

Transcript of ARRB Interview with Edward J. Coyle
conducted July 29, 1996 by Tim Wray
ARRB staff present: Wray, Montague, Zimmerman, Barger, Gunn

Wray: I'm Tim Wray, and I'm an analyst for the Assassination Records Review Board. I'm talking with Mr. Edward J. Coyle; and Mr. Coyle, you understand that we're taping our conversation now?

Coyle: I do.

Wray: Okay. Sir, let me just get some preliminary information. At the time of the assassination of President Kennedy in November of 1963, do you recall what rank you held in the United States Army?

Coyle: Yeah, I was a warrant officer.

Wray: Okay. And what were your duties at that time?

Coyle: I was the head of our... what we referred to as the security section. We'd turn around and provided [sic] security services to Army units in the area, and did security inspections and made sure that they adhered to the Army regulations in regards to the handling of classified information, and so on and so forth.

Wray: Now when you say you were the head of the security section, were there other people that worked on that with you?

Coyle: Oh, yes. Yeah, I... well, I-- understand that I worked in there. Steve Weiss was a lieutenant, was my boss.

Wray: Okay.

Coyle: He was the head of it, okay? And then I worked in there with him. One of my other duties-- I should say, one of *our* other duties, but I found that I was doing most of the work-- was maintaining liaison relationships with the other investigative agencies in the area. Now, this included the FBI, and the... we had a very close working relationship with the intelligence section of the Dallas Police Department. And, well, ONI and all the other agencies there.

Wray: Okay. As a warrant officer-- I'm a retired Army colonel-- what was your MOS, or

specialty, then?

Coyle: My specialty was Army Intelligence.

Wray: Okay. I happened to see part of your military record-- we were recently in St. Louis, looking through a number of records there; do I understand correctly that-- I think it was earlier in 1963-- that you'd previously been enlisted, and then just became a warrant officer around that period of time?

Coyle: That's true. That was-- in fact, I was a transfer into... I was an E-6, and I had orders to go to England. And... let's see... gee, we're talking sixty-three now, yes?

Wray: Yes.

Coyle: But anyhow... in 1960, I had submitted papers to become a warrant officer, and no one ever said anything to me. And then all of a sudden, in 1963, right after I was advised that I was going to go to England, I got another-- I got a telephone call from Washington, DC, that said I was a warrant officer. I said, "Oh, well that's great." They said, "Well, now you can't go to England anymore, because that was an E-6 slot, and now you're a warrant officer." So, that was what caused me to be trans-- at that time, I was in Abilene, Texas. And my making warrant officer caused my transfer to Dallas, Texas.

Wray: I see. In fact, it's interesting [that] you mention that--I had previously seen a roster from the Dallas regional office for the 112th--

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: --that showed you as being, I guess the, the lone agent in the Abilene office. Now this was as of --

Reich: Yeah.

Wray: --sometime in 1962.

Reich: That's true.

Wray: And then when you became a Warren officer then you moved back into Dallas?

Reich: That's right.

Wray: Okay. I think the way to proceed, at this point, would be to, for me to ask you to

just recount your experiences , your recollections, of what happened on the 22nd of November, and I know you discussed this earlier with Mr. Montogue, but sort of for the record if you would just go over that again.

Reich: Well I--I have to go back to a few days before that.

Wray: Alright.

Reich: Okay. --Just to tell you when properly. There was a--I recieved some instructions from our headquarters to do an agency check on a guy that I no longer remember his name, okay?

Wray: Uh-Huh.

Reich: And it had to do-- I later found out...what it was all about. There was...somebody tried to...tried to get a captain-- I believe it was in Fortworth, Texas--a captain that worked in the army. They tried toget some weapons from him. It was somebody in the Dallas area.

Wray: Yes.

Reich: Okay? And these weapons were illegedly to be used...I think for the..for the...Cuban exiles. Okay?

Wray: Yes.

Reich: Now, when I turned around and I did this investigation, I--the reason--I just did a local agency check on him, I and (sic) well this includes the FBI and the FBI said that they had no information in regards to this guy. Now I did not go to...Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the Secret Service because (*unintelligible*) and nobody at our headquarters had told me what this investigation was about.

Wray: Right.

Reich: Okay. Afterwards, and we're talking...well right before, right before the 22nd I found out that this investigation--what had happened was that the FBI and Army Intelligence had set up a clandestine investigation to trace this sucker who is doing business with a, with a firearms store in Dallas, Texas. Okay?

Wray: Yes.

Reich: Now, when unbeknowns of Army Intelligence in the FBI think they've got a clandestine operation going, right?

Wray: Yes.

Reich: However, ATS in Dallas, Texas turns around and arrests the guy that we are interested in (*pause*) and it blew the case wide open. In other words, no one told [the] Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms division of the secret service that we were using this guy as a...well, we had the investigation going to try and find out where the arms were going and who was trying to get 'em and, you know, the whole bumblewhack.

Wray: Right.

Reich: So anyhow once I found out that we screwed up an investigation, I was angry with the FBI because they said they didn't have any records of this guy and I was angry with my headquarters because they didn't tell me what the hell was going on, (*pause*) and then I was also perturbed with ATS because they blew the investigation. So I had turned around arranged a meeting between--I cannot remember the man's name--at ATS. Jim Oshty of the FBI, myself, and his representative of ATS met at ATS offices in Dallas, Texas the morning of the 22nd. Okay?

Wray: Yes.

Reich: When--and my main purpose (*garbled*)--you probably know being a member [that] there's an awful lot of jealousy that is, that is tied up with each agent--

Wray: Right.

Reich: --and I don't give a damn what --there's no way in the world that you can stop it. And I told these guys that I wasn't interested in any of that, I wasn't interested in--I said I just want to know what we can do to prevent something like this from happening in the future.

Wray: Right.

Reich: Okay? So anyhow there was a...kind of a mutual understanding between our three agents as a result of this meeting at least right there in the (*unintelligible*). Anyway, so when, when this meeting broke up...Jim Hosty and I --you know and I can't fi-, I can't remember the names of the damn streets, but the ATS office was only a couple of blocks from my own office, and my, our office was at 902 Rio Grande, in the Rio Grande building, which was just off of the corner Rio Grande and Maine where the,

you know , where the motorcade came down.

Wray: Right.

Coyle: So, when we left, when Jim Oshty and I left the ATS office, we walked up the street together. Now when we went we went down there from the street it had been pouring and when we turned around and walked up, the sun went down. Okay?

Wray: Yes.

Coyle: And I mentioned to Jim*** you know , I said, “ This guy Kennedy is amazing