

When A Mysterious Death Is No Longer Mysterious

by Mark K. Colgan

In Lake Lawn Park Cemetery, in Metairie, Louisiana a suburb of New Orleans, in a section called "The Patio," find a mausoleum labeled "South Corridor F." Enter this mausoleum and turn so that you can view the inscriptions found on the right hand side. Gaze at all of the names on tier "B." This is the second row from the bottom. Find the crypt in the back corner, which has no inscription. You are now looking at crypt 12. You are now standing in front of the final resting-place of one of the many mysterious people to emerge in the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's assassination. And yet in death, a final mystery was left to us to solve. "Who is in Crypt 12," you ask? None other than a star plucked from the sky some might answer. Others would, I think, answer differently, because in this unmarked crypt is a person whom many questions were asked about during the Warren Commission's hearings in 1964. It is here that the mortal remains of Janet Adams Conforto lies, though many of us know her better as "Jada."

Over the last thirty-seven years since JFK's assassination many people have wondered what happened to Janet. I too wondered if she was alive or dead. I had read that she died mysteriously, yet no one offered any clues. I checked the internet forums and no one really knew any facts, except that she reportedly died in 1979 or 1980. This information was

developed when her son was contacted during the filming of the program *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*¹. So I set out to track down Jada, a renowned stripper, and star of a 1960's burlesque motion picture, *Naughty Dallas*².


I started with the Warren Commission Exhibits. Several days of heavy research followed by many days of waiting explains most of the rest. The clues that I gathered led me to the following information that everyone can now read.

Sources:

All this information has been compiled from 3-9-2000 to 5-23-2000.

1. *The Men Who Killed Kennedy*, 1992, A&E Network Video
2. *Naughty Dallas*, 1992 S.W.V. (Something Weird Video)
3. I began by calling the Social Security 800 number as I understood it would lead me to what is called the "Master Death File." I will tell you that I contacted a very helpful lady, who turned out to be the exception within our government, who checked every combination of name listed in the Warren Commission exhibits for Jada. With this lady helping I found nothing that told me Jada was dead. I next called every state, county, or city mentioned in the Warren Commission

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Police Monday released the name of a 44-year-old San Francisco woman killed Friday when her motorcycle was struck by a school bus.

Janet Adams Washington was riding her motorcycle on the 12800 block of East Central when an empty school bus driven by Donna Beeman of Albuquerque struck the motorcycle from behind and ran over it, police said.

JADA
Jada, on May 9, 1980, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, mother of Joseph J. Conforto and Edward M. Washington, age 44 years. Relatives and friends of the family are invited to attend the Funeral Services at Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home, 5100 Pontchartrain Blvd., in Metairie Cemetery, on Friday, May 10, 1980, at 10:00 o'clock a.m. Interment in Lakelawn Park. Visitation on Thursday, May 9, 1980, 6 to 10 p.m. and Friday, May 10, 1980 from 8 to 10 a.m.

Motorecyclist Killed

Paramedics worked in vain Friday to save the life of a California motorecyclist after she was run over by a school bus on the 12800 block of East Central. The bus driver told police the motorecyclist turned in front of her and she was unable to stop. There were no children on the bus. Police were withholding the name of the dead woman pending notification of next of kin.

Newspaper clipping from the Albuquerque Journal, New Mexico, May 10, 1980.

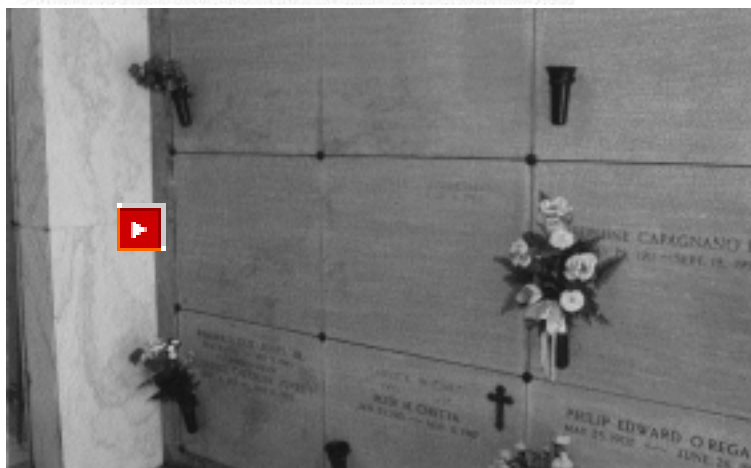
exhibits with regards any of Jada's marriages. With the exception of Georgia, nothing was available over the phone. (If I had not mentioned that I was in charge of building one of the Big Twelve school's football stadiums I am not sure the guy who helped me over the phone would have. So for his sake "Go Dogs.") This happened on a Friday leaving me with nothing more than the thought that I might learn Jada's maiden name when her third marriage license showed up in the mail.

I spent all day Saturday trying to find death records online over the Internet. I was able to access the Death Master File through two online web pages. I then spent countless hours trying every combination of name I could to track down Jada. I awoke Sunday morning, (about 3:00am) with a new idea, I placed Jada's birthdate in the screen with no name as all I wanted was the people who were dead that were born on that day. I then searched through 884 names. About half way through I found Janet Mole, I knew this was her, even though I forced my way through the rest of the names. Now, I do have to explain: In the Warren Commission Exhibits Janet Conforto nee Mole is listed, I did not find out until much later that this is a French format meaning *Birth* name.

The next day in the mail I found her wedding license with the name Mole listed. This gave me a place of birth not only for her, but also for her parents and Mr. Smallwood. This left only one last major hurdle. Where did she die? The Master Death File lists everybody's place of last residence if available. But that does NOT mean you died there. The Master Death File did list a death payment being made, this read as 70179, which I took as a date, and that her death of 5-00-80 was when it was reported. I was wrong. Because of this one item I searched through two years of the San Francisco Examiner before giving up and looking for other options. 70179, I figured out after several days, was a *zip code*. I then requested through Inter-library loan the New Orleans Times Piscayane Newspaper, I requested three months of papers, and found her obit within 30 minutes of looking. That information lead me to New Mexico where you now have the rest of the story.



The arrow below points to Jada's unmarked crypt at Lake Lawn Park Cemetery.
Photos by Mark Colgan



Mug shot from New Orleans, LA, April 16, 1963.

JADA

I first met Jada about a month before the assassination. Bud Shrake and I shared an apartment on Cole Avenue that autumn, and since we were both sportswriters, Ruby considered us favored customers. He invited us to the Carousel one night, and Shake came home with Jada.

We all became good friends, and when Jo and I got married a few weeks later, Jada gave us our first wedding gift -- a two-pound Girl Scout cookie tin full of illegal weed she had smuggled across the border in her gold Cadillac with the letters JADA embossed on the door.

Jada cleared customs with 100 of the two-pound tins in the trunk of her car. She was accompanied by a state politician (who knew nothing about the load) and wore a mink coat, high-heel shoes, and nothing else. The first thing she did at customs was open the door and fall out, revealing more than the customs official expected.

That was one of Jada's great pleasures, driving around Dallas in her mink coat and high heels, her orange hair piled high and the coat flaring open. It was a better act than the one Ruby paid for.

from "Who was Jack Ruby?" by Gary Cartwright, *Texas Monthly*, November 1975

Statistical Information on Janet Conforto "Jada"

Maiden Name: Janet Mole
Born: February 12, 1936
Died: May 9, 1980 Albuquerque, New Mexico
Found in New Orleans Times Pisceayne, May 16, 1980.
Listed as Jada in Obituaries.
Buried : Buried under the name "JADA"
Lakelawn Park Metarie Cemetery, New Orleans, LA
Patio section, South Corridor "F", Tier "B", Crypt 12
(crypt owned By Joseph Conforto)
Cause of Death: Injuries sustained in a motorcycle and school bus collision
Last Known Address: J. Mole (1980-1981 Phone Book, Only J. Mole listed)
1169 Market Street, San Francisco, CA (000) 626-3085
Trinity Plaza Apartments (415) 861-3333
Death Payment: 70179 (a New Orleans Zip Code,
Child, Edward M. Washington living at home)

Mother' Name: Elsa T. Mole
Mother' Maiden Name: Elsa T. Clark
Born: January 25, 1905
Where: Trinidad, West Indies
Died: January 20, 2000
Where: Livingston, New York
Last Known Address: Adventist Nursing Home
Prior Residence: New York City, New York
Additional Information: Became U.S. Citizen November 6, 1958
Married John Ives Mole June 12, 1933.

Fathers Name: John Ives Mole
Born: New York, New York
Died: unknown
Married: Elsa T. Clark June 12, 1933
Where: unknown

Brother's Name: Adam Mole
Born: unknown
Died: unknown but reported to be dead.

Possible/ or Known Spouses:

1. Nick Bonney Married in California 1954 unconfirmed
2 Joseph Cuffari Married in Baltimore, Md. unconfirmed
3 Ralph C. Smallwood Married in Bainbridge, Ga. March 24, 1959 confirmed
4 Joseph Conforto Married in New Orleans, La. Approx. 1961 unconfirmed
5. ? Washington Unknown (name on obituary)

Children: Joseph Jerome Adam Peter Conforto DOB 5-14-59
Edward M. Washington DOB ?
Step Children : Angelo J. Conforto DOD 5-29-95

Additional information on Ralph C. Smallwood:

Born February 26, 1934
Died unknown
Occupation Jockey
Address 1041 Washington Street, Atlanta, Ga.
Mother's Maiden Name Nora M. Baker
Mother place of birth Marietta, Ga
Father's name John S. Smallwood
Father place of birth Jefferson, Ga.

Janet's residence at time of marriage

202 Georgia Ave. New Orleans La. No Occupation listed on application

NEW at JFK Lancer Online!

Mexico City: A New Analysis

John Newman at the "November in Dallas" JFK Lancer Conference Friday, November 19, 1999. Transcript and hundreds of documents! Congratulations to Joe Backes and Debra Conway for putting this valuable resource online.

http://jfklander.com/backes/newman/newman_1.html

Kennedy assassination article added **"Firearms, Photographs, & Lee Harvey Oswald"** by British researcher Ian Griggs from from Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1995 *Kennedy Assassination Chronicles*. A comprehensive study of photographs showing Oswald with various firearms. Source notes and photographs.
<http://www.jfklander.com/bymain.html>

The **report on laboratory analyses** of evidence from the assassination of former President John F. Kennedy was released today by the National Archives and Records Administration. JFK Lancer has scanned and placed this report at <http://jfklander.com/fragreport.html>.