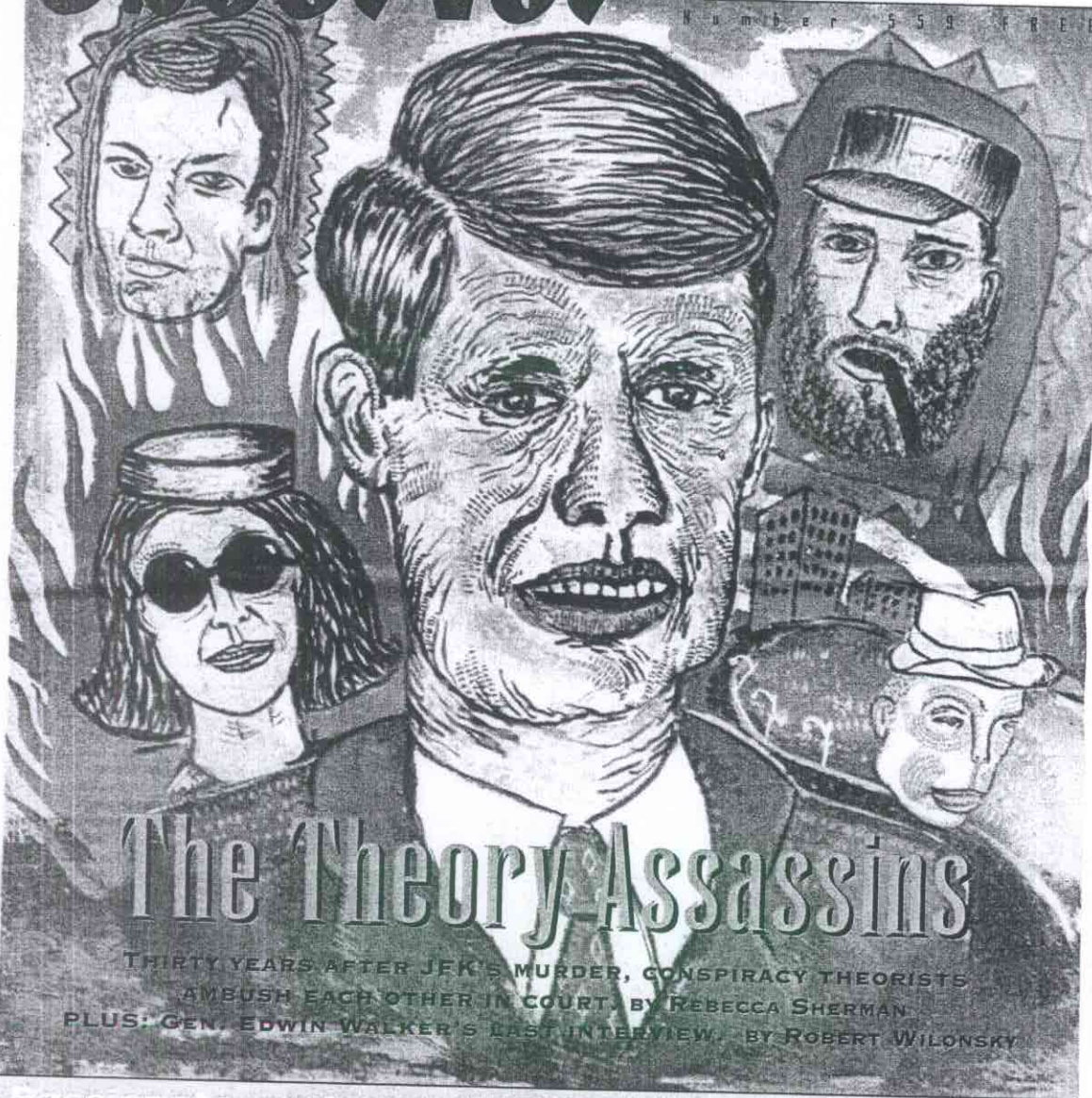


Observer

November 24, 1993
Number 559 FREE

**Fountain of money?
Billionaire's lieutenant hawks
Ecuadoran youth pills**



The Theory Assassins

THIRTY YEARS AFTER JFK'S MURDER, CONSPIRACY THEORISTS
AMBUSH EACH OTHER IN COURT. BY REBECCA SHERMAN
PLUS: GEN. EDWIN WALKER'S LAST INTERVIEW. BY ROBERT WILONSKY

Passionate, angry music from Jane Campion's *Piano*

Pitney Bowes
ex-manager wins
civil verdict
in "witch" case

A rising sun
in local eateries:
Dish delights in the
details at Ume



Business blues
in Deep Ellum:
Where have all the
people gone?

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MICHAEL OBER

the final Conspiracy

OBSESSED WITH A 30-YEAR-OLD MURDER, JFK ASSASSINOLOGISTS GO TO COURT TO SILENCE ONE ANOTHER.

BY REBECCA SHERMAN

Attorney-at-law Brad Kizzia is hardly able to contain himself. Punching his phone to put the caller on hold—in mid-conversation—he sputters excitedly to a visitor in his office: “Do you know who this is?”

“It’s *Mark Lane!*” Kizzia blurts, unable to await a guess. “*The Mark Lane.*” When the name elicits only a blank stare, the stocky, rust-haired barrister twirls his executive chair around. “Over there on the bookshelf!” he exclaims, wagging an index finger at the overstuffed rows, a veritable library of such JFK-assassination classics as *High Treason*, *JFK: Breaking the Silence*, and *On the Trail of the Assassins*—one of the two books on which Oliver Stone based his movie, *JFK*. Among the many esteemed tomes: an autographed copy of *Rush to Judgment*, published in 1966 by, of course, Mark Lane, the dean of “assassinologists”—and the very same

DALLAS ATTORNEY BRAD KIZZIA
 (OPPOSITE PAGE) IS REPRESENTING JFK
 CONSPIRACY THEORISTS GARY SHAW (BELOW)
 AND DR. CHARLES CRENSHAW (BELOW RIGHT)
 IN A DEFAMATION SUIT AGAINST SOME OF
 THEIR CRITICS.



Michelle Dapera



Wade Lambert

man who is now dangling on interminable hold.

Lane is calling Kizzia, a 39-year-old insurance and personal-injury litigator at the conservative downtown Dallas firm of Strasburger & Price, to announce his plans to file a lawsuit. Not about an accident or malpractice claim, but because Kizzia shares Lane's passion: proving that the assassination of America's 35th president was the product of a sinister, and as yet unearthened, conspiracy.

It is no accident that this lawyer has pinned a poster-sized diagram of Dealey Plaza on the wall of his 44th-floor office, which offers a clear view of the assassination scene, including Dealey Plaza, the former Texas School Book Depository, and the edge of the grassy knoll.

And it is no accident that Kizzia is at the center of the latest twisted wave of the 30-year-old controversy surrounding the martyred president: he represents conspiracy theorists who are suing other conspiracy theorists for defamation—and who allege that the attacks upon them are part of yet another conspiracy. Jokes Kizzia: "You could call what I'm doing, 'On the Trail of the Character Assassins.'"

The assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 in Dallas has inspired more than 250 books—and at least as many theories. Dissatisfied with the Warren Commission conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, serious researchers, buffs, and assorted flakes have made their various cases for the involvement of the CIA, the FBI, Soviet intelligence agents, anti-Castro Cubans, the Mafia, and extraterrestrial beings.

Kizzia himself blames the Cubans. He believes exiles sent to overthrow Castro during the Bay of Pigs fiasco were angry at Kennedy for abandoning them—and conspired to kill JFK to provoke a war against Cuba. "It didn't work," Kizzia explains. "Because the CIA and the FBI covered it up. I think a lot of well intentioned people participated in the cover-up because

they thought they were doing their country a service by avoiding World War III."

Though he admits he snatched up the law office with the assassination vista when the opportunity presented itself, Kizzia insists, "I don't spend hours looking out the window, wondering." Likewise, he says

he resists the temptation of a lunchtime stroll two blocks away to the scene of the crime—including the Sixth Floor exhibit, featuring more than 400 photos and an inside view of the sniper's perch. "I've only been there twice since it opened. *Really*."

"I'm not obsessed," he declares, before pausing to contemplate his words. "Of course, obsessed people *would* deny that they are obsessed."

Rhetorical characterizations aside, Kizzia is clearly part of the passion that keeps the Kennedy assassination controversy alive.

"I've been thinking for a long time about writing an open letter to District Attorney Vance," Kizzia announces brightly, "and asking him to reopen the investigation of the case. I know he lost the Railey case, and maybe he wouldn't want to take on something as controversial as this during reelection, but there were three murders in Dallas County—Kennedy, Officer Tippett, and Oswald. Ruby was prosecuted for murdering Oswald, but there is no statute of limitations for the other murders."

"People have written books claiming they participated in conspiracies to murder the president. They either need to be exposed as frauds or they deserve to be prosecuted."

Just a third-grader when the president was shot, Brad Kizzia became "totally fascinated" by the assassination—"as a murder mystery and as a cover-up"—while a political science **Continued on page 16**

Assassinologists

Continued from 15

major at Austin College in Sherman. That's when he wrote a term paper on the case and invited Mark Lane—the Mark Lane—to speak on campus about his theory of CIA involvement.

That's also when Kizzia, who picked up Lane from the airport, recognized that not all his peers shared all his passion. "The turnout was disappointing," Kizzia remembers. "I guess not that many people at that time were as interested in the assassination as I was."

Undaunted, Kizzia through the years became an avid student of JFK conspiracy theories. In 1991, he noticed a newspaper ad for the first annual "Assassination Symposium on Kennedy," or "ASK," being held in Dallas.

It is there Brad Kizzia made the connections that would make him the man for unhappy conspiracy theorists to call. It is there that he met Tom Wilson—and heard about what we shall call "The Second-Gunman-Detecting Machine."

When Tom Wilson invented his device, officially called "Image Processing with Computer Analyses Systems," he harbored only mundane industrial ambitions. Wilson, after all, was a retired engineer living in Murrysville, Pennsylvania—about as far from the 20th century's foremost murder mystery as one can get.

He had been tinkering with his machine for eight years by 1988, when a revelation struck him one crisp evening, as surely as it befell Archimedes sitting in his bathtub.

"I'M NOT OBSESSED. OF COURSE, OBSESSED PEOPLE WOULD DENY THAT THEY ARE OBSESSED."

"I was in my office doing repetitive tests on the machine I had invented for my work in the metals industry," Wilson, now 61, recalled in a recent telephone interview with the *Observer*. "It could detect bare metal, or flaws, in metal products. When that happened, the monitor would register a flash, or sparkle. But I had to run it over and over again. I was bored."

Wilson ejected the metals test tape and popped in a video of a TV documentary about the 25th anniversary of JFK's assassination. This moment of boredom would change his life forever.

When the famous Mary Moorman photograph of the grassy knoll appeared on his screen, flashes and sparkles materialized behind the knoll's wooden fence.

"That meant an object behind the fence was metal," explains Wilson. "But the area behind the fence was dark. Why would something shine if there is nothing there?"

To find out, Wilson, a metals-industry consultant, abandoned all his projects and concentrated on testing the Moorman photograph. Months later, he emerged triumphant: "Yes, there was a metal object behind the fence," he recalled. "And yes, there was a person firing a weapon."

Additional studies, he insists, proved that another shooter was lurking behind

the fence. "I'm not going to say I know who did it or why," Wilson says. "But it was proof there was a conspiracy."

Wilson felt certain he had cracked the case that had stumped the nation's top criminal investigators. But there was a problem: Wilson couldn't find anyone who believed him—or would even listen to his claims. Admittedly that he would not profit from his discovery, nor allow its exploitation, Wilson says he turned down offers by tabloid TV shows that wanted to break the story. Instead, he solicited the attention of Dan Rather and *The New York Times*, among others. "I had this hard evidence," he says. "I tried to call, to write letters. I didn't hear back."

Despite the rebuffs, Wilson continued his research. But now, there were other problems. Measurements and photographs he had taken at Dealey Plaza in November 1990 didn't match his other data. So on the morning of December 17, 1990, Wilson commandeered his wife Marcelyn, several of her metal pie pans—to which he had affixed various sizes of fabric and glass "targets"—and jumped on a plane back to Dallas.

Once at Dealey Plaza, Wilson, a heavy-set man with thinning gray hair, instructed his wife to stand holding the pie pans in front of her face while he photographed her in three critical spots: the pedestal next to the grassy knoll where Henry Zapruder filmed the fatal shots; the site across from there where Mary Moorman photographed the grassy knoll; and smack in the middle of Elm Street (and busy traffic)—the location where Kennedy's head would have taken the fatal shot as he passed by the grassy knoll.

A bewildered Oliver Stone, at work on *JFK*, watched this odd couple from the safety of the sidewalk in front of the old School Book Depository. "Do you mind if I ask you what you're doing?" a member of Stone's crew asked Marcelyn as she scurried to find her next cue.

"I can't tell you," the inventor's wife responded. Eventually, Wilson recognized Stone and approached him. And soon, according to Wilson, the couple and the filmmaker were sharing hot dogs and swapping opinions about the precise location of the presumptive assassin (or assassins) who fired from behind the wooden fence.

Weeks later in Murrysville, Wilson received an offer from Stone to consult on his movie-in-progress. Wilson worked, for the most part, authenticating photographs. "I never did see a movie star," he complains.

But the Stone connection did help win Wilson a feature role before the first annual Assassination Symposium on Kennedy, in November 1991. Invited to speak, he says he paid his own way. "It was my first chance at a legitimate forum," Wilson explains.

The annual symposium now attracts thousands of assassination buffs to the Hyatt Hotel and Dealey Plaza. "Assassinologists," as ASK organizers say their participants prefer to be called, pay a \$175 registration fee for four days of panel discussions on such topics as "JFK 101: An Assassination Primer," "Intelligence Community and Defectors,"

"Eyewitnesses," and "New Leads and Revelations."

Although most speakers had been allotted but a single hour, Wilson's 1991 talk lasted more than two hours. "I was going to pull the plug on him," remembers an ASK organizer, "but I was told if I did, the crowd would riot. They were completely mesmerized by what he was saying."

A *Dallas Times Herald* reporter named Mark Potok, himself an assassination buff, covered Wilson's talk and wrote an article about it published in the *Times Herald* on November 16, 1991. In the story, Dr. Cyril Wecht, a noted forensic pathologist and former president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, was quoted calling Wilson's work "beautiful."

But others were less generous. Their statements, as quoted in the *Herald*, would incite a lawsuit.

"It's a series of massive lies," declared David Belin, counsel to the Warren Commission, according to the *Herald* story. "The man is basically making an outrageous claim." The Warren Commission had, of course, concluded that the assassination was the work of Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone. Like everyone else with an opinion on the subject, Belin had offered his point of view in print—with two books that supported the single assassin theory, *November 22: You Are The Jury*, and *Final Disclosure: The Full Truth About the Assassination of President Kennedy*.

The *Times Herald* reporter also sought comment from Robert Blakey, chief counsel and staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations; the committee had concluded that Oswald most likely did not act alone. Blakey, who has offered his own conspiracy theory in a book titled *Plot to Kill the President* (later reissued under the title *Fatal Hour: The Assassination of President Kennedy by Organized Crime*), was quoted saying about Wilson's theory: "You know the saying among computer people, 'garbage in, garbage out?' This is garbage."

Wilson, who previously had no standing in the world of assassination theorists, was unwilling to let these attacks on his newfound stature go unchallenged. "You don't have to take this, you know," Wilson says a friend told him after he'd returned home to Murrysville. A short time later, Wilson received a letter from Brad Kizzia, who had heard him speak and had read the newspaper criticism of Wilson's presentation. After mulling over the matter, he had hopped on a plane back to Dallas and was sitting in Brad Kizzia's office.

Stone's movie, *JFK*, had just come out amid a storm of controversy, and Kizzia had written an opinion piece in *The Dallas Morning News* defending the film, for which Wilson had served as a consultant. That allied the lawyer with Wilson—and against Belin, who had aggressively attacked Stone's film.

In most intellectual debates—particularly the dicey business of unproven conspiracy theories—proponents of various points of view attack one another freely without fear of litigation. Theorists, after all, are supposed to offer sharply contrasting opinions about public controversy.

But Wilson wasn't going to take it. Angered by the published comments in the *Times Herald* article, in November 1992 he filed a defamation suit against both Blakey and Belin. Brad Kizzia is handling the litigation for Wilson.

Being there

An interview with JFK—
more or less

Since the public seems ready to accept Oliver Stone's quirky version of November 22 events as history, we figured there was no one better to discuss assassination theory with than the man who *actually* played John F. Kennedy in the movie *JFK*. Not credible enough for you? OK, he also played JFK in *Itwig*.

First, of course, the usual disclaimer: *he's not actually an assassinated president; he just plays one on film.*

Russ Vandeverdonk, a Dallas copier-machine salesman and sometime actor, says he abhors the "morbid" schemes to piggyback onto the publicity of the assassination's 30th anniversary. Still, he wasn't hard to track down: he sent out a press release announcing his availability to discuss assassination-related events. He says he was incensed by initial reports that as part of the dedication of the site as a national landmark, the city had planned to invite the Kennedy family to a ribbon cutting—something Vandeverdonk finds tasteless. "It [the dedication] should be done quietly," the man-who-would-be-Kennedy says. "It's where someone died, for Christ's sake—a president!"

True. But the part of the press release that got our attention was: "Of particular interest is the haunting feelings he experienced when it was the first take and he made the actual turn into Dealey Plaza..."

What self-respecting journalist facting the assassination's 30th anniversary wouldn't bite? Howard Stern, Channels 4 and 5, and Japanese television certainly did. Vandeverdonk, however, turned the Stern show down. "I was afraid they just wanted to do something funny with it," he explains.

Japanese television, we have to admit, has already grabbed the best line on the Vandeverdonk story, branding him "the only man to walk in Kennedy's footsteps the day of the assassination." (Actually, there were two JFK stunt doubles in the film, but why spoil it for the Japanese?)

But we've got the real scoop: Vandeverdonk, who patiently sat through more than 200 takes of the ill-fated motorcade—takes that included all the most popular shooting scenarios—is willing to make a call on the assassination theories.

Like the press release says, "...1960s dressed actors cheering, the rifle in the window, the grassy knoll, and the pillbox hat...". Short of a paranormal hookup with JFK, it doesn't get better than this for a conspiracy buff.

So, take it from the man who was there. About the "riflemen on the knoll" theory: never happened. The conjecture that a second gunman fired from the building across the street from the Depository? No way.

For the man who's relived the moment more times than the Secret Service agents guarding the president, it's simple. "After going through it so many times," Vandeverdonk says, "I believe it's the one gunman. Oswald wanting to get in the limelight. I don't think it was anything else."

Cut. Print.

Glen Warchol

Belin could not be reached for comment. Blakey, reached at his office at Notre Dame School of Law in South Bend, Indiana, where he is a tenured professor, declined to talk directly about the case. But he noted the oddity—and potentially chilling effect—of the litigation: “The debate on the Kennedy Assassination ought to be free and robust. If people get sued every time a reporter calls them on the phone, then that severely limits that freedom.”

On April 13, 1993, Kizzia, suing one conspiracy theorist on behalf of another, flew to South Bend to depose Blakey. Though the deposition was ostensibly being taken to determine whether Blakey could be sued in Texas, Kizzia took the opportunity to quiz Blakey about CIA memos and retouched *Life Magazine* photos of Oswald. “Tell me how that’s related to jurisdiction,” he asked, refusing to answer the question.

Kizzia also quizzed David Belin, in an April 7, 1993 deposition taken to help determine proper jurisdiction, about photographs of the grassy knoll and Dealey Plaza. “Do you feel that all persons who take issue with the Warren report are liars?” Kizzia asked. Belin’s attorney advised him not to answer because the question had nothing to do with jurisdiction. Kizzia pressed on. “...Did you come into possession of or did it come to your attention that there was, I believe, a CIA memo in 1967 that was distributed instructing and encouraging agents on how to counteract critics of the Warren Commission?” he asked. Belin again declined to answer.

Through an April 17, 1993 affidavit, even Oliver Stone makes a cameo appearance in Wilson’s lawsuit. The affidavit reads, in part: “John W. Belin has made speeches, given public appearances (including appearances on network television), and has written letters and articles that were published in newspapers and magazines around the country which have attacked me, the movie *JFK*, and people associated with the movie. He has unjustly called us liars and profiteers...Mr. Belin has apparently undertaken a nationwide campaign to strike back at those who voice opinions different from his own in connection with the JFK assassination.”

“I, like most Americans, want to know the truth regarding the assassination of President Kennedy, but the process of determining the truth through public discussion is undermined when people are discouraged from disputing the so-called ‘official’ government versions of the truth because of fear that their reputations and integrity will be smeared by influential people.”

Stone was not available to address the issue of how Wilson’s decision to sue critics—including a prominent Stone critic—might promote “the process of determining the truth through public discussion.” Stone’s publicist, Mark Pogachefsky, says the filmmaker has no comment. “I think we’ll just let the affidavit speak for itself,” he says.

Wilson’s suit was recently dismissed for lack of personal jurisdiction; federal judge Barefoot Sanders ruled that none of the defendants had sufficient ties to Texas. But Wilson is appealing the decision. And he says he intends to refile in Pennsylvania if the appeal isn’t successful.

“I am willing to stand up under oath and say exactly what I have found that posi-

tively shows there was a conspiracy,” the inventor of the “Second-Gunman-Detecting Machine” declares from his home in Murrysville, Pennsylvania. “If people want to do the same, we’ll see who’s telling the truth.”

Brad Kizzia holds an elegant black and white book in his hands and opens it from back to front. Although the volume was a gift from the author, it is the only book in his collection that Kizzia hasn’t read—and for good reason. The book is written in Japanese. Its title, however, is in English: *JFK: Conspiracy of Silence*, by Charles Crenshaw, M.D.

The English version is a different matter. Kizzia has scrutinized every word of the Fort Worth doctor’s book; after all, Dr. Crenshaw is his client.

The book was published last year with help from Cleburne-based assassination researcher Gary Shaw—who serves as director of the JFK Assassination Information Center—and writer Jens Hansen. The book is mostly a personal account of what Dr. Crenshaw, then a third-year resident at Parkland Memorial Hospital, says happened on November 22, 1963.

Crenshaw was one of 15 doctors who played a role in attempting to save the president’s life—he helped insert and drip an IV into the president’s leg. Two days later, he says, he assisted in resuscitating Lee Harvey Oswald after Jack Ruby shot him.

Crenshaw, now 60 and the semi-retired head of surgery at Tarrant County’s John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, claims several controversial facts in his book. First, he maintains that two bullets struck Kennedy from the front—a critical point for conspiracy theorists, since Oswald could have only shot Kennedy from the rear. According to Crenshaw, one bullet hit Kennedy in the neck and another in the temple near the hairline, creating a massive wound at the back of the head. Crenshaw not only claims to have seen the wound himself; he says the autopsy photographs have been altered to disguise the evidence.

While one other physician who treated Kennedy backs Crenshaw’s published account, several other doctors who cared for the president have said they do not recall such a head wound. Much of the harshest criticism of Crenshaw’s book—and the words that would spur him to sue for defamation, according to Kizzia—appeared in the May 27, 1992 issue of *JAMA*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

David Breo, the author of one of the *JAMA* articles, interviewed the two doctors who performed the autopsy and four doctors who treated Kennedy at Parkland on November 22, 1963. Writes Breo: “...no one can say with certainty what some suspect—Crenshaw was not even in the trauma room; none of the four [doctors] recalls ever seeing him in the room.” Breo quoted Dr. Charles Baxter, a surgeon who treated Kennedy at Parkland, as saying: “I’ve known [Crenshaw] since he was three years old. His claims are ridiculous. The only motive I can see is a desire for personal recognition and monetary gain.”

On April 9, 1992, the *Dallas Morning News* published an opinion column by free-lance writer Lawrence Sutherland.

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Assassinologists

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who attended a press conference Crenshaw called in Dallas. Sutherland's column repeated some of the statements in Breo's *JAMA* report and included some of Sutherland's own choice rhetoric: "Conspiracy of Silence is peddling lies."

Although Crenshaw's book stayed on the *New York Times* best-seller list for months, Crenshaw claims that the *JAMA* article and the Sutherland column defamed him. He had been carved up by many of the same critics who attacked Oliver Stone.

In March 1993, Crenshaw and Shaw filed a defamation suit against the *Morning News* and Sutherland. (The other author, Jens Hansen, did not file suit. He told the *Observer*, "I didn't sue because I didn't feel like I had been damaged.") Two months later, Crenshaw and Shaw added four more defendants to the suit: the American Medical Association, which publishes *JAMA*; *JAMA*'s editor, George Lundberg; writer David Breo; and, finally, Oliver Stone's archnemesis, David Belin. Belin was named because of interview excerpts published in the *News* on May 17, 1992, according to Kizzia. In part, the story quoted Belin as saying: "I think that the press should demand of the Dr. Crenshaws of the world, of the Oliver Stones of the world, or the Mark Lanes of the world, full financial disclosure. Because hundreds of thousands of dollars have been made out of the assassination."

Not exactly a vicious example of character assassination. But enough for Crenshaw and Shaw, whose suit accuses all the defendants of "individually and/or in concert and/or conspiracy" making defamatory comments.

Kizzia says the published criticism of *JFK: Conspiracy of Silence* in *JAMA* and the *News* damaged book sales as well as Crenshaw's reputation. "In the *JAMA* article, it suggests that Dr. Crenshaw wasn't even there," declares Kizzia. "There is no question he was there and participated with the resuscitation efforts."

On that issue, Kizzia has a point. In fact, transcripts of the 1964 Warren Commission hearings show two witnesses identified Crenshaw as having participated in the attempt to save Kennedy's life. *The New York Times* and *Columbia Journalism Review* also have both criticized the *JAMA* article for its sloppy research. It failed to note that several doctors had changed their stories over the years since the assassination; writer Breo even interviewed his own editor, George Lundberg.

Kizzia complains that Dr. Crenshaw was not interviewed for the *JAMA* article. But when asked if Crenshaw would comment for this story, Kizzia said his client was unavailable. "I think Dr. Crenshaw was really shocked by the responses to the book," Kizzia says. "I know it really hurt him personally and emotionally."

Kizzia notes that the AMA called a press conference to promote the Breo article. "Was there a conspiracy to silence Dr. Crenshaw?" he asks rhetorically. "I don't know. I do know that there are groups and organizations that have an agenda, and Dr. Crenshaw is certainly a threat to that agenda." The AMA is one such group, Kizzia maintains; he declines to list others.

Through their attorneys, Lundberg and Breo declined to comment on the suit. David Belin also did not respond to

requests for an interview about this matter.

Gary Shaw, a 55-year-old Cleburne architect and well-known assassinologist, insists he and Crenshaw filed suit as a last resort after the *News* and *JAMA* declined to publish their rebuttals and letters to the editor. The critiques of the book focus on Crenshaw. He says: "We have no problem with anyone who has a different approach to the assassination case. What we have a problem with is personal attacks."

Shaw, who grew up in Cleburne, says he made frequent trips to Dallas before Kennedy was killed to drink in Jag's Ruby's Carousel Club. "I heard the scuttlebutt that Ruby was Mafia and to be careful around him," he says. Shaw, who was 25 years old when Kennedy was killed, says he doesn't know who killed Kennedy. "I'm certain that if Lee Harvey Oswald was given a trial he would have been found probably not guilty. We've really not been told the truth by the government. There has been a cover-up."

Brad Kizzia's call from Mark Lane—the Mark Lane—who makes his living as a Washington attorney, concerned a suit Lane wants to file against the hottest JFK author of them all: Gerald Posner, whose best-selling 1993 book, *Case Closed*, made the August 30 cover of *U.S. News and World Report*.

From his law office, Lane declared he plans to sue Random House, Inc., publisher of Posner's book *Case Closed*, "for millions and millions of dollars" this week in U.S. district court. The basis for the suit, according to Lane: a promotional ad published in the August 24, 1993 *New York Times* that shows Lane in a photograph with other conspiracy theorists, including Oliver Stone. The photo's caption reads: "Guilty of misleading the American public." Lane says he is preparing a suit against Gerald Posner for "the incredible errors in his book."

"I'm not settling the case, either," Lane says at fever pitch. "Not unless Random House wants to give me the publishing house so we can publish books by eyewitnesses to the assassination whose books can't get published."

Lane, who says he will handle his own case with help from another Washington attorney, was calling Brad Kizzia because the Dallas lawyer has already fired his first legal salvo at Posner—on behalf of Dr. Charles Crenshaw. *Case Closed* quotes "a senior Dallas doctor who is a close Crenshaw friend" in distinctly unflattering terms: "If you spend time with [Crenshaw], he starts to confabulate, or a plot or plan, and that sort of thing. We are not dealing with a normal individual...He has had a stroke and can't operate anymore. I think it is a bag of worms of ego, going over the hill, the last hurrah." In September, Kizzia fired off a letter to Posner and Random House demanding an "immediate retraction and apology" for "the outrageously defamatory comments" about Crenshaw in *Case Closed*.

Posner's book attempts to dismantle the conspiracy theories set up by Lane, Crenshaw, and others over the last 30 years; much to the dismay of many active assassinologists, he concludes that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone.

"It is a book filled with errors," Lane says. Then, dishing out the most stinging insult a conspiracy theorist can offer, he

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adds: "It's very possibly the worst thing since the Warren Commission published their report."

Posner, resting for a few minutes between endless rounds of radio and television interviews to promote *Case Closed*, laughs when he hears that Lane intends to sue him. "He's been saying that for two months now. Every time I turn on the radio, he's saying it."

"Let me guess: Did he say my book was worse than the Warren report?"

Posner, saying that "truth is the absolute defense," insists he wasn't prepared for the response to his book. "It's created a lot more controversy than I hoped. This shows you how far our country has come. Thirty years ago, Lane was considered the skeptic. Now, when I'm the one who's backing the Warren report, I'm considered the skeptic."

Posner muses for a moment about the prospect of one author trying to silence another by going to court. "What is it about *Case Closed*? It's almost as if he doesn't want anybody to read it."

This week, Brad Klizsia—appropriately enough—will moderate a panel discussion of doctors and lawyers during the third annual Assassination Symposium on Kennedy. Norman Mailer, who is writing a book about Oswald, will deliver the keynote speech at the Hyatt Hotel.

It is clear that, within this gathering of conspiracy theorists, Gerald Posner has assumed the status of the assassiniologists' antichrist.

Tom Wilson, for example, whose invention caused such a stir in Dallas two years ago, is devastated that a story *Newsweek* planned to write about him was replaced by a story on Posner's new book. "Everything Posner says is black, I say is white. It's very difficult to take."

Wilson suspects the decision to pull the story about him might have been, yes, part of an effort to conceal the truth. "I have a feeling certain interests don't want this [information] to come forward," Wilson says. Then, in a moment of self-insight, he adds: "You can get so paranoid with this."

An employee with the symposium, who didn't want her name used, says Posner has been invited to speak this year but may not come because Norman Mailer, who is writing a book about Oswald, will be speaking. Posner confirms that he won't be coming and that Mailer's presence—as well as the ASK group's hostility toward his book—are among the reasons.

The symposium staffer says Lane is not welcome. "He came to the first one to speak and stood up and told all of us we were exploiting Kennedy's death and trying to make money off of the assassination." Ironically, Lane's 1966 best-seller, *Rush To Judgment*, is considered the first commercial success for a conspiracy theorist. Hundreds of other books about conspiracy theories have followed. Hundreds more are surely to come.

So the gathering known as "ASK"—dedicated to airing divergent views about the assassination of President Kennedy—will take place without the presence of several key figures on both sides of one of America's longest-running historical debates.

"Some days," says the symposium staffer, "I think they are all loony." □

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the Man Oswald missed

IN HIS LAST INTERVIEW,
GEN. EDWIN WALKER
 DEFENDED HIS PLACE
 IN HISTORY.

BY ROBERT WILONSKY

When Dallasites read the news that Maj. Gen. Edwin Walker died peacefully at 83 in his modest North Dallas home, most of the city's residents struggled to remember who he was.

If they remembered the general at all, it was for his brief brush with infamy. Walker narrowly survived a bullet from Lee Harvey Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, only seven months before Oswald would cut down John Kennedy with the same weapon a few miles away in Dealey Plaza.

A front-page obituary in the *Dallas Morning News* and a large one in *The New York Times* helped Dallasites fill in the blanks, bringing the general into uncomfortable focus, particularly when they recalled the Dallas of the 1960s that Walker personified: Commie-bashing, antidesegregationism, Kennedy-baiting, and right-wing fanaticism.

Walker's Halloween death from lung disease, no doubt from a chain-smoking habit, was a surprise only to those who **Continued on page 22**

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Walker
 Continued from 21
 thought the general—for so many years silent—had died long ago. He spent the last years of his life like an aging boxer, too tough and too proud and too punch-drunk to hear the bell.

As Walker told the *Dallas Observer* in an interview given just weeks before his death, "Our fight is not necessary now in the way it was then. It was bringing out an understanding of what the enemy was and what a communist was and was capable of. Even the Kennedys couldn't understand that.

"You can't understand the demise of communism unless you saw it in action," Walker said. "You're living in an age that's trying to back out of all the things it did. It was a vicious time. Everything was deceitful, from bottom to top. It got into everything, politics; and everybody doesn't get straight in one day."

Whether you liked him or hated him—if only because he was a grim reminder of an ugly, mean-spirited time—there's no denying Walker's place in Dallas' history.

For one brief but indelible moment in the early 1960s, for the world at large, retired Maj. Gen. Edwin Anderson Walker was Dallas. The ramrod straight general embodied the city's attitude and ideology at a time when men like congressman Bruce Alger and businessman H.L. Hunt had Dallas' rich and powerful running around like frightened children, fretting about the Red Menace and the threat of weak-kneed liberals like Kennedy and Johnson. Walker took Dallas' eccentricities to a national audience in 1961 when *Newsweek* featured his stately face on its cover, casting him as an important spokesman of the extreme right-wing.

Yet with just a few notable exceptions—like those two times in the 1970s when he was caught and charged with trying to pick up male undercover cops in Dallas park bathrooms—Walker's name hadn't been in the papers in three decades. The days of the Kennedy Camelot, communism, and the Berlin Wall have passed. And the John Birch Society, the National Indignation Committee, the Christian Crusaders, the Minute Men, and every other extremist right-wing movement that Walker founded or drew strength from are dead or moribund. And, finally, the general himself has died, in obscurity.

listed in the city directory, and he'd usually answer the phone when you called.

But Walker, perhaps sensing his nearing death, finally relented and agreed to an interview. For two hours he talked, often incoherently, about his place in history, touching on communism, the importance of the Warsaw Pact, John Kennedy's ineffectual presidency, Walker's failed run for Texas governor in the 1960s, and Oswald's attempt on his life. Sometimes the obviously ailing Walker was insightful, especially when it came to the



Gen. Edwin Walker being led away by U.S. marshals after being arrested on charges of inciting a riot on the Ole Miss campus

Kennedy assassination: he would raise questions about the FBI's lack of assistance to the Dallas police, mentioning the long-known fact that Hoover had it in for the bungling local cops and wouldn't grant them jurisdiction on the shooting.

Other times, Walker mumbled gibberish, particularly when he spoke about his historic legacy. Did his actions change the course of this country, or even his city? Walker answered with a rambling discourse on the impact of communism, adding, "You can't understand any of that unless you discuss the three Warsaw Pact objectives put out by Khrushchev, and only by assessing those against the Kennedy administration do you get a clear picture of what the result is." The more he would elaborate, the more murky the answer would become.

Here he was, grudgingly giving what would be his last interview, and most of it was an unintelligible mishmash of right-wing code words, out-of-date rhetoric, rallying cries long ago forgotten, and half-remembered snippets of anticommunist, antidesegregation speeches he gave decades ago in places like Shreveport and Jackson, Mississippi.

The leader who rallied people by the thousands to hear him speak—his "U.S. Day" speech at the Dallas Memorial Auditorium on October 23, 1963 being one of the most memorable, when he assembled every right-wing nut in the region from the Birchers to the Christian Crusaders—now struggled to finish

When reached by phone in late September, Walker refused to be interviewed. He said he had had enough of the media, which was "always getting things wrong." Visitors weren't allowed to his house and weren't allowed to call—though, till his dying day, the general's phone number and address were

a sentence.

Though he repeatedly insisted he was "doin' all right, feeling fine," Walker would not allow a face-to-face interview. And, the longer the general spoke over the phone, the shakier his voice became.

It was the quivering, brittle, phlegmy voice of a nearly deaf 83-year-old man who had seen his share of bloodshed and fighting, in and out of uniform. In it was only a distant echo of the brash, determined voice of a soldier who thought it was worth sacrificing his military career for his belief that America must be saved from communists without and within.

Where he once toured the country giving speeches about the relentless Red threat to freedom, espousing Christian verse and rightist propaganda, Walker spent his final days phoning state and local politicians to tell them Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison got a raw deal and that the state income tax was a bad idea.

Three decades after rallying thousands against communism, Kennedy, and desegregation, the general's issues were tame by even moderate Republican standards.

One of the things lost to history is that Walker was a fine soldier, a West Pointer who was awarded the Bronze and Silver stars and the Legion of Merit. Born in Center Point, Texas, on November 10, 1909, Walker graduated from West Point (where he was a first-rate polo player) in 1931 and slowly worked his way through the peace-time Army's ranks until, in 1943, he assumed his first command, leading a special service force of airborne, amphibious, and ski troops. It was his unit, the 3rd Regiment, that led the assault on the Japanese at Amchitka during the Aleutian campaign in May 1943, countering the only foreign invasion of America soil since the War of 1812.

The 3rd also participated in the attack on Naples, the Anzio beachhead, the Battle of Cassino, and several battles in southern France. In 1944, he commanded the 474th Infantry Regiment, which participated in several German and European campaigns as part of General George Patton's Third Army.

After World War II, Walker returned to the U.S. and eventually became Secretary of the General Staff, Fourth U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Sam Houston. He would go on to train airborne Ranger companies for each Army division, but by the early

THE COMMIES WANTED HIM DEAD, AND THE KENNEDYS DIDN'T MUCH LIKE THE GENERAL EITHER, SO THEY SENT THEIR BOY TO KILL HIM, WALKER FIGURED.

1950s Walker was itching for combat.

In 1951 he was sent to Korea, where he eventually became the Deputy Chief of Staff for prisoner-of-war affairs. Then he hopped from Korea to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Taiwan (where he became advisor to the commander-in-chief of the Chinese Nationalist Army), to Hawaii, to Arkansas, and to Heidelberg, Germany—each time as a commanding

officer and an increasingly revered soldier.

Yet while stationed in Germany in 1961, Walker found himself in trouble with the Army and his commander in chief for distributing right-wing John Birch Society leaflets to his troops; it was part of his "pro-blue" training program, which he claimed was "based on years of personal study, expert counsel, and official Cold War directives." As the general explained it, to be pro-blue was to be anti-red; it was patriotism (if not McCarthyism) taken to the extreme: Walker's strong belief that Commies had infiltrated the U.S. government. Kennedy himself became involved in the Army's investigation of Walker and reprimanded him publicly.

Fed up with the military, Walker sent the Chief of Staff his letter of resignation on October 1, 1961, claiming that "connection or affiliation with the United States Army may continue the jeopardies to which I have recently been subjected."

In one of the many ironies of Walker's life, he found himself defying a liberal president who wanted him to fight communists. But Walker refused to fight in what he believed was a dirty, ill-advised war: Vietnam.

"With 30 years of military service I made the decision I would not honor the Kennedy order of October 13, 1961," Walker said during his interview with the *Observer*, "that reassigned me from NATO Germany to an undeclared war against a second-rate Soviet satellite in the jungles of Asia. *The New York Times* said I was forced out of the Army, but the Army was running a hell of an operation if the war was so bad they were forcing me out by assigning me to it.

"John F. Kennedy and Robert McNamara were kind of mixed up in their military affairs. If they could use their own dirty war as a means of getting me out of the Army, I don't think that's much credit, do you? I just had a Kennedy on top of me who said I had to be eliminated from the Army because of my anticommunist stance, and I did what I had to do."

After his resignation he moved to Dallas and became the symbol of the right wing. From Dallas, he was going to launch a conservative revolution with the help of people like evangelist Billy Hargis (who would tour the country fighting Commies with Christ) and local billionaire and well-dressed religious zealot H.L. Hunt—who, Walker claimed, "was just someone I

talked to a couple of times," despite history books that have them closely allied.

To Walker, Dallas was a "communist cell" that needed to be purged, and his forces were ever-growing. Yet when he ran for governor in 1961, he finished sixth out of six in the Democratic primary; two years

later he considered running again—"because it is the cause for Christ and the world," he explained at the time—but then abruptly dropped the idea.

Walker didn't realize that his moment in history had already passed, in 1957. He was named the commander of the U.S. Military District in Arkansas, and under President Dwight Eisenhower's orders he

Continued on page 24

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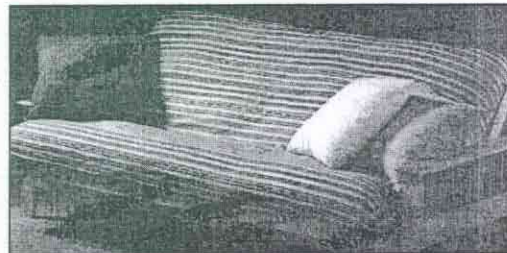
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Walker

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led the troops that forced integration on Little Rock's Central High School. His presence helped keep calm and order at a turning point in American history and make him a hero to the civil rights movement. But the general rejected history—he was commanding in Little Rock, he said, "against my wishes."

"I didn't think American troops on top of American people was the right way to do that," Walker said. "I asked Doug MacArthur what he thought about it, and he said Eisenhower made him do a lot of things he didn't want to do, too." Walker's Little Rock dilemma may have struck a deeper chord with MacArthur, who, under orders from another president, used cavalry in 1932 to break up the Bonus Army, a group of disgruntled World War I veterans camped in Washington.

In 1962, Walker would make up for his Little Rock "error" when he led a riot on the campus of the University of Mississippi at Oxford to protest the admission of black 29-year-old Air Force veteran James Meredith. On September 30, Walker issued a statement to the national media claiming that Meredith's enrollment at Ole Miss was "the conspiracy of the crucifixion by the Supreme Court in their denial of prayer and their betrayal of a nation."

The riot on Oct. 1, 1962, which involved thousands of antidesegregationists—some armed and wearing Confederate uniforms—left Ole Miss in shambles and landed Walker in the custody of U.S. marshals. To the end, he maintained that he was simply part of the melee, not its leader.

He was charged with acts of "rebellion, insurrection, and seditious conspiracy"—all of which were later dropped after a high-profile legal battle and batteries of psychological tests, including one that led an SMU professor to proclaim Walker had a "superior level of intelligence."

In one way, Walker equated Little Rock and Ole Miss: both events were "too badly messed up, too questionable."

"There's a difference between integration and desegregation, and that's never been taken into account," Walker said in his final interview. "One infers force and the other one doesn't. That's all I have to say on the subject."

In 1982, Walker was reinstated by the Army and given back his title of major general—not to mention his full annual pension of \$45,120 and all benefits. "I got everything back," Walker said, quite proudly.

"I don't have any fights with the Army," he added. "I was never fed up with the Army. I was fed up with the Kennedy administration."

Even with Little Rock and Ole Miss, Edwin Walker would have become little more than a footnote had Lee Harvey Oswald not embarked on his own rendezvous with history. "When Oswald shot at Walker," says author Gerald Posner (*Case Closed*), "he dragged Walker into the history books in a more prominent way."

It was on April 10, 1963 that Lee Harvey Oswald narrowly missed putting a bullet through Walker's head. Had it not been for a window frame that deflected the 6.5 mm bullet harmlessly onto a stack of

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papers, the general would have died three decades ago, a martyr for his right-wing cause. As it is, his history is forever intertwined with that of the president he

fairly conservative when it came to matters of foreign policy, Walker said, and he never really saw himself as the right-wing extremist portrayed in the media.



A surveillance photo of Walker's mansion believed to have been taken by Lee Harvey Oswald

despised.

Walker, in his own mind miraculously spared JFK's fate, was left with an obsession with the assassination, convinced that Oswald was part of a communist plot to kill both himself and the president. Walker believed the Warren Commission Report was "85 percent right" and that Oswald alone killed JFK. But he also maintained that not only did the Kennedys know that Oswald shot at him, but that the Dallas Police Department had arrested Oswald the night of the shooting and that Attorney General Bobby Kennedy had ordered Oswald's release from custody. How Oswald could be part of a communist plot to kill a right-wing radical and JFK—and be protected by the president's brother—Walker couldn't quite explain.

The FBI claimed it didn't learn of Walker's attempted murder until December 3, 1963, when Marina Oswald, Oswald's widow, told the feds that Oswald had plotted to kill the general. She not only turned over a note from Oswald that instructed her on what to do in case he was captured, but also revealed that when Lee returned home that night, he was "nervous," saying he had just tried to kill Edwin Walker. She also gave the agents copies of surveillance photos Lee had

WALKER, MIRACULOUSLY SPARED JFK'S FATE, WAS LEFT WITH AN OBSESSION WITH THE ASSASSINATION.

taken of the general's old Turtle Creek mansion.

According to a December 26, 1963, letter sent from the Secret Service to Jesse Curry, then the Dallas police chief, Oswald told his wife, "It was best for everybody that I got rid of Walker."

The general has spent three decades turning over in his mind why Oswald would have targeted him and Kennedy, two men who, to most people, appeared at odds with each other and at political poles. But Walker figured it differently: he and JFK weren't so different. Both were

"There are similarities in everything," Walker said, laughing. "But I wouldn't make a newspaper article out of it."

And, of course, it could have been that Oswald, obsessed in his own way, thought Gen. Edwin Walker was a more powerful, influential figure than he really was. One of the hundreds of theories swirling around the assassination holds that Oswald believed that by killing Walker, whom he considered to be racist and anti-Semitic, he would wreak havoc on the Dallas political scene—the hoped-for effect of the Kennedy assassination on a smaller scale.

But for Walker it was simple: The Commies wanted him dead, and the Kennedys didn't much like the general either, so they sent their boy Lee to kill him. History would tell us Oswald's act that April night (and November afternoon) was out of calculated, illogical violence, but Walker would tell you it was part of some grand international scheme to bury the right, to bury God.

"I completed 30 years of military service and made my home in Dallas when the president gets shot by a Communist," Walker said. "How do you younger people explain it? The policy was wrong. I couldn't prosecute a communist because he knew Khrushchev and because he knew Kennedy, and in my opinion Oswald was a ward of both states. You know bloomin' well he was a ward of the Kennedy state and a ward of the Khrushchev state."

Then, and to his dying day, Walker was convinced communism, whether it finally had been beaten by Jesus or the cash register, had left scars that affect us every day. "Everything's a little off-keel," he said. "A little abnormal."

"You know, I can't systematize the whole world, but you can do it one person at a time," he said, perhaps the only time in the conversation when he really reflected on his life's work. "But back then, I had a bit more influence than that. Course, you young people don't remember that." □

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