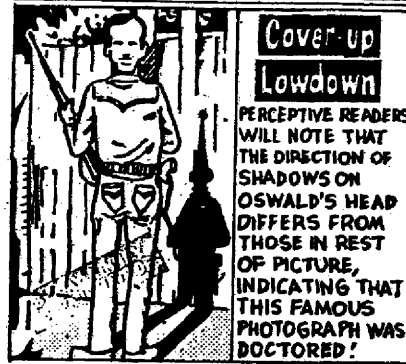


# JFK Assassination FORUM

CAN THIS BE THE  
FINAL COMMENT  
ON THOSE  
INFAMOUS "OSWALD  
PHOTOGRAPHS"...??

NUMBER 17



"Cover-up" by Gary Shaw with Larry Harris  
\$10.95, 227 pages, 300+ photographs.  
Published May 1976 by Cover-up, P.O. Box 722,  
Cleburne, Texas 76031.

The Preface to this book begins: "This book is for the average citizen. It is not written for the critics of the Warren Commission, and they will find that most of its content is a recapitulation of information known to them for years. This information however, is not generally known or understood by the public.... Hence, another book on the assassination." To disagree with the preface of a book does not normally inspire confidence in the contents. This book is different because anyone - critic or otherwise - will find it an invaluable asset in their search for the truth.

The first five chapters discuss the avoidance, suppression, and altering of testimony, photographs, and material evidence, as well as examining the many other suspects who were arrested but later released. They also follow up some of the uninvestigated leads left by the Commission and other Agencies. While the Authors do, to some extent, cover 'old ground' in these chapters, they also bring to light some other facts which were hitherto unreported. Of the many important points raised one in particular has more sinister overtones and implications than all the others: the possibility that the medical evidence was faked! The testimony and evidence presented by the Authors on this issue makes this a far greater possibility than might at first be thought.

Chapter 6 discusses "The Execution". This is the Authors' own interpretation of the events in Dealey Plaza, and this chapter alone contains over 50 Zapruder film frames. The scenario presented here suggests that an 11-man assassination squad, including 5 gunmen, was active during the shooting. However, compelling as the rest of the book is, there is one major criticism of this chapter: The Authors rely heavily on the "shakes" in the Zapruder footage for corroboration of six of the seven shots which they postulate. This dependence on a camera movement which has been clearly shown to be unrelated to the timing of the shots casts a cloud over their reconstruction.

The question of "Who Killed Kennedy?" is discussed at length in Chapter 7 and their conclusion is that the President's death was "ordained and carried out by a force far greater than can be imagined by the average citizen: a superpower comprised of the Military-Industrial-Intelligence complex." This elite body, they say, had the means and the motive - two essential which Lee Harvey Oswald did not have.

While disagreeing with some of the conclusions reached by the Authors, I find myself fascinated by this book (which is, incidentally, published in a limited edition of only 3000 copies), and I unreservedly recommend it. For its wealth of photographic material alone, "Cover-up" is one of the books without which any "assassination" library will be incomplete. (C.S.)

## JFK'S HEALTH: MORE WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS.

In Accessories after the Fact, Sylvia Meagher quotes from a prestigious medical journal which expresses dissatisfaction with the JFK autopsy. The journal complains of the absence of any comment on the President's adrenal glands. Subsequently the autopsy has come under further fire from informed medical opinion, notably Cyril Wecht MD, who has pointed out that the autopsy surgeons had no real experience of evaluating gunshot wounds, and has observed that sections were not taken from the brain in the standard manner. Wecht, who has examined the autopsy ~~picture~~ X-rays, has noted the presence in JFK's brain of a mysterious foreign body which might be almost anything from a bone-fragment to a tumour. The actual brain was preserved in the Archives precisely, one supposes, so that further investigation would be possible; it has, however, Wecht informs us, unaccountably disappeared.

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AVE, HAROLD WOOD, ROMFORD, ESSX.)

For many years, researchers have supposed that all this was part of a cover-up to protect the assassins and to prevent the real truth about JFK's wounds from coming out. To support this view, it has been pointed out that, but for the high-handed action of Presidential aide O'Donnell, JFK's body would have received a civilian autopsy in Dallas rather than a military one in Washington. They have further pointed out that virtually every document concerning JFK's brief sojourn at Parkland Hospital was originally stamped TOP SECRET, as if the FBI was preparing to rewrite history on a grand scale, should it prove necessary. Finally, they have noted that originally the Kennedy family hijacked the autopsy X-rays and photos until public uproar forced them to return them to the Archives; the inference being that the Kennedys wanted to provide for the possibility of a new enquiry by ensuring that the material was not tampered with or destroyed.

A recent book, however, (THE SEARCH FOR JFK by Clay and Joan Blair) suggests a different reason for some of the suppression. According to Godfrey Hodgson in his review of the book for the Sunday Times, the Blairs make the following assertions:

- Kennedy was literally kept alive by drugs for the last 15 years of his life; apart from a 25mg dose of cortisone taken orally every day, pellets of DOCA (desoxycorticosterone acetate) were embedded in his thigh for his system to draw on and replaced every three months.

- One of JFK's doctors relates that the Kennedy family kept stores of cortisone and DOCA in safe deposits around the US so that supplies would never run out.

- JFK's back complaint had little to do with football at Harvard or PT109; in fact he was born with an "untable (sic) back" which required a dangerous operation in 1955, made more dangerous by the fact that Kennedy had, by then, been suffering from Addison's Disease for at least seven years;

- Addison's disease was secretly diagnosed by the London Clinic and a Boston hospital, both of which JFK visited in 1947.

- Much of JFK's youthful vigour and alleged sexual capacity was a consequence of the steroid drugs JFK was taking.

For good measure, the Blairs allege that JFK was a "manufactured war hero" - ie that the accounts of the PT109 incident and JFK's part therein were greatly exaggerated with the help of Kennedy money; that JFK's book PROFILES OF COURAGE was in great part the work of highly-paid hacks; and that "Jack was lucky not to have been cashiered from the Navy" as a result of an involvement in 1941 with a Danish woman called Inga Arvad who had known many of the leading Nazis in Berlin.

Let us first deal with the health issue. JFK appears to have denied outright to Schlesinger that he suffered from Addison's disease, but was pretty frank with Sorensen, who is pretty frank with us. It seems entirely plausible that the Kennedy family would have suppressed this information; it would have ruled out JFK as a Presidential candidate and, if made known after JFK's death, would have affected the credibility of his brothers; one can see now why so many clansmen or intimates - such as Wm Manchester and Sorensen - were as eager as the FBI, CIA and Warren Commission to avoid controversy about the autopsy. To keep matters in perspective, though, it should be noted that the strict medical requirements which would have deprived JFK of the presidency would also have ruled out Churchill, Roosevelt and Castro as leaders.

For the data about PT109 one should presumably refer to the Blairs' book. Sorensen enthuses over JFK's long heroic swim through icy

waters with an injured comrade; it is, perhaps, unfortunate that Teddy's version of Chappaquidick should have so many features in common with his brother's exploit.

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TROUBLE AT T'ENQUIRY

It had been my hope that I could report in this issue some of the early findings of the Congressional enquiry into the deaths of JFK and MLK. The project, forced through Congress with the help of the Black Caucus promised fair. It is chaired by Henry Gonzalez, a longtime sceptic, who was in the fatal motorcade himself and who, about eighteen months ago, provided a preface for the highly-contentious COUP D'ETAT IN AMERICA (Third Press - the authors Canfield and Weberman are currently being sued by Howard Hunt for libel). The Committee's staff is headed by Richard Sprague (no relation to the photo-expert) who won his spurs in the Yablonski murder case.

Unfortunately these good omens have not borne fruit. Writing to me on February 17, Harry Irwin tells me:

"It appears that moves are afoot to abort the Congressional Inquiry. Sprague asked for a first year budget of \$6.5 million and his opponents latched onto this request to sabotage the whole project. It has to be re-established by a vote in the newly-formed Congress and this hasn't been done yet. The only moves made were to let the probe run for another two months to enable them to come up with some hard evidence to justify their continued existence". Surely that shouldn't be TOO difficult?

"The additional bad news is that, like the critics over years, internal feuds have erupted. Gonzalez and Sprague fell out within the past week and Gonzalez fired him. This action was overturned by the other ten Committee members, but where do we go from here."

Naturally we shall keep you in touch, and provide further details about the progress of the enquiry and its constitution if it remains on its feet.

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PUMPKINHEAD THOMPSON?

Back in print and very welcome is Josiah Thompson's pioneer study SIX SECONDS IN DALLAS. It is a tribute to this monument of meticulous research that Thompson has not seen fit to alter the contents after 10 years, and the book seems in no way dated. Thompson has, however, added a new introduction, which seems to indicate that he has perforce abandoned his rigidly impartial stance.

One note of criticism: A substantial part of Thompson's argument is based upon close analysis of the Z film. Life refused to allow Thompson to reprint frames from the original film for the 1967 hard-cover edition of SIX SECONDS. Since then, Thompson has won a legal battle to enable him to use those Z frames, instead of the charcoal drawings substituted in the original book. These frames now appear in the paperback reprint but, sad to say, are too small and too poorly printed on non-glossy paper to be very informative. Unaccountably, in one place, Thompson or his publishers have retained the charcoal drawing.

A recent study of the Z film by Luis W Alvarez of the University of California (A PHYSICIST EXAMINES THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION FILM, American Journal of Physics, Vol 44, No 9, Sept 1976) challenges Thompson's assertion that JFK was struck twice in the head, the first shot driving him slightly forward and the second flinging him

violently backward and to the left. (Most critics assume that this movement, graphically depicted on the Z film and clearly suggestive of a frontal shot is one of the principal reasons for Life's longtime suppression of the film).

Alvarez comes up with the most plausible "from the rear" explanation to date. He observes that the retrograde motion is consistent with the law of conservation of momentum if one pays attention to the law of conservation of energy as well and includes the greatest momentum of all the material in the problem. Alvarez feels that he differs from most of the critics in that they treat the problem as though it involved only two interacting masses, the bullet and the head. Alvarez's analysis involves 3 interacting masses - the bullet, the jet of matter from the brain visible in frame 313, and the remaining part of the head. It is claimed that the jet can carry forward more momentum than was brought in by the bullet, and the head recoils backward, as a rocket recoils when its fuel is ejected. Alvarez shows some frames from a film in which bullets were fired into pumpkins which seems to support his contention.

If this is fairly impressive, the total impact of the article is less so, since, despite the expert detail, Alvarez's confirmation of virtually every aspect of the Warren Commission's case comes hard up against the brick wall of probability. We know now that the Commission version of the President's injuries was compiled in a spirit of compromise and expediency, not in a spirit of abstract, detached scientific enquiry. Is it likely, then, their version can be 100% correct? The odds are very much against it. Alvarez may be right; the head shot may have come from the rear - but even this does not alter the fact that some explosive disturbance took place behind the picket fence, that Patrolman Smith did smell gunpowder there and did encounter a bogus SS agent, or that Lee Bowers saw men fleeing the area immediately afterwards.

Any reader interested in obtaining a copy of SIX SECONDS should write to Harry Irwin c/o my address, enclosing an sae.

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