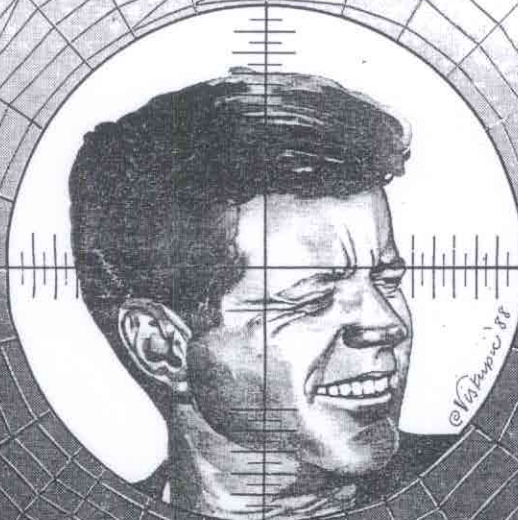


IDEAS

The Conspiracy Complex

A quarter of a century after JFK's assassination, some investigators still reject the official account. Here in outline are several of the conspiracy theories:



A Mafia Capo In Dixie Did It

By John H. Davis

THERE WAS no more desperately threatened enemy of the Kennedys in the fall of 1963 than Carlos Marcello, the Mafia boss of the Gulf Coast.

For, in the fall of 1963, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, with the full backing of his brother, was bent on destroying Marcello's power once and for all. The Justice Department's conspiracy and perjury case against Carlos and his brother Joe, due to go to trial that November, was

to be the first step in removing Carlos from the country forever. Carlos Marcello's possible motive, then, in killing the president, would have gone far beyond revenge, to survival.

Everything he had built up over the years, as well as his very presence in the United States, was under direct attack from the Kennedys at the very moment President John F. Kennedy was venturing into Marcello territory.

The sheer volume and extent of the body of circumstantial evidence suggesting the possible involvement of the Mar-

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Illustration: Gary Vantage

John F. Kennedy's Legacy

Twenty-five years ago, the curtain came down on Camelot. It's futile to wonder: What if? We should, instead, remember John Kennedy for what he was, not what he could have been, for what he meant to a generation of young Americans whose political and social values he helped nourish.

Kennedy spoke of a "new generation of Americans born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace," a generation sensitive to the realities of world politics, aware of the massive destruction possible by a simple error in judgment. During the Cuban missile crisis, he chose not to seek a military solution; he was not willing to risk American lives in a show of force.

He told us that "to whom much is given, much is required." And give we did. The Peace Corps is a fitting and lasting tribute to what he saw as our role in the world.

He compelled us to reach for the stars. Although he wasn't here for that glorious moment, he let us know mankind could indeed walk on the moon.

Kennedy believed "the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threat-



Kennedy

ened." He was so appalled by the sight of vicious dogs and fire hoses being turned loose on southern blacks that he made civil rights and human rights a moral issue. The civil rights act of 1965 was a legacy of that commitment.

Our generation, he told us, is fated "to live with a struggle we did not start, in a world we did not make." He sent advisers to Vietnam. Would he have pulled them out, as many historians suggest, in his second term? He inherited the Bay of Pigs invasion from the Eisenhower administration, and when it was an abysmal failure, he alone took the blame.

He warned, "those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." When told about the destruction a nuclear war would cause, he dedicated his presidency to a thawing of the Cold War and a test ban treaty.

In the 25 years since that nightmare day in Dallas, the world has changed. Some of John Kennedy's hopes, dreams, aspirations have come to fruition. We're a better people because of his thousand days. As one brother said in his eulogy to a third: "Some men see things as they are and say, why? I dream things that never were and say, why not?" John Kennedy also said why not. As we look to the future, we echo those words, why not?

Michael Lissauer
Plainview

Letters should be kept brief and are subject to condensation. Writers should include a full address and home and office telephone numbers, where available, as well as affiliation indicating special interest in a subject. Anonymous letters are not printed. Write for Letters Editor, Newsday, Long Island, N.Y. 11747.

Real Cost of Nuclear Arms

The recent disclosures of serious safety problems at several different nuclear weapons facilities operated by the Department of Energy bring to light a problem that has been hidden deep in the labyrinth of national security. We are in the process of poisoning ourselves.

Production of nuclear materials has continued since the beginning of the Cold War with little regard to the long-term consequences, which include: The release of enormous quantities of radiation, poisoning workers and surrounding communities; unsafe storage of tons of radiological waste which lasts for thousands of years and cannot be isolated from the environment, and not accounting for large quantities of material that could be used by enemies to fashion nuclear weapons.

These nonmonetary costs are in addition to the hundreds of billions in taxes that have flowed into nuclear weapons production.

Why, then, are government officials urging huge additional expenditures — upwards of \$100 billion — for new weapons facilities? Clearly the answer cannot be deterrence. If 30,000 existing warheads will not deter the Soviets, why should more weapons or modernized weapons do so?

The question of "why more nuclear weapons production" demands immediate examination. Our government's current response appears to be a mixture of bureaucratic inertia and a philosophy of "more is better" or "peace through strength."

But can we afford more nuclear weapons — not the \$100 billion cost in money — but the poisoning of workers, communities and future generations? Quite literally, atomic weapons are already destroying us, even if they are never detonated.

Martin Melkonian
Hempstead

Editor's Note: The writer teaches economics at Hofstra University.

Psychiatrists' Opinions Are Not for Sale

Cyrus R. Vance Jr., a former Manhattan prosecutor, wrote an article earlier this year in which he criticized two psychiatrists for conduct arising out of their expert testimony in a sensational criminal trial involving a double homicide ("Medical Expert Witnesses Are Not Hired Guns," Viewpoints, June 8).

I am one of the two psychiatrists Vance attacked in his article and, in the interest of basic fairness, I think a response is called for in order to set the record straight.

I am an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, where I am in charge of a program in law, psychiatry and ethics. I have authored more than 50 articles in the area of psychiatry and the law, psychiatric ethics, psychiatric expertise and, notably, the authoritative article in the literature on the very psychiatric defense employed at the trial in question: "extreme emotional disturbance."

I am consulted from time to time as a psychiatric expert in criminal and civil cases (and have testified at murder trials in the past on behalf of Vance's former office, that of the Manhattan district attorney). I always approach such consultations in a professionally objective and scientific manner and not as an advocate or "hired gun" for the side that retains me.

My professional reputation and integrity are highly regarded by leaders in both professions, psychiatry and law, and my opinions are well respected and not for sale, as Vance suggests. In fact, Vance knows quite well (and the trial transcript of the case will bear this out) that I performed an exhaustive in-depth evaluation, including not only psychiatric examinations but also extensive review of hospital records, reports and other documents

concerning the defendant; he knows I even attended the psychiatric examination conducted by the psychiatrist retained by the DA's office. Contrary to Vance's characterization, I was fully informed in regard to the defendant's past history, such as it was, prior to my testimony.

Yet Vance tried to convey the damaging false impression that I carried out a slipshod evaluation, improperly avoided learning anything about the defendant that would detract from his case, buried my head in the sand and accepted at face value whatever the accused chose to tell me about himself and his conduct leading up to the homicides. By thus twisting the facts himself, Vance disingenuously implied I had been negligent at best or unscrupulous at worst.

Vance's associates wasted no time in circulating copies of his article to my colleagues and professional groups. The effect was not merely to discredit me but to undermine our traditional system of justice. Under our adversary system, juries are entitled to hear from qualified expert witnesses on both sides when there is an honest difference of opinion in order to reach a more informed and just verdict in a case.

While paying lip service to a defendant's right to a legitimate psychiatric defense, Vance raises the specter of irresponsible public officials wielding the awesome power of the government, attempting to intimidate and injure those expert witnesses who dare to disagree with the state's position in a case by going after them in the media and casting aspersions on their competence and character. Is such an abuse of power and trust Vance's idea of an acceptable ethical standard for prosecutors to follow?

Robert Lloyd Goldstein, MD, JD
Manhattan

The Yankees Are No More

The Yankees? There are no "Yankees." They died many years ago — or rather, they were murdered many years ago when a man named George Steinbrenner took over ownership of the team. The only thing left to remind us of what has passed on is Yankee Stadium, and even that has lost its charm. Surely, it has been beautified, but the beauty is geared to the ostentatious, uncaring subscribers who buy blocks of tickets to show off, but who rarely attend the games — usually giving the tickets out to their own customers.

Back when the Yankees existed, it was fun attending games, sitting in the bleachers, getting to know the players in the bullpen and coming back year after year to old friends who were there until they were too old to play — and the Yankees kept winning.

Now it's a business. I buy you today — if I don't like you or you don't treat me right, I trade you tomorrow. Batting averages, runs batted in, stolen bases mean nothing. The fans mean less — we just pay to come to the games, root for our favorite players and then watch as they are threatened or, more likely, traded.

It's no fun anymore — we don't even get to know the players. The numbers change from day to day — the names change from game to game, and we go on losing in the end.

With hope that Steinbrenner gets tired of losing and decides to trade the team for a race track, I will keep on believing that maybe there is some hope for the Yankees in the future.

Janet Cohen
Calverton

Newsday

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The Mafia Wanted No Probe

—Continued from Page 1

cello organization in the assassination that has accumulated over the past 25 years is now sufficiently persuasive to require evaluation and action on the part of the government.

To imply, as the Justice Department has done by its inaction, that this body of evidence is meaningless requires us to brand at least 18 witnesses and informants as either liars or lunatics, or both, and requires us, as well, to regard the extraordinarily large number of relationships shared by Lee Harvey Oswald (the president's killer), Jack Ruby (Oswald's killer) and David Ferrie (a friend of Oswald) with associates of Carlos Marcello as mere coincidence.

To be able to get away with the assassination, Carlos would have had to anticipate the responses of the Dallas police, the FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency, whatever special investigative body President Lyndon Johnson might choose to appoint and a possible investigative effort, independent of the FBI, by Attorney General Kennedy.

THE LOUISIANA Mafia had an entente with the Dallas Police Department dating back to the 1940s when the Chicago outfit attempted to take over Dallas using young Jack Ruby as one of its tools. As for the FBI, it has become more and more apparent that Carlos must have exerted some control over the FBI field office in New Orleans in the early '60s. There is no other convincing explanation of why the New Orleans agents assigned to oversee Marcello failed so completely to carry out Attorney General Kennedy's order to upgrade their

investigation of Carlos Marcello, including the deployment of electronic surveillance against him.

As for the CIA, we know that Marcello admitted to having participated in the CIA-Mafia plots to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro and was close to at least one of the plotters, Santo Trafficante. The agency would never undertake a thorough investigation of the assassination if the leading suspects in the crime were knowledgeable of the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro, for fear of having its darkest secret revealed in the process.

We come to President Johnson and whatever body he might have appointed to investigate the assassination. Did Carlos have enough on Johnson so that the new president would not wish an investigation to turn up evidence of Carlos' complicity? Of course he did. Carlos Marcello's payoff man in Texas in the '50s, the notorious Jack Halphen, had been a principal financial backer of Lyndon Johnson's political campaigns in Texas from the late '40s on, to the extent that it could be said that illegal profits from Marcello's slot machines in Dallas and Houston and from bookmakers' subscriptions to his racing wire service throughout all of Texas, used by Halphen to finance Johnson, were crucial to the success of Johnson's senatorial campaigns. How would it look if it came out in the press that the man accused of masterminding the assassination of Kennedy had been an important backer of the man who had profited most from the assassination?

There remained the question of Attorney General Kennedy's response to the assassination of his brother. According to Edward Becker, a private investigator from Las Vegas, Marcello had stated in September, 1961, that he believed the assassination of President Kennedy would destroy his younger brother's power, so that he would not be capable of galvanizing the Justice Department into launching a thorough investigation of the crime. Events proved Marcello's alleged prediction was absolutely valid. After the assassination, both Johnson and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover turned their backs on

Robert Kennedy and rendered him virtually powerless as attorney general.

In fact, we can now affirm with reasonable certainty that upon the 25th anniversary of the assassination, no other conspiracy scenario seems even remotely as plausible as that suggesting the complicity of the Marcellos.

The four individuals actually arrested by the police in connection with the assassination of the president and the murder of his suspected assassin were all connected either to Carlos Marcello or to one or more of his close associates.

IN CONFRONTING the possibility of the involvement of Carlos Marcello in the crime of the century, 25 years after Hoover deliberately avoided the issue, the question inevitably arises: Would a powerful Mafia leader in his right mind have ever chosen such an unpromising crew to accomplish a major execution as that ragtag bunch of ne'er-do-well misfits, Lee Harvey Oswald, David Ferrie and Jack Ruby?

It was precisely their apparent unsuitability and removal from the stereotype of the professional Mafia hitman that would have persuaded a Mafia leader to utilize Oswald, Ferrie and Ruby in an important execution. As Carlos Marcello had "clearly indicated" to Edward Becker, "his own lieutenants must not be identified as the assassins" so "that there would thus be a necessity to have them use or manipulate someone else to carry out the actual crime." An ex-defector to the Soviet Union who passes out pro-Castro leaflets in the streets, a hairless ex-airline pilot with a history of arrests for committing "indecent acts" with young boys, and a small-time striptease joint operator — what a crew! Who would ever dream of linking these amateurs, these nonentities, to professional criminals, to the Mafia? The selection of such an apparently unprofessional assassin as Oswald, or the framing of such a type in a murder plot, was another time-honored tradition of the Mafia.



John H. Davis is the author of "Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy" (McGraw-Hill), from which this has been excerpted.



Illustration by Gary Vukobratovic

The CIA Plotted To Change U.S. Policy

By Jim Garrison

I BELIEVE that what happened at Dealey Plaza in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, was a coup d'état. I believe that it was instigated and planned long in advance by fanatical anticommunists in the United States intelligence community; that it was carried out, most likely without official approval, by individuals in the CIA's covert operations apparatus and other extra-governmental collaborators, and covered up by like-minded individuals in the FBI, the Secret Service, the Dallas police department and the military, and that its purpose was to stop Kennedy from seeking detente with the Soviet Union and Cuba and ending the Cold War.

I do not know precisely when the planning and preparation for the coup began. Just who did the plotting is not clear either.

In the United States, the modern counterparts to the Praetorian Guard are vital to a successful coup because they have the capability of allowing the defensive protection of the leader to vanish at a crucial moment. A Telexed warning of an attempt to assassinate the president in Dallas on Nov. 22 or 23 had apparently been sent to every FBI special agent in charge across the country and had been



Jim Garrison, a former New Orleans district attorney, is the author of "On the Trail of the Assassins" (Sheridan Square Press), from which this is excerpted. © 1988.

A Round-Up of Theories

WARREN COMMISSION'S LONE-ASSASSIN THEORY

Lee Oswald, acting alone, killed President John F. Kennedy, wounded Texas Gov. John Connally, then murdered Dallas Police Officer J. D. Tippit in an escape attempt.

Jack Ruby, acting alone, murdered Oswald.

"No credible evidence" indicated Oswald or Ruby was part of a conspiracy.

Oswald fired three shots at the Kennedy motorcade. One struck Kennedy in the upper back, left an exit wound in the throat, then passed through Connally's torso and right wrist before entering his left thigh. This bullet was later found on a hospital stretcher in almost pristine condition. The second bullet missed. The third struck the back of Kennedy's head, apparently inflicting a mortal wound.

A rifle owned by Oswald and bearing his palm print was found near the window from which the sniper apparently fired. Three empty cartridge cases discovered nearby, plus the nearly pristine bullet and other fragments, matched Oswald's rifle. Witnesses placed Oswald near the window shortly before the assassination. A pistol seized from Oswald during his arrest was identified as the Tippit murder weapon. Oswald lied to the police on substantive matters after his arrest. Seven months before the Kennedy assassination, Oswald tried to kill controversial former Army Gen. Edwin Walker by firing a rifle shot at him.



Jack Ruby

SECOND-GUNMAN THEORY

Numerous conspiracy theorists have argued that Oswald could not have fired all the shots and thus there must have been two — if not more — gunmen.

These theorists challenged the official contention, based on Abraham Zapruder's amateur film of the assassination, that Oswald fired all three shots within 7.9 seconds. They said the weapon was clumsy to fire and Oswald was far from expert. But FBI and military experts testified he was fully capable of firing the shots accurately in 7.9 seconds.

Theorists also argued there was evidence one shot struck Kennedy from the front, not the back. Some claimed a second gunman had fired from a manhole in front of the Kennedy limousine (even though all manholes along a presidential motorcade route are habitually sealed by

the Secret Service). Many speculated that a second gunman had fired from a grassy knoll to the right front of the limousine, where witnesses reported seeing puffs of smoke and other suspicious activity. Photographs taken at the scene were said to show shadowy figures who might have been gunmen. But modern guns do not normally produce puffs of smoke, and no credible physical evidence was ever produced to prove the second-gunner case.

Doctors who treated Kennedy in Dallas or performed the autopsy on his body insisted all his wounds came from shots fired behind him. Recent analysis of the assassination-scene photographs revealed no evidence of a second gunman. Moreover, in response to those who argued that the nearly pristine bullet could not have caused all the wounds reported by the Warren Commission, scientists recently performed neutron analyses on the bullet and on metal fragments recovered from Connally's wrist. They matched perfectly.

THE FOUR-SHOT THEORY

The House Select Committee on Assassinations, preparing to issue a 1979 report concluding that Oswald acted alone, changed its mind at the 11th hour and contended Kennedy "was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy." The turnaround was prompted by electronic analysis of a recording of what purported to be noise picked up by an open police radio near the assassination scene.

It produced a variation on the second-gunner theory — one in which it was claimed that four, not three, shots were fired at the motorcade. Researchers working for the committee contended their electronic analysis had detected the sound of four shots on the recording. On that basis, the committee concluded that Oswald had killed Kennedy but that another gunman had fired simultaneously and missed. No other evidence to prove the second gunman's existence was produced. And the committee's theory was sharply called into question recently when a researcher detected a previously unheard voice on the recording. The voice was identified as that of Dallas Sheriff Bill Decker, who said it was apparent the recording had been made at least a minute and a half after the shooting — for he was giving orders in reaction to the gunfire.

THE DISAPPEARING-BODY THEORY

Author David S. Lifton, who said he spent 15 years researching a 1981 assassination book called "Best Evidence," claimed Kennedy's body was stolen during the six hours between the assassination and the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital. He contended bullets were removed and wounds were altered to conceal the truth about the assassination. Only then, he said, was the body returned to its coffin for the autopsy.

Lifton did not explain precisely how all this could have been done without detection. *Continued on Next Page*

quietly ignored. The protective bubble for the president's limousine had been left off by the Secret Service. The windows and roofs of buildings along the parade route had not been secured. And the parade route had been changed at the last minute so that the motorcade would have to make a sharp turn, thus slowing it to less than 10 m.p.h.

The president's blood hardly had cooled before the well-organized cover-up began. Ruby's murder of Oswald, silencing the one man who might have identified the assassination's sponsors, was the capstone.

For 25 years, the American people have been bombarded by propaganda pointing insistently to a variety of irrelevant false sponsors as the supposed investigators of the Kennedy assassination. ("False sponsor" is a term used in covert intelligence actions which describes the individual or organization to be publicly blamed after the action, thus diverting attention from the intelligence community.) The original false sponsor was the scapegoat himself, Lee Harvey Oswald. Nominated for the role by the intelligence community, he was formally endorsed by the Warren Commission and others at the highest levels of the United States government. However, over time it became increasingly apparent that the lone assassin fairy tale had fallen apart, and most of its supporters simply fell silent.

One of the most intriguing false sponsors is Fidel Castro. I was aware, as well, of the brief vogue for the "Southwest oil billionaires" as backers of the assassination. The primary and most lasting false sponsor has been organized crime, the Mafia, the mob. Upon close examination, however, the false sponsors all fall of their own weight. What remains as the only likely sponsor with both the motive and the capability of murdering the president is the covert action arm of the Central Intelligence Agency.

In retrospect, the reason for the assassination is hardly a mystery.

Following Lyndon Johnson's swearing in as president, Kennedy's order to have the first thousand Americans returned home from Vietnam by December was promptly rescinded. By the time the United States signed the Paris Agreement in January 1973, more than 55,000 Americans were dead.

Thus was President Kennedy's foreign policy reversed. This was the major consequence of the assassination, and the real reason for it.

Behind the 'Official' 2nd Gunman Theory

By Armand Moss

IN THE MID-'70s, because of a second wave of books and articles on the Kennedy assassination, it seemed appropriate to assign to a congressional committee the task of showing whether the allegations made by the critics of the Warren Commission could be substantiated.

The seven-man commission, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to investigate the murder, had concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, had killed President John F. Kennedy.

The critics claimed that they had covered up the truth: that Oswald was part of a conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

Different critics alleged different conspiracies.

The second commission of inquiry, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, found that none of these allegations had any foundation. Prof. Robert Blakey, its chief counsel and staff director, was clearly convinced the Mafia was involved. During the two years the committee was in session, he worked very hard to prove this but never found anything to back up his position, and the committee did not implicate the Mafia.

Those among the new amateur detectives who are sincere and who, maybe unknowingly, are rehashing assertions proven false years ago are just wasting their time.

Few people know how the sentence "President Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy" was introduced in the report of the Select Committee.

The final draft, dated Dec. 13, 1978, stated that Oswald was the lone assassin and that there

was "insufficient evidence to find that there was a conspiracy."

But at the 11th hour before publication, mistaken acousticians told the committee that a record of the sounds at the scene of the assassination showed that four shots had been heard, one more than those fired by Oswald. If that were so, there would have had to have been a second gunman. An extra session was held on Dec. 29 in order to listen to the acousticians. The committee was impressed by ultracomplex explanations.

In spite of the opposition of some of the members, the conclusions were hurriedly changed: "Acoustic evidence establishes a high probability that two gunmen fired at the president" who "was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy."

In their anxiety to get it over with, the majority of members had taken a considerable risk: Once published, the new conclusions were to be the official truth and, should the acousticians be proven wrong some day — which could, and did, happen, it would be of course impossible to publish a revised edition of the report with the correct Dec. 13 conclusions.

A dissenting member, Rep. Robert W. Edgar (D-Pa.), had requested a new acoustic study. The National Research Council's Committee on Ballistic Acoustics then found that acoustic data did not support the conclusion that there was a second gunman.

Moreover, the committee found that the impulses attributed to gunshots were recorded about one minute after the president had been shot.

That report was hardly mentioned anywhere. It went unnoticed in the United States as well as abroad.

The small article in The New York Times (May 15, 1982) giving the news, headed "New Study on Slaying of Kennedy Doubts 2nd Gunman Was Involved," ran on page 35.

The "conspiracy" is thus the official truth. This is unfortunate for those who try to establish the historical truth.



Armand Moss is the author of "Disinformation, Misinformation, and the 'Conspiracy' to Kill JFK Exposed" (Archon/Shoe String).

'THINGS WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.'

John Kennedy Was My President

By Harvey Aronson

IF JOHN F. KENNEDY were alive today, he would be 71 years old and that is almost impossible for me to deal with. To me, he is forever young.

I showed a colleague a story I wrote about John Kennedy's assassination — about the hush of shame that covered Dallas the day a 24-year-old bookbinder who had never been anybody shot the president of the United States — and my co-worker said it was strange to know that I had been there. "I was 9 years old," he said. "This is history to me." Then he called over someone else. "Look at this," he said.

I never thought about John Kennedy as history. I voted for him in triumph and wrote about him in sadness and in death. I loved John Kennedy. And so maybe this is what this is — a love story by someone who mourns for a lost America in a country where social welfare is anathema and "liberal" is a dirty word. Someone who longs for a New Frontier that was barely explored and for a promise that once sparkled in a president's smile.

I do not care which or how many movie stars Jack Kennedy was involved with; I never believed in Sir Galahad but I liked Sir Lancelot as a human being. I do care about the way it was on a day in 1960 when I first saw John Kennedy. He came to a Quonset arena in Commack in a swirl of straw campaign hats and hot jazz and talked about what he could do for his country. I saw him standing on a stage with tomorrow in front of him. I heard him sound a call to personal dignity and civil rights. I watched him sound a drumbeat we could all march to — the cadence of a changing world and the hope that we could make it better. The message of a New Frontier that he had spelled out when he accepted the Democratic nomination — "a frontier

of unknown opportunities and perils . . . a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats." A frontier that was a set of challenges in an age in which "we will witness not only new breakthroughs in weapons of destruction — but also a race for mastery of the sky and the rain, the ocean and the tides, the far side of space and the inside of men's minds."

I heard the sheer, wonderful surge of eloquence. I watched the Boston-accented "a" spreading passion across the stands, and I was part of it. We were all part of it. And I thought that if my country could produce candidates like John Kennedy, it had to be a terrific country. That was his talent. That was how he made you feel.

'I saw him standing on a stage with tomorrow in front of him.'

Don't tell me that he was too ruthless and that his father was a rich autocrat and that John Kennedy never really got anything done. That's bilge and blathering and the carping of people not fit to sit in his rocking chair. He was a political candidate who preserved the division between church and state. He was a war hero and the author of a Pulitzer Prize-winning book. He was the candidate who called Coretta King as soon as he learned her husband had been arrested for sitting in at a table in an Atlanta restaurant. He was the president who fought for Medicare and whose administration introduced the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Jack Kennedy could never have gone to Bitburg to eulogize the Nazi war dead, but he went to Berlin and visited Checkpoint Charlie and passed a stretch of weeds above what was once Adolf Hitler's bomb shelter. And he talked about freedom in a divided city in a country branded with guilt and said that "when one man is enslaved, who are free?" And he said that as a free man he took pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner" and the world cheered.

No one in our time ever combined so much style with so much substance. In Vienna, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev explained that he was wearing the Lenin Peace Medal and John Kennedy leveled him with a one-liner. "I hope you do nothing to make them take it away from you," he said.

He was funny and witty and urbane, and he was the president who played touch football and looked equally real in sweaters and tuxedos and invited Igor Stravinsky to the White House. He was a human being and susceptible to life. Maybe that was what stalked the time in America they called Camelot — that it was almost too good. Three years after that day in Commack, I stood by the window of a Boston hospital and watched John Kennedy walk with his head bowed in a terrace of the building where his newborn son was dying. In memory, the light of that August day was dying, too.

And then I went to Dallas and read the shame of the city in lonely footfalls on Main Street, in a funeral wreath hanging on the closed door of a honky-tonk bar. It was Friday night but it could have been a lonely Sunday. John F. Kennedy was dead. It wasn't very professional but I walked the streets of Dallas with tears running down my face. I told you. I loved John Kennedy. When he died, it was like the death of first love or the end of childhood. Things would never be the same again.

He was my last hero. He was our last hero. He made us feel America, he understood the city lights below the whispering jets and the squares of the farm fields and the patterns of the conquering suburbs. He gave expression to the fires that burn in the hearts of the striving, to the dreams that keep little pieces of us forever young.

He was my president. His death made me think about my own mortality. He was my time, my generation, my aspiration. I believed in the New Frontier as I have never been able to believe in the Great Society or any of the imitations that came afterward. Because with John Kennedy, there was the hope of all the things he was yet to accomplish. He had a talent for the future.



Harvey Aronson is *Newsday's* writing coach.

Continued from Preceding Page

tion by Jacqueline Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Secret Service agents, White House aides and others accompanying the body back to Washington aboard Air Force One.

But, although his seemed one of the more bizarre scenarios, he was far from alone in suggesting that Kennedy's wounds had been distorted. Numerous conspiracy theorists maintained that the wounds had been altered either by the Dallas doctors or those who performed the autopsy.

Over the years, Lifton offered other conspiracy theories. As early as 1967, he told *Esquire* magazine that "prior to the assassination the grassy knoll was excavated from beneath and a system of tunnels and bunkers was built into it. Peepholes covered with grass-mesh camouflage were placed on the sloping surface of the knoll."

THE MOB THEORY

Since both Oswald and Ruby were reported to have underworld connections — and since the Kennedy administration had been waging a publicized war on organized crime — many conspiracy theorists contended the assassination must have been a mob hit. G. Robert Blakey, staff director of the House assassinations committee, said when the committee issued its report: "I am now firmly of the opinion that the mob did it. It is a historical truth."

Ruby, as the operator of a sleazy Dallas strip joint, frequently fraternized with racketeers. Oswald's supposed mob con-



Carlos Marcello

nections, if any, were more tenuous. He was said to have known David Ferrie, a cashiered airline pilot and one-time private detective who was a central figure in former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's discredited assassination investigations. Ferrie, in turn, had represented New Orleans mob boss Carlos Marcello. Both Ferrie and Marcello denied knowing Oswald. But numerous conspiracy theories have centered on Marcello's ordering the assassination — perhaps with the help of his close friend, Florida Mafia boss Santo Trafficante — in retaliation for the Kennedy administration's antimob campaign. Other mob bosses have been named as well by conspiracy theorists.

But no persuasive evidence has been marshaled to prove such speculation. Moreover, both underworld figures and law-enforcement officers have pointed out that the mob normally uses professional hit men — not rank amateurs with

the erratic backgrounds of Oswald and Ruby — to carry out important murders.

THE CASTRO THEORY

While living in New Orleans before moving to Dallas, Oswald distributed handbills attacking United States policy toward Fidel Castro's Cuban regime. The handbills bore the imprint of the local chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee — from all indications a chapter consisting of Lee Harvey Oswald.

After the Kennedy assassination, a Dallas woman reported she had once been visited by anti-Castro Cubans who introduced her to an American she later recognized as Oswald. She said the Cubans told her the American was trying to persuade anti-Castro groups to kill Kennedy because of his "reaction to the Bay of Pigs."

Meanwhile, congressional committees reported uncovering evidence that the CIA — with the help of underworld figures — had plotted assassination attempts on Castro. West Coast mobster John Roselli, who testified about such plots to the Senate intelligence committee in 1976, was later found murdered and dismembered.

For these reasons and others, there has been widespread speculation that Castro ordered Kennedy's assassination. In an interview with representatives of the House assassinations committee, Castro called the idea insane. "From the ideological point of view, it was a tremendous insanity," he said. "That would have been the most perfect pretext for the United States to invade our country,

which is what I have tried to prevent for all these years."

THE RIGHT-WING PLOT THEORY

One conspiracy theory current in the immediate aftermath of the assassination — but little heard in later years — was that right-wing business titans (Texas oilmen were usually mentioned) had ordered the assassination to replace Kennedy with the more conservative Lyndon Johnson.

The theory held that some Dallas millionaire, representing a loose confederation of like-minded entrepreneurs, had recruited Oswald — probably using several layers of middlemen. It was no secret that Kennedy's policies had made him unpopular in such circles; anti-Kennedy propaganda greeted his arrival in Dallas. Some of the more exuberant theorists even went so far to accuse Johnson of complicity in the plot.

But no evidence of any probity was ever found to support the right-wing theory — much less the Johnson corollary. As president, Johnson carried out Kennedy's policies and, in fact, was able to push through Congress some programs Kennedy could not.

In appointing the Warren Commission, Johnson hoped to put at rest public doubts about the assassination. Later, however, he came to have his own doubts — telling intimates he suspected there was a plot. He never dignified with a denial the notion that he might have been involved in such a plot.

— Michael Dorman



Nov. 22, 1963 — A Soldier's Memory

IT HAS been 25 years since that bullet rang out from the Texas Book Depository, or wherever, and dramatically began to change America.

The 1960s were nasty times, and on Nov. 22, 1963, they got infinitely nastier. It was the first of the assassin's hits that would fix in strangers' minds for years to come just what they were doing when the slug hit home.

Feb. 21, 1965, was the second strike.

The third and fourth came on April 4 and June 5, 1968.

On that bleak November day 25 years ago, I was a newly minted second lieutenant swaggering to lunch at the Fort Bliss officers' club, when the rifle slug—in Dallas—struck home.

Starched and pressed in my tropical worsted uniform, I had taken the oath to defend strangers' human rights that neither I nor my forebears had ever enjoyed in our own country. Such cruel contradictions are the birthright of those born into the oppressed classes of this republic.

After graduating from college in Connecticut, I had sought a job as a reporter, but that possibility for me, in those days, was as remote as the Oval Office. There were two newspapers in Hartford, the Times and the Courant. Neither had ever hired a black reporter. The Evening Times has seemed to exist, thanks to the forces of good.

In life, the Times would no more have hired me, I had every reason to believe, than the Klan would have taken me on as its imperial wizard. The white male graduate, in the main, got the upscale jobs and all the other benefits of citizenship. My generation of blacks was expected to make peace with the obligations of citizenship. We were not rewarded in the civilian job market for aspiring to excellence.

Not many of us, two decades ago,

got out of the wretched conditions of the ghetto. Some took refuge in the church, others in the bottle, still others made their stand in the pool hall, on the street corner, behind the switchblade—candidates, as Richard Wright wrote, "for the clinics, morgues, prisons, reformatories and the electric chair of the state's death house."

Those of us who escaped had to

other, endeared him to Afro-Americans. They gazed on him and saw not so much what he was, but rather what, if worked on, he could become.

Coming out of the Eisenhower years, blacks were afforded a new, though exaggerated, sense of the possible humanness of the enemy they were up against. As Malcolm X and Martin Luther King heightened blacks' sense of dignity about them-

in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 per year, a life expectancy which is seven years less, and the prospects of earning only half as much.

"No American who believes in the basic truth that 'all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights,' can fully excuse, explain or defend the picture these statistics portray. Race discrimination hampers our economic growth by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. It hampers our world leadership by contradicting at home the message we preach abroad. It increases the cost of public welfare, crime, delinquency and disorder. Above all, it is wrong."

No president, including Abraham Lincoln and Lyndon Johnson, has ever spoken this way. Kennedy went on to lay out a blueprint to make things more equal in the areas of voting, education, employment, public accommodation, housing and civil rights overall.

In his introduction, Kennedy cited the Emancipation Proclamation as a "first step." He praised the president who signed it and noted that Lincoln "unhappily did not live to follow up."

Nor, of course, did Kennedy. For on that bleak November day as I swaggered into the officers' club, Walter Cronkite gave us the word that the commander-in-chief had been shot dead in Dallas.

The crowd of officers gathered around the television broke out into mild applause and scattered cheering.

That afternoon, my first sergeant, from Mississippi, smiled for the first time since I had met him.

'It was never so much what Kennedy did during his short sojourn; it was his style, his boldness, the things he said.'

find a lever. I took my English degree into the Army to hone my leadership skills and learn how to shoot down enemy bombers with Nike Hercules missiles.

My commander-in-chief was John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The Irish had never struck me as racially enlightened. I grew up in a partly Irish and Italian neighborhood in Hartford and found the former, on the issue of race, to have attitudes similar to their redneck cousins in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

But this Irish-Catholic Kennedy, this president, many Afro-Americans said, seemed different. He spoke eloquently enough, but when pressed, there was something more. What the oppressed saw in him was a quality rare in white males and absent in every other president since, save Jimmy Carter.

President Kennedy's humanitarian synapses were open; he had a rather substantial capacity to change. This quality, more than any

ones, Kennedy, in words at least, hiked their expectations of the federal government.

It was never so much what Kennedy did during his short sojourn; it was his style, his boldness, the things he said. On Feb. 28, 1963, in a message to Congress on civil rights, Kennedy diagnosed the effects of racial illness in America:

"Through these long one hundred years, while slavery has vanished, progress for the Negro has been too often blocked and delayed," he said.

"Equality before the law has not always meant equal treatment and opportunity. And the harmful, wasteful and wrongful results of racial discrimination and segregation still appear in virtually every aspect of national life, in virtually every part of the nation."

"The Negro baby born in America today—regardless of the section or state in which he is born—has about one-half as much chance of completing high school as a white baby born

OTIS PIKE

After U.S.-Bashing, Still Good Neighbors?

VERO BEACH, Fla. — All over the United States our magnificent national highway system beckons Northerners to follow the sun before the great freeze kills them.

The motels and restaurants beckon, too. They fly the flags of northern states so Yankees will feel welcome. They also fly the flag of one foreign country.

We don't think of Canada as a very foreign country. Except for the French-speaking part, there is less difference between their language and that of our northern states than there is between that of Minnesota and Alabama. The boundary is unfenced and unarmed—a magnificent testimonial to the ability of two nations to get along.

While every U.S. student knows who said, "The British are coming," and while two generations of U.S. politicians have gotten elected by warning that the Russians were coming, no one has gotten into our history books by waving the bloody flag and

Otis Pike, a former congressman, is a syndicated columnist based in Washington.

proclaiming, "The Canadians are coming." They are almost part of us.

That is the problem. They don't want to be part of us. They want to be Canadians. Unless the pollsters are wrong, up across the border where Liberal is not a dirty word, but a political party, the Canadians on Monday will spurn

sense, but man does not live by economics alone.

The Liberals and their leader, John Turner, struck a nerve. John Turner has cried that Mulroney sold Canada out to the United States. He has, in a campaign that would seem demagogic had we not just been through one, warned that the Ameri-

'We don't like being pictured as the barbarians at the gates.'

the opportunity to get closer to us.

The Conservatives won the last election in a landslide and held 203 of the 282 seats in the last parliament.

Their prime minister, Brian Mulroney once opposed a free-trade agreement with the United States; now he supports the one that was negotiated between the two nations this year. It was approved by the U.S. Congress with only minor fuss. It is the overriding issue in tomorrow's election. Free trade makes economic

cans are coming. If the pact is approved, Canada will be "a colony of the United States," he says.

Turner has been aided in his nationalistic emotionalism by the Toronto Star, Canada's largest newspaper and one that circulates in the heart of the Conservatives' strength.

We don't like being pictured as the barbarians at the gates. Free trade is, on balance, good for business. Bar-

the free-trade pact is rejected "by dismaying foreign and domestic investors alike, it would cause capital either to shun or flee the country, thereby putting relentless pressure on the currency. That, in turn, would impel the central bank, which happens to be sensitive to the threat of inflation, to push already high interest rates higher. . . . Down that road lurks recession or worse."

It was not an economist but Robert Frost who said, "Good fences make good neighbors." Most of the fences between the United States and Canada are down and if the Canadians elect to keep some small ones standing, that is no reason for us to act like a woman scorned.

For those sensible Canadians who don't want to get any closer to freezing than the center section of the supermarket, may their flags continue to show a welcome on I-95. Let them arrive solvent and leave less so.

For less sensible U.S. citizens who elect to strap long strips of plastic on their feet and break limbs in Canadian snows, let's hope that after their little orgy of U.S.-bashing and fence-preserving, the Canadians will continue being what good fences make.

