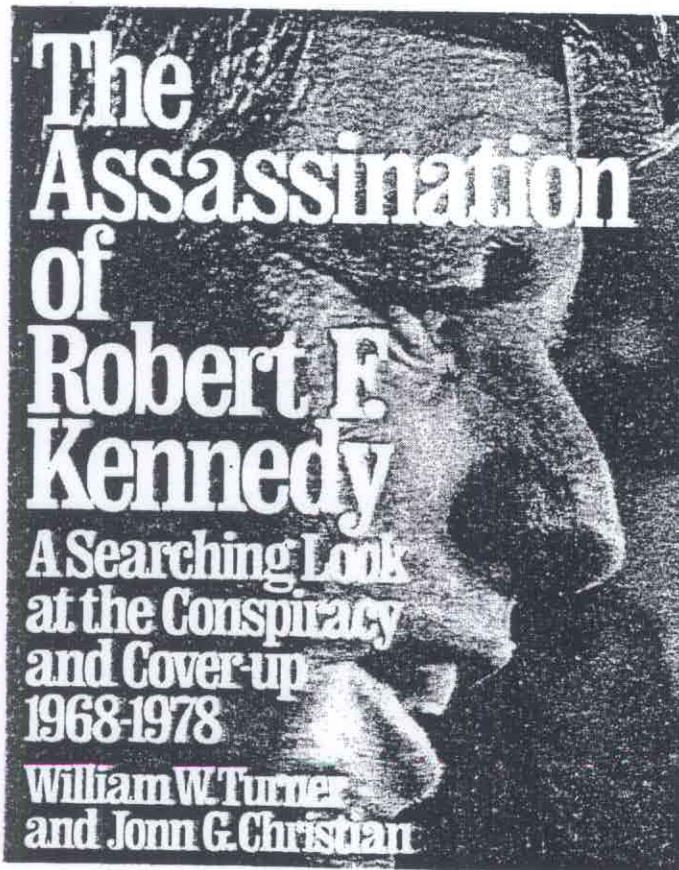



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—DR. ROBERT J. JOLING, Former President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, in the Foreword

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Bobby Kennedy

SEPTEMBER 20, 1978

Still the controversy rages

By Carol Felsenthal
American Library Assn.

Richard Nixon called him "that little SOB." Jimmy Hoffa called him a "monster." Lyndon Johnson called him "that grand-standing little runt."

Yet in his new biography of Robert Kennedy, two-time Pulitzer Prize winning historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. calls him the "tribune of the underclass" and "the most creative man in American public life."

Can they be talking about the same man — Bobby Kennedy? Just about the only point on which Kennedy's foes and fans agree is that Bobby incited strong emotions. From 1952, when he went to work for Joe McCarthy, the red-routing senator from Wisconsin, to 1968, when he was assassinated just moments after proclaiming victory in the crucial California presidential primary, Robert Kennedy remained a controversial figure.

Plowing through Schlesinger's "Robert Kennedy and His Times" — a thousand pages of pure praise for Bobby — will leave anyone under the age of 21 wondering what all the fuss was about. It will also leave him wondering why Kennedy wasn't a candidate for canonization, instead of a candidate for the presidency.

Schlesinger — a close friend of the Kennedy family, JFK's intellectual-in-residence and RFK's trusted advisor — has written a long, embarrassing love letter to Bobby. His statement of bias at the outset — "I was a great admirer and devoted friend of Robert Kennedy's.... But to adapt a phrase A.J.P. Taylor used in his life of Lord Beaverbrook, if it is necessary for a biographer of Robert Kennedy to regard him as evil then I am not qualified to be his biographer." — misses the point.

The fact that Schlesinger is unable to find a trace of evil in his subject pales alongside the fact that he goes to such ludicrous lengths to find evil — or at least venality — in everyone who opposed Bobby. By portraying this most complex of the Kennedy clan as a hero crossing swords with the forces of darkness, Schlesinger ignores the very qualities that made Bobby such a fascinating figure.

For instance, several of Schlesinger's colleagues have argued convincingly that the Kennedys stole the 1960 election from Richard Nixon. Bobby managed that campaign for the winner, his

ROBERT KENNEDY AND HIS TIMES by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (Houghton Mifflin, 1066 pages, \$19.95)
THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY by Jonn Christian and William Turner (Random House, 397 pages, \$12.95)



PLOWING THROUGH Arthur M. Schlesinger's "Robert Kennedy and His Times" — a thousand pages of pure praise for Bobby — will leave anyone under the age of 21 wondering what all the fuss was about.

brother. How did Bobby manage it? Not a clue from Schlesinger. Instead of making sense out of Bobby's less attractive qualities, Schlesinger makes excuses.

Bobby had the reputation for being a bully — a vicious, ruthless, relentless man. Schlesinger's Bobby is a romantic whose tough exterior hides a heart of gold; a man whose pugnacious personality can be explained — believe it or not — by his height and birthdate. (Bobby was the smallest of the Kennedy brothers and the youngest, save one.)

Historian Schlesinger regularly erases the historical record whenever that record reflects badly on Bobby. Kennedy the cold warrior, Kennedy the Communist hunter, Kennedy the wire tapper is nowhere to be found. Schlesinger doesn't cite, let alone examine, even one of Bobby's Cold War speeches. There's no mention of the fact that in 1961 Kennedy urged his brother to declare a national emergency and unleash his "emergency powers" to more efficiently fight Communists.

There's no mention of the Kennedy, who, as his brother's attorney general, would countenance bugging, wiretapping and spying on Martin Luther King; the Kennedy who helped put segregationist southern judges on the federal bench; the Kennedy who, in his singleminded fight against organized crime, acted as if the activities of a few Mafia mobsters were the number one domestic menace facing the United States.

Also missing from Schlesinger's biography is an examination of his subject's assassination — except, of course, when Schlesinger uses it to show what a brave soul Bobby was — serving the public even though he knew his fate would be the same as his brother's.

Not surprisingly — considering that the Kennedys have spawned nearly as many books as Watergate — there's now a whole book available on the subject of "The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy."

Sirhan Sirhan, a young Palestinian, shot Kennedy in full view of many eyewitnesses and a brigade

of TV cameras. Seconds later, Sirhan was arrested, still clutching the smoking gun. He was later charged with murder, tried and convicted.

Now journalist Jonn Christian and ex-FBI agent William Turner claim that Sirhan was merely a "Manchurian Candidate" hypnotized by a group of right-wing Catholics — who in turn were fronting for a group of oil millionaires. Supposedly, they programmed Sirhan in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, fire blanks, while another conspirator fired the real thing and then somehow melted into the crowd in full view of crowd and cameras.

Among the evidence the authors cite is a conversation between a man and two call girls. The man, they say, is the person who aided the Boston police by hypnotizing the Boston Strangler and getting him to trace his crimes. The hypnotist told the prostitutes that he had also hypnotized Sirhan. The authors claim that the prison psychiatrist was immediately removed from the case when he became convinced that Sirhan had been acting under a hypnotic trance.

After carefully studying ballistics reports, Christian and Turner ask why, if Sirhan fired his gun at an oncoming Kennedy from a distance of two to three feet, do all his wounds indicate that the shots came from the rear and from point-blank and near-point blank range.

They conclude by hinting that there may have been a conspiracy between the Los Angeles Police Department unit that investigated the assassination and the CIA.

Anyone who can manage to make it through this alternately dry and melodramatic book, will most likely end up believing that the authors are onto something. If an investigation is launched, watch out for a book — or two or three — when the results are in. Or probably even before they're in.

(NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.)
9-20-78 (TAPE NO. 3)

ABOUT BOOKS



NEA Newspaper Enterprise Association/ New York

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'Sirhan acted under the influence of others and the police covered up'

Who Killed Bobby Kennedy?

By William W. Turner

IN THE tumultuous political year of 1968, I ran in the Democratic primary for Congress in the Sixth district in San Francisco, and called for reopening the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy at the congressional level, the first national candidate to do so.

As the final line of my campaign brochure I pleaded, "Not to do so not only is indecent but might cost us the life of a future president of John Kennedy's instincts."

On election night that June, Senator Robert F. Kennedy was mortally shot in Los Angeles, minutes after claiming victory in the California primary. I was stunned, not only by the nightmarish fact of another

assassination, but by its timing.

Yet it seemed an open-and-shut case. A young Palestinian immigrant named Sirhan Bishara Sirhan trapped the senator in a pantry of the Ambassador Hotel and blasted away before scores of witnesses.

A few weeks later prominent San Francisco attorney George T. Davis, who had been chairman of my campaign, wanted advice on an urgent problem. A client, a preacher who billed himself "The Walking Bible," had received death threats as the result of a chance encounter with Sirhan in Los Angeles on election eve. The preacher had picked up two hitchhikers, and one, learning that he traded horses on the side, offered to buy a

palomino for delivery to the rear of the Ambassador Hotel on election night.

When Sirhan's picture was shown on television, the preacher recognized him as the hitchhiker. He was sure that an attempt had been made to set him up as a dupe in a getaway scheme, and that the second hitchhiker was an accomplice. He immediately reported the incident to the Los Angeles police, and the death threats ensued.

The police dismissed the preacher's bizarre story as a publicity stunt. At Davis' request, Jonn Christian, a former KGO newsman, who had been my campaign manager, and I analyzed the story. We agreed with the police that it was fiction, but we sharply disagreed that publicity was the motive. The preacher had religiously avoided publicity, and when the first press account did appear it referred to him as "Mr. X" at his insistence.

The "Walking Bible" episode propelled us into our own investigation, which in fits and starts has spanned a decade. We talked to cops and cowboys, scientific experts and prostitutes. Three witnesses were shot at, others intimidated. Evidence disappeared. But a picture gradually developed that, while blurry in spots, shows that Sirhan acted under the influence of others — perhaps through hypnotic conditioning — and the police covered up.

It is time to find out who paid for the bullets that killed Bobby Kennedy.

A Searching Look At the RFK Assassination

The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy: A Searching Look at the Conspiracy and Cover-Up 1968-1978

By William W. Turner and Jonn G. Christian, Random House, 397 pp., illus., \$12.95.

By Jean Collins

"The important thing to know about assassinations is not who fired the gun, but who paid for the bullets." (From Epilogue)

RECENTLY there were congressional investigations into the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., but not into the last of the murder trilogy, that of Robert Kennedy. One reason for this omission may be that RFK's killer, unlike the others, was convicted at a trial. Everyone knows Sirhan B. Sirhan was the murderer. Or was he?

After 10 years of intensive research, authors Turner and Christian aren't sure. They believe we don't have all the answers to the RFK assassination, nor have many good questions been asked.

For one, what was Sirhan's motive? Although born in Jordan, he'd never before shown political interest. Then, Sirhan was standing in front of Kennedy when the latter was shot. Why were the fatal wounds in back of the head? There were also too many spent bullets (some of the wrong size) for Sirhan's gun. The nation saw Sirhan shoot, but did he kill Kennedy?

Several peripheral characters, such as "Reverend" Jerry Owen and "the girl in the polka-dot dress," weren't given credence. Owen claimed he met Sirhan as a hitchhiker the day before the assassination. Yet they were seen together earlier. The girl in the polka-dot dress was heard by several witnesses to say gleefully, "We

shot him! We killed him!" But the L.A. Police Dept. discounted all such evidence.

The LAPD's role is certainly bizarre: They tried to get witnesses to alter stories; records were destroyed. According to the authors, the LAPD was "stone-walling" the case. J. Edgar Hoover shut the "FBI door," and D.A. Evelle Younger "made it abundantly clear he would resist any attempt to reopen the investigation."

Sirhan's trial itself showed little except the inadequacy of our adversary court procedures. The prosecution's only interest was in conviction; the defense's sole aim was acquittal. Neither side permitted evidence that might detract from these goals.

Strangest of all, Sirhan claims no memory of the shooting. His notes, written before the murder (and reproduced in this book), are weird. Since he wasn't on drugs, hypnosis was considered. A few years ago, "hypnoprogramming" would have seemed ludicrous. Now, with so many oddities, it's no longer unlikely, especially since we learn Sirhan disappeared for three months in 1967.

It's now a decade since the RFK assassination on the night he won the California primary, which put him closer to the Presidency than any other Democrat. His murder may well have "changed the course of American history." Robert Kennedy, like his assassinated brother, was well-liked. Among his admirers was Sirhan B. Sirhan who said, "I thought he was heir apparent to President Kennedy and I wish to hell he could have made it. I loved him."

This well-documented book raises many doubts about the entire case. It also provides good questions yearning for answers for "another assassination could be upon us at any time."

San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle World Section

Sunday, October 1, 1978



ROBERT F. KENNEDY: In the hurricane's eye at home and abroad

A conspiracy and cover-up?

THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, by William W. Turner and Junn G. Christian, 397 pages, illustrated, Random House, \$12.95.

Review by
MAURICE DOLBIER

Not long ago, in magazine articles, investigative reportage in newspapers, and book after book from major (as well as decidedly minor) publishers, conspiracy theories abounded about the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and

Martin Luther King. Some were bolstered by serious examination of deficiencies in the public record, or thoughtful discussions of seeming anomalies in such technical fields as ballistics or anatomy; some were clearly politically motivated; some were sheer fantasy, on a par with personal reminiscences of being taken captive briefly by little green men from flying saucers.

As is the case with so many topics taken up by the media, overplay held its own fatality. While small groups, now dismissively referred to as "assassination buffs," held conventions from time to time, like

Baker Street Irregulars and "Star Trek" buffs, the media went on to other matters, and so did the public, though still nagged by the thought that "there must have been something more to it," shrugging it off with the twin thought, "Well, I guess there's no way we'll ever really know."

In the late summer of 1978, it has taken publisher's courage to bring out a book on Robert Kennedy's assassination, with a subtitle: "A searching look at the conspiracy and cover-up: 1968-1978." It is a book that must be reckoned with, and that should persuade authorities to reopen an

investigation of the case. Turner and Christian, the first a former FBI special agent, the second a radio newsman, have made a most convincing case for a cover-up, largely on the part of the Los Angeles Police Department, and though some of their conspiracy speculations seem far out—Sirhan Sirhan as a kind of Manchurian Candidate hypnotically programmed to pull the trigger—their investigations have uncovered enough odd characters, unexplained conflicts in testimony, ambiguous reactions, and unlikely coincidences, to make, it would seem, a reopened investigation mandatory.

Conspiracies In RFK Death Investigated

"The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy," by William Turner and John Christian. (Random House, 385 pages, \$12.95).

Ever since a third-rate burglary (Watergate) ended up a national scandal, there has been a re-sparking of interest in the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. No longer is the "lone assassin" theory accepted. Too many questions have been raised and too many answers have been found insufficient.

William Turner and John Christian take a searching look at RFK's death and possible conspiracies and cover-ups. Through some strange circumstances, they come upon a self-ordained minister who relates a chance encounter with Sirhan B. Sirhan the day before the assassination to the authors and to the Los Angeles Police Department. Investigating the story of Oliver "Jerry" Owens, the authors' efforts come to a climax in 1975 when a little noticed trial (Owens vs. KCOP) opens a new avenue into the murder of Robert Kennedy and attracts attorney Vincent Bugliosi.

Discoveries and frustrations are included; new evidence, destroyed evidence, vanishing reports and witnesses and evidence of "stonewalling" by the authorities in Los Angeles in 1968. Also, the plausible theory of hypnoprogramming, of Sirhan being made a "Manchurian candidate," is explored and expounded.

That Sirhan was literally found with the smoking gun is not contested. However, Turner and Christian offer compelling reasons for refuting the lone assassin theory. The bullets which killed RFK did not come from Sirhan's gun, but from a second gun which was taken into police possession. And since it had been established that Sirhan was facing Kennedy at a distance of 3 feet when he fired, how can the fact that the fatal shots came from behind at a range of 1 to 6 inches be accounted for?

Admittedly, the reader is engulfed in the viewpoint of the authors. Yet even the most hard-line cynic will find it difficult to discount their investigations and nagging questions.

"The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy" is a chilling book which demands a re-examination of the case and calls for the uncovering of possible conspiracies.

Norma Walsh

THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, by William W. Turner and Jonn G. Christian. Random House, \$12.95.

The authors, who have been working on Kennedy research since 1968, have tried unsuccessfully many times to have the case against Sirhan Sirhan reopened. They contend that the Los Angeles Police Department destroyed important evidence which supports their theory that more than one gun was fired in the Ambassador Hotel pantry the night of the assassination. They have signed statements from witnesses, including a former FBI agent, indicating evidence of more than eight shots fired, but that fact was never brought out at the trial.

They also have pursued a theory that Sirhan was a "Manchurian Candidate" killer, hypnotized to do the job. Perhaps, they speculate other assassins around that time were similarly programmed.

One of their main investigations centers on a sometime preacher, Jerry Owen, who apparently knew Sirhan. Through another lawsuit involving Owen, they tried to get some of their Kennedy information into a court record, but the judge was not amenable, even though they persuaded Vince Bugliosi, prosecutor of the Manson Family, to enter that case.

Turner and Christian find the heavy hand of coincidence linking some figures in the Robert Kennedy matter with James Earl Ray, Arthur Bremer and Jack Ruby. Was this slaying part of a larger conspiracy which affected other key political figures? Unless this book persuades authorities to reopen the case, we may never know.

—NANCY HAMILTON

Arresting data on death of RFK

THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY: A Searching Look at the Conspiracy and Cover-up, 1968-1978, by Jonn G. Christian and William W. Turner. 397 pp. ill. New York: Random House. \$12.95.

By **FRANK J. CHERRY**

"THE IMPORTANT thing to know about assassinations," the Turkish police inspector said in Eric Ambler's *A Coffin for Dimitrios*, "is not who fired the gun, but who paid for the bullets."

Authors Jonn G. Christian and William W. Turner raise new and serious questions about the June 5, 1968, murder of Robert F. Kennedy. The doubt they cast on the lone-assassin theory, if indeed Sirhan B. Sirhan did fire the fatal bullet, is compelling.

Christian, a journalist, and Turner, an ex-FBI special agent, believe Sirhan was a kind of "Manchurian Candidate," programmed through hypnosis either to kill Kennedy or to divert attention in the kitchen pantry of Los Angeles' Ambassador Hotel while others did the job.

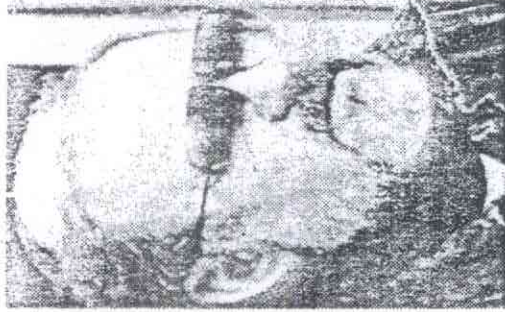
Christian and Turner specifically accuse the Los Angeles Police Department, whose "Special Unit Senator" investigators had CIA links, as well as the justice system in general, of actively covering up evidence of conspiracy.

"It was a bit mind-boggling," they write, "to think of liberal leaders (as was Kennedy, who had proclaimed victory in the California Democratic presidential primary only moments before he was shot) being knocked off by the radical left rather than the radical right . . ."

But since the public is perennially haunted by Communist plot theories, "one effect . . . was to permit the LAPD to suppress evidence leading in the opposite direction."

What evidence was suppressed? Early on, speculation about the whereabouts of "The Girl in the Polka-Dot Dress" reached a fever pitch. She was the proverbial "mystery woman" reportedly seen with Sirhan by several witnesses at the hotel the night of the murder. Even Sirhan, who said he remembered nothing of the shooting before being overpowered and disarmed by the crowd, did recall being with a girl he'd met there. He had gone to the kitchen to get her a cup of coffee, he said.

Yet, the LAPD discredited each witness, Christian and Turner say. Sirhan's pistol could fire eight shots; yet the number of bullets that struck the pantry's ceiling, walls, door jamb and swinging doors, plus the ones that struck Kennedy and at least one other, a newsman, added up to more than eight — 13, perhaps 15 holes in all. Original photographs made by the



JONN G. CHRISTIAN

LAPD and by the FBI tend to corroborate the authors' contention that more than eight shots were fired.

SIGNIFICANT PHYSICAL evidence (parts of a door jamb, for example) was destroyed by the LAPD even before Sirhan's appeal, Christian and Turner reveal. Some of the holes, the investigators said, were caused by "protrusions" on serving carts.

A ballistics hearing involving seven experts could not prove the fatal shots came from Sirhan's pistol. Curious, the authors say, that the bore of his pistol was heavily leaded (witnesses placed him at a range the day before). The slugs in Kennedy's body were copper-jacketed. Firing copper-jacketed bullets removes lead deposits.

The post-mortem examination showed Kennedy was shot at close range from the rear; yet Sirhan



WILLIAM W. TURNER

was facing Kennedy as the fatally wounded senator fell backward.

Too many bullets and too many guns, the authors say.

And wasn't it strange that an evangelist, a former boxer with a wall-to-wall rap sheet who admitted to having dealings with a young man he presumed to be Sirhan the day before the assassination, turned up in a Lincoln Continental and flashing a wad of 25 to 30 \$1,000 bills?

And wasn't it stranger still that the Rev. Jerry Owen's brother, a trade-school instructor, had a secretary whose brother, Arthur Bremer, made an attempt on the life of former Alabama Gov. George Wallace?

Readers who have had it up to here with conspiracy buffs will think twice before discounting this new, disturbing eye from a wilderness of suspicion.

Cherry is a member of The Post staff.

Books

Missing pieces in the "how"

THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, A Searching Look at the Conspiracy and Cover-up 1968-1978. By William W. Turner and John G. Christian. New York: Random House, 1978. \$12.95.

Reviewed by Richard Raznikov

In their dramatic book Turner and Christian demonstrate with great clarity three central points: first, that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan was almost certainly in an hypnotic trance when he shot at Robert F. Kennedy, and that the trance was induced by someone other than himself; second, that it is very likely that more than one gunman fired at Kennedy and that it was the second gunman who killed the Senator; third, that the true sponsors of the assassination were extremely powerful, that they probably included the CIA, and that some important political figures (notably Evelle Younger) and the Los Angeles police systematically covered up the truth.

In their almost ten-year search for the underpinnings of conspiracy, Turner and Christian found the authorities less than helpful. The small group of LAPD officers originally assigned to "cover" the case were, in fact, "covering-up" the case. The officer who ran the "lie detector" was more interested in brow-beating or intimidating inconvenient witnesses than in ascertaining truth — and there were many inconvenient witnesses.

Turner and Christian explored a web of material which pointed inevitably to a single conclusion: the LAPD, whether through innocence (rarely) or design, managed to frustrate the investigation into Bobby Kennedy's murder. They destroyed evidence, threatened witnesses, wiped out some of their own files. They lied to news reporters and to the FBI. They had their lone assassin, Sirhan Sirhan, delivered to them, and from the public information office in the Glass House (LAPD headquarters), they spun a public fantasy of how a second Kennedy had been murdered.

Much of the material in this book is not new, but that is no criticism. That which is not new is, in fact, quite relevant to the case. What is new, principally, is the story of Jerry Owen, cardboard minister and shadowy figure behind the gun or guns at the Ambassador Hotel. Owen knew Sirhan, Owen was with Sirhan frequently, Owen had connections which might have wanted Kennedy dead, and Owen came into a huge amount of money just prior to the assassination.

The connections uncovered by Turner and Christian are the missing pieces in the "how" of it. For many years investigators have known that Sirhan was in a trance at the time of the shooting. What they needed was the linkage, something more substantive than the shadowy figures seen with Sirhan but never properly identified.

They found that hypnoprogrammer, a man named William J. Bryan, Jr. who had been used by the prosecution to hypnotize Albert DiSalvo ("The Boston Strangler"). The name "Salvo ... DiSalvo ... DiSalvo" turned up inexplicably in Sirhan's notebook, among the automatic writing, yet Sirhan did not know who DiSalvo was. Bryan had bragged, toward the end of his life, that he'd hypnotized Sirhan, although he was never used in that capacity by the police or the defense after the murder. Bryan, by the way, worked for the CIA.

The authors also, with the help of former Manson case prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi, found more than eight bullets connected with the Kennedy murder. More than eight shots fired translates to more than one gun. There is very good reason to believe, as a matter of fact, that Sirhan was firing what amounted to blanks, and wounded no one at all, while two other guns did the job.

In an important sense, this is all old news. The details of assassination and cover-up are receding in importance as the more impressive truths of our time strike home. One of these truths is that official agencies owe allegiance to fear ahead of integrity, and so our "history" is written.

According to the publishers, "Members of the



William Turner



John Christian

House Assassination Sub-committee ... may use [the book] as the basis for expanding their investigations ... to include the murder of Robert F. Kennedy." Let us hope not. Let us hope that we have learned the greatest lesson of our time: that our future belongs to each of us, and that our past should not be manufactured by the Official Pronouncements of a Big Brother government.

Pacific Sun, Week of October 27-November 2, 1978

Mill Valley, CA.

A 'curious' inquiry into the senator's death

The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy

By John Christian and William Turner
Random House, 397 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by James Coates

On Sept. 15, 1978, the publishing firm of Random House, whose offices are just a few blocks from the apartment building that houses the Cuban "observers" at the United Nations, will, interestingly enough, issue a book dealing with the assassination of Sen. Robert Kennedy. One can only speculate why the people who control the Eastern establishment publishing house issued this book. Is it significant, one might ask, that one of the co-authors, William Turner, has the identical last name as the current chief of the CIA?

Is there more significance than immediately meets the eye in the fact that the other author, John Christian, worked for the same television

James Coates is a member of *The Tribune's* Washington Bureau who has covered the investigation of the House Assassination Committee

network as John Scali, a newsman with past CIA ties?

Similar innuendos of conspiracy are speckled throughout Christian and Turner's book on the Robert Kennedy assassination like the rat hairs and insect parts in an FDA-rejected hot dog. And they are about as palatable.

"Curiously enough," write the pair, Sirhan Sirhan's infamous "Kennedy Must Die" notebooks mention the name of DeSalvo — the last name of the Boston Strangler. More curiously, the notebooks have the same disjointed quality as the "automatic" writing subjects under hypnosis sometimes produce.

Further, note our two authors, the hypnotist who aided Boston police by placing DeSalvo in a trance to help him recall crime specifics, told two call girls — just before he died, "interesting-enough" of that he had hypnotized Sirhan Sirhan.

Curiouser still, note the two Random House sleuths, James Earl Ray, convicted slayer of Martin Luther King Jr., once visited a Los Angeles hypnotist.

Yes, it gets curiouser and curiouser, this southern California version of Alice in Wonderland. Isn't the conclusion obvious:

Sirhan was a "Manchurian Candidate," pro-

grammed by right-wing Catholic fundamentalist cronies of Southwestern oil millionaires to approach the senator in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel and fire several blank bullets while a co-conspirator, unnoticed by the hundreds of eyewitnesses, and TV cameras, fired the fatal shots and melted into the crowd.

In fact, the bizarre premises Turner and Christian cook up would make all this a most readable mood piece of paranoia if the subject — Kennedy's murder — were not so painful.

But the focus is Kennedy, and the memory of that terrible June night 10 years ago hovers over every page. The result is that this book — even if it did raise questions that should be pursued — has an unforgeable taint of cheap exploitation.

The authors, for example, work closely with and write glowingly of Vince Bugliosi, the prosecutor in the Manson cult murder trials who acquired even more notoriety from the Fate and LaBlanca deaths through his best seller "Helter Skelter."

Much of the factual information in Turner and Christian's hands comes from a California stander trial in which a Los Angeles TV station attempted, unsuccessfully, to defend itself against charges it falsely reported that a video

evangelist named Jerry Owen, "the Walking Bible," was "involved in the Kennedy assassination."

Bugliosi, who wanted to play F. Lee Bailey on the TV station's behalf, attempted to turn the stander trial into a judicial examination of the Kennedy assassination. In the process much confusing and potentially important information surfaced.

For example, it was this case that raised most recently the truly confusing charges and counter charges over whether the gun taken from Sirhan was indisputably the weapon that killed the senator. Similarly, the trial developed yet-to-be-pursued questions about a CIA tie to the Los Angeles Police Department unit that investigated the Kennedy assassination.

Unfortunately, investigation of such potentially explosive leads is invariably dull going and rarely if ever confirms the startling ultimate possibilities that prompt the original inquiry. Establishing a tie between a key Los Angeles police officer and the CIA is a far cry from linking the CIA with Kennedy's death.

Turner and Christian, like so many before them, have decided to copy the Queen of Hearts by skipping the trial and moving right along to the execution.

Like a '20s pulp thriller

THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY by John G. Christian and William W. Turner. Random House, \$12.95.

"There'll be an attempt on my life sooner or later," Robert Kennedy had predicted. "Not so much for political reasons

... Plain nutness, that's all." William W. Turner, an ex-FBI agent turned polemicist, and John G. Christian, an ex-broadcaster turned assassination buff, could not disagree more strongly. In "The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy," they

argue that Sirhan Sirhan was a "Manchurian Candidate," an assassin programmed by vague right-wing forces to kill Sen. Kennedy.

Their book deals a stunning blow to the art of assassination, which has been growing more respectable during the last few years. The evidence to support their theories is scanty, and the book's prose seems lifted from a 1920s pulp thriller. "Plain nutness, that's all." Gary May

Sunday News Journal
Wilmington, Delaware
September 10, 1978

The Sunday Oregonian -- September 10, 1978

BOOKS

A related new book is *The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy*, by William W. Turner and John G. Christian (Random House, \$12.95), which concerns itself primarily with the tragic events in the Los Angeles hotel kitchen on the night Robert Kennedy was shot dead. The two authors are absorbed in selling their theory that the assassination was the result of a conspiracy and that the "cover-up has lasted for more than a decade." They did not convince this reader that Sirhan Sirhan was not alone in the killing.

The death of a Kennedy

Prejudices Distort Probe Of RFK Death

Conspiracy? 'So much trash'

By Elmer Gertz

By OTTO SCOTT

THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY: A Searching Look at the Conspiracy and Cover-up 1968-1978 by William W. Turner and John G. Christian; Introduction by Dr. Robert J. Joling; Random House; photos; appendix; index; 397 pages; \$12.95.

President John F. Kennedy was the first; next was the killing of Oswald by Jack Ruby. Then followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and the crippling of Gov. George C. Wallace.

In each of these dread events the responsible individuals were immediately captured and all but Oswald convicted and imprisoned. Yet the nation was left with an enduring sense of frustration mainly because — despite reams of publicity — there has been a conspicuous, dismaying lack of intelligent analysis and description of not only the preparations of the assassins, but of their motives. Only Edward Jay Epstein has provided a rounded description of Oswald, though the implications he opens regarding press coverage and competence and the state of the CIA is fairly scary. For the rest, confusion clouds the figure of petty criminal James Earl Ray, convicted assassin of Dr. King; a pit of darkness has swallowed dull-witted Bremer, crippler of George Wallace, and Sirhan Sirhan sits neglected in prison while the admirers of Robert F. Kennedy continue to deplore the senator's untimely death.

This turning from what would seem the natural starting place for any investigation marks the methods of Turner and Christian, though both are experienced. Turner is an ex-FBI agent; Christian an ex-broadcaster "newsman." They are not

drawn toward Sirhan, whom they consider innocent, so much as to other, seemingly peripheral characters — though Sirhan was captured with a smoking gun amid a crowd of witnesses.

The central Turner-Christian suspect is an itinerant evangelist named Oliver B. "Jerry" Owen, who thought he picked up a hitchhiking Sirhan and almost sold him a horse the day of the assassination. In pursuit of this tale, which the police dismissed, Turner-Christian rush down many streets and cul-de-sacs, shouting angrily. In their course they reveal some heavy prejudices against the FBI and the CIA, the Los Angeles police and former Chief Ed Davis, former L.A. Mayor Sam Yorty, various district attorneys, judges, at least two former state attorneys general and

some appointed officials and elected personages.

Their major argument is that Sirhan was "hypnoprogrammed" by evil forces to serve as a decoy while the real assassins went to work. The authors believe this same program covers and links the shootings of President Kennedy, Dr. King and Gov. Wallace. They also believe that these events are the work of a right-wing cabal out to kill all liberals, and explain the Wallace shooting was necessary because Wallace was siphoning votes from Nixon.

Various names are dragged out to support this theory; Jim Garrison, the ex-New Orleans D.A. who sought political fame through his own Kennedy investigation, lawyer Vincent Bugliosi, various naive individuals from show-biz and broadcasting and some Washington wire-pullers who should (and probably do) know better.

The theory conspicuously omits all but domestic targets. It casts dark insinuations in many directions, and even seeks to include evangelical Christianity in its hierarchy of evil. This Pogo approach ("We have met the enemy and he is us") was funny in the hands of a cartoonist, but is now tiresome and intellectually insulting. Our government is not a criminal conspiracy, but I now believe many of our national troubles stem from persons willing to hurl hysterical accusations. To me, this book is a graphic and sad illustration of the old adage that "When reason sleeps, dreams of lunacy arise."

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Robert F. Kennedy was shot, in 1968, at his moment of greatest triumph, in the sight of many people, by Sirhan Sirhan.

This young Palestinian was subsequently charged with the murder, tried in open court with every constitutional protection, convicted and sentenced to death — a sentence overridden when the California Supreme Court and later the highest court of the land struck down capital punishment as it was then imposed.

How, then, can there be any doubt that Sirhan, and Sirhan alone, killed Kennedy? To ask this question is to be ignorant of the resourcefulness of those who have studied and written about the assassinations of both Kennedys and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Was it not St. Paul who said that faith is the evidence for things not seen?

These writers have ample faith in their almost invisible premises. Their readers should have an equal amount of skepticism.

I do not mean to dismiss this book out of hand. It does truly raise some troubling questions and illuminates corners not heretofore believed to be dark, the corner even of the kitchen in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, scene of the fatal shooting of Kennedy.

One might be tempted to take the book more seriously if it were not so flamboyant, so melodramatic. I would prefer a more straightforward presentation — the bare facts and logical inferences drawn from them.

The authors claim that while Sirhan was the visible assassin, there were more and different bullets fired at Kennedy from those in Sirhan's gun. They present what seems like formidable evidence and suggest, obliquely, the identity of those who might have done the unseen shooting, including a mysterious damsel.

They suggest that Sirhan may have been a "Manchurian candidate," set up as the killer through powerful suggestion in the nature of hypnosis.

They claim a gigantic conspiracy on the part of law enforcement officials.

Lest one dismiss the book as so much trash in a garish style, it is only fair to point out that a good deal of care went into its production.

In the last analysis, the book may be a reflection of America's preoccupation with mysteries and dirty work at the crossroads.

Too often in the past we have been disillusioned by official explanations that turn out to be false. Now we tend to discount everything that is told us. We want to penetrate to the core of things, especially if that core is rotten. Our gullibility is in believing nothing.

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THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY by William Turner and John Christian, Random House, \$10. Non-fiction. The reviewer is a Chicago lawyer whose "Henry Miller: Years of Trial and Triumph, 1962-1964," has just been published.