



The Dallas Morning News: David Looney

Michael Conaway (left) of Pennsylvania, Jan Stevens of New Jersey and Craig Ciccone of Michigan examine a detailed schematic of the John F. Kennedy assassination site Thursday.

WHO KILLED JFK?

Theories abound as 300 gather for assassination seminar

By Todd Copilevitz
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Just about everyone had someone to blame for John F. Kennedy's assassination: The CIA did it, the FBI, the Mafia, pro-Castro Cubans, anti-Castro Cubans, the KGB, French mercenaries.

Perhaps the most novel theory was the one that links CBS anchorman Dan

Rather to the assassination plot. It's all there in Monte Evans' book, *The Rather Narrative — Is Dan Rather the JFK Conspiracy's San Andreas Fault?*

No one seemed to be buying the Rather link — or the book.

It was about the only theory that wasn't getting significant attention at the first Assassination Symposium on

John F. Kennedy, also known as ASK. More than 300 people registered for the three-day seminar to discuss what they think really happened on Nov. 22, 1963.

The number of theories nearly matched the number of people who gathered Thursday at the Hyatt Regency Dallas at Reunion, a few blocks
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NOVEMBER 15, 1991

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from the assassination site.

JFK assassination buffs made the trek from 30 states and five countries in search of the truth and armed with their own evidence. Each theorist had his or her favorite motive and suspects.

Some were more willing to share their findings than others.

"I can't talk for attribution," said the vendor selling the *Rather* book. "But the book says it all."

Other, better-known experts, went out of their way to be quoted, calling news conferences on the first day of the seminar, which is being sponsored by the JFK Assassination Information Center and the *Texas Observer*.

During an hourlong presentation, author Mark Lane repeatedly insisted that he had proved that the CIA was behind the president's death and offered a videotape of his key witness.

"What is very important is looking at the facts," Mr. Lane said. "It's very hard to admit in any country that the secret police killed your president. But that's what happened just a short distance from here."

He was followed by Phillip Rogers of Houston, who said he solved the assassination plot by accident while researching a book. He believes that the killing was masterminded by three men found hiding in a boxcar near Dealey Plaza shortly after the shooting. The trio is known as "The Three Tramps."

After studying the slaying for more than 20 years, Wallace Milan of Dyersburg, Tenn., said that he has come to only one firm conclusion.

"I think it's safe to say none of us believe Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman," the community college instructor said. "Who would drive 500 miles to say they believe a government finding?"

He was referring to the report by the Warren Commission, which concluded that the president was

killed by a single gunman, Mr. Oswald.

For those who weren't up on the latest theory, book vendors and authors from across the country were happy to offer reference material.

Linda Winiarczyk drove three days, from Williamsport, Pa., to show books from her Last Hurrah Bookshop, which boasts more than 700 titles about the JFK assassination.

Other vendors offered videotapes, Kennedy-era memorabilia and vintage newspapers.

A bright red flier touted the Winedale Tavern's fifth annual Conspiracy A-Go-Go to be held Nov. 22 in Dallas. The event features The Six Lone Assassins band and look-alikes of Mr. Oswald and of Jack Ruby, who killed Mr. Oswald in front of a national TV audience.

In the middle of the Regency Ballroom was a large scale model of Dealey Plaza and the presidential motorcade.

M.K. Newton of San Diego studied the model and tried to recall all the theories she has studied.

"I've read just about every book, but now I'll have to go back and read them again to refresh myself on the facts," she said.

She moved on to join the line of people signing up for bus tours of Dealey Plaza and other Dallas sites tied — by fact or theory — to the assassination.

Outside the ballroom, several dozen people gathered around Aubrey Rike, who was an employee of the O'Neal Funeral Home in 1963 and helped put the president's body in the casket.

The questions came fast and furious as more and more people gathered around.

"Did you see the bullet? Did the neck wound look like an entry or exit wound? What color was the casket? When do you think they could have tampered with the body to hide the evidence?"