

CHAPTER 8

Critical Findings and Summary on Gregory Smith

8.1 - We accept that Gregory Smith gave Donald Rodney an anti-personnel device namely, a remotely controlled explosive in what appeared to be a walkie-talkie, a communications device.

8.2 - At the time Gregory Smith was a sergeant in the Defence Force in the marine department.

8.3 - We accept, too, that Gregory Smith was encouraged in providing that device by prominent members of State agencies.

8.4 - We find on the balance of probabilities that Walter Rodney had intended the walkie-talkie to be a communications device which would have permitted him to be in relatively easy contact with fellow WPA activists and for no sinister purpose. The point must be made at this stage that telephones were not easily available and there was discrimination in the distribution which was controlled by a State agency and which, in all likelihood, would have been denied the WPA.

8.5 - We find, further that Donald Rodney, whose testimony we accept, was on the night of 13th June, 1980, doing no more than accompanying his brother, Walter, to collect what they thought would have been a walkie-talkie.

8.6 - There is no evidence before us to suggest that the reason for collecting the device was other than indicated by Donald.

8.7 - Further, we are satisfied on the evidence presented that Smith was protected by the State and this inference is strengthened when it is borne in mind:

1. That within a matter of hours after the explosion and resultant death of Walter Rodney, Smith was taken to Kwakwani in a Defence Force aircraft.
2. He was given a passport, not in the name of Gregory Smith which name he carried as a member of the Defence Force, but in the name of CYRIL MILTON JOHNSON.

8.8 - We hold that the change of name was intended to conceal the true identity of the killer of Walter and that it could only have been achieved with the cooperation and support of the Passport Office which was part of the Police Force.

8.9 - It is significant that the head of the Immigration Department at the material time was Laurie Lewis.

8.10 - We accept that Gregory Smith, renamed Cyril Milton Johnson, received State assistance in going to French Guiana. The choice of country was deliberate and was no doubt informed by the fact that French government, of which French Guiana was a Department, had a policy opposed to the death penalty. In short, it would have been difficult, virtually impossible, to secure the extradition of Smith/Johnson from French Guiana.

8.11 - That Gregory Smith returned to Guyana on more than one occasion and received a new passport on one such visit, according to the evidence of Woman Police Sergeant 1725 Alexis Adams, is also accepted. On that occasion the Passport Office was acting on the instruction on the then Commissioner of Police, Laurie Lewis.

8.12 - The inspection of the passport form produced before the inquiry revealed that Smith renamed Johnson was not required to sign the form and fill in the necessary particulars required.

8.13 - Allan Gates was an important witness on our findings in relation to Gregory Smith/Cyril Johnson. Gates' testimony is that he and Gregory Smith grew up in neighbouring districts and that he knew Gregory for years. He further testified that Gregory Smith told him that once Dr. Rodney was dead he would receive US\$1 million and that he and his wife/girlfriend and child would be facilitated in being relocated out of the country.

8.14 - It must be indicated that Allan Gates, a former policeman and an instructor in security matters, was at the time of his testimony serving a period of imprisonment for several offences of obtaining money by false pretences.

8.15 - At the heart of the offences for which he was convicted is dishonesty.

8.16 - There is no rule of evidence or of human experience that because a man is in prison or has been convicted, his testimony must be rejected.

8.17 - We nevertheless ask ourselves, as we felt obliged to, whether we should accept Gates' evidence, not always corroborated in every material particular, and what weight should be attached to it.

8.18 - Having so advised ourselves, we felt confident in accepting Gates' testimony. He was unruffled in the course of testifying; he looked the Commissioners straight in their eyes; he was unshaken in cross-examination and his evidence is supported by events which occurred subsequent to Rodney's death. That series of coincidences was not accidental and we found that Allan Gates was a witness of the truth. Importantly, no evidence was produced by anyone, contradicting his testimony.

8.19 - The book purportedly written by Gregory Smith and his sister, Anne Wagner, entitled, *Assassination Cry of a Failed Revolution: The Truth About Dr. Walter Rodney's Death*, is a self-serving account of what took place on the night of 13th June 1980. In the words of the publication itself, it was intended to present Gregory in a good light in the eyes of history. In Anne Wagner words at page 17, *"My brother's one unfulfilled wish was to clear his name. Hence my solemn promise to him and to myself to let the world know the truth, even if it kills me."* Unfortunately, her account as set out in the book does not harmonize with the evidence presented at the inquiry.

8.20 - The suggestion that Walter Rodney was killed on the initiative of his own party, WPA, has no support on the evidence. In any event, Rodney was highly respected, if not idolized, by WPA members who had difficulty travelling and could not have arranged Smith's sudden and disguised exit from Guyana. They had no capacity so to do. They often had to resort to what has been called the back track to exit Guyana themselves.

8.21 - It is inconceivable that a party whose executive members had difficulty travelling could either have secured a passport for Gregory Smith in the name of Cyril Johnson and /or secured the services of a Defence Force aircraft to support his exit from Guyana with his family.

8.22 - We have no hesitation in holding that Gregory Smith was responsible for Dr. Walter Rodney's death on 13 June, 1980 and that in so doing he was acting as an agent of the State having been aided and abetted so to do, by individuals holding positions of leadership in State agencies and committed to carrying out the wishes of the PNC administration.

8.23 - Gates further testified that three days before Rodney's death, Burnham met with Skip Roberts, Laurie Lewis and Norman McClean to be briefed on the plot to kill Rodney. His evidence is that Burnham insisted that Carl Ram Doobay be present. Doobay was close to the President and, with the President, rode horses with Skip Roberts.

8.24 - Gates' still further testimony is that subsequent to Rodney's death he interviewed a number of persons to satisfy himself as to who killed Rodney and how he died. He said that it was Sgt. Mark Johnson who informed him that the meeting three days before Rodney's death took place at the President's official residence. He said that as part of his investigation into Rodney's death he looked at intelligence clippings and spoke to Sgt. Liverpool and Sgt. Saigo. He concluded that it was his judgment that *"Rodney's death was State sponsored and to Burnham's knowledge."*

8.25 - He said that Burnham and the PNC administration were concerned with following:

1. The increasingly large crowds which were attracted to WPA meetings and which *"were seen"* as a threat to the government;
2. Rodney's infiltration of the intelligence and security forces;
3. His activities were seen as interfering with the smooth function of the State.

8.26 - After Smith/Johnson was in Cayenne, Anton Barker was sent there to keep watch on him and that assignment was given Barker by Major General Norman McClean (Ret'd.). He gave Norman McClean's code name as "Moon River."

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