. It was--

Reich: No, I just want to tell you that there were quite a number of people who were interested in determining from some of the officers that were assigned at various units prior to the arrival in Texas, as to interrogation methods.

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: And, especially I was interested in them to say no, because they wanted to-- were interested mainly in rough stuff, which was contrary to our doctrine at that particular

time, I don't know whether you know. But we don't use any rough stuff, even in the Joint Interrogation Center in Frankfurt, prior to my arrival here in the States.

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: So, I know there was quite a number of people [sic] I don't know. If there was anybody in the unit that had a contact, you know, I've no idea. I'm pretty much of a lone wolf.

Wray: Yes, sir. Sir, let me ask you, were intelligence personnel--

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: --either in the 316th detachment or in the 112th group, were they trained to provide protection for people?

Reich: Yeah. This is why I mentioned, as the [S]3, I was also responsible for training--

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: --and you can go through all these training records that we produced in those years before or after, there is nothing of that sort. In fact, I was very much surprised when I heard that there was such an attempt made to get people to support the Secret Service. You know, I read everything-- while at the 112th-- I read every... you know these briefings that come out and go finally to the President, you know, that the intelligence unit gets? You know, the 3-4 sheets of briefing? I don't know if it was monthly or weekly, I forgot. But none of these mentioned any, any let's say concern, that the President may have... may be assassinated. And nothing that came out from the Director of Intelligence that I know of, I mean, the material that comes to us, or came to us, as briefing materials, nor the Army G-2, ever mentioned anything in connection with the ... any support that was supposed to be given to the Secret Service.

Wray: Yes, sir. Sir, reviewing unit records, it appears to me that the 316th was formed-- actually, it had previously existed, I think, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina--

Reich: Correct.

Wray: --but then was transferred to Fort Sam Houston in, I think, at the end of December

1962, as I recall. So, it would've been a new unit, at least at Fort Sam Houston, in 1963.

Reich: It sure was, yes.

Wray: In your experience either as the commander of the 316th, or previously when you were the S-3 for the 112th Group--

Reich: Yes.

Wray: --do you recall any other incident, whether it was a Presidential visit, or the Vice-President, who had been Mr. Johnson-- he had a ranch in Texas--

Reich: Correct.

Wray: --where they visited Texas, and any people from either the 316th or the 112th *ever* had anything to do with helping the Secret Service with security arrangements?

Reich: Not to my knowledge, sir. But... no way.

Wray: Okay.

Reich: No way. But, I tell you what, if anybody knew, it was then the commander of the [1]12th.

Wray: Okay.

Reich: Or the G-2, that used to talk about these things. You see, the problem is, and I hate to say this, but I've got to say it-- I've just got to get rid of the thought. Many of the groups, the intelligence groups, and other people in the intelligence field, if they wanted to retire in Texas, they gave 'em some kind of intelligence group. These people had no idea what it's all about.

Wray: (*laughs*) Yes, sir, I understand.

Reich: So, that's all I wanted to say on that, but... it really hurt me. I've seen it four, five, six times in my... even way back after World War II, I remember it very clearly. People (*garbled*) had no idea what it's..... (*trails off*)

Wray: Okay. Sir, let me ask you one more question about this. Do you recall, after the assassination--

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: --whether anyone from the 316th or the 112th was asked by any sort of law enforcement, or the FBI, or any other kind of investigative agency, to assist with the investigation into the assassination?

Reich: Sir, I could talk only for myself, because I do not know if other people were approached and were not talking about it. But none of these staff people that I associated with daily, so to speak, you know, and privately, ever mentioned anything like this, so I would not know.

Wray: Okay. You mentioned a little bit earlier that people there were familiar with Oswald and they were familiar with Ruby. What was the basis for that knowledge, do you recall?

Reich: Just-- I forgot which section... was it CI? One of our sections... you know, they studied the newspaper, they cut out things, and hometown people, if they have [a] rowdy or something like that, they make photographs and just started a dossier on some of these people, you know what I mean?

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: And, you know, in that damn book, that idiot colonel says 'They knew Oswald. They knew that the trip to Dallas was dangerous.' I mean, what kind of... officer of his capacity, that he claims to have been, according to his biography in the book... something like that? You know?

Wray: Sir, I'm sorry, who was the author? I didn't catch the name.

Reich: You mean... *(pause)* Oh, the--

Wray: The author of the book that made these allegations.

Reich: L. Fletcher Prouty.

Wray: Oh, yeah.

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: Okay. *(Pause)* And was that-- so... both...do you.. Oswald had come to the attention there-- do you recall also that there was a file or that there was information about Ruby as well?

Reich: No. I just know that it showed up in one of the reports that I read. After.. A couple years ago, I do not know. Where the name came from, I have no idea.

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: But it was before the Ruby-Oswald affair, I know that.

Wray: Okay. Do you know... you mentioned that you had a copy of this letter that you sent to, uh, DCSI.

Reich: Yes. *(Garbled)* I copied it, I kept [it] for myself.

Wray: Do you have any other records from that time that might have any information about the assassination or your recollections of-- you know, a diary or anything like that?

Reich: No. I'll tell you the truth: I never kept notes, because everything I did was strictly in accordance with current-- at that time-- current rules and regulations. And I did nothing that would be contrary to a directive or a mission statement that I had at that time. So I did not protect myself in some of the statements that I may have made or action that I took. It was always in [the] mission.

Wray: Okay.

Reich: But I never believed in writing things down. I learned it, as I had mentioned to the other gentleman, that I was also very much, how should I say, engaged in FOI operations. These were all overseas; I do not know any FOI operations in [the] United States.

Wray: When you say FOI, you mean Field Operations Intelligence?

Reich: Field Operations Intelligence, yes. That is correct, sir, yes.

Wray: Yes, sir. Let me ask you this; this is to get away from the assassination a little bit, but just to get into sort of the general activities of the 316th and a little bit the 112th. We've found some of the records from that period, from those units.

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: I should say, more messages from G-2 and so forth, going back to ACSII or Washington, DC. It appears that at least there was *some* effort on the part of the 112th-- I don't know about the 316th-- to monitor civil rights activists.

Reich: That is correct, but it was one section-- as I said to you, I do not remember which section; if they called it a CI section, I do not remember any more. But I remember that this is correct, sir... that information that you just mentioned, yes.

Wray: Now did the 316th do that as well?

Reich: No, no, not in the 316th. In fact, you see, we were so new, and there was an effort made to get us out to-- a couple months after I was made detachment commander, or the establishment of the unit-- to go out and lend a hand in the big maneuver they had out in California. So, as I say, we were new within the organization, that's right, to certainly train the people they way I saw fit, to accomplish the mission, the eventual mission, when the notice came that we most likely will go to California for three or four weeks, I believe it was.

Wray: Yes, sir, I have a record of... let me see... that would be...are you referring to exercise DESERT STRIKE?

Reich: I think that was the name, yeah--

Wray: In May of 1964.

Reich: -- I wouldn't swear the name, [but] yes.

Wray: In fact, I found in a record here a letter from someone who had been assigned to 3rd Corps headquarters discussing the performance of yourself and the unit during DESERT STRIKE, and then also an after action report about that...

Reich: I tell you, I made myself-- the last week, the last, what was it, two weeks-- I made

myself a very undesirable persona non grata, because the... I forgot who the general was, to be honest with you. He called me in one day, to his tent, and wanted me to come to a mission that he'd cooked up to poison water supplies and stuff like that. And, I said, "General, I'm very sorry, but that's not within our mission," and-- I'm talking about the detachment's mission--

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: --and he was very unhappy with me, that I said no, because his--was it the G-2? I've forgotten who it was, I forgot the name-- he said 'you didn't make a friend here, when you said no, you wouldn't do it.'

Wray: This was during the exercise, though?

Reich: Yes, yes. And when I came back home, I mentioned it to my colonel-- Col. Mizell, at that time-- that if he ever hears any derogatory information, that's probably what the cause was... saying no to a general.

Wray: Okay. Sir, you've been very helpful with us today. I guess what the last thing that I'd just like to inquire about... I mentioned that I had found some records from the 316th and also the 112th in the National Archives and some other places. I'm gonna consult with our director and some other people here, and let them have an opportunity to listen to the tape of our conversation as well. But it might be that at some future point, based on our conversation today, that they might want to send myself or one other member of our staff down to talk to you in person, so that we could show you these records from the National Archives, and see if that stimulates any additional memories or things like that.

Reich: Oh, I think that...you know, after all these years, that probably would be the proper thing to do, you know.

Wray: Yes, sir. It's not that... I think... most of them, none of them, have anything to do with the assassination so far as I know, but--

Reich: No.

Wray: We have, for example, a copy of the unit history from 1963 from the 316th. And so, things like that, that as you read through it, perhaps, you know, a name, or an event, might trigger some other memories.

Reich: Oh, definitely.

Wray: So I guess I was just--what I wanted to ask is, would it be all right with you if we decide to do that, if in fact we could arrange it-- to send someone down to Florida, to meet with you for an afternoon or something like that.

Reich: That would be fine, sir.

Wray: Sir, let me thank you for your assistance. One other question, someone just sent to me, was: would you have any information about... for example, you mentioned the dossiers on Oswald and perhaps other reports--

Reich: Yeah, yeah.

Wray: --of where those records might have gone... after the unit was finished with them?

Reich: There would have been a copy in the files. If I just could remember... if I could see a roster of officers, I probably would recognize [him]. I think he was a first lieutenant, that used to head that section, you know, those guys that snoop around downtown and so on.

Wray: Well, actually, we do have a roster of officers from the 316th. We have stationary, we have things with your signature on them.

Reich: That wasn't 316th, it was 112th, sir.

Wray: We have both. We have a unit history for both, and we have rosters for both. In fact, a lot of the documents we have from the 316th have your signature on them... you know, original documents.

Reich: *(amused)* Oh, my God.

Wray: *(laughing)* I mean, nothing better than seeing your own signature to recall something. Let me...do you still have a copy of the letter that I sent you, do you still have that?

Reich: I definitely do, sir.

Wray: Okay, the address shown on the letterhead there... 600 E Street, Washington, DC, is

the address you can-- if you would-- mail us a copy of the letter that you sent. And if you run across any additional documents, that would be very helpful to us; if you would just put that in an envelope--

Reich: (*garbled*)... somebody prodding my memory a little bit.

Wray: All right. But if you would just send that to the address on the letterhead of the letter we sent you, you can send it--

Reich: Attention Timothy A. Wray?

Wray: --attention... yes, sir.

Reich: [It] will be done.

Wray: Okay, sir, and I will be in contact with you again here, perhaps in a week or so, after I've let our director listen to the tape of our conversation, and we'll make a decision. But I would think at this point that it's likely that we will want to send someone down to talk to you in person.

Reich: Possibly, a roster of officers would be very helpful.

Wray: Yes, sir, we will have that.

Reich: That might give you leads on some of this.

Wray: Okay, sir, thank you very much.

Reich: May I ask a question before you hang up?

Wray: Oh, yes, sir.

Reich: You mentioned a movie that I missed, and nobody tipped me off, that deals, or dealt, with the situation. Could you tell me which--what the hell is...

Wray: Yes, sir. If you have a video, or someone, one of your friends has a VCR, they can go to a video rental store, and the film is called *JFK*, and the director is Oliver Stone.

Reich: Oh, Oliver Stone, yes.

Wray: And that film has a section, toward the end, in which they have sort of some black and white film that makes it look like it's a flashback, in which an individual is represented there essentially as being you.

Reich: Saying what?

Wray: Basically telling the Fletcher Prouty story; in fact, Fletcher Prouty, I think, was a consultant on the film. So, you know, claiming that the commander of the 316th had offered help to the Secret Service and was specifically told no.

Reich: Oh, that, yeah. That guy has been smoking something, but he made it interesting enough for the author of the book to buy it, because it fits in the whole story of, it probably was a conspiracy, you know what I mean?

Wray: Yes, sir.

Reich: That's how he presented everything. Okay, sir. Nice talking to you.

Wray: Sir, thank you very much for your time and your help, and we'll be in touch.

Reich: I thank you, sir.

Wray: Yes, sir. Good-bye.

Reich: Good-bye.

transcribed by Christopher Barger, ARRB, July 25, 1996