

Acoustics: The NAS (Ramsey) Panel report has been delayed, perhaps for another month or two. (I just heard this, and have no further information.)

HSC Records:

- *** 267. 26 May 81 [2 pp.] (Lardner, WP) "House Assassinations Committee
Attacked for Secrecy on Records"
* 268. 28 May 81 (WP) "Suit [by Mark Allen] Demands FBI Files on
Assassination Probe"

George Lardner notes that "The extent of the extraordinary secrecy is just now coming to light, as the result of inquiries by assassination critics seeking to pursue their own research and to assess the House committee's performance. They suspect a deliberate effort to avoid the kind of scrutiny that eventually tarnished the work of the Warren Commission.... In fact, the Warren Commission is now an open book in comparison to the [HSC]."

Two distinct HSC actions are at issue. By the time the Report was released, Stokes and Blakey "had already quietly arranged to lock up - for a period of 50 years - all the backup records and transcripts that it didn't publish." Also, Stokes asked various executive branch agencies "to treat the records they compiled for the investigation in the same fashion, as 'congressional material' not to be released to the public."

The suppression of the HSC's internal records and unpublished testimony could be explained as standard operating procedure for a House Committee, were it not for the special circumstances of this Committee. Lardner notes that the report "proclaimed its dedication to public disclosure," calling it "essential" that people be "able to judge this committee's performance.... Such is the very essence of representative democracy." (HSCR 17) Blakey and various HSC members indicated that they intended to publish more, but ran out of time and money.

Arrangements concerning records in the custody of the agencies were made by Stokes and Blakey, in consultation with Stanley Brand, general counsel for the clerk of the House, "to comport with court cases and rulings that, in effect, show how to prevent records compiled in a congressional investigation from being made public" under the FOIA. Stokes' letter to AG Griffin Bell (which is not in the HSC's volumes - Mark Allen obtained it) seems rather broadly drawn: it requests the nondisclosure of "material ... generated by your department in response to specific requests or concerns of the Select Committee" and other "congressional material," plus "related information in a form connected to the committee."

Some agencies have given the HSC's request a reasonably narrow interpretation. Some, according to Mark Allen, have released their letters to Blakey, but not Blakey's letters to them. However, key agencies (including the CIA and FBI) have taken a hard line. The Army is treating "the approximately 100 dossiers on various individuals that the House committee used and then returned to the Army 'as investigative files of a congressional committee.'" Also, "the Army denied [Harold] Weisberg records that he says he began seeking in broad-gauged requests years before the House committee was established."

There are lots of good quotes and tidbits in this article. Among those unhappy with the HSC's nondisclosure policy: David Belin, who has been trying to get the pre-acoustics draft report, which he once got a glimpse of; it allegedly said there was no conspiracy. Belin thinks the suppression of the records is "just plain wrong." (I wonder what he thinks of the suppression of the records of the Rockefeller Commission?) An unnamed former CIA officer (Phillips, perhaps?) was denied a copy of his own executive session testimony.

Sawyer doesn't recall even being consulted about the secrecy arrangements, and doesn't understand the need for them. All the HSC people quoted deny any coverup. Blakey, "who is now about 45, added: 'I'll rest on the historians' judgment 50 years from now when everything becomes available....'"

"And what of the objections of Weisberg and other critics that there was now no way of adequately assessing the committee's performance? 'He [Weisberg] can kiss my a--,' responded the professor from Notre Dame. 'And you can quote me on that.'"

(I gather that Blakey wouldn't mind if Lardner got off his back for the next fifty years. The Blakey-Billings book says, in passing, that Lardner's stories "tended to reflect his bias rather than the facts," and that he was "on target for once" with his negative review of Epstein. Myself, I'm glad to see that Lardner is writing about the JFK case, and what's left of the FOIA, again.)

Speaking of the records that were shipped back to the agencies, Blakey said, "Our records, insofar as we created them in agency files, are ours. If you don't like that, sue." Jim Lesar is quoted as saying such a suit would probably be successful. As noted briefly in item #268, Mark Allen has filed such a suit, against the Justice Department and the FBI. (It has been assigned to Judge June Green.)

"Best Evidence":

Blakey zipped through San Francisco on June 8, appearing on TV and radio to promote his book. (I don't have a tape or transcript yet, so I can't quote him exactly.)

When asked if the controversy and the reinvestigation were all over now, Blakey said that it appears that, unfortunately, the actual criminal investigations are over, he thinks. He expects that people will continue filling in the details - referring to the plot he has outlined, of course, not Lifton's. He characterized Lifton's hypothesis as "medical nonsense," and said that the suggestion of involvement by Secret Service agents (some of whom he has talked to and knows) is "obscene."

Blakey said two specific things about Lifton's hypothesis which I wonder about. First, he said that he took the hypothesis to the forensic-pathology panel. While it may be true that no panelist places any credence in this hypothesis, I was told that the panel did not formally consider it. Certainly the published material does not reflect any such consideration. Talking to Baden is not the same as taking the hypothesis to the panel.

Secondly, Blakey was asked if the autopsy photos were shown to the Dallas doctors; he said they were. I have seen no published response by any of the Dallas doctors to Lifton's book, and Blakey's claim is news to me. (See also p. 8.)

Does anyone have a tape or transcript of the rather long report on Lifton's work by "Fifth Estate" (the Canadian equivalent of "Sixty Minutes")? An interview with Don Rebentisch (the new second-casket witness) was included.

269. 10 Jan 81 (UPI) The first report on the substance of the book, based on inadvertent early sales by a Dallas bookstore.

270. 11 Jan 81 (UPI in N.Y. News World)

271. 17 Jan 81 (St. Paul Pioneer Press) Calls the book "sensational," but also "grizzly" - presumably a subconscious Eddowesian reference to the Russian bear.

272. 25 Jan 81 (St. Louis P-D) Book called "not convincing," but "disturbing. It will be interesting to see what the official reaction to it will be."

273. (Same paper, same date) Accompanying review of the Lattimer book. The argument is called persuasive, but the Lincoln-Kennedy "non-thesis" and the writing style are strongly criticized.

274. 25 Jan 81 (Birmingham News) Descriptive review

275. 25 Jan 81 (Cincinnati Enquirer) Generally sympathetic review

276. 6 Feb 81 (Detroit Free Press) Short, rather routine interview of DL

277. 15 Feb 81 (ALA Booklist) "Indefatigable labors," but "inconclusive"

278. 8 Mar 81 (WP best-seller list) 5th week on list; #7 among non-fiction locally; #5 nationally. Someone at the Justice Department must have read it!

279. 10 Mar 81 (Ventura Star) Column by Bob Holt, who talked to Lifton at a private party. "The basic question, of course, is: Can you believe this stuff?"

280. 12 Mar 81 Second column by Bob Holt; comments on critical responses, but doesn't take a stand on the aforementioned basic question.

Fred Newcomb has sent me a two-hour tape of Air Force One transmissions, obtained from the JFK library. The tape is "edited and condensed," and is presumably identical to the version described in "Best Evidence."

Fred has also sent me a taped interview of Gen. McHugh, done by Bob Holiday of CFTR (Toronto) in November 1975. McHugh was asked about the "surgery of the head area" quote in the Sibert-O'Neill report, which is discussed, among many other things, in "Murder From Within," a privately published 1974 book by Newcomb and Perry Adams. McHugh initially said, "Yes, there was surgery done on his head before the autopsy, yes," but in the rest of his answer he is clearly talking about the surgery done during the autopsy. McHugh gave a similarly puzzling answer when asked about Gen. Clifton's request (on the Air Force One tape) for arrangements to take the body to Walter Reed for autopsy; he initially expressed amazement that Clifton had said that. Most probably McHugh was simply confused during this interview, but I wouldn't rule out the possibility that he knows something about "security precautions" which he is too discreet to reveal. (My crude handwritten notes on the McHugh interview [2 pp.] are #281.)

282. 5 Apr 81 (Wash. Star) "[Best] Evidence': Case Study In How to Sell a Book" (Hilary Mills alleges that a publishing house can create a best seller out of anything (which I really doubt). Totally negative; quotes some of the negative reviews but is almost totally devoid of substance.)

Clippings: (More or less directly relevant to the JFK case)

283. 1980 (Kodak Studio Light) [15 pp.] "Photography Is Star Witness In JFK Assassination Probe" An interesting summary of the work of Cecil Kirk and his group for the HSC. Kirk notes in passing that "the [autopsy] doctors were not aware that all of their x-rays were underexposed."

284. 21 Mar 81 (DMN) [2 pp.] "Belli," by Kent Biffle. Belli says he's "mellowed," and is no longer constantly angered by the verdict against Ruby. "I've remained on good terms with Henry [Wade] and Bill [Alexander] all these years," he said. NBC is planning a series based on his career.

* 285. April 1981 (Texas Monthly) "Welcome, Mr. Kennedy, to Dallas" [11 pp.] Excerpt from Harry Hurt's book on the Hunt family. Includes lots of familiar information; also, quotes a memo of November 4, 1963 from Paul Rothermel, which noted unconfirmed reports of planned right- and left-wing violence during the November 22 parade. (The rumor was that the left-wingers would provoke a fight with the right-wingers, "with the knowledge of the President," supposedly to increase Kennedy's popularity.) Also, Hunt is said to have kept a sharp eye on the Warren Commission investigation. In February 1964, Rothermel told Hunt that LBJ "does not trust the Secret Service to protect him," and that the CIA and Manuel Ray's group were planning a second invasion of Cuba.

286. [2 pages of graphics accompanying #285 - routine]

287. 7 Apr 81 (SFX, UPI) "The JFK-Lincoln death-probe link" [2 pp.] A sympathetic story on Dr. Lattimer and his book. "Of one thing you may be sure: this calmly reasoned study is not going to create any uproar - nothing, for example, like [Best Evidence]."

288. 28 May 81 (WS) A brief item on the drug and bribery convictions of, respectively, Nofio Pecora (age 30) of New Orleans, and his mother Frances, a former state official. No details are given, but these people may be relatives of alleged Marcello lieutenant Nofio J. Pecora (HSC Report, p. 154-6).

* 289. 30 May 81 (DMN) "Marcello listens as damaging FBI tapes unwind" Earl Golz' summary of the Marcello trial so far - it was expected to continue for two or three more months. The last paragraph mentions that "references to Marcello conversations about the assassination" were deleted from the evidence presented to the jury. Golz told me that the defense claimed that the deleted material would be prejudicial. (Presumably some material not relating to the JFK case was deleted also.) Even if Marcello is not convicted, the word is that his "effectiveness in dealing with politicians is disintegrating as more and more recorded conversations are played."

* 290. (Parapolitics, Issue 2, p. 14) Jonathan Marshall's summary of the Marcello trial, from NOTP coverage. (Clint Murchison mentioned!?)

Clippings, etc.: (By and about "our friends")

291. April 1980 (High Times) "The CIA Tried to Contact Dead Agents," by Martin ("Marty") Lee. The documents on which most of the article is based deal with other CIA interest in parapsychological matters; the allegation in the headline comes from Marchetti, whose reliability is very questionable. Contact with dead agents was the theme of George O'Toole's first novel, "An Agent on the Other Side," I believe, and that could be Marchetti's source. As far as I know, O'Toole's book was purely fictional.

292. 20 Jan 81 (Economic Perspectives) This 4-page Kidder, Peabody newsletter includes a discussion of "Watergate as a political coup d'etat," and quotes - favorably - from Carl Oglesby's early Yankee-cowboy interpretation of Watergate. (Does ideology trickle up while money trickles down?)

293. May 1981 (Gallery) "The Spy at the Bottom of the Bay" [8 pp.] Dick Russell on Paisley. Based in part on documents released under the FOIA, and interviews with Fensterwald. Suggests that Paisley's death is linked, somehow, to the great mole hunt.

294. 8 Apr 81 (Zodiac) "Conspiracy lawyer Mark Lane is at it again...." Newsweek says he's been talking to the Nazis about Hinckley.

295. 24 May 81 (NYT) "Ex-Pittsburgh Coroner [Cyril Wecht] Acquitted on Charges He Used Job for Profit" Actually, most of the charges didn't even get to the jury. Wecht, who is now Allegheny County Democratic Party chairman and a county Commissioner, was accused of using morgue employees to do tests for his private lab. This brief story mentions Wecht's role on the HSC panel; apparently his medical skills were debated during the trial.

296. 26 & 29 Jan 81 (Detroit Free Press) [2 pp.] This proves that it's not just the pro-conspiracy pathologists who get into trouble: Dr. Werner Spitz and an ex-employee are suing each other, alleging all sorts of nasty things. Spitz allegedly shot at bodies without proper permission, and funneled the proceeds from removed pituitaries into his research foundation.

297. Publisher's blurb [2 pp.] for "On The Border: Portraits of America's Southwestern Frontier," by Tom Miller, the principal author of the "Assassination Please Almanac." (Harper & Row, \$12.95) Sounds interesting; he writes well.

Clippings: (Relating to the Reagan shooting)

298. 31 Mar 81 (Golz, DMN) "Police recall '63 death" [2 pp.] Quotes Rose, Leavelle, Revill, King, Bowles and others.

299. 31 Mar 81 (Little, DMN) "Dallas doctors recall Kennedy tragedy" Quotes Baxter, Jones, Giesecke - mostly Baxter, who recalls getting about a dozen threatening letters after the assassination.

300. 7 Apr 81 (Deeb, OT) "How assassination attempt affected network schedules"; NBC killed a "Tomorrow" repeat because it included an interview with Ralph Salerno, in which he "discussed alleged Mafia influence on the members of President Reagan's cabinet."

301. 16 Apr 81 (Herb Fox column, Santa Barbara News & Review) "The Assassination of Politics" Notes that such a shooting is never a nonpolitical act, whatever the motivation; criticizes the lone-nut bias of the media, and notes the conclusions of the House Committee, Blakey, and Lifton.

302. June 1981 (Martin Mayer, American Film) "Rush to Judgment" [2 pp.] A thoughtful comparison of the reaction of TV news in 1963 and 1981. There were lots of rumors in 1963 too, "but we were told in a context of rumor denial." "The scoop syndrome, almost entirely absent [in 1963], reasserted itself this time around." Many reporters now lack print experience, and are more skeptical.

Book news:

Two of the best recent books are coming out in paperback: "Conspiracy," by Tony Summers, is now available (McGraw-Hill, \$7.95); "Wilderness of Mirrors," by Dave Martin, is due in September, for \$2.75, as part of Ballantine's new "Espionage/Intelligence Library." (See Publishers Weekly, 15 May 81, #303 [2 pp.]) This series will include "The Philby Conspiracy."

Also recommended: "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been in the FBI Files?" by Buitrago and Immerman. (Grove, \$7.95; 227 pp.) How to get and interpret

FBI documents. Includes a glossary, a list of the FBI's file-classification categories, and a list of files available at the FBI reading room.

If you want to know how to order the 1980 Pennsylvania Crime Commission Report (\$5.78), ask me for item #304. No, I don't know what's in it.

Rampant silliness:

On April 5, "Sixty Minutes" commentator Andy Rooney commented on the number and diversity of books on the JFK case, holding up a number of them for the camera (including Blakey, Lifton, Thompson, and Eddowes). He dismissed most of them as "malarkey" and expressed the hope that there are no "grassy knoll" theories in the Reagan shooting. (Does anyone have a tape or transcript?)

But within a week, Dick Gregory had a lot to say about the Reagan shooting, in a S.F. speech attended by SF T-1. For starters, Reagan was actually shot in the car by a SS agent. There's lots more, about everyone from Sinatra to Moscone, in Gregory's paranoid fantasies. Worst of all, T-1 reports (#305, 2 pp) that the audience of several hundred received this enthusiastically.

Alleged CIA-Mafia plot to kill Castro:

* 306. Excerpts [23 pp.] from the Demaris-Fratianno book, "The Last Mafioso". This includes the material on the CIA-Mafia plot, plus some of the introductory material (in which Ewing and Jack Anderson, among many others, are cited as sources). Citations to Judy Campbell are also included.

This information deserves careful evaluation. Demaris says that Fratianno says that Roselli told him that "this whole thing has been a scam.... All these f---ing wild schemes the CIA dreamed up never got further than Santo."

Obviously we're not dealing with reliable sources here. But could this be true? Upon reflection, it strikes me as strange that (as far as I can recall) nobody has raised this argument in defense of the CIA. It wouldn't be much of a defense of the CIA's ethics, to be sure, but I do recall similar narrow defenses being raised in connection with the plots against Lumumba and Trujillo - 'we may have tried to kill them, but we didn't actually get our fingers on the triggers.' I suspect that the answer is that the government does have solid independent information that the mob was not just pulling a scam. This is just a hunch; I haven't even had time to review the basic literature on this issue. (Where are all the graduate students in history who get paid for doing this kind of research?) I expect that if we pursue this question, we will get valuable new information about just what the CIA was up to.

The most obvious reason for defenders of the CIA to raise the "scam" argument would be to counter claims that the CIA-Mafia plot had led Castro to retaliate against JFK. The key factor is what Castro thought was going on. What did the CIA know about what Castro knew? Pursuing this question might not only answer the "scam" argument, but shed light on "sources and methods" which have been kept totally under wraps.

Here's one specific issue, involving Tony Varona. As you know, I have been particularly interested in him, since he is now known to be the "Mr. Y" of the CIA-Mafia plots. He testified to the HSC that "he is not aware of any CIA assassination plots to kill Castro and denied involvement in their operations." (10 HSC 169) If the Fratianno story is true, might not this be true also? The HSC staff report (signed by Mark Flanagan) simply asserts that Varona "is obviously not telling the truth." Obviously? Not based on what I know. But Varona was the leader of the CIA's CRC, and presumably passed information on to the Agency in that capacity. What did he tell them? Was he party to the scam? What's going on here?

Earlier, I noted that Dan Moldea was severely critical of Demaris for calling the plots "Operation Mongoose" (#162). It's a sloppy error, but I don't think Demaris uses it to suggest direct involvement by the Kennedys. (In fact, there is a paragraph which argues against the Anderson-Pearson report that RFK was behind the plot.) Demaris' accuracy in reporting and reconstructing conversations is questionable elsewhere also - he has Roselli telling Ed Morgan about the details of the earlier CIA-TSD plots (poison cigars and thallium salts), and about Dulles' knowledge of the plots - all quite implausible.

Highlights of "The Continuing Inquiry":

The March TCI includes an interesting 3-page article by Gary Mack, "Unlocking HSCA Evidence," which describes various items of photo and audio material that were loaned to the HSCA. Some of this material got sent to the Clerk of the House rather than being returned to the owners, and Gary got Stokes to authorize the Clerk to return it. Blakey told Bronson that his firm would retain Congressional immunity from FOIA requests. In early March, Mary Botroni (formerly Moorman) filed suit for the return of her material.

An article on the HSC by Edgar Tatro is entitled "Why hide anything if there's nothing to hide?" [4 pp.] Gary Mack's "Briefs" column - always interesting - mentions the status of the Taft International film (not about to come to your local cinema), the alleged disappearance of film showing JFK's coffin at the airport, and more. Critic Sprague has contributed "The assignment of Dr. [sic] G. Robert Blakey" [5 pp.], which manages (quite inadvertently) to make Counsel Sprague look very bad compared to Blakey. The article contains information of historical value about Counsel Sprague's investigation. Another article by Gary Mack [1 p.] reports on a new witness to J. D. Tippit's activity (including a possibly mysterious phone call) shortly before he was shot. There are also a few clippings on Marguerite Oswald's estate.

(You may have noticed that I have not assigned numbers to this TCI material; this is because I think all of you should subscribe. Nonetheless, I will send copies of specific items, if you need them.)

The April TCI includes Mack on Blakey on the acoustics (as already noted, in issue #3, pp. 6-7). Gary's "Briefs" column notes that Mary Moorman is getting her photos back, that "one prominent researcher has been openly hostile to Best Evidence but has not yet read it," and more. An article by Tim Cweik [1 p.] compiles the evidence that Jackie Kennedy climbed on the trunk to retrieve matter from JFK's head. The rest of the issue is analysis and speculation on the Reagan shooting, by Jim Marrs, Gary Mack, Jack White, and the DMN. I have a strong inclination not to get involved with any of this, but, hey, is there someone on the balcony? And what about the two White House photos that haven't been released?

A couple of the Morning News stories are worth noting:

307. 1 Apr 81 (Golz, DMN) "Oswald vs Hinckley: More than Dallas links accused gunmen" (Hinckley had the famous Life cover photo of LHO, etc.)
- * 308. 5 Apr 81 (Kent Biffle, DMN) "Reporter recalls the day Camelot died in Dallas" [2 pp.] Excerpts from Biffle's 11/22/63 journal, and his 1959 coverage of Oswald's defection. In the TSBD, he was afraid that nervous cops would shoot him; Truly mentioned LHO's absence from a (second) roll call after "hours" had "dragged by"; when word of the Tippit shooting came in, the police at the TSBD did not immediately link it to the assassination. This account strengthens my feeling that there is lots of still unexamined information about 11/22 floating around out there.

Parapolitics:

The first two issues of Jonathan Marshall's newsletter are available. Issue #1 (3/26/81) is 38 pages in all - 12 pages of summaries of news on the intelligence community, drugs and organized crime, exile political activities, terrorism, Nugan Hand, Task Force 157, Sindona, CIA and the banks, and more. There is also an 18-page draft article by Jonathan on "The Company" (Terpil, drugs, etc.) [reduced to 10 pp.], and 14 pages of reproduced clippings. Issue #2 (5/30) is 54 pages [!], including 28 typed pages of news briefs - a really impressive effort. Topics include intelligence [4 pp., of general interest], the Liberty Lobby and the US Labor Party, organized crime, and many of the same topics as issue #1, plus lots on the Italian P2 (Masonic lodge) scandal. The reproduced clippings include Jonathan's review of Claire Sterling's book, and some material on the British spy scandal which mentions Angleton. There are memos by K. Coogan on Robert Gayre and Jerry Meldon on Deane Hinton. More topics than I can keep up with, but clearly a very valuable source of information. Send \$25 and inquiries to Jonathan c/o Inquiry (747 Front St., SF 94111).

Other newsletters:

Items 309-311 are from the March 1981 issue of "Organized Crime Review," published by Ryan Quade Emerson of Reno, Nevada.

* 309. "The Mobbing of the White House" (Emerson) [11 pp.] This is Part 1 (re Frank Sinatra); Part 2 (on Jackie Presser) was scheduled for the next issue. Quotes from the Summers book on Sinatra and Exner, and (extensively) from "The Don," by William Brashler, on Sinatra and Giancana, the 1960 election, and Giancana's expectations.

310. "Crime Spy Reports" [5 pp.] (Many brief items of O.C. news)

311. [4 pp.] The rest of this issue (cover, masthead, ad, cartoon)

312. 15 Aug 80 (Zodiac) On Emerson and his publication. Emerson says he used to work for the FBI and other agencies; claims a circulation of 5000. (At up to \$70 per year!) He is starting a new magazine, "Corruption," with the help of \$100,000 from an anonymous philanthropist.

Again, I recommend "Organizing Notes" (\$10/yr from CPR, 201 Mass. Ave., DC 20002.) If you want to see the "Update" (news briefs) section of the March-April issue [4 pp.], ask me for #313.

In March, the "J.F.K. Committee" announced the publication of a newsletter. Send \$2/issue to 77 Purnell Drive, Unit 53, Hamilton, Ontario L9C 4Y4 Canada. Oswald in Montreal?!

The Summers book:

* The paperback edition of "Conspiracy," described above (p. 4), includes a new afterword [4 pp., #314] on the ongoing search for Maurice Bishop. There is some interesting new information from the pseudonymous CIA people mentioned in the HSC volumes, and quite a bit on someone who may have known Bishop, Phillips, and/or Veciana: Virginia Prewett, a rather prominent journalist who has written extensively on Cuban matters. In an April 1963 article, she defended the exiles against criticism from the Kennedy administration, specifically mentioning the "daring and gallant Alpha 66 raids on Cuba."

315. 14 Jun 81 (NYT Book Review) One paragraph in the "Paperbacks: New and Noteworthy" section, quoting the Powers review of "Conspiracy."

NSAM 273:

In 1972, Peter Scott wrote that "study after study [in the Pentagon Papers] is carefully edited so as to create a false illusion of continuity" in U.S. Vietnam policy in the period of November 22-24, 1963. (See "The Assassinations," pp. 406-442.) Scott argued that a significant policy reversal was authorized on November 24 and promulgated in this National Security Action Memorandum. NSAM 273 is now available [#316, 3 pp.] and agrees quite closely with the text reconstructed by Scott in 1972.

Fans of Peter's prose might like to see his latest book, "Rumors of No Law: Poems from Berkeley 1968-1977." Some personal, some political and personal. (Thorp Springs Press [Austin], \$4.00, 88 pp.)

RFK's reaction on 11/22/63:

In the previous issue, I speculated about Haynes Johnson's revelation that, in the initial confusion, RFK told a Cuban exile leader that "one of your guys did it." (See #231.) The leader, who was meeting with high officials on 11/22, probably was Enrique Ruiz-Williams (Harry Williams). In the May 1975 issue of "People and the Pursuit of Truth," Richard E. Sprague said that on 11/22 E. Howard Hunt "was in a meeting with Richard Helms, Lyman Kirkpatrick, and Harry Williams in Washington, D.C. They were discussing whether the CIA would put up more money for further support of anti-Castro Cubans in Florida." (This was pointed out to me by M. Goddard.) In his recent piece on Blakey (TCI 3/22/81), Sprague refers to the HSC's failure to ask Helms, in public, about "Harry Williams' statement" that these people were at this meeting, "talking about the CIA supporting another invasion of Cuba, without JFK's knowledge." (Does anyone have an independent source for this information? I take everything Sprague says with a grain of salt.)

FBI documents: 6 pp. (mostly deleted) on E. Lorenz Borenstein of N.O. (#317). He's the art dealer (and Trotsky nephew!) linked to Ruby by Gaudet - allegedly. See "Coincidence or Conspiracy," p. 229.

The medical evidence:

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318. 21 Jun 81 "Dispute on JFK assassination evidence persists" [4 pp.] (Boston Globe, by Ben Bradlee [the younger])

"The gaping head wound was seen by at least 12 doctors and 4 nurses ... at Parkland.... Fourteen of the 16 were interviewed recently by The Globe. [One doctor would not comment and one nurse could not be reached.] Eight of these [5 doctors and all 3 nurses] said that an official [Dox] tracing of an autopsy photograph of the President's head does not show the wound as they recall it."

The article does not name or quote all of the doctors and nurses. Dr. Richard Dulany said "There's a definite conflict.... That's not the way I remember it." Dr. McClelland "reaffirmed in a recent telephone interview that the drawing [in Thompson's book, showing a large rear head wound] was what he 'vividly remembers' the head wound looking like." He is not quoted on the Dox drawing itself. Dr. Robert Grossman is counted as supporting the Dox drawing; he noted that the term "occipital" is often used loosely, and said that he saw a large parietal wound and a smaller occipital wound - but he said that the latter was about one-and-a-quarter inches in diameter (i.e., too big to be the official entry wound). Nurse Doris Nelson said "There wasn't even hair [in the back of the head].... All that area was blown out." Nurse Patricia Gustafson (a new name?) also said the wound was in the back of the head.

Bradlee says that none of the 14 people interviewed had seen the actual autopsy photos. (This contradicts Blakey [see p. 2]. But Bradlee also says that Dr. Dulany did not testify to the Warren Commission, when in fact he did give a deposition.) A sidebar notes that Harrison Livingstone first showed the Dox drawing to several of the Dallas doctors, "and elicited doubts from them as to the tracing's accuracy." Unfortunately, the doctors quoted in Livingstone's article in TCI (10/22/80), namely Giesecke, Jenkins, Hunt, Bashour, Peters, Shaw, Baxter, and McClelland, are not quoted by Bradlee (except for McClelland). There is little from the doctors who testified at the greatest length to the Warren Commission. (One such doctor, Charles Carrico, told the Globe that the Dox drawing "showed 'nothing incompatible' with what he remembered....")

In a sidebar, Bradlee reports on an investigation of Groden's allegation that the photo of the back of the head was forged, using a matte process. Burke Marshall granted access to the autopsy photos to a panel of experts for the Globe. (The panel included Charles Wyckoff, who worked on the Zapruder film for CBS, and Hutson Howell, formerly of Itek. I have no reason to believe that those links are at all relevant, but I don't want to be accused of suppressing them.) The panel heard presentations from Groden and from Frank Scott, the HSC's expert, who said the photos were authentic. Each of the four other panelists (three photo experts and a radiologist) concluded that he could find no evidence of alteration. They said that the area noted by Groden where the hair is unusually dark looked wet and must have been caused by washing of the region "before the photographs were taken to make the wound visible." The panelists also noted that the stereo view formed by two photos taken from slightly different angles precluded any undetected alterations.

It had been rumored that Bradlee would use the work of this panel to totally dump on the critics. In fact, it appears in a sidebar, and considerable space in the main article is given to another possible explanation for the Dallas-Bethesda conflict, namely the Lifton hypothesis. That hypothesis is set forth in some detail; the only specific rebuttal is from McHugh, who called it "absolutely absurd ... full of lies and false implications." (Bradlee also mentions that, of course, the Dallas doctors could simply be mistaken.) There are no quoted comments from Blakey or from the HSC's forensic pathologists. (There is a long sidebar on the "autopsy oversights," as detailed by the HSC.) Bradlee's final conclusion is neutral: "Whatever the answer, it is likely that few will be satisfied, and that The Globe's Dallas interviews add up to another mysterious footnote to the Kennedy legacy."

It's always nice to see a major newspaper taking the JFK evidence seriously, even though this article is no substitute for a more thorough, and more official, report.

I have received some additional information from one of the Dallas doctors who is not mentioned in the Bradlee article. Since I hope to get more from him, I will refer to him only as Dr. G., which is not his real name. About a month before the Bradlee article came out, Dr. G. replied to my written inquiry, which had asked for his comments on the major references to him in the Lifton book. He was generally reluctant to re-enter the controversy, noting that he had testified before and that the passage of 18 years had not sharpened his recall. On the specific description of the wounds, Dr. G. deferred to another doctor, who had examined them more closely. Despite his professed unwillingness to get into all the questions I had raised, he managed to drop some rather provocative comments. (I can't venture a guess as to whether he recognized the implications of what he said to me.) For example, the doctor to whom he deferred gave basically the same description of the wound as Dr. G. - a description which supports Lifton. Although he did not comment on the Lifton hypothesis specifically, and said he was not familiar with Lifton's book, he did respond to my suggestion that the HSC had dismissed the observations of the Dallas doctors too easily: "that's an easy judgment to make from many years later, and especially to be made by people who weren't there and probably haven't even read all of the sworn testimony."

Most interestingly, Dr. G. declined to tell me how well the 3 published Dox drawings comported with his recollection. Instead, he sent back the Xerox copies I had sent him, saying that he was returning them "because they are clearly artist renderings and are diagrammatic and two-dimensional and have little bearing on the real thing." This is not the sort of thing to say if one wants to stay out of the public controversy! I don't know if Dr. G. meant what he said about the Dox drawings, but he said it.

Credits: Thanks to M. Allen (#267), M. Ewing (309-311, 317), J. Goldberg (267-8, 282, 288), L. Harris (284, 298-9), G. Hollingsworth (302-3), B. Kenton & D. Lifton (269-277), P. Lambert (279-280, 283), M. Lee (291, 294, 312), M. Longton (318), J. Marshall (290), F. Newcomb (281-tape), C. Oglesby (292), R. Pensack (287), R. Ranftel (267, 295, 301, 305, 315), P. Scott (306, 316), and G. Shaw (289). And, thanks to all of you who have sent clippings over the past few months which I haven't gotten around to listing yet.

Robert Kennedy's tragic knowledge:

In my review of the Blakey-Billings book, I noted their suggestion that RFK's knowledge of his brother's affair with Judy Campbell Exner might have been central to his perception of the forces behind the assassination. I indicated that I would like to see a treatment of this theme which was more political - that is, which had more to say about the possible relevance of Kennedy administration efforts against Castro. It turns out that just such an analysis was published in the 1980 book by Harris Wofford, "Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties." (Farrar Straus Giroux) Wofford was a colleague of Dr. King, a special assistant to JFK for civil rights, and later a Peace Corps official.

Wofford's analysis is much more speculative than Blakey's, but also more searching and provocative. Wofford is ultimately very sympathetic to both Kennedys, but he is very critical (and was so at the time) on a number of issues, notably Cuba. The facts are effectively put in their political and chronological context. (If any of you are looking for a project, I think that a comprehensive chronology of Kennedy administration actions on Cuba, organized crime, and related matters (such as Exner) would be a useful tool.) Here are some excerpts from Wofford's Ch. 12, "The Agony of Robert Kennedy":

"At least one of those familiar with his [RFK's] role in Operation Mongoose thinks that his fascination with violent counter-insurgency and his frustration with Castro would have invited the assassination planners to make him privy to their plots.... A rationale for Operation Mongoose was always inadequate, according to a non-CIA participant in the planning, but it was approved because of the Attorney General's insistence. In retrospect, that official thinks Mongoose made sense only as a cover for the attempts at murder.... If Robert Kennedy understood and supported this secret plan within the larger covert operation, he himself may

have been the source of the 'terrific pressure' [on JFK, as he alleged to Szulc] for the assassination [of Castro]."

"What surely shocked [RFK] was the recognition ... that his brother and the government ... were entangled with the most evil forces he could imagine.... The Mafia leaders were privy to what may have been the worst national secret in the history of the U.S., and the most embarrassing personal secret about John Kennedy.... The potential for blackmail ... included Judith Campbell ... and any number of CIA and FBI agents...."

"During the late spring and early summer of 1962, I would see [JFK and RFK] huddled in the Oval Office or walking in the Rose Garden. Now I know one of the hardest subjects they had to discuss.... [RFK] apparently decided that he could not succumb to the threat of blackmail and would continue his all-out effort against organized crime, including Sam Giancana.... The FBI intensified its surveillance of [Campbell] and Giancana. [Giancana obtained an injunction against FBI harassment, perhaps to warn RFK to lay off.] 'Bobby pushed to get Giancana at any cost,' said William Hundley, who headed the Organized Crime Section at Justice - but who did not know the cost the Attorney General realized he might have to pay."

[By the way, I'm a little surprised by the lack of known HSC interest in the lawyer who sent the telegram to Oswald in jail, offering to represent him. He was from the firm which had represented Giancana against the FBI. I happen to think that there was nothing sinister about the lawyer's interest, but I would have expected the HSC to at least check it out.]

"No one can know how much all this contributed to the change in Robert Kennedy's attitude and approach that manifested itself so dramatically and decisively a few months later in the Cuban missile crisis [when he was no longer the leading hawk on Cuba]. One of his most trusted friends, with whom I tested this theory that the CIA-Mafia-assassination-and-sex entanglement had a profound effect on [RFK's] thinking, says it fits the facts and may be the key to the puzzle."

"There was no way of getting to the bottom of the assassination without uncovering the very stories he [RFK] hoped would be hidden forever. So he closed his eyes and ears to the cover-up that he knew (or soon discovered) Allen Dulles was perpetrating on the Warren Commission, and took no steps to inform the commission of the Cuban and Mafia connections that would have provided the main clues to any conspiracy."

"In the spring [of 1964]..., [RFK] learned of a remark that Johnson had made to Pierre Salinger which he considered 'the worst thing Johnson has said,' and in Schlesinger's opinion was what made the gulf between the two 'ultimately impassable.' That Johnson said it to Kennedy's close friend and former aide meant that he intended it to reach Kennedy, perhaps as a warning.... [As RFK recounted it, LBJ said that, when you remember the assassinations of Trujillo and Diem,] 'what happened to Kennedy may have been divine retribution.' Kennedy had reason to believe that Johnson had more in mind than Trujillo and Diem.... [He] had to assume that [Hoover] had disclosed to Johnson whatever damaging information he had on the Kennedys, [including the stories of Campbell and the Mafia-CIA plot]."

[In February 1967, RFK met privately with LBJ, trying to persuade him to negotiate a settlement in Vietnam. In his oral history account, RFK said that LBJ had threatened to "destroy you and every one of your dove friends ... You'll be dead politically in six months."] "The threat must have had alarming overtones for Kennedy.... Based on what we now know that Johnson knew and could use against Kennedy, a good guess is that the whole CIA-assassination-Mafia mess had played some part in holding [RFK] back from all-out opposition [on Vietnam]." [Wofford notes RFK's major Senate speech of March 2, 1967, breaking with LBJ on Vietnam, and Jack Anderson's column (of the following day), but does not suggest a link.]

"Part of the case I made then [spring 1968] and would make again, now with more evidence, is that Robert Kennedy had come to see that the Enemy Within America was the enemy within him, and that he had done as well in taming the savageness in men and in himself as anyone I knew."