

JFK  
Assassination  
FORUM

Nothing of  
special interest

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FIFTEEN LONG YEARS!

*With this special issue, we commemorate the 15th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Fifteen years is indeed a long time to have kept the truth about that turning point in our history under wraps. The tragedy of Dallas has long since moved into dimensions that were unimaginable in those dark days of late 1963. A national tragedy has become a living nightmare for most of us.*

*The HSCA is scheduled to issue its report - the Committee's "Final Solution" to the Dallas and Memphis murders - in a month or so, and then disband at the end of the year. Most of us will not be sad to see them go. The Committee's "Tracherous Trio" - Blakey, Stokes and Preyer - and their henchmen and sycophants have done their job well. They have spent upwards of \$5 million to make certain that Congress will never again appropriate any funds for any kind of investigation of the assassinations, much less a fair one. Well done, fellas!*

*A rumor which recently surfaced has it that Blakey will be rewarded for his efforts by being appointed Attorney General after Griffin Bell graciously steps aside. That wouldn't surprise us one bit, but we'll just have to wait and see what happens. We will also be keeping an eye on the political careers of the Committee members, especially Stokes and Preyer.*

*With so much bad news despondency will certainly be hard to resist. There can be no doubt that the current coverup will seriously reduce our options. After the HSCA's report is issued, researchers and critics will need to take stock of those options and take it from there.*

*This, then, is our "hands across the sea" issue, as Harry Irwin and J.W. Burke, Jr. join hands in the Neverending Battle Against Evil. Despite the difference in format and some slight differences in content, the U.S. and U.K. editions of this issue are essentially the same. The editors hope that those of you who subscribe to both publications (a very small number, really) will forgive us our indulgence.*

*This issue contains two important articles by England's Chris Scally, the usual book news & reviews, and an intriguing little letter that was given to GRG's Associate Editor, Ralph Holmes. We have agreed to respect the donor's request for anonymity. We cannot, of course, vouch for the letter's veracity, but we can vouch for its authenticity. Which is to say that we are satisfied that the events described therein did actually take place as described. Whether or not the General was telling the truth is for you to decide.*

THE EDITORS

For a number of years, the Dallas Times Herald reporter Hugh Aynesworth has taken great pleasure in recounting to those gullible enough to listen how he "invented" the FBI and CIA numbers which have been attributed to Lee Harvey Oswald. Aynesworth, friend of the Dallas police, the FBI, and Dan Rather, to name but a few, claims that FBI number S-172 and CIA number 110669 are figments of his imagination, which he made up from two Telex numbers and then passed on to Lonnie Hudkins of the Houston Post. According to Aynesworth, the entire spectrum of theories regarding Oswald's possible connections with the FBI and/or CIA originated from his little "joke". Because of his connections with the authorities, his lies have been accepted up to the highest levels, resulting in a lack of any honest and thorough investigation of the FACTS.

In the light of documents recently acquired by this author, however, the "Aynesworth Caper" can be seen at last in its true light. Indeed, in view of recent revelations about CIA infiltration of the media, it would not come as a great surprise to find that Aynesworth was paid to circulate his patently false story.

Lee Harvey Oswald had a CIA "201 file", opened on December 9, 1960, in the name "Lee Henry Oswald". A "201 file", according to a number of CIA sources, implies that the person is an agent rather than a mere informant. Among other interesting jewels of information, Oswald's file says that his occupation was "Radar Operator, U.S. Marine Corps as of 1960". It should be remembered here that Oswald allegedly "defected" to Russia in October 1959!

Fellow-researcher Ed Tatro recently sent me a copy of an FBI interview by Special Agent Joseph J. Louffler, dated November 27, 1963. This interview had been conducted on the same day with Harold J. Stafford, Regional Attorney for the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare in Dallas.



Part of that interview report reads as follows:

".... Mr Stafford advised correspondence from the New York Office indicates that Oswald served in the U.S. Marine Corps and went to Russia with the State Department's approval to accept employment as a radar specialist...."

This revealing document also sheds further light on Oswald's comments during his debate with Carlos Bringuier which was broadcast on Radio Station WDSU in New Orleans on August 21, 1963. During that debate, Oswald said: "I worked in Russia, er, I WAS, er, under the protection, er, of the, er, that is to say I WAS NOT under the protection of the American government...." (Emphasis added - C.S.) It would seem from the transcript quoted here that Oswald immediately realized that he might have "blown his cover", recanted, and hoped nobody had noticed.

This material, while admittedly sketchy, strongly suggests that Oswald was working for the American government when he went to Russia in 1959. Whether or not his FBI and CIA agent numbers are valid is immaterial - he was in Russia "with the State Department's approval".

Did the House Select Committee on Assassinations consider this question in detail? Did the Committee see the Documents referred to in this article? Did the Committee refer to the WDSU Transcript? Or did they call Hugh Aynesworth, and have him tell them that he forged the "201 file", the FBI interview report and the radio transcript as another of his little jokes?

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"WE GOT RID OF JACK AND BOBBY." - A CABELL'S 'CONFESSION'

In recent months, with various investigations into Kennedy's murder more or less underway, speculations of possible (God-forbid) CIA involvement was bandied about. The CIA was mentioned as proof that no stone would be unturned. It was certainly a relief to learn that they weren't involved.

But it reminded me of a story I once heard. It was told to me by a lady I have known for a good number of years, a lady whose word I have always respected and believed in. She had been a fire-watcher in London during World War II, a fact I mention only to illustrate that what she saw or heard in the years afterward paled by comparison. That is, she learned not to be an alarmist. Nothing much bothered her. At least until one night in late July of 1969, shortly after Teddy Kennedy's ambush at the Dyke Bridge. The scene was the Officer's Club at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. during one of those interminable affairs thrown for the benefit of the brass hats. This lady found herself talking to Lt. General Charles Cabell, an acquaintance from some years earlier, before he became Deputy Director of Intelligence at the CIA under Allen Dulles.

During the course of the long evening, conversation turned to the plight of Teddy Kennedy, a popular topic at the time, whereupon General Cabell said, "Well, we got rid of Jack and Bobby," and the lady who was there recalls a fairly heavy emphasis on the "we". At this point Cabell's wife cut in, laying a finger across the General's mouth, saying, "Now Ben!" According to the lady who told me the story, Mrs Cabell's tone was stern and it was all too clear that she was admonishing her husband to keep mum. Sound advice, I'd say, and it proves the value of a good woman to a man's career, particularly in the military. Too bad, however, that the General's wife wasn't in the powder room at the time as it would

have been interesting to hear Cabell out - a stream-of-consciousness war story with more potential than some I've heard.

Which is exactly the way the truth about the assassination will surface, in spite of the many millions spent on wood-paneled investigations. Some guy is simply going to spill the beans, like the death-bed confession of the assassin in Richard Condon's fictional account of the JFK murder, Winter Kills. Now suppose you're the one he tells it to, what do you do? Picture it. You're in a bar somewhere standing next to a guy who looks like Bruce Dern and he's really had a load because he starts talking to you like you once shared a cigarette in a foxhole. Just when you think he's about to drown in a puddle of beer on the counter he says, "Lissen, pal, you may not believe it but I was back-up rifle in Dealey Plaza." If you do believe it you have to hope he is alone with no one to clam him up and that you have enough cash because from now on you're buying. You also have to have a snappy come-back, something flattering like, "I've seen the movie; you do good work."

The lady who told me the story about Cabell believes to this day that she was in just such a situation that night at Bolling. She was livid for days after. She went to people for advice, talking to sympathetic Democrats and former New Frontiersmen, all of whom told her to forget it, that there was little she or anyone else could do.

Maybe Cabell's remark was a little ambiguous after all.

Maybe so, but the lady knew about Cabell's background, of his association with the CIA and the fact that his brother was the mayor of Dallas at the time JFK was shot and in her mind there could be no mistaking the meaning. It seemed to her that if anyone could be assumed to know, it would be someone in a position like Cabell.

And someone in a position like Cabell doesn't usually talk, especially if he's got something to say.

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WITT - THE UMBRELLA MAN? NEVER!

by Chris Scally

On 30 July 1978 the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) released a series of pictures and sketches of people they wished to contact in connection with their study of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King (see p.2 JFK.AF No.29. August 1978). One of these photographs was taken in Dealey Plaza at the time of the JFK murder by Art Rickerby of Life, and depicted the infamous "Umbrella Man" sitting on the curb moments after the shooting. Both before and after the release of this photograph, a small group of researchers who have been investigating this mystery-man tentatively identified him to the HSCA.

His name was NOT L.Steven Witt!

The 12 August issue of the Dallas Morning News carried a story by Earl Golz under the heading "'Umbrella Man' identified?". This article stated that a former co-worker of a L.Steven Witt had identified Witt as the "Umbrella Man". According to Golz, Witt said that he would have no objection to being questioned by the HSCA, and he duly appeared before the Committee. However, despite the subsequent item in the (London) Guardian headed "Kennedy 'umbrella killer' just a bad joke", it would appear that the HSCA (and the public) have been subjected to a gigantic fraud, the perpetrators of which have thus far remained predictably anonymous: unless, of course, the HSCA themselves were a party to this evil hoax.

The story told by Golz and the Dallas Morning News contained a number of points which strongly indicate that Mr Witt was 'nominated' for the job which he subsequently carried out to the satisfaction of the HSCA:

- (1) His former co-worker, now an insurance executive, agreed to talk about Witt on the condition he remain anonymous. Why? Is he afraid of Witt? Was he afraid of being called to testify before the Committee under oath? This mysterious "former co-worker" should be publicly identified, so that he - and his background and motives - can be very carefully examined. Too many executives double as CIA contacts (remember Clay Shaw), and the real Umbrella Man was - and still is - a CIA agent.
- (2) Witt's story to the News was curious, to say the least. He said that he "could not remember exactly" where he was during the assassination, but "thought he probably would have been on his lunch hour." Everyone, with the possible exception of Richard Nixon, remembers where they were and what they were doing when JFK was killed. It seems more than reasonable to assume that if Witt was the Umbrella Man, he would remember being in such close proximity to the murder of his President.
- (3) Witt's un-named co-worker, rather than Witt himself, provided the information that Witt held aloft a black umbrella as a form of protest against the Kennedy family's history in foreign policy matters. If this were true, how can the fact that the umbrella was held aloft for only a few SECONDS be reconciled with it? An umbrella that is held aloft for a maximum of 25 seconds hardly constitutes a political protest!
- (4) Who was Witt's Cuban-looking associate, who stood a few feet from him during the shooting, and then sat on the sidewalk apparently talking to Witt? This second man also appears to have been using a walkie-talkie set. With whom was he communicating? Was he in ANY way associated with Witt?
- (5) Finally, there is a serious question-mark against Witt because of his reaction to the shooting. The photographic evidence clearly shows that people near the Umbrella Man threw themselves to the ground as soon as the shooting started. Witt, however, would have us believe that he was oblivious to it all, and took no evasive action. Similarly, after the shots were fired, most of the people in that area ran towards the grassy knoll. The Umbrella Man calmly sat on the curb, before walking up Elm Street towards the TSBD.

The evidence clearly shows that The Umbrella Man was directly involved in the JFK assassination. He was NOT a political protester. No matter which way one looks at it, there is only one possible conclusion - L. Steven Witt is a liar, and part of a huge hoax. On the basis of what we have seen of Robert Blakey and the HSCA, the odds are that Witt is a well-rewarded 'plant' designed to take the heat off the real Umbrella Man.

Pass the whitewash, please!

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WHILE THEY LAST: As an addendum to the above article readers may be relieved to know that copies of Jack White's photographic essay on "The Umbrella Man" which is referred to and which appeared in GKG and JFK.AF are still available. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and 25 cents for each copy to GKG (US readers only). British subscribers can contact JFK.AF.

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# Warren Commission's doubters get a day in the sun

By Myra MacPherson  
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — They come into the House Assassination Committee hearings lugging suitcases of material. They take notes, stare intently at witnesses and charts and photographs and endless reruns of the famous Zapruder film showing President John F. Kennedy's head explode as a bullet strikes.

For years they belonged to a nether world, generally scorned by the serious. But in the skeptical post-Watergate era—with polls showing a majority of Americans doubting the widely disputed Warren Commission findings—they are today at least acknowledged, if not necessarily believed, by the establishment politicians conducting the hearings. Loosely defined as the "critical community" they are vehement disbelievers of the Warren Commission Report finding that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone.

Within this group, the range of dissent and credibility is enormous.

"We find it extremely uncomfortable being lumped as a group; we like to think we represent the more rational wing," said one member of the Assassination Information Bureau (AIB). About half-a-dozen AIB members work out of a Washington office crammed with assassination files. They propound their theories at salaries of \$50 a week from private donations.

But Harold Weisberg, long-time Warren commission critic, and author of several assassination books, says "there is not one expert" among the AIB. Weisberg is purposely absent from the pack of a dozen or so critics at the hearings. The former Senate investigator and Frederick, Md., poultry farmer feels the committee is deliberately "white-washing" the evidence by skirting crucial questions. He also says of the critics: "There isn't sufficient unity to refer to us as a community. I believe most are irresponsible, well-motivated but unsuited, while a large number are either ego-motivated or crackpots."

Some will tell you with absolute seriousness and conviction that the so-called "umbrella man" spotted in the Zapruder film, shot a poison dart into the throat of the President via his umbrella-weapon. Others list an army of conspirators the size of the Normandy invasion — from J. Edgar Hoover and Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford to right-wing Americans and Cubans and the CIA and the Mafia.

"Forget the name Lee Harvey Oswald. He was just a patsy," said one theorist at the hearings. Some see a conspiracy behind everything and con-

tend with arched eyebrows that newspapers do not print their ideas because of "organized suppression."

The more respectable refuse to dabble in conspiracy speculation but seriously question from available evidence as do many, including John Connally's wife, Nellie, who was in the limousine — the theory that a single bullet passed through Kennedy and wounded Connally in the jump seat in front of the President. This is crucial to the case because, if it was not a single bullet, one assassin could not have had the time to fire the two shots.

For the next month, these assassination buffs — who like to call themselves "researchers" — and others following the story will be caught in a curious time warp that both compels and repels many, sifting a 15-year-old disaster and the discrepancies surrounding it as if it were yesterday.

For many in the "critical community," pouring over the facts and pseudo-facts has been a full-time, decade-long obsession.

Some have exhausted their own money to publish books of theories unacceptable to most publishers. Others have made a living by giving lectures around the world, writing articles, collecting a small following.

"I like to think I'm being looked at more as a prophet than a crank," says 30-year-old AIB member Robert Katz. He handed out leaflets at the hearings on points the AIB feels the committee will ignore — among other things, what Katz terms "the framing of Lee Harvey Oswald" based on "lack of incriminating evidence."

Katz and others chafed at the committee's choice of Robert Groden, a 32-year-old photo-optical technician, as the sole representative of their world.

Groden testified that films showing Kennedy's head violently wrenching to the back of the limousine "would seem to indicate" that he was shot from the front, not behind — a theory that a panel of medical experts later refuted. Katz agreed with Groden on that point. Katz dismissed, however, a blob at the bottom of one film — which Groden says he believes is a man possibly holding a rifle — as a "Rorschach test for anyone's paranoia. If you stare at anything long enough, you can believe anything."

Some of the more conservative theorists feel Groden's testimony reflects on them by putting forth easily assailed "far-out" theories. (Not a few people question whether the committee didn't pick him for just that purpose.)

A few years ago, Groden became a mini-celebrity with a traveling road show, teaming with comedian Dick Gregory to show his slides and films and appearing on the now defunct "Goodnight America." He was lavishly praised by chief counsel G. Robert Blakey, as playing "no small part in convincing many members of Congress that the Kennedy case should be reopened."

The far end of the spectrum is represented by men like R. B. Cutler, a congenial New England architect in white bucks, seersucker suit and bow tie, who has peppered the committee with his drawings and theories. "How can any one person speak for all of us?" he sniffed. Cornering one member of the committee at the end of a session, Cutler said, "Hi ... I'm the 'umbrella man' theorist." The staffer said, "Oh yes ... I've read all your stuff."

Cutler then eagerly pursued the man down the corridor, trying to get his day in the sun as well. Cutler's material places "the umbrella man" as one of several assassins. "Of course, he shot the 'flicchette' or poison dart from the umbrella as he twirled it," said Cutler. "Not too many people believe that theory."

Cutler says, however, that "no one would talk to me until after Watergate. Then some thought, 'Just maybe you're right about our government and conspiracies.'" Seated with him was Richard Sprague, an expert on assassination photographs and once a consultant to the committee. He believes the assassinations of Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were all part of a government-inspired plot. Sprague said "my brother wouldn't talk to me for years." Cutler said: "Your brother? My wife wouldn't talk to me."

Like most critics, Sprague said he started to examine the evidence, saw a number of troubling inconsistencies and got hooked. "More than a decade ago, I started cataloging, analyzing and compiling a photo system and I just put my foot in quicksand and have never been able to pull it out."

The mysterious "umbrella man" long has been a subject of discussion. Photographs taken at the time of the assassination show a man opening a black umbrella, although the sun was shining as the motorcade turned in front of the book depository. On the Zapruder film he can be seen moving the umbrella up and down rapidly as Kennedy's limousine passes. At the point when the bullet hits the President, and other spectators dive for cover, several photos show the umbrella man calmly sitting on the curb and being joined by another man. Many "researchers" have alleged that he could have been a signal man for an assassination team. Others see the "umbrella man" as a "ridiculous" diversion from important evidence.

"That man has been found and has an explanation," said one committee staffer. "He was pumping it up and down to protest Kennedy's father's dealings with pro-Nazi sympathizer Neville Chamberlain." (Britain's prime minister at the outbreak of the war was then caricatured as carrying an umbrella.) As his listener stared, the staffer said: "I admit it's subtle," but indicated that the committee believed the explanation.

Blakey has incurred the wrath of some of the press for his gag rule and for what seems a rather grandiose narration at the beginning of each day's hearings. He refuses to talk about the hearings until they are over.

Some people have speculated that the hearings will be more of a circus than a catharsis. "How can anyone say that until they've heard all the evidence?" Blakey asks.

One Capitol Hill policeman assigned to the hearing room displayed his own brand of cynicism. "I think the Warren Commission bungled it and I don't think we're ever going to get the answers. You know why I think they're holding these hearings now? Because, come November, all those voters are going to say: 'Oh yeah, I remember that congressman. I saw him on television.' It's strictly politics."

As the critics follow the ins and outs of the testimony, they talk fluently about bullet trajectories and autopsy reports, how long it takes to load and fire a rifle, whether the bullet found on the stretcher was a plant. They mull over evidence they feel points to an assassin shooting from another window, and ponder the Oswald-Jack Ruby connection.

Some of them gloomily predict the committee — which has already spent more than \$2.5 million — will come to the same conclusion as the Warren Commission. "With Gerald Ford (a member of the Warren Commission) scheduled to testify, they're hardly going to zap the commission," one said. Others feel that public hearings, no matter how inconclusive, are some sort of plus "as opposed to the blindness imposed by the trauma of the time," as Katz put it.

This article originally appeared in early September 1978 and, although it may appear a little dated with the passage of time, we are reprinting it as it is the most objective account of the role of researchers and critics — and their attitudes to the HSCA Public Hearings that we have discovered!

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#### BOOKNEWS

HOW TERRORISTS KILL. THE COMPLETE TERRORIST ARSENAL by J. David Truby  
Paladin Press. October 1978. ISBN 0-87364-124-8. 87 pages. \$6.00.

Our regular contributor, David Truby, has just had his latest book published, and, although terrorism is not a subject that we usually cover in our columns, we mention it here as it now affects virtually all of us in our everyday lives.

This is an interesting study of modern terrorism documenting the vast variety of weapons used throughout the world. Over 80 photographs depict these and, drawing on sources and interviews from many countries, the author has produced an up-to-date account that may shake some of our misconceptions.

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In addition to this title the same publishers — Paladin Press, Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306. — offer the two following books.

SILENCERS, SNIPERS AND ASSASSINS by J. David Truby

The story of the invention, development and importance of the silencer. \$15.95.

ASSASSINATION. THEORY AND PRACTICE by Richard Camellion  
September 1977. ISBN 0-98364-089-6. 161 pages. \$6.00.

Although Chapter Four is dedicated to the killings of JFK, MLK and RFK, this book is virtually a history of assassination with worldwide cases from 1914 onwards. As a primer on the subject it is excellent, if marred by a right-wing political bias. There is an intriguing dedication ".... to the old pros in the Q-Section", but the author doesn't elaborate on that!

Assassination by the KGB and the CIA is covered. Comparisons between the German and Soviet style. Global assassinations and Violence in the United States is also covered.

Obviously, as far as this journal is concerned the most interesting point is the author's statement that "the true killers (of JFK) were never caught and never will be. Lee Harvey Oswald was only the patsy, the goof 'dropped' to the American public."

Now, try and tell THAT to Robert Blakey and the HSCA!!

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+++ British readers will be interested to learn that two recent Assassination books - one an excellent anthology and the other of doubtful veracity - have now been published in paperback form:

(1) THE ASSASSINATIONS. DALLAS AND BEYOND by Peter Dale Scott, Paul Hoch and Russell Stetler. Pelican Books. £1.50.

(2) LEGEND. THE SECRET WORLD OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD by Edward J. Epstein. Arrow Books. £1.25.

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Whilst taking this early opportunity of wishing our readers a Happy Christmas the dark cloud on the spending horizon - with ALL those other seasonal bills - is the fact that subscriptions are now due to cover nearly all British addresses from Issue No.32. Please, if the box below contains the dreaded green asterisk (\*), give this matter your urgent attention! We hope to get our next issue out EARLY in the New Year and funds to do this are really required - quickly.

Thanks for your co-operation!



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