

Dallas & New Orleans Projects

Subject: Conversation w/ James Doyle, Jr. & Donations re: LHO in New Orleans

Description of the Call

Based on a previous conversation between Doyle, Jr ("Doyle") & Tom Samoluk for which NARA provided the tip, I called Doyle to inquire about his information re: the assassination, his film of LHO & any other records he may have for the Collection. Doyle was cordial & said he had a film of LHO in NO showing him passing leaflets re: Castro. He said he'd like to donate it to the Collection, but wants to know more about us & wants to ensure safe passage for his materials. I explained the nature of the Review Board & described the archival facilities at Archives II re: film material. I then asked him to tell me the history of his film & any other records; & that I'd explain the Deed of Gift process after I have an idea of his materials.

Through our exchange, Doyle provided the following statements:

In August of 1963, James Pat Doyle, Sr (Doyle's father) was the Governor (president) of the National Electrical Contractors Association. Doyle, Sr decided to carry his family w/ him to NO that month for the Association's national convention. In 1963, the Doyle family lived in Oregon.

Doyle was 14 at the time of the assassination but remembers a great deal of details re: the events in NO. The Doyle, Sr carried his family sightseeing on either August 20th or 22nd, 1963 (which was one of the days during the convention). Doyle thought the city was "wilder" than Oregon, which he expected. Using an 8mm Bell & Howell movie camera w/a hand crank & Kodak 8mm film, Doyle filmed people and scenery during their sightseeing. Doyle filmed a man passing out yellow Pro-Castro flyers & a group of appx 7-8 adult males approaching him. 1 of these adult males pulled a stiletto (long knife) on the man while threatening him. Several police officers approached the man, began questioning the people involved & arrested the man while a crowd of appx 40 people observed. As the crowd dispersed, Doyle had his back to the sun & he filmed the crowd while walking backward for a few moment until he stopped filming. Upon returning from the convention, he mailed the film for developing at the Glendale, California Kodak Developing Center (which was the normal procedure).

On November 23, 1963, the family was watching LHO being transferred in the basement of the Dallas PD on TV when he was shot. Doyle's younger sister (Sharon Doyle) mentioned that **LHO resembled the man passing out leaflets & who was arrested in his film from NO.** The family ran the film for verification & it did look like LHO. Doyle said his father was a very patriotic American & being so, he called the Portland FBI office about the film. **The FBI sent 2 agents to the Doyle's home that day to view the film. After viewing it, they said they'd like to borrow the film for further study & (he thinks) provided a receipt.** After several months, Doyle, Sr. asked for the film to be returned several times but it was not returned. After several more years, Doyle (Jr) retained attorney Richard Senders in order to force the FBI to return the film. They effectuated the return probably in the early to mid 1970s. **When the Doyle family received their film, they viewed it & discovered it was different than before.**

Doyle noted the following differences:

1) the "after" film makes Doyle's view appear to be much further away than before
2) the "before" film was appx 2 1/2 minutes & the "after" film was appx "45-50 seconds
Doyle, Sr. became upset at the differences & contacted the Glendale, CA Processing Center sometime later. A representative (he doesn't remember who) told Doyle, Sr. they no longer had the negatives because the FBI "confiscated" them on/around 11/23/1963. The Doyles wondered why the FBI would get the out-of-camera original film from the family in Oregon on 11/23/63 & get the negatives from the Processing Center in California on the same day.

Some time later (Doyle couldn't be more specific) people started "hounding him" for access to the film on a regular basis. He thinks as a result of his name being mentioned in a book re: the assassination. He thinks it may be called the "4 Days" book, but he's not sure. Some of the people who contacted him included Robert Groden, Gary Mack & Jim Garrison. Doyle refused to let Mack borrow the film because he could not guarantee its return. He also offered to fly the film himself to Dallas if Mack bought his ticket, but Mack did not wish to do this. Doyle decided to visit a company named "Photo Art" in Portland, OR which was able to transfer 8mm frames into still pictures. Doyle made at least one of all the frames of particular people such as the Cubans, LHO, LHO's brother, the police officer, the crowd, etc...). After Doyle sent these stills to Mack & others, he received info re: some of the people w/in the film. Doyle was told (he will look for the document re: his source) that the person who approached LHO w/ the knife was a CIA operative & that several people in the crowd were FBI agents. He doesn't remember the source, but he said a man named Robert Groden attempted to contact Doyle & he heard that Groden obtained a copy of the film from the FBI for appx \$30.00 & that Groden wrote about the film in one of his books (without Doyle's permission).

On the 30th anniversary re: either the assassination of JFK or LHO (probably JFK), Doyle let the BBC in conjunction with Public Broadcasting borrow a VHS copy of the film for a special they were doing. Doyle again took the film to Photo Art, but they were unable to transfer it to "broadcast quality" VHS tape. Doyle trusted a man named "John" (doesn't remember the last name) at Photo Art & let him carry the film to Seattle, WA for transfer. Both Doyle & John were compensated by the production company for their efforts & the company copyrighted the film in Doyle's name. The film is now stored w/in a safe deposit box at an Oregon Bank.

Doyle has the following items:

- the 8mm film returned to him by the FBI depicting the events he filmed in August of 1963
- appx 3-4 still photos made at Photo Art
- documentation re: researchers who contacted him
- documentation re: contacts w/ the FBI about his film through his attorney

After I explained the Deed of Gift Process, **Doyle agreed to provide all of this material to the Collection under a Deed of Gift so that it may be properly preserved for history.** Doyle expressed concern that given his former experiences re: the film, he'd like to ensure it will really make it Washington, DC. & asked if I could possibly pick it up from his home. I told him I'd check on some possibilities for transfer of the film & would contact him in about a week so he could review the explanatory material I'd send him. I also suggested that in the

interest of time, it might be better to arrange for transfer now (using an official receipt) & then to proceed w/ the Deed of Gift process (which could take several months). Doyle likes the purpose of the Review Board, my idea & feels this arrangement is acceptable.

I verified his information & thanked him for his time.

*** I recommend that Doyle be asked to provide a copy of his videotape of the film and copies of some of his documentation to determine whether a trip to his home is warranted.**

Doyle Jr.'s info

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*he owns a pet store named "C.B. Tropical"