Pawley, he was instrumental in the ruthless overthrow of the Communist-oriented regime in Guatemala. Guy Banister, who reportedly manipulated Lee Oswald in the summer of 1963, has also been linked with the Guatemala operation. The report persists that Hunt was in Mexico City in late September 1963, at the time of Oswald's visit to Mexico.[128] Hunt denies this, as he has denied allegations that he was in Dallas on the day of the assassination.

Frank Sturgis (né Fiorini),[129] Howard Hunt's associate in the Watergate burglary, was one of those who helped spread the story that Oswald was affiliated to Castro's intelligence service. He is still alive. Hunt says he did not meet Sturgis until 1972, while Sturgis has said he met Hunt two years before the Kennedy assassination. Sturgis has declined to say where he was on the day the President was killed.

In 1979 an Assassinations Committee report stated that Sturgis took part in an anti-Castro operation called "Cellula Fantasma." This involved dropping leaflets from the skies over Cuba, and Sturgis — who is a pilot — was involved. The importance of the detail is that Sturgis has been connected to the operation by a Cuban who attended its planning stages. The Cuban is Antonio Veciana, and his reason for mentioning the scheme to Congressional investigators was the identity of a CIA officer who took a personal interest in it. The officer, says Veciana, was "Maurice Bishop."

Antonio Veciana was the victim of a murder attempt in late 1979 — an ambush while he was on the way home from work. Four shots were fired, and a fragment of one bullet lodged in Veciana's head. He recovered — in what police and doctors considered a freak escape. Publicly the veteran anti-Castro fighter has blamed the attack on Castro agents, but privately he has also expressed concern that it may have been linked to his allegations about CIA case officer "Maurice Bishop," who — says Veciana — met Oswald shortly before the Kennedy assassination and later urged the fabrication of a false story about Oswald and Cuban diplomats in Mexico City.

"Maurice Bishop," meanwhile, remains the center of controversy and the elusive target of continuing research to establish his real identity. Assassinations Committee investigators, working on Veciana's description, have built up a picture of their quarry. "Bishop," who would now be into his sixties, was 6'2" tall, of athletic build, and weighed more than 200 pounds. The eyes were gray-blue, the hair light brown going gray, the complexion fair. "Bishop's" face was usually tanned and he had "sunspots" under his eyes. He was meticulous about his dress, and — by the early Seventies — was wearing glasses for reading. Veciana gained the impression he was either from the American South or — more likely — from Texas. In 1978 the Assassinations Committee issued an artist's impression of "Bishop" and made a nationwide appeal for assistance in tracking him down (*see illustration 26, top*). That proved unrewarding, but the investigators did make considerable progress in the information desert and disinformation jungle that they encountered at the CIA.

Veciana recalled that "Bishop" — as his spymaster in Havana — suggested he seek assistance from a number of officials, working in the U.S. Embassy. One was an unnamed CIA officer, a second was Wayne Smith, and the third was Sam Kail. Smith, who was third secretary at the Havana Embassy, had not been questioned yet — just one example of the failure by the Assassinations Committee management to follow up relevant leads in the Veciana affair. Colonel Sam Kail, however, a Texan who was a military intelligence officer at the Embassy, was contacted by the Committee. He said he saw so many Cuban visitors that he could not remember Veciana. Nor, he said, could he recall the name "Maurice Bishop," but said that "agents of the CIA would frequently use the names of other Embassy staff personnel in their outside contacts." Kail later assumed, while in Miami, that his military unit was actually working for the CIA. It was Kail who, in summer 1963, proposed the meeting with Army Intelligence that was attended by Oswald's Dallas mentor, George de Mohrenschildt. So far, the Kail lead has been unproductive apart from that connection, but the Committee found dramatic encouragement elsewhere. Several CIA officials have said they did indeed know of a "Maurice Bishop."

First there is the former Director of the CIA, Kennedy appointee John McCone. During his deposition, this conversation took place.

QUESTION: Do you, or did you, know Maurice Bishop?
ANSWER: Yes.
QUESTION: Was he an Agency employee?
ANSWER: I believe so.

Former Director McCone said that, although he once knew, he could no longer remember what "Bishop" actually did for the Agency. There was another intriguing development when the Committee interviewed a former CIA agent described publicly merely as "B.H." When asked if he knew Maurice Bishop, "B.H." replied that "Mr. Bishop was in the organization, but I had no personal day-to-day open relationship with him. . . ." "B.H." was vague about "Bishop," saying only that he had been a senior officer and that he had met him "two or three times" at CIA headquarters. In Miami, however, the Committee stumbled on a witness who was more specific. He had formerly been a case officer at JM/WAVE, the headquarters in Florida for the CIA's Secret War against Castro. This officer, whom the Committee quoted under the pseudonym "Ron Cross," had handled one of the most active anti-Castro groups and was potentially well placed to have known "Bishop." His answers to the Committee questions were dramatic.

Committee investigators threw not one, but three names at "Cross." The first was "Bishop," another was "Knight," and the third was the real name of an officer who had worked out of Havana. "Cross" duly pointed out the fact that the third name was the true name of somebody he had encountered in Havana. "Knight," as he recalled it, was a name occasionally used by Howard Hunt. And "Bishop," "Cross" believed, was the name used by David Phillips.

Phillips, the reader will recall, is the former top CIA officer who was running Mexico City Cuban operations — at the time of the Oswald visit, and of the strange visits to the Cuban and Soviet Embassies by a man who may — on some occasions at least — have been an Oswald imposter. It is Phillips who, in retirement, has come up with his own explanations of the lack of surveillance pictures of the real Oswald, and of the disappearing sound recordings of the visitor to the embassies — and some of whose testimony failed to satisfy two Chief Counsels of the Assassinations Committee. "Cross," a few days after his initial statements, declared himself "almost certain" that Phillips, who sometimes visited the Miami CIA station from Washington, did indeed use the cover name of "Bishop." In addition, "Cross" now coupled "Bishop" with the first name "Maurice" — a name the Committee investigators had not so far mentioned.

David Phillips testified on oath to the Assassinations Committee in 1978. He denied ever having used the name "Bishop," and said he had never heard the name used by a CIA employee. His denial, however, has not stilled the speculation around his name — and it continues as this edition goes to press.

Phillips, a Texan born near Fort Worth, originally wanted to become an actor. After a false start in the theater, he moved to Chile and tried his hand at publishing a small English-language newspaper. It was there that he attracted the attention of local CIA officers, who launched him on his long career in U.S. intelligence — a career which spanned some of the Agency's most infamous operations to topple foreign governments (*see illustration 26, right*). In 1954, in association with a CIA team including Howard Hunt as Political Action Officer, Phillips played a leading part in the overthrow of the anti-American, left-leaning Arbenz government in Guatemala. It was a remarkably cunning operation, in which Arbenz was panicked into resignation as much by propaganda as by actual force of arms. Phillips, a propaganda expert, ran the clandestine Voice of Liberation radio — broadcasting false reports about imaginary rebel forces and about battles which never took place. When American-backed forces took over, Phillips spent some time in Guatemala studying the documents of the defeated regime. It was he who noted the recent activities in Guatemala of an obscure young revolutionary called Che Guevara, and opened a CIA file on him. Six years later, in 1960, Phillips was in at the very start when President Eisenhower approved the earliest plans to reverse Castro's revolution in Cuba. He attended the first CIA executive meeting on the subject, and later became propaganda chief of the Bay of Pigs operation. He was Chief of Station in the Dominican Republic during 1965, the year American troops invaded

the country. At the peak of a career in which he rose to become Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, Phillips was to the fore in American meddling in Chilean affairs. He was chief of the Chile Task Force established to try to prevent Salvador Allende assuming the presidency to which he had been legally elected. Phillips, for all that, insists he is a man of progressive sympathies.

The Assassinations Committee inquiry, faced with the suggestion that Phillips was "Bishop," took into account certain coincidences between Phillips' career and "Bishop" as described by Veciana. Phillips was a Texan, and Veciana had from the first expressed the belief that "Bishop" was most likely from Texas. Phillips had served in relevant places at times consistent with Veciana's account of "Bishop's" activities. In 1960, when Veciana said he was recruited by "Bishop" in Havana, Phillips was serving there as a covert operative. Veciana says "Bishop" initially introduced himself as a representative of a construction firm headquartered in Belgium. He also used a false Belgian passport. Phillips, in a biography not yet published when Veciana first made his allegations, states that by 1959, following the Castro revolution, he was using his own public relations firm as a front for CIA operations. One overt function of the company was to represent "foreign industrialists." There is evidence that the CIA has indeed used Belgian identity papers for secret operations abroad.

The Anglo-American Directory of Cuba for 1960 carries an entry for Phillips as a "Public Relations Councillor." Phillips, however, says he was out of Cuba by early March 1960, *before* the "mid-1960" period when Veciana says he was recruited by "Bishop." This author's research, for this Edition, has produced some corroboration that Phillips did cease to be a permanent Havana resident in early 1960. Assassinations Committee research, however, reportedly indicated that Phillips could indeed have been in Havana during the period mentioned by Veciana. The CIA's liaison in the Castro regime was one of Veciana's closest associates, and Phillips knew

him. Veciana says it was "Bishop" who incited him to take part in a plot to murder Fidel Castro, while Phillips says he knew nothing of CIA assassination plots. He has, however, admitted that — in Cuba — he took part in other anti-Castro activity very similar to that ascribed to "Bishop." Phillips, writing before the Veciana allegations became known, said he contacted one of a group of Cubans who were planning an early coup attempt against Castro. His CIA instructions, Phillips wrote, were to introduce himself as "an American anxious to assist," perhaps "using a false identity." The plan leaked, and several of the Cubans involved were arrested. Much the same happened when Veciana's plot to kill Castro was discovered.

Veciana has claimed that "Bishop" was involved in a much later plot to assassinate Castro, in 1971 in Chile. He also says that "Bishop" played an important role in efforts to remove the then Chilean President, Salvador Allende. Allende fell in 1973 — the year Veciana says he was finally paid off by "Bishop" with a lump sum of more than a quarter of a million dollars. Phillips, who played a leading role in CIA operations against Allende, says that — as chief of CIA Latin American operations in 1973 — he knows that no such CIA payment was made to Veciana. He insists that such a sum could have been paid only with his own approval or that of the Director of the CIA. It is known, however, that CIA operatives in Latin America — including Phillips as a key executive — disposed of thirteen million dollars on covert action operations between 1963 and 1974. Congressional Oversight Committees have yet to be told how much of that vast sum was spent. Millions, however, went to fund manipulation of radio stations and newspapers for propaganda purposes, an area which has been Phillips' speciality since the Fifties. None of this, of course, proves that the CIA, let alone Phillips, made the payment to Veciana. Funds were available, however, and they are so far fuzzily accounted for. Phillips, meanwhile, says he may be able to produce documentation showing that he was at CIA headquarters near Washington during at least part of the day "Bishop" allegedly paid off Veciana in Miami. On the other hand, Phillips has made no such

appeal to the record over his whereabouts at the time of the incident at the heart of the "Bishop" furor — the meeting in autumn 1963, when Veciana says he encountered Oswald in "Bishop's" company in Dallas, Texas. Phillips now says that he was in Texas "around that time," visiting relatives thirty miles from Dallas.

Congress' Assassinations Committee pursued the declaration by Miami case officer "Ron Cross," that Phillips and Howard Hunt had operated under the names "Bishop" and "Knight" respectively — using what appears to be a chess analogy. It found a sort of corroboration, which also contains a contradiction. Hunt, who has written several novels and a non-fiction work about the Bay of Pigs, has used pseudonyms in his books. For example, although Hunt claims he did not meet Frank Fiorini/Sturgis until the Seventies, a character very like him appears under the name Hank Sturgis in a novel written as early as 1949. The fictional character is an ex-Marine turned gambler and soldier-of-fortune, a career which sounds similar to that of the real-life individual who legally took the name Frank Sturgis in 1952. In his book about the Bay of Pigs, Hunt refers to his old associate Phillips, then propaganda chief for the operation, as "Knight." In his 1977 memoirs, for his part, Phillips makes much of this identification, commenting that "Bestowing the name of Knight was the ultimate accolade — people who have worked in CIA will recall that pseudonym belonged to one of the Agency's most senior officers, a man Hunt idolized. . . ." The man Hunt idolized, it turns out, was Richard Helms, the controversial former Director of the CIA. The recent authoritative book on Helms, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, states flatly that "Knight" was Helms' codename in the CIA. Hunt's literary back-patting of Phillips, however, does not necessarily correspond with the use of cover names in real-life operations in the early Sixties. If Hunt indeed idolized Helms, it seems plausible that — as former case officer "Cross" recalls — he would have dubbed *himself* "Knight" during anti-Castro operations. "Cross," of course, suggests it was Phillips who borrowed the other name from the chessboard, "Bishop." He said the reason he was "almost positive" Phillips actually used that name was because of the conversations he recalled with Phillips' assistant, Doug Gupton. Gupton, says "Cross," would often say something like, "Well, I guess Mr. Bishop will have to talk with him," and "Cross" would know he was referring to his boss, David Phillips. At this point, however, the Assassinations Committee inquiry faltered.

The Committee traced Gupton, who confirmed that he was in daily contact with "Cross." However, he said he "did not recall whether either Hunt or Phillips used the cover name "Knight," nor did he remember Phillips using the name "Maurice Bishop." Faced with "Cross' " recollection of his having referred frequently to Phillips by the name "Bishop," Gupton said, "Well maybe I did, I don't remember." He said he did not recognize the artist's impression of "Bishop" drawn from the description by Veciana. He did say, however, that Phillips "used many of his old contacts from Havana in his personal operations."

During the search for "Bishop," Antonio Veciana was shown photographs of David Phillips. He reportedly stared at one picture for a long time, and then said, "It is close. . . . Does he have a brother?" Finally, though, Veciana said, "No, it's not him. . . . But I would like to talk to him." Soon, Veciana had an opportunity to observe David Phillips in the flesh — at a luncheon of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers.* Afterwards, according to a published account of the confrontation, Veciana repeated his denial that Phillips was "Bishop," saying, "No, he's not him. . . . But he knows." Asked what he meant, Veciana merely repeated, "He knows." Phillips, for his part, showed no sign of recognizing Veciana during the luncheon session — although Veciana was repeatedly introduced to him. Later, in sworn testimony, Phillips was to claim that Veciana had been introduced not by name, but merely as "the driver." According to the Assassinations Committee investigator present, Phillips was clearly told Veciana's name, three times, in front of wintesses.

* The meeting was addressed by Clare Boothe Luce, who cropped up in the inquiry in connection with disinformation. Luce, a staunch defender of the intelligence establishment, is on the board of the Association.

In the end, Congress' Assassinations Committee was not satisfied with the responses by either Veciana or Phillips. Its Report said that the Committee "suspected Veciana was lying when he denied that the retired officer was Bishop . . ." It referred only to a "retired officer" as having been the subject of the confrontation with Veciana, but a detailed appendix to the Report shows that Phillips was the officer discussed.[131] The Report said of Phillips, ". . . For his part, the retired officer aroused the Committee's suspicion when he told the Committee he did not recognize Veciana as the founder of Alpha 66, especially since the officer had once been deeply involved in Agency anti-Castro operations . . ."

There is no evidence that the "retired officer," Phillips, had any part in a conspiracy to murder the President. Moreover, whatever the true identity of "Bishop," Veciana's account does not state that "Bishop" plotted the President's assassination. What Veciana does allege, however, is — if true — highly relevant to the continuing inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the tragedy. The allegation is that a U.S. intelligence officer met with Oswald shortly before the crime, and subsequently incited a Cuban contact to help fabricate a false story about an Oswald link with Cuban diplomats. That, clearly, must be exhaustively investigated.

The Assassinations Committee has left the "Bishop" affair unresolved and under-researched. Its inquiries had been stymied by confusing responses to its questions about "Bishop" addressed to the CIA and to its former employees. Once the Agency declared it could find no reference to "Bishop" in its files, one-time Director McCone said he must have been mistaken when he told the Committee he *did* remember "Bishop." "B.H.," the former covert operative believed by Committee staff to have been used on assignments involving violence, stuck to his story of having met "Bishop" at CIA headquarters. "Ron Cross," the Miami case officer who named Howard Hunt as "Knight" and Phillips as "Bishop," has not withdrawn his allegation. One Committee investigator, weighing the various statements and the circumstances in which they emerged, believes that the statement by "B.H." may be a red herring designed to confuse the trail. He tends to believe McCone's instinctive initial reaction, and also the

replies of "Ron Cross" about Hunt and Phillips. The feeling remains that somebody in the CIA, or who was formerly in the CIA, is playing chess with the Kennedy inquiry.

In its closing months, with the evidence about possible Mafia connections with Oswald in New Orleans building up, the Committee veered in that direction to the exclusion of other evidence. In fact, taking together the evidence of New Orleans and Mexico, this was surely an error of judgement. That, combined with the pressures of time and money, led to the dying-off of top-level enthusiasm for the hunt for "Bishop." As we have seen, vital leads remain unchecked. So, too, does another of Veciana's efforts to help the investigation. He states that, in the very earliest days of his relationship with "Bishop," he noted that his American contact had with him a Belgian passport. Veciana noted the name "Frigault" on the passport, and he has produced a slip of paper with that name on it. He says this is a note he made at the time, which he has kept ever since. Congress' Assassinations Committee failed to pursue this lead, which — like the other neglected clues — should now be followed up promptly. Those directly involved in this area of the investigation are confident there was indeed a "Bishop," and believe it is of paramount importance that he be unmasked. Clearly this is right.

It is certainly possible that a renegade element in U.S. intelligence manipulated Oswald — whatever his role on November 22, 1963. That same element may have activated pawns in the anti-Castro movement and the Mafia to murder the President and to execute Oswald.

The very suggestion that some of those charged with protecting American security should so betray their trust is clearly abhorrent to moderate citizens. Unfortunately there is nothing inherently implausible in the scenario. The revelations of the Seventies have shown only too clearly that there were rotten apples in the CIA apparatus and that they included some of those most passionately committed to the elimination of Fidel Castro. In the name of that cause, intelligence officers dabbled in unauthorized operations, including assassination plots which until recently seemed to belong in the purple pages of pulp fiction. In pursuit of these follies, CIA officials were deeply involved with top members of the Mafia. The mob hated the Kennedy adminis-

tration, and so did some of those in the CIA whose views clashed with the President's. The time of the Bay of Pigs, when the President "betrayed" the cause of the anti-Castro movement, was coincidental with the Kennedy onslaught on the Mafia, including, specifically, the forcible eviction of Carlos Marcello. Over Cuba, the Mafia and the exiles nursed the same resentments as many in the CIA. There were those in the CIA, steeped in an everyday aura of deception and violent action, who exercised unconscionable power. The signs are that, at least from the time of the unauthorized raids on Soviet shipping after the missile crisis, some individuals in intelligence encouraged actions designed to sabotage the President's search for peace. This cannot be dismissed as unfounded speculation. Congress' Assassinations Committee noted that, even at the time of the Bay of Pigs debacle, a senior CIA officer reportedly incited Cuban exiles to disobey Presidential policy. Before the invasion, the CIA director of operations, working under the cover name of "Frank Bender,"* assembled exile leaders at their Guatemala training camp. According to the authoritative history, "Bender" told the Cubans that "There were forces in the administration trying to block the invasion, and Frank might be ordered to stop it. If he received such an order, he said he would secretly inform Pepe and Oliva. Pepe [Pepe San Roman, the exile commander] remembers Frank's next words this way: 'If this happens you come here and make some kind of show, as if you were putting us, the advisers, in prison, and you go ahead with the program as we have talked about it, and we will give you the whole plan, even if we are your prisoners.'. . . Frank then laughed and said, 'In the end we will win.' "[122]

Many months later, during the missile crisis, Robert Kennedy was appalled to discover that — as the world waited in fear of a nuclear holocaust — one CIA officer had conceived on his own the project of dispatching ten commando teams to Cuba. Three groups had already set off. The President's brother investigated the matter and found that top CIA officials knew nothing about it. The officer responsible for this idiocy was William Harvey, the CIA operative said by an official of the Cuban Special Group to

* The officer's real name was reportedly "Droller" (Thomas Powers, *op. cit.*, p. 107).

have hated Robert Kennedy "with a purple passion." Before his eventual removal to a foreign posting, Harvey's expertise was harnessed to two familiar projects. One was the "Executive Action" scheme, in which Harvey had been dabbling even before the Bay of Pigs. Its purpose, as the CIA has admitted, was to research means to overthrow foreign leaders, including a "capability to perform assassinations." To that end, Harvey contacted QJ/WIN, the as yet unidentified CIA "asset" whom Harvey used to canvass the underworld for "an available pool of assassins." From late 1961 until 1963, Harvey headed another operation — the CIA machinations with the Mafia to kill Fidel Castro. He was actively involved in the field and in that capacity had meetings with the gangster John Roselli, the link-man to Santos Trafficante in the Castro assassination plots.

Harvey's desperate folly during the missile crisis, and "Bender's" apparent incitement to mutiny during the Bay of Pigs operation, are both recorded by distinguished chroniclers. These episodes are evidence, if evidence is still needed, that some in the CIA were ready, even eager, to flout the wishes of President Kennedy. While the Assassinations Committee rightly concluded that the CIA as an agency had no part in the assassination, it is wholly possible that mavericks from the intelligence world were involved.

After his brother's death in Dallas, Attorney General Robert Kennedy confided such suspicions to a family friend, then Director of the CIA, John McCone. The younger Kennedy later recalled, "You know, at the time I asked McCone . . . if they had killed my brother, and I asked him in a way that he couldn't lie to me, and they hadn't." As we have seen, Robert Kennedy later developed grave doubts about the official version of the Dallas murder and suspected that organized crime might have had a part in it. As for McCone, he believed from the start that there had been more than one gunman in Dealey Plaza. In 1979, the suspicions of both men have been vindicated by the research of the Assassinations Committee. Today, furthermore, it is doubtful that McCone would still feel able to give assurances of American intelligence officers' innocence, and certainly Robert Kennedy would have had difficulty accepting them. In November 1963, when the question first came up, CIA Director McCone had no

idea what outrages his own people had been committing. He knew nothing of the CIA plots to kill Castro. Nor had he been told that, as part of their lethal schemes, some senior officers had become deeply involved with the very Mafia bosses suspected of plotting to kill the President. Allen Dulles, McCone's predecessor, did know of assassination plots against Castro but failed to mention it to his colleagues when he became a member of the Warren Commission. If Robert Kennedy had survived to learn what we know today, he would surely have extended his suspicions of an organized-crime role in the assassination to include the American intelligence element.

The past two years have marked a historic turn-around in the unraveling of the Kennedy case. Former Warren Commission counsel Burt Griffin told a BBC colleague and myself, "I feel betrayed. I feel that the CIA lied to us, that we had an agency of government here which we were depending upon, that we expected to be truthful with us, and to cooperate with us. And they didn't do it. The CIA concealed from us the fact that they were involved in efforts to assassinate Castro which could have been of extreme importance to us. Especially the fact that they were involved in working with the Mafia at that time." Judge Griffin feels the same about the FBI and says, "What is most disturbing to me is that two agencies of the government, that were supposed to be loyal and faithful to us, deliberately misled us." Judge Griffin's rueful conclusions about the performance of the intelligence agencies are now not allegations but hard facts, hammered into the record by successive Congressional inquiries. As for the specific case of the Kennedy killing, the Assassinations Committee declared in 1979 that "the CIA–Mafia–Cuban plots had all the elements necessary for a successful assassination conspiracy — people, motive and means — and the evidence indicated that the participants might well have considered using the resources at their disposal to increase their power and alleviate their problems by assassinating the President. Nevertheless, the Committee was ultimately frustrated in its attempt to determine details of those activities that might have led to the assassination — identification of participants, associations, timing of events, and so on. . . ."

As this book was being completed, one indefatigable American reporter found that his carefully researched stories on the Kennedy case were not getting into print. On appealing to his editor, he received a memorandum regretting that he was still "posing questions that are unanswerable." He should instead, wrote the editor, "carefully point out that the Assassinations Committee's demise is reflective of the general public's feelings for the moment — 'Let it rest.' " When the Committee's final report came out, the most powerful organs of the American media echoed that sentiment. Some decried the significant achievements the Committee had produced. Long before their reporters could possibly have studied the monumental verbiage of the report and its accompanying volumes of evidence, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Times* delivered their verdicts. They gave space to articles ranging from the caustic to the openly sarcastic. One distinguished commentator "declined to accept" the acoustics evidence that two gunmen were at work in Dealey Plaza, yet it was clear from his comments that he had not studied the vital detail of that evidence. One reporter sneered at those he dubbed "conspiracy junkies," and another gloomily foresaw that now "wackier and wackier the theories will grow." Had he read the Committee's findings, the latter writer would have found that the latest inquiry had performed the welcome service of disposing of the many fantasies which had surrounded the case.

I started work on the Kennedy case with the apprehensive expectation that I would be sifting more than a dozen years of intensive investigative reporting. I found, with astonishment, that I was in a virtual journalistic vacuum. The Kennedy assassination never was treated with the assiduous reporting effort that followed Watergate. It occurred in a time when the reporter's vital instinct of inquiry was dulled by trust in the official investigation. The necessary follow-up was swept away in the avalanche of the metamorphic Sixties. With a handful of honorable exceptions, few professional journalists did original work on the Kennedy assassination. To my amazement, I repeatedly found myself the first reporter to interview relevant witnesses.

After the Assassinations Committee reported, one American editorial opined that the Committee had done no service to history and should never have met at all if the best it could do was prolong public confusion. Its writer claimed with assurance that

"few Americans are very fervent these days in their desire to know the single, burning, absolute truth about the killings." No reporter should presume to read the public mind, and — I venture to say — it does not really matter in this case whether the American people are weary of the Kennedy assassination or not. Between hysteria and the cement of history there is that essential to any civilized society — justice.

The reporters who mocked the latest assassination investigation also produced disturbing quotes from law-enforcement authorities. One Justice Department official was reported as saying that the latest official inquiry "offered nary a clue" as to who, other than Oswald, might have taken part in the assassination. Another declared that the Justice Department has better things to do than to "chase ghosts." The first would find clues aplenty were he to study the seven thousand pages of Assassinations Committee evidence on the Kennedy case. He might even find them in this book. As for the second official, the outburst is at odds with his responsibility as a trusted public official.

As for the CIA, its arrogance toward the civilian administration is recorded time and again in these pages. For Congressmen on the Assassinations Committee, its performance was as galling as ever. One, Congressman Fithian, noted at one public hearing that the Agency had dispatched a spokesman who declared himself "not qualified" to discuss the subject of Lee Oswald, "which happens to be the only thing this committee was primarily interested in." Congressman Dodd was so outraged by what he learned about both the FBI and the CIA that he added his own eloquent footnote to the Committee's report. Dodd insisted, "These two agencies need the rule of law. The attitude that they were free to function outside or above the law allowed these abuses to occur. There must be no question that the Congress intends for these agencies to operate within the law and that the American public demand that they do so. I believe that even today the attitude of being in some way above the law lingers in these agencies." Congressman Dodd, like his colleague Fithian, deplored the fact that the CIA had failed to send to the Committee a spokesman prepared to discuss the role of that central figure — Lee Oswald. In conclusion, the Congressman turned to

Shakespeare to ask the question he posed to the American people about the CIA. He asked, quoting *Julius Caesar*,

> "Upon what meat doth this, our Caesar, feed
> That he is grown so great?"

"Perhaps," Dodd concluded, "it is the meat of our indifference. If so, we can afford to be indifferent no longer."

The Chief Counsel of the Assassinations Committee, Professor Robert Blakey, is a meticulous lawyer. He has a reputation for extreme caution and a painstaking regard for hard evidence. Since the Committee issued its Report he has broken his customary silence to emphasize that the fact that there were at least two gunmen in Dallas, and thus a conspiracy, is "a scientifically based fact." The Professor says, "The Committee has provided a road map that indicates the points of departure for subsequent investigation that need not be limited as Congressional investigations are — New Orleans in the case of the Kennedy assassination. . . . The Government, to live up to the meaning of Justice, can do no less than to pursue the course the Committee has charted. Why? Because statutes of limitation do not apply to murder, certainly not the murders of men like John F. Kennedy. . . . Justice demands no less."

The Chief Counsel is right, and his forthright comments lead to the aspiration with which justice is inextricably entwined — morality. In mid-1979, at a low point in his own administration's fortunes, the fourth successor to John Kennedy, President Jimmy Carter, addressed the nation on what he called "the crisis of the spirit in our country." He listed the ills of an America endangered from within — a nation in which only a third of the people even bother to vote, whose productivity is falling, where there is a growing disrespect for all the established institutions. President Carter firmly dated the milestones in the process that led to the crisis. They were, he said, the executions of national figures which began with the killing of President Kennedy.

In a schizophrenic era, the assassination of President Kennedy has reflected the best and the worst hallmarks of the American character. The murder itself, enacted on a wide screen of global attention, was somehow intrinsically American, as seminal

to the Sixties as the broadcast dramas of Vietnam, the revolution of international youth, and the landing on the moon. The first Kennedy inquiry was bungled, for all the pomp and circumstance with which its conclusions were announced. It was an analgesic, administered as readily as the drug culture which was soon to calm and confuse one generation and outrage its parents. In the Seventies, the reopening of the Kennedy inquiry was a response by the lawmakers to a national doubt that questioned far more than the manner of one man's passing. In 1981 it is conceivable that the concepts of justice and morality may surface from a sea of cynicism and resume their place at the core of American life. Perhaps that hope will not, only three years away from 1984, draw conditioned derision.

It is fitting, perhaps, to close with the words of one who was not yet an American citizen when President Kennedy was assassinated. In 1978 Silvia Odio, the Cuban exile whose chilling testimony about "Oswald" remains the most compelling human evidence of conspiracy, gave me a television interview. When I asked her why she was now prepared to talk, after refusing press approaches for so long, she was silent for a long moment. Then she said, "I guess it is a feeling of frustration after so many years. I feel outraged that we have not discovered the truth for history's sake, for all of us. I think it is because I'm very angry about it all — the forces I cannot understand and the fact that there is nothing I can do against them. That is why I am here."

A multitude of citizens, not only in the United States, would certainly agree with that sentiment. The Assassinations Committee Chief Counsel, in a remarkable statement, has expressed his belief that it is not necessarily too late to see justice done. He has declared that there are today "living people who could have been involved in the assassinations of Martin Luther King and President Kennedy. These people should be vigorously investigated by all constitutional means." Professor Blakey asserts that "there are things that can be done, in a criminal justice context, to move this towards trial . . ." On a case so long neglected, the Chief Counsel warns that he could not be sure of bringing an indictment that would secure conviction. Nevertheless, the Professor says, "I think I could come close to it."

That statement, from a distinguished and responsible counsel, should not go unheeded in a functioning democracy. In its final Report, the Assassinations Committee asked the Justice Department to study the evidence so far assembled, and recommend whether further action should be taken. That was in early 1979. Two years later, as this edition goes to press, the Justice Department has yet to report back to Congress. Its attitude to the Kennedy case, however, is distressingly clear. Department officials began by moving extremely slowly — even more slowly than one may expect from a bureaucracy. When pressed on the delay by the Chairman of the Assassinations Committee, the Office of the Attorney General responded with foolish nitpicking about the precise dates on which it had received Committee material. Then, late in 1980, the Justice Department made public an FBI review of the acoustics evidence that persuaded the Committee there were two gunmen involved in the assassination. The FBI report, a mere twenty-two pages long, declared the two-gunman finding "invalid" for lack of scientific proof that shots were actually recorded, or that a second gunman fired at the President from the front. There were immediate protests from the consultants who originally advised the Assassinations Committee. That was perhaps predictable, yet even a lay reading reveals that the FBI review is flawed. One observer questions how much of the published review is the work of the Bureau's management, rather than that of its scientists. Assassinations Committee Chief Counsel Blakey expresses uncharacteristic anger, calling the FBI review "a public relations gimmick designed to avoid carrying the investigation forward." He adds bitterly that the Justice Department has failed to do the work the Committee requested — not only on the acoustics but in other key areas. Professor Blakey respects today's FBI for its general integrity and competence, but says that "on the Kennedy case they seem institutionally incapable of thinking or acting positively. It is a failure that began within a day of the assassination, when the FBI decided there was no conspiracy, and it has blocked open-minded handling of the case ever since." Once, the Assassinations Committee Chief Counsel expressed faith that the American legal machin-

ery would redeem the past failures in the case of President Kennedy. Today, after seeing how the Committee's work has been mishandled, he is openly outraged. Professor Blakey now says "The Justice Department is burying this thing because they want the case to die. It's almost diabolical. The Justice Department will get out from under this thing entirely, and nothing else is going to be done about it — a conspiracy to kill my President and yours."

Former Attorney General Robert Kennedy was reported as saying, two days before his own assassination in 1968, "I now fully realize that only the powers of the Presidency will reveal the secrets of my brother's death." Today, either the President or the Attorney General can appoint an independent Special Prosecutor, as was done after Watergate. The inadequacy at the Justice Department reinforces the feeling of some observers that only such a course could now be effective.

The trauma of the murder of President Kennedy will not go away in our lifetime. A comprehensive judicial inquiry — and to date there has been no such thing — should promptly investigate those living persons who are potential suspects in the conspiracy to murder President Kennedy. If the evidence justifies it, they should be brought to trial.

Such an inquiry, full and unfettered, could purge the frustrations and the doubts of a generation. It may fail to do so, but — as the Assassinations Committee Chief Counsel insists — justice demands no less. Without such an effort, the dying of President Kennedy becomes, indeed, a confirmation of the age of uncertainty.

CHAPTER 25

Afterword: The Continuing Search for "Maurice Bishop"

David Phillips, the former CIA officer considered by the Select Committee on Assassinations as a possible candidate for the true identity behind the cover name "Maurice Bishop," reacted strongly when this book was published in the summer of 1980. He contacted top executives in newspapers and television, making himself available to counter passages in *Conspiracy* concerning him. As a result, I took part in discussions with Phillips on prominent television programs.

In the course of these approaches to the press, Phillips contacted the editor of the *Washington Post*. Subsequently, when a reporter was assigned to the story, Phillips revealed the real identity of former CIA officers whose identities were protected by pseudonyms in Assassinations Committee reports and in my book. Phillips observed that "Cross," the case officer who believed Phillips had indeed used the name "Bishop," was a heavy drinker, implying that he was prone to getting his facts wrong. Shortly afterwards, when a *Post* reporter visited "Cross" at home, he found that Phillips had been on the phone to him only a short time earlier. Whatever had passed between them, "Cross" stood by his assertion that the name "Bishop" had been used in the Miami CIA office, and that he believed it was used to refer to Phillips. "Cross" admits that he was formerly a heavy drinker, but — as noted earlier — has shown that his recall of names and details other than "Bishop" is accurate. In a further conversation, with this author, in 1981, "Cross" seemed upset by the interest his statements have caused, and complained the Assassinations Committee gave it "undue emphasis." He agreed, however, that he had been correctly quoted. A subsequent check with congressional investigators revealed that "Cross" originally linked the name "Bishop" with that of David Phillips promptly and spontaneously.

The *Washington Post* reporter was also able to talk to Phillips' former Miami assistant, "Doug Gupton." He said, much as he had said to the Committee, "I never used the name 'Bishop,' to my recollection." Finally, the reporter visited "B.H.," the former CIA covert operative who told the Committee he had met "Bishop" in the past, but whose testimony prompted a skeptical reaction from the Committee investigator.

"B.H.," a short, dark man of Cuban origin, is belligerent — not least about the way the CIA has been treated in recent years. He told the Committee that Phillips was "a personal friend," an officer he worked with closely on a "day-to-day" basis on Cuban operations between 1960 and 1964. Interviewed by the *Washington Post* in 1980, B.H. stated that after Phillips testified to the Committee, but before he himself was formally interviewed, he discussed the Committee inquiry with Phillips. In his Committee interview "B.H." was asked simply whether he had known anybody named Maurice Bishop. After replying that he had, "B.H." responded to Committee questioning, "Mr. Bishop was in the organization but I had no personal day-to-day open relationship with him. Phillips, yes; Bishop, no. I knew them both." "B.H." appeared in his replies to be stressing that he remembered "Bishop" as being somebody other than Phillips. There are notable discrepancies between what "B.H." told the Committee and what he said to the *Post*. He told the Committee he encountered "Bishop" "two or three times." He told the *Post* he met him only once. He told the Committee that he encountered "Bishop" between 1960 and 1964. In his *Post* interview, he said it was probably *after* 1964 — after the time most relevant to the Veciana allegations. "B.H." told the Committee he worked closely with Phillips between 1960 and 1964. In the conversation with the *Post*, he claimed he did not work with Phillips until after 1964. "B.H." accounts for these differences by claiming that his comments were "wrongly recorded."

The Assassinations Committee investigator of the "Bishop" case suspects that the "B.H." scenario may be a red herring, designed to confuse the trail. Such justifiable suspicions might have been resolved had the Committee management given the "Bishop" case the attention it deserved. Sadly it did not. While Phillips did testify, the Committee failed to take testimony on

oath from "Cross," "B.H.," or "Gupton." "Cross," who told two investigators he believed "Bishop" was Phillips, was not even subjected to formal interview. There were no systematic interrogations of relevant CIA officers who might have further confirmed the use of the name "Bishop." The Committee failed to follow up on a key lead provided by Veciana — the identity of a prominent Cuban who may have originally proposed Veciana to "Bishop" as a promising candidate for CIA recruitment. The Cuban's name was known to the Committee, and is known to this author. Other leads received cursory treatment.

The Committee never tried to trace a vital witness whose name was provided by Veciana months before the Committee wound up its inquiry. Veciana had spoken, from the start, of a go-between whom he used during his association with "Bishop." He explained that, in line with intelligence tradecraft, "Bishop" had always initiated their clandestine meetings, either by telephoning direct, or through a third person who always knew where to reach Veciana. Veciana was long reluctant to identify this third party, but finally did so — providing an old, invalid address in Puerto Rico. In 1980 I did follow up the lead, and tracked down the Veciana–"Bishop" go-between. This proved to be the first independent corroboration that Veciana really was in touch with somebody called "Bishop."

The person who helped arrange meetings between "Bishop" and Veciana is a woman, a prim grandmother in her fifties, who works as a minor functionary in a U.S. government administrative department. She has requested anonymity, and will be identified here only as "Fabiola," a Cuban exile who left Havana in autumn 1961. She worked, until that year, as Veciana's secretary at the Banco Financiero, and was there at the time Veciana claims he was recruited by "Bishop." While she says Veciana never then mentioned a CIA contact, Fabiola recalls details which fit his story. She recalls a time when Veciana started going to "language courses" in the evenings. Veciana, in his earliest interviews, spoke of attending nightly U.S. intelligence briefings in an office building which housed, on the first floor, the Berlitz School of Languages. Fabiola says she did become aware that Veciana was involved in subversive activi-

ties. He once produced the huge sum of half a million dollars, which he asked her to safeguard until he retrieved it. Veciana has always said he worked with "Bishop" on a "program that resulted in the destabilization of the Cuban currency." In Cuba, Fabiola decided not to ask Veciana awkward questions. Politically, she sympathized with him, and later — in exile — collaborated actively when Veciana became leader of Alpha 66. He asked her to act as answering service for him when he was traveling, and in the months to come Fabiola became familiar with the name of a caller from the mainland United States. The name was "Bishop." When I interviewed Fabiola I threw out a number of names, including that of "Bishop." "Bishop" was the only name to which she responded, and it stirred in her the memory of another name. "Bishop" is firmly linked in Fabiola's mind with a second person — "Prewett." For her, the two names are so definitely associated that at first she had difficulty remembering which was which. Fabiola says both individuals telephoned Veciana over the same period, and she understood that they were associated with one another. She believed both "Bishop" and "Prewett" were connected with an American news publication, based on the East Coast. Finally, she recalls that "Prewett" was female.

A check of American press directories turned up Virginia Prewett, a Washington journalist who has specialized in Latin American affairs all her life. She has written extensively about the struggle between Fidel Castro, whom she has characterized as a "betrayer," and the Cuban exiles, whom she describes as "patriots." In summer 1963 Prewett attended a conference on Cuba co-sponsored by Freedom House and the Citizen's Committee for a Free Cuba. Her report on the conference, later inserted in the *Congressional Record*, began by quoting a call by Freedom House "to remove both Fidel Castro and the Soviet presence from Cuba without delay." For many years, Prewett wrote for the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA), a syndication organization founded by Prewett's friend Ernest Cuneo, also a member of the Committee for a Free Cuba. It was Cuneo, a veteran of the CIA's forerunner, the Office of Strategic Services, who arranged for Prewett to work for NANA. In 1963 NANA was severely criticized in a Senate Committee Report,

for syndicating pro–Chiang Kai-shek propaganda written by a paid American lobbyist.

In spring 1963, seven months before the Kennedy assassination, Prewett was assailing the administration for its opposition to the raids mounted against Cuba by Antonio Veciana's Alpha 66 guerrillas. On April 2, in the *Washington Daily News*, Prewett lambasted a Kennedy spokesman who had "called the daring and gallant Alpha 66 raids on Cuba irresponsible acts." Prewett called this "an all-time low in pronouncement of U.S. foreign policy," and mocked the notion that "unless we stop the Alpha 66 raids against Communist Cuba, there'll be nuclear conflict." Three weeks later, after President Kennedy ordered strong measures against would-be exile raiders, Prewett rushed to support the exile leadership and berated the Kennedy White House for assuming it had "carte blanche to create a foreign policy outside the nation's popular consent." These Prewett articles were read into the *Congressional Record*.

The Alpha 66 raids, which so embarrassed President Kennedy and which pleased Virginia Prewett, were the very attacks which — according to Alpha 66 leader Veciana — were carried out on specific instructions from CIA officer "Maurice Bishop." As Veciana tells it, "Bishop's" intention was to cause further trouble between Kennedy and Russia — within months of the Missile Crisis which had brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. His purpose was "to put Kennedy against the wall in order to force him to make decisions that will remove Castro's regime."

In the company of a *Washington Post* reporter, I talked to Virginia Prewett in 1980. She agreed that she had contact with Alpha 66 in the early sixties, and accepted that Alpha 66 was "probably" backed by the CIA — even if its leaders were not formally told so. Prewett made it clear she was once familiar with the work of the group's leader, Veciana, and asked, "Where is he now?" Later in the interview, however, she said she had never met Veciana. Veciana, for his part, says he did know Prewett, and refers to her as "Virginia." He asserts he met her at her hotel in Puerto Rico more than once, and "probably in Washington." When the name "Bishop" was first raised with Prewett, in the context of the CIA and Cuba, she said,