

Case open

At last,
a conspiracy
theorist who says
he may be wrong

WASHINGTON—After years of reading every imaginable kind of conspiracy book, interviewing congressional investigators and committee counsels, sifting through assassination bureau files, walking virtually every inch of Dallas' Dealey Plaza, sitting on the grassy knoll, sighting through "the window" on the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository, hanging out with Oliver Stone and his "JFK" crew in New Orleans bars, fleeing from jabbering conspiracy loon Mark Lane at Jane Fonda cocktail parties, and watching, by my count, 47,298 television shows on the subject, I have finally come upon someone with something sensible to say about the John F. Kennedy assassination.

His name is Col. Oleg Maximovich Nechiporenko. Until 1991, he was one of those fun guys in the KGB. More to the point, he was one of the Russki intelligence chaps who met with Lee Harvey Oswald when Oswald came calling at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City in 1963, and subsequently devoted much of his career to investigating the assassination.

The sensible thing he had to say was this: "There may be some evidence as yet uncovered that could prove my conclusion wrong."

"Could prove ... wrong." Unbelievable.

His conclusion, which I think is Kennedy assassination theory No. 245,817, can be found in his book, "Passport to Assassination: The Never-Before-Told Story of Lee Harvey Oswald by the K.G.B. Colonel Who Knew Him."

Simply put, it is this: While there is circumstantial evidence that



Lee Harvey Oswald, theorizes a former KGB agent, became peripherally involved with plots to kill JFK, but then pulled off the job on his own.

Michael Kilian

might implicate the Mafia, the CIA, anti- and pro-Castro Cubans or Texas military-industrial-complex right-wingers, among others, in a conspiracy, Oswald was a lowlife nut case who apparently became peripherally involved with one or more of these muttered-about but unhatched plots. He then pulled off the job himself as a sort of grand, public way of committing suicide.

As JFK assassination theories go, Col. Oleg's seems sounder than Lyndon Johnson's notion that JFK was done in by South Vietnamese seeking revenge for the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem the month before, or even the notion that LBJ himself had a hand in it.

But the magic of the colonel's position is that he doesn't think it's unassailable.

"I'm not saying evidence [to disprove his theory] is there or there or there," said the colonel, who with 27,985,891 others participated

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in a Kennedy assassination symposium in Dallas last weekend. "But there could be documents, other things. We don't know everything."

What a marked contrast to Stone, Lane, New Orleans prosecutor Jim Garrison, the Warren Commission, the House Assassination Committee and everyone else who has written "the final word" on this subject.

What a contrast to Gerald Posner, who a few weeks ago came out with an assassination book (I think No. 1,943,001) called "Case Closed," which critics, columnists and veteran newsmen fell all over themselves to declare the final word on the matter. It asserts that there was no conspiracy. Oswald did it on his own. The nation owes Posner a debt of gratitude for doing what the Warren Commission could not and putting the matter finally, forever behind us.

Yeah, right.

Sure enough, within days, the avalanche of magazine and newspaper articles began rolling in. What about the shots on the Dictabelt recording? What about Oswald's association with right-wing creep David Ferrie as teenagers in the Civil Air Patrol? If Posner relied on Secret Service agent Paul Landis as an authority on the first shot, why did he ignore what Landis had to say on the grassy knoll shot?

Swamping the mere printed words were the television programs: "Fatal Deception: Mrs. Lee Harvey Oswald"; "Frontline: Lee Harvey Oswald." Even tabloid TV's "Hard Copy" came up with an "Exclusive! Never before told! The truth about Lee Harvey Oswald from his Dallas jail cellmate!"—hot stuff that "Hard Copy" nevertheless was content to schedule after its revelations about Michael Jackson and Julia Roberts.

I have my own theory about the Kennedy assassination, but I'm keeping my mouth shut. The only people I told were John Lennon and Elvis Presley, and look what happened to them.