

News:

As far as I know, there is very little happening on the JFK case. So why am I so busy? One reason:

"On 28 July 1984 a reliable and sensitive source in California reported that an American female, who identified herself as J. Hoch, contacted Kaiser Hospital in Oakland at approximately 0750 that morning, inquiring whether the hospital had received any news concerning her family. The American was described as weighing 8 pounds 3 ounces, about 21 inches tall, with lots of dark hair. It is believed that subject may be identical to Joanna Carol Hoch, daughter of Paul L. and Susan Schumacher Hoch."



Some of you may recall a similar announcement (also derived from CIA document #6-3, 10 Oct 63) seven years ago, when Beth was born. All four of us are doing fine. Uninterrupted time is scarce, of course, but I can still make photocopies and answer uncomplicated letters. (My apologies to those of you to whom I owe long or substantive letters - you know who you are.) I intend to keep taking bites out of my substantial backlog of listable clippings and other items. Please continue to send material on the JFK case and on topics which you or I consider closely related. If you think I should be sending you more clippings in exchange, tell me what topics are of special interest and I'll see what I can do with my unlisted files.

Freedom of Information Act action:

There are some developments to report in Hoch v. CIA, C.A. 82-0754. This is the suit which precipitated the release of Batch G. (See 4 EOC 3, p. 8.) Since 1977, the CIA had been promising me that this batch of documents would be released "shortly," "in approximately six to eight weeks," in "another two or three months," and so on; it was released within three months after Jim Lesar filed our suit. Then the CIA naturally filed for summary judgment; on July 22, 1984, that was granted by Judge Aubrey Robinson in all regards, except for one document (CIA #1648-452C).

That one document has generated a noteworthy legal situation. It was the only item for which the CIA claimed FOIA exemption B5, which relates to certain intra- and inter-agency records. The CIA suggested (not implausibly) that the judge had not noticed that it had also claimed exemptions B1 and B3 (classified intelligence sources and methods). The Agency asserted again that the document, a 15-page memo dated 24 April 1975, should be withheld in full under these exemptions. As Lesar was preparing a response, the CIA noticed that parts of the document had been released in 1976, in response to a suit by Robert Borosage of the Center for National Security Studies for records relating to foreign assassination plots. I won't bore you with the CIA's explanation of how information which was released in 1976 was deemed withholdable in 1984, but we clearly have a good example of the misuse of the FOIA exemptions.

Document 1648 is entitled "What Could Castro Have Known?" It was apparently prepared in partial response to inquiries from the Rockefeller Commission about CIA plots against Castro. My guess is that the memo was not really designed to answer the question in its title, but to argue (perhaps just within the CIA) that the people running the AMLASH plot might not have blown the security of the operation. (Recall that Des FitzGerald had gone against professional advice to meet with Cubela personally; see pp. 74-5 of the Schweiker Report.)

I won't give this item three stars until I get a copy with no deletions. For the 13 available pages, ask me for #1984.93. All the names of plot participants were deleted in 1976, and the CIA is still deleting them, even though many of the names have been officially released (e.g., by the CIA through the HSCA). If you are interested in other documents, clippings, and arguments about what

Castro knew which have been compiled by Harold Weisberg, please write.

Most of the facts in the CIA memo seem familiar, but I haven't checked them all. Can someone identify "the exile leader's son-in-law, with whom he had close associations during that period, [who] probably knew of the [plot] activity"? Is this new? (The HSCA did not exactly confirm that the exile leader involved in this plot was Tony Varona, but it did reveal that executive session testimony was taken from each on March 16, 1978, and that the exile leader was "obviously not telling the truth." (10 HSCA 9 [n35] and 169 [n165]))

Congress has been considering a bill to exempt CIA "operational files" from the FOIA. The last I heard, it had been passed by both houses in slightly different forms. (#94: Lardner in WP, 9/18; #95: UP in SFC, 9/20) Jim Lesar prepared a memo opposing this bill (which was endorsed by the ACLU!) Among other things, Lesar argued that the CIA's backlog of FOIA requests is largely self-created. (Lesar's memo is #96, 13 pp.)

I was able to get a prompt response to one FBI FOIA request. On April 15, Nixon apparently indicated on "60 Minutes" that Hoover told him that Kennedy's assassin was a communist very early - within an hour after Nixon heard the news. (I don't have the text of Nixon's remarks, just references to them. Oddly, the NYT published a short letter headed "How did Hoover know?" (#97, 4/22/84) with no comment and no attempt at rebuttal.) I wrote the FBI on May 7, noting that memos were prepared after many of Hoover's phone calls. (They are in fact almost verbatim paraphrases.) Several from November 22 are in the released assassination files. About three months later, I was told that no record relating to a Nixon-Hoover phone call about the assassination could be found. I was not surprised that the request was processed expeditiously, since one could reasonably expect that any record found would probably show that Hoover did not describe the politics of the assassin before Oswald was in custody. If I had to venture a guess, it would be that Hoover and Nixon talked more than once that day, and that Nixon got the word about communist involvement late enough but does not remember the details of timing. (I think a more interesting initial reaction was that of RFK; see 6 EOC 1, p. 6.)

New publications:

Jerry D. Rose has announced a bi-monthly research journal on the JFK case, entitled "The Third Decade." The first issue is scheduled for this November. For details, write him at State University College, Fredonia, NY 14063, or send him \$15 for the first year. I can send you his prospectus (#98, 2 pp.), a form letter dated September 17 (#99), and a page on manuscript solicitation (#100). The single-issue price will be \$3; a few copies of the first issue will probably be available from me at that price.

Rose, a sociology professor, has published seven interesting articles in recent issues of "The Continuing Inquiry." His work involves the kind of close examination of basic details which unfortunately is not being done or published very much these days. The progress of the buff community, such as it is, has always ultimately rested on the fact that there are problems which keep popping up in the official case when someone looks at it closely. I'm not sure that I agree with most of Rose's conclusions; I would like to look through a lot of documentation and review some of my own old work, and I don't have the time right now. But Rose's speculations and interpretations are easily identifiable as such, and I certainly recommend these articles to researchers. If you don't have TCI, I can make copies of the following:

101. (2/84) "The Epileptic Seizure" [5 pp.]
102. (4/84) "Refused to Sign" (LHO fingerprint cards) [6 pp.]
103. (4/84) "Jack Ruby and the FBI" [2 pp.]
104. (4/84) "Lee, Harvey Oswald in Mexico City" (signatures in the hotel register) [4 pp.]

105. (5/84) "Agent 179: The Making of a Dirty Rumor" [7 pp.]
 106. (5/84) "The Twilight Zone: An [Oswald military] ID Card in the Time Machine" [4 pp.]
 107. (5/84) "Uniquely Insecure: HSCA XI" (HSCA analysis of motorcade route planning and motorcycle deployment) [5 pp.]

Keri Cassidy and Steve Barber have started another newsletter, entitled "The Kennedy Loyalist." The first issue (25 pp.) includes introductory material, clippings, illustrations, and articles on Camelot and the Secret Service in Dallas. Even if you are not a fan of JFK or his policies, you can get a copy by sending a dollar to Barber at 548 S. Diamond St., Mansfield, OH 44903.

The Assassination of Robert Kennedy:

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting with Greg Stone (formerly a top aide to Rep. Allard Lowenstein), who is very knowledgeable on the RFK case. Until his own murder in 1980 (see 2 EOC 5, p. 1), Lowenstein was one of the few public figures to press for an investigation of RFK's death. Before I met Stone, my impression was that the RFK case was even more moribund than the JFK case, and that no serious work was now being done. I found it unusual that the case was even mentioned in the Blakey-Billings book (which noted the suspicions of William Sullivan of the FBI, and the alleged presence in both Dallas and L.A. (at the time of the killings) of a litigious alleged con-man with alleged links to organized crime).

Stone did not make me believe that there was a conspiracy, but he did convince me that I should not just dismiss that possibility as I have sometimes done. My old feeling - based on a layman's knowledge - was that Robert Kaiser's work on Sirhan's hypnotic programmability was intriguing, but beyond that the RFK case could be viewed as a "control" study for the JFK case. That is, it might show how bad a lone-assassin explanation for any such crime looks if you study it closely enough, just because of normal problems with witness testimony, imperfect investigations which naturally minimize their own imperfections, and the odd links that an odd person is likely to have. That may still turn out to be the case, but there are issues which deserve more attention.

I also learned from Stone that there is some noteworthy recent and ongoing work. Some people are trying to do acoustical analysis, but I don't know the details. Efforts are being made to get some of the basic investigatory files released, and Stone feels that much interesting analysis could be done. If any of you would like to dig into this case before the next twentieth anniversary (not much more than three years away), you can reach Stone through 2349 N. Early St., Alexandria, VA 22302.

Stone has prepared a memo on the current status of the evidence, which I recommend. (#108, 16 pp.) It deals primarily with the second-gun issue, and the official handling of the case; it includes a list of specific "available avenues" for further inquiry. Stone concludes that there are "reasonable grounds for doubt" that Sirhan acted alone, and that the response to issues of possible conspiracy by L.A. law enforcement authorities "has been persistently irresponsible or worse."

The next three items are by Lowenstein; the latter two appear in the 1983 book "Lowenstein: Acts of Courage and Belief" (Harcourt), which Stone co-edited.

109. Feb 76 (Argosy) "The Kennedy Killings" [6 pp.]
 110. 19 Feb 77 (Saturday Review) "The Murder of Robert Kennedy: Suppressed Evidence of More than One Assassin?" [8 pp.]
 111. 6 Jun 83 (written in 1977) (Newsday) "Robert Kennedy's Education in American Power" [3 pp.]

Queries:

For the previous round of questions from readers, see 4 EOC 4.

Q54. I would like two articles from "The Washingtonian": "The Mafia, the CIA, and the Kennedy Assassination," by Milton Viorst (Nov 75), and "Sex, Power, and Politics" (August 72). If you have either item but want to avoid being the second person to send me a copy, please write.

Q55. Does anyone have the final issue of "The Rebel," reportedly with Jesse Jackson on the cover and an article on the JFK case, or an issue identified as Vol. 2, #2?

Q56. Can anyone explain the FBI rubric "CRIMDEL"? It appears as the subject of a Dallas airtel of November 21, 1963, informing FBIHQ that SS agent Sorrels said that the "bullet-proof-bubble type Lincoln" was being flown to Dallas. For no apparent reason, this routine-looking document (#1984.112) was subsequently put in one of the FBI's assassination-related files.

Many of you know that I have about a thousand documents from the large FBI releases of 1977-78, skillfully selected by the AIB, Weisberg, and others. There is lots of good stuff which deserves further analysis and correlation with other evidence. If you are seriously interested in doing research on these documents, I can make available my lists (#113, 36 pp.) and a collection of my notes and analysis (#114, 24 pp.)

Q57. Can anyone tell us more about "Maceo," a name used by one of the participants in the CIA-Mafia plot against Castro, beyond what is in HSCA Vol. 10, pp. 152 and 177? The HSCA called it "puzzling" that the CIA apparently did not check "Maceo" out when he was introduced to take over Trafficante's role, suggesting that "it seems more logical that at least Roselli and Harvey did ascertain the identity of Maceo and for whatever reason decided to withhold this information." Is there any relationship to Dr. Antonio Maceo, a Cuban surgeon who (like Varona) was a member of the CIA-front FRD? (10 HSCA 57)

Q58. Did anyone shell out \$5 for the 14 pages of Warren Commission documents released by the Archives in 1983? Can we share? For the Archives listing of the 5 documents from which these pages come, ask me for #115.

Q59. In 1978, Jonathan Marshall and I wrote that "Helms was not asked [in the HSCA public hearing] about this speculation, but the role of the military in planting fake defectors in the Soviet Union in the late 1950s, which a committee source confirms, suggests once again that ONI may have sponsored Oswald's defection without even the full knowledge of the CIA or FBI." (Inquiry, 12/25/78, #1984.116, 3 pp.) HSCA sources are not infallible, so I wonder if anyone has additional sources on the use of false defectors by CIA and/or ONI. My original source was a discussion with CIA buff Brad Sparks, who pointed out that through the 1950s there was a general shift of authority over espionage, including the selection of targets, from DoD to CIA.

Q60. Dick Russell and Robert Ranftel (separately) would like any information on Thomas Eli Davis, other than what is in Seth Kantor's book, HSCA Vol. 9 (pp. 183-5, 640), and the Fensterwald-Shaw memo on Souetre (#1982.157).

Q61. Can anyone argue that there was any investigation of Souetre/Mertz in connection with the JFK assassination before the allegations published in a French newspaper in February 1964? (See #1984.77.)

Q62. Larry Harris (601 A St. NE #1, DC 20002) has renewed his interest in the Tippit case, and would welcome an exchange of ideas and information. Bob Benn would also like to hear from Tippit-case buffs.

Q63. Harris would also like to hear from people interested in studying INS documents on the deportation proceedings against John Lennon.

Q64. In the last EOC, I quoted John Davis's book on the question of Kennedy knowledge of CIA plots against Castro. (For pp. 410-3 of the book, ask for #117 [2 pp.]) Obviously, Davis's CIA sources may have shaded the truth in their own favor, but their statements still deserve careful attention. Can anyone tell me if the name of Samuel Halpern, said by Davis to be directly involved in the AMLASH operation, has been previously published in this connection? Is he in the HSCA or

Church Committee reports, identified by title only? His connection with certain Cuban and Indonesian operations is mentioned in the Powers book on Helms.

Q65. L. Keene tells me that a fake-assassination plot like that hypothesized by R. Ramsay (6 EOC 1, p. 9), designed to generate support for the victim, plays a part in the 1977 book "The Lincoln Conspiracy" (by Balsiger and Sellier), which was sold as non-fiction. Can anyone provide other sources to establish whether or not such an operation was actually implemented in 1865?

Q66. David Scheim says that Ruby stripper Karen Carlin was "found shot to death in her Houston hotel" shortly after the Ruby trial. ("Contract on America," p. 126) Does anyone have contrary information, or a better source than the cited one (Sybil Leek's book)?

Q67. Does anyone know the whereabouts of Thomas C. Lucey (author of a pamphlet on Nagell) or Frederick H. John?

Q68. Does anyone know exactly when the rifle was taken from the TSBD? Any ideas on how to pin down this time, from photos or otherwise?

Jean Davison (author of "Oswald's Game") has told me that Davison is her husband's name, and that he knows of no relatives in Georgia or named Alexis. (Some people were curious about this; for the reason, see "The Assassinations," p. 472.) I'll seize this opportunity to publish Russ Stetler's 1978 poem, inspired by "Legend":

"The CIA's doctor, Alexis / Examined the Oswalds (both sexes) / He said 'Visit my mother / in Atlanta - deep cover - / On the way to your mission in Texas.'"

Campaign '84:

You may have noticed that President Reagan is running against malaise this year. This should be of special interest to assassination buffs, since when President Carter used that word, he traced the problem back to the murder of JFK.

Of course, we should not treat Reagan's comments as if they were a reasoned rebuttal to Carter. A typical Reagan analysis: Carter had "helped drain 'spirit from the heart of our people' by declaring that the nation was in a 'malaise.' Imagine, Reagan said, if Winston Churchill had exhorted wartime Britain not by vowing to fight on the beaches and in the streets, but by declaring: 'It's no use, you suffer from a malaise.'" (#118, WP in SFC, 6 Sep 84) I think we are just supposed to recognize "malaise" as one of those negative and vaguely foreign words, like "malaria" and "detente."

What did Carter actually say? "The symptoms of this crisis of the American spirit are all around us.... These changes [have] come upon us gradually over the last generation, years that were filled with shocks and tragedy. We were sure that ours was a nation of the ballot, not the bullet, until the murders" of JFK, RFK, and MLK; then there was Vietnam and Watergate. These remarks came in a speech on "energy and national goals" (remember the energy crisis?), on July 15, 1979. (Full text: #119, 4 pp.) The speech was hardly despairing or anti-Churchillian: "So, the solution of our energy crisis can also help us to conquer the crisis of the spirit in our country." Carter repeated his analysis when talking to reporters in October: the assassinations "caused people to be deeply concerned about the societal structure in which we live. I would say the Watergate embarrassment and the deposing of an incumbent President caused Americans to doubt the integrity of their own government." (#120, 3 pp.)

It is rare to see a high-ranking politician suggest, as Carter did, that one needs to recognize the implications of the assassination controversy - at least the general disbelief in the Warren Report, if not the actual consequences of a conspiracy to kill Kennedy. Reportedly, Carter's assessment of the malaise was based in part on polls by Patrick Caddell. (See #1980.290, 2 EOC 7.) At the time of Carter's speech, the HSCA's acoustical evidence stood essentially unrebuted. The ridicule heaped on Carter's "malaise" speech is disturbing because he at least thought seriously about the impact of the assassinations.

What does Reagan think about the JFK case? Fortunately, he has not made it a campaign issue against Cuba or Nicaragua. He did have something to say in February or March 1979, according to Ronnie Dugger's 1983 book, "On Reagan." (P. 355: #121) "Perhaps nothing else so dramatically illustrates a certain heedlessness in Reagan concerning the Soviet Union than one of his 1979 radio broadcasts.... Reagan publicly expressed his suspicion that the Soviet Union put Lee Harvey Oswald up to the assassination of President Kennedy. 'Have we hesitated,' he asked, 'to investigate the possibility that Oswald might have been carrying out a plot engineered by an international agency?'" With his characteristic appetite for facts, Reagan noted that "someone must have helped" Oswald learn Russian, that he married the niece of a KGB colonel, and that the address of the Soviet Embassy was found in his wallet. "It has been reported," Reagan said, "that President Johnson and the [Warren] Commission were fearful that evidence of a Communist conspiracy, involving as it would the Soviet Union and/or Cuba, would anger the American people and lead to a confrontation, possibly even to war.... Maybe some day a new investigation will start down that trail."

When Reagan spoke, of course, the HSCA had already checked out that trail and returned with a negative report. One wonders if anyone in Reagan's inner circle wanted to explore that trail (or bulldoze it into a freeway) once they got into office. As noted in 6 EOC 1, some sort of decision by the Justice Department on the status of the case was scheduled for early 1984 (as of November 1983). At this point, I'll be relieved if the delay is due simply to other business of higher priority, or (as Mark Allen suggested) to the possibility that keeping the case officially open makes it easier to withhold records under FOIA.

Reagan was involved in one investigation of the JFK case, as a member of the Rockefeller Commission in 1975. We know that the published chapter on the assassination dealt very narrowly and selectively with allegations of CIA involvement, and that the hot issue of CIA involvement in plots against Castro was passed on to the Church Committee. Do any of you know whether the Commission gave serious attention to the Castro-retaliation theory of the JFK assassination? And does anyone know how active a part Reagan played in the work of the Commission?

Perhaps, to understand Reagan and the JFK assassination, we have to regard the latter as a symbolic or mythic event. Consider the comments of French sociologist Michel Crozier: "The America of the '80s wants to forget history. It pretends that nothing dramatic has ever happened.... Was John F. Kennedy really murdered on Nov. 22, 1963? America almost begins to doubt it. After all, President Reagan was shot on March 30, 1981, also by a bizarre young crackpot. A real remake, just like in the movies! But a remake with a happy ending. This time everything is as it should be.... [Reagan's] jokes make the headlines. The Dallas tragedy is exorcised." This is from Crozier's forthcoming book, "The Trouble with America." (#122, 3 pp.: adaptation in SFC, 26 Aug 84, via WP) This is rather silly stuff (is the trouble with America that it is not France?), but maybe Crozier is on to something. From a domestic source: "The Democrats ... concede [Reagan's] edge in the bravado department. 'He took a bullet in the chest and survived, and all of America saw it,' said [Democratic media consultant David] Garth. 'That was a very macho thing.'" (#123, 2 pp., "Why Most Men Like Ronald Reagan," NYT story in SFC, 19 Sep 84)

Some leading Democrats also know a thing or two about what happened in the 1960s. Senators Mondale and Hart were members of the Church Committee, and Hart was the other half (at least on paper) of Sen. Schweiker's subcommittee on aspects of the JFK case. As I recall, a Minnesota buff indicated to me many years ago that he had received a sympathetic hearing from someone in Mondale's office.

In their 1978 book on the RFK case, Bill Turner and Jonn Christian reported on a 1975 dinner party at the home of a former Mondale campaign manager. "The Mondales listened intently as [Dianne] Hull and [Paul] Le Mat gave their presentation [on the RFK case]. 'If what you say is true,' the senator remarked somewhat

skeptically, 'this would involve a cover-up of incredible dimensions.'... Joan Mondale chided her husband, reminding him that neither of them believed that Lee Harvey Oswald alone had shot John Kennedy." (#124, 2 pp.)

As far as I know, the only candidate who specifically mentioned any conspiracy theory was Jesse Jackson. Campaigning at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, he said "I believe the government had some role in Dr. King's assassination. I think it was an active role, but I do not know who or what." Jackson, who met with James Earl Ray in prison, said he was clearly involved, but "not capable of pulling it off by himself." (#125, UP in SFC, 1 May 84) Jackson referred to the death of King as a "crucifixion" (#126, NYT, 1 May), a figure of speech he also used later in connection with the death of Robert Kennedy. (#127, 6 Jun, SFC)

Long hot summer in Dallas - Republicans and arsonists:

128. Jul-Aug 84 (Texas Architect) "Depository Retains History Sans Tragic Face" [2 pp.] A rather technical account of the recent conversion of the TSBD into the Dallas County Commissioners Administration Building. [Additional photos: #128A, 5 pp.]

129. 15 Aug 84 (Ivins, DTH in SFC) "An Uptight City in a Down-Home State" [4 pp.] A few interesting paragraphs on the 1963 "city of hate" allegations.

130. 18 Aug (SFC) "Surly Mood Expected at Protests in Dallas" [2 pp.] "Some Dallas residents may be particularly touchy about having the San Francisco-based [rock group] Dead Kennedys performing" there.

131. 21 Aug (Boston Globe) "This is a city that wants to forget" One reason Dallas wanted the Republican convention "was to try to blunt the memories that forever link their city with the death of a President." City residents have been slow to contribute money for the museum planned for the TSBD's sixth floor.

132. 22 Aug (NYT) "Dallas Tour: Old Trauma Now Mythic" The city and the Republicans jointly sponsored tours for delegates. Mayor Starke noted that "people no longer talk about the assassination first thing when they find out I'm from Dallas. Now they talk about the television show 'Dallas.'" A Dealey Plaza postcard vendor noted that in 1963 "Dallas didn't have anything else to be famous for."

133. ? (SFC) "Sightseeing in Dallas" For \$15, you could see the TSBD, Oswald's rooming house, and the entrance to Parkland Hospital.

134. 22 Aug (SFC) At the Wax Museum of the Southwest (in Dallas), a two-part "JFK tableau ... features an empty rocking chair on one side ... and Lee Harvey Oswald ... holding a rifle on the other."

135. 23 Aug (SFC) "How Dallas Could Forget Kennedy Assassination" Cosmetics magnate Mary Kay Ash suggested on national TV that the Kennedy memorial near the TSBD should be dismantled and turned into a parking lot. Not to forget JFK, it was explained later, just to "not have it there for people to remember." (In this account, unlike some others, her reference was not to the TSBD itself.)

136. 24 Aug (WP) "Where the Shots Rang Out" [2 pp.] Includes comments from tourists. "Several" said it was a Castro-KGB plot.

137. 24 Aug (NYT) "Fire Destroys Kennedy Memorabilia" in the TSBD basement. It was definitely arson (multiple points of origin); the sprinkler system had been turned off for repairs. Nothing irreplaceable was lost unless you count parts of the Hertz sign. (Photo: #137A)

138. 24 Aug (DTH in SFC) "Arson hits building at JFK murder site" [2 pp.]

139. 27 Aug (SFC) Maybe there were two arsonists, Herb Caen jokes. For a nasty (but amusing) DTH column taking advantage of this opportunity to ridicule conspiracy theorists, and for several more stories on the fire, see TCI for 8/22.

140. Aug ? (from NYDN) A column on buying guns in Dallas (still easy) and going out for target practice like Oswald.

141. 3 Sep (Andy Rooney, SFC) "Poor Reminder of a Good President" Memorials are unsatisfactory, but for some people the TSBD serves the need we feel

for something material to remind us.

142. 23 Aug 84 (SFC) "Joan Rivers gets into the act" at a Dallas luncheon for Nancy Reagan. "Geraldine Ferraro - big deal. It's no big deal to have a woman in the White House. John F. Kennedy had a thousand of them."

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Warren Report, an item from Tom Miller's "Assassination Please Almanac." But seriously, folks: prompted by the recent official report on the Aquino case, one can still wonder about the historical inevitability of the WR. Could a conspiracy have counted on a limited investigation? Could a lone nut have triggered one? How should the responsibility be divided up - Warren, Hoover, LBJ, Ruby, Oswald, RFK, and even the secrets of John F. Kennedy's own administration?

From Europe: anarchist art blends fact and fantasy, avoiding speculation altogether.



Socialist Worker—London

Clippings: By or about buffs or other investigators, relating to the JFK assassination

143. 21 Jun 83 (NYT) "A Political Insider's New Views from the Outside" [2 pp.] A profile of Richard Schweiker. He would not "elaborate on his continued strong doubts" about the WR. "'It's clear to me it just didn't go the way the Warren Commission said it did,' is all he will say."

144. 25 Jul 83 (Newsweek) "Quincy Meets Reality" [2 pp.] (Medical examiners in real life.) "The most notorious forensic blunder of all" was in the JFK autopsy, when "a pathologist mistook an exit wound for an entrance wound," supporting the theory of more than one assassin. "That initial error will live with us forever," says Dr. Michael Baden (head of the HSCA's pathology panel). Presumably Baden was talking about the observations of the Dallas doctors, not the autopsy pathologists.

145. Aug 83 (XL, reprinted in TCI, 8/22/83) A brief article on Steve Barber. "When a panel of some of America's most distinguished scientists announced that their acoustic analyses did not detect a fourth shot..., they had a young musician in Mansfield, Ohio to thank." This does not imply that supporters of the HSCA's acoustical work should be hostile to Barber. Look at it this way - if he hadn't spotted the crosstalk, the NAS panel would have rejected the HSCA work anyway, I would have spent many unproductive hours arguing about statistics, and the case would probably be just as quiet as it is now.

146. 13 Aug 83 (TV Guide) "Replay of a Tragedy" During the reenactment for the NBC film, "on hand to help ensure realism was assassination expert Dr. Jack Gordon." After seeing Gordon's 58-minute video, actors Martin Sheen and Blair Brown (and "most, if not all, of those who viewed it") were convinced that LHO did not act alone. (On Gordon's tape, see 4 EOC 3, p. 7. I have quite a few clips on the NBC film, which left me unimpressed. Reg Gadney's book "Kennedy" (5 EOC 4, p. 8) has been remaindered.)

147. 25 Oct 83 Have you ever tried to explain your interest in the JFK case to someone who thinks of JFK as Jackie O's first husband, and wonders if you have interviewed the man who shot him? If so, you might appreciate Robert Ranftel's transcription (guaranteed authentic) of one such conversation.

148. "The Plot Thins: Twenty Years of Conspiracy Theories" [typescript, 5 pp.] A survey article by Tom Miller, focusing on California angles, prepared for but unfortunately not published by a magazine whose name I will not repeat. A few well chosen words from or about PLH (too flattering to quote), Tink Thompson, Mae

Brussell, Jeff Cohen, and others. From Lifton: "What I don't understand is why people get so upset over who stole President Carter's debate book when there's overwhelming evidence that someone stole President Kennedy's body.... I think it's outrageous that the government isn't doing anything about it." John McCone (now 81) told Miller that "There was never a single request directed to the CIA [by the WC] to which we didn't respond immediately and fully. The investigation was right and the conclusions correct."

149. 7 Nov 83 [2 pp.] A major article on the buffs by Mike Cochran of AP. This version, which I think is the most nearly complete I have, was in the Idaho Falls paper with the headline "Many still think Kennedy shooting was a conspiracy." Basically sympathetic, despite a tendency to focus on exotica: "Chances are you've never heard of the Black Dog Man, the Umbrella Man, the Mafia Con Man, the Tall Tramp, or the man called Frenchy." Quoted or discussed at some length: Mary Ferrell, Gary Shaw, Robert Blakey, Gary Mack, and Jack White. There are a few nice words about Penn Jones, Bud Fensterwald, and me. (I allegedly do get some respect. But I am not a professor at U.C., just a senior applications programmer at the Office of Institutional Research there.) I also have versions of this story from papers in San Antonio (#150, 1 p.), Orlando (#151, 2 pp.), Greenville, NC (#152, 2 pp.) and two unidentified papers (#153, 3 pp. and #154, 2 pp.)

155. 7 Nov 83 (CBS Evening News) [3 pp.] Described in 5 EOC 4, p. 8. The only named non-CBS person to comment on the case who was not an official was Penn Jones; the officials quoted were G. Ford, L. Stokes, H. Sawyer, J. S. Cooper, and F. Church.

156. 11 Nov 83 (ABC News Nightline) Described in 5 EOC 4, p. 8. [7 pp.]

157. 11-17 Nov 83 (DC City Paper) "Reflecting on One of America's Darkest Moments" [4 pp.] Particularly sympathetic to Weisberg, "an unofficial dean of the scholarly wing of assassination researchers," who is quoted several times. Marion Johnson points out that it wasn't the Archives who lost JFK's brain. Author Tom McNichol comments on Dallas, the umbrella man, Ruby, the exhumation, Mark Lane, and the buff movement - "a religion with a bible that no one believes" (the Warren Report).

158. 16 Nov 83 (USA Today) "Carrying On: Four who keep his memory alive" [2 pp.] Short profiles of "the truthseeker" (Penn Jones), "the best friend" (Dave Powers), "the actor" (Mark McIntire, who does a one-man JFK show), and "the collector" (one John B. Kennedy). "'I hope I'm the craziest damn fool in the United States,' says Jones.... 'If I'm not, you're in trouble.'" To Powers, "does it matter whether one or a hundred were involved?"

159. 20 Nov 83 (Dublin Independent) "Kennedy 'killed by Mafia' - [says] Irishman" Photo of researcher Chris Scally, with his views on the acoustics and other matters. Scally has been on the case since 1966, when he read the 26 volumes at the U.S. Embassy.

160. 20 Nov 83 (Milwaukee Journal) "Confusion and doubt live on," by David Wrone. Analysis and strong opinions: negative on the WR and the books of Blakey, Lane, Epstein, and Lifton; positive on Weisberg, Meagher, and Roffman. Wrone is certain there were two gunmen, and that the damage to JFK's tie was made not by a bullet but by a scalpel, as previously argued by Weisberg. "I don't know who shot President Kennedy. But I know that the character of American civilization is wrapped up in a resolution of the answer." [3 pp.]

161. 20 Nov 83 (Cleveland Plain Dealer) "The day a president died and a memory was born" [3 pp.] Includes the following comments on Burt Griffin of the WC staff, now a Common Pleas Judge. "Years later, Griffin came to look on the assassination as a tragic outcome of the American propensity to meddle in the affairs of other countries. He is convinced Oswald killed Kennedy as 'his reaction to the CIA's effort to assassinate Castro. Obviously, Oswald was much more successful in that respect than the CIA. Someday the relationship of this (Kennedy's death) to our so-called covert foreign activities will become more and more

apparent, but I don't think anybody has the stomach to deal with that right now."

162. 20 Nov 83 (DMN) "The Obsessed" [2 pp.; part of #18] Profiles and photos of Penn Jones, Mary Ferrell, and Michael Eddowes. The writer seems less hostile than bemused - e.g., when Eddowes's explanation of his interest in the case starts with what he told the FBI about Maria Novotny in June 1963.

163. 21 Nov 83 (CBS Morning News) [2 pp.] Brief, generally predictable comments by Specter, Lane, Hoch, and Davison. [William Webster's reported statement that the case was closed was noted when this item was listed as #1984.5.] There's no business like show business: first a rather well-informed woman from CBS in New York talked to me for an hour by phone; then a rather uninformed woman from S.F. videotaped an hour interview; this program used one sentence from me, pointing out that Ruby's shooting of Oswald "is to many people perhaps the strongest single piece of evidence pointing to a conspiracy."

164. 21 Nov 83 (Belfast Telegraph) "The Belfastman who runs the JFK Forum [newsletter]" A brief profile (with photo) of buff Harry Irwin.

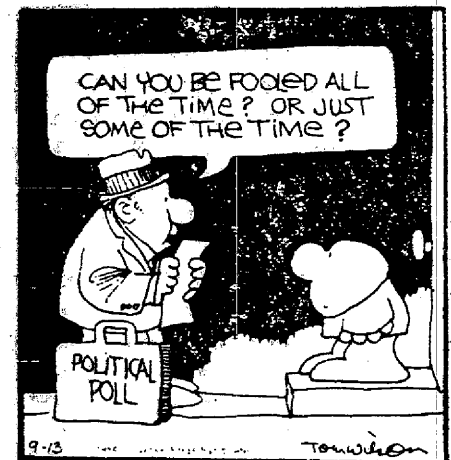
165. 22 Nov 83 (WCBS-TV, NY) [4 pp.] An interview of Dr. John Lattimer by Dr. Peter Salgo. Lattimer discussed, rather effectively, the jet effect, the condition of CE 399, and the small size of the throat wound, but did not do well on the question of the mistaken wound positions arising from the autopsy. (Not wanting the autopsy photos "in every lurid bookstore" does not explain keeping them from the WC staff and the Bethesda doctors.) Lifton's material was not discussed, but Salgo referred to it in his closing remarks. Surprisingly, he said body alteration is "possible," despite what he called the lack of "hard evidence" for it.

166. 16 Jul 84 (Sussman, WP Weekly Edition; also in TCI, 8/22) "Sleuths: Where the Experts Agree - Sometimes - on the JFK Assassination" Based on a poll by Bud Fensterwald, who sent 27 multiple-choice questions to various "experts." "Like the public, they don't buy the Warren Report." I'm a bit surprised that the Post would publish these results, especially without discussing the selection of the experts (WC and HSCA staffers, and authors of books and articles) or which fifty of us responded.

167. 1 Jun 84 [7 pp.] The details of this poll, as released by Bud's CTIA. There is a consensus that there was a conspiracy with at least 4 shots, that there have been mysterious deaths, and on some other issues. No consensus was found on 11 questions, including the Tippit killing and Oswald's ideology. It appears from the tallies that 38 of the 50 respondents were basically pro-conspiracy. The strongest consensus was the agreement of 41 that there has been "a concerted effort to cover up the facts of the assassination since 1963."

Bud asked some difficult basic questions, and I don't think the FOIA allows me to withhold my answers and comments. (#168, 16 pp.) I reserve the right to refuse to argue about my answers, however. If I were not uncertain about most of these issues, I probably would have retired from the buff business long ago.

Credits: Thanks to M. Ewing (#124, 155), B. Fensterwald (166-7), M. Goddard (143), J. Goldberg (97, 126, 136-7, 157), G. Hollingsworth (146), H. Hurt (154), H. Irwin (164), L. Kartsonis (153), G. Laughinghouse (152), J. Lesar (94, 96), P. Melanson (131), J. Mierzejewski (140), T. Miller (148), G. Owens (132, 137), R. Ranftel (147), J. Rose (98-100), C. Scally (159), G. Shaw (128) & G. Stone (108-11).



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