

The success of Oliver Stone's commercialization and exploitation of the JFK assassination and the great interest in the controversy about it inspired a surge in the publication of books also exploiting and commercializing that great tragedy. Almost without exception they were frightfully bad books by those knowing little about the established fact of the assassination and the great volume of previously withheld official records ^{that for years have been} readily available to these authors.

Most presented conspiracy theories as established fact when they ^{are} were utterly false and proven to be false by the actual and available fact.

Perhaps the most indecent of this outpouring is Howard Donahue's "Mortal Error," ghosted by Bonar Henninger (St. Martin's Press). It says that a Secret Service agent it names killed JFK by accident even though ^{in 1975} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ I had referred Donahue to the photographic ^{proof} evidence that proves his theory impossible and ^a loned him for copying an FBI photograph that disproves the rest of his concocted "solution" to the crime. Donahue and his publisher knew this agent had suffered a complete emotional breakdown after the crime he had been unable to prevent *and had been forced by it to retire into seclusion.*

St. Martin's president, Ken McCormick, admitting that the book might be in error, justified publishing it because that agent did not respond to phone calls and letters.

But almost a decade ^{earlier} ago Donahue hired "private-eye" "Nicholas Beltrante" to investigate that retired agent. Beltrante told Benny Morris of "The Jerusalem Post" that the ^{former} agent "hasn't worked since" forced to retire a year and a half after the assassination.

"He lives like a recluse," Morris' September 14, 1987 story quotes Beltrante as telling him. "He refuses to answer the phone. We have him under surveillance."

The one ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{short} book that claims to be entirely factual and of personal knowledge appears to the purchaser and to the media to have ^{authentic} the best credentials.

Dr. Charles A. Grenshaw appears as the author, "with Jens Hansen and J. Gary Shaw." Like Stone's movie, which is not about JFK, it is titled "JFK." It is subtitled "Conspiracy of Silence" because Grenshaw says all the doctors who tried to save JFK kept silent, not disclosing knowledge that disputed the official solution ^{of} that crime.

Crenshaw attributes ^{his} ~~is~~ own silence to fear of losing his job, his medical career and his life ^{to} ~~and thus~~ explains why it took him 28 years to break "the conspiracy of silence."

"Efforts to suppress and distort the truth about the assassination on the part of government officials and agents," he says (on page 9) have been well documented in previous works on this subject. That ~~these~~ efforts included threats, intimidation and falsification and destruction of evidence and even death have played no small ~~part~~ role in my silence, ~~and~~ of the past 28 years."

I've spent those 28 years working in the ~~filed~~ field. I've brought more to light that is embarrassing to the government than anyone else, and I have ~~not~~ been injured. I know of no real incident of any witness or alleged witness being injured by the government or its agents ~~and~~ I also know that it is only in works of fiction represented as non-fiction that anything of the sort is "well documented."

Crenshaw attributes his own silence to ~~fear of losing his job and his medical career.~~
~~fear,~~
 This ~~in his account lasted 25 years, through all the contention from which no single~~
~~person was hurt in any way. It ended only when it appeared that ~~an~~ Oliver ~~tone~~ would make~~
~~a fortune and all the other books were making much money.~~

As Crenshaw does not say, there never was a time when ~~those~~ ^{other} Dallas doctors refused to talk. A number did to me, more did to other ^{for} writers, and not a few appeared on TV ^{beginning} more than two decades ago.

^{at Publisher} front Signet's cover describes Crenshaw as "the surgeon who tried to save JFK and Oswald!"
 The back cover ^{reports} says he and he alone "fought" to save both.

Both covers proclaim he has "new" evidence, ~~and~~ ^{he} says "he was not allowed to give [it] to the Warren Commission."

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{at} If I'd not known better I'd have wondered how, after ^{the} exhaustive analysis of the Warren report and its appended 26 volumes of evidence in my first ~~so~~ book, which was the first on the Commission, after careful study of its records in the National Archives, and after getting and studying about a quarter of a million pages of once withheld agency records, mostly the FBIs, by a series of FOIA lawsuits, and from what I'd learned and included in five other books on the JFK assassination, I'd not have perceived how important a medical man Crenshaw was those days.

Imagine- the only doctor who "fought" to save both men - and I didn't know it!

So, I consulted the Commission's published index of its published testimony. As apparently Signet did not.

In all ~~of~~ 15 volumes of printed testimony, Crenshaw's name is mentioned five times, all in the sixth volume.

Dr. Robert McClelland, then an associate professor of surgery at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, at Parkland Hospital, where both victims were taken, ~~when told by the Resident, Dr. Crenshaw,~~
~~testified that when Crenshaw told him that JFK had been shot they both went to the~~
~~emergency room together (page 31)~~
 testified that he was told that JFK had been shot "by the Resident, Dr. Crenshaw." (page 31)
 and he named ~~him~~ as one of the doctors present in the emergency room. (page 32)

Dr. Charles Baxter, another assistant professor of surgery does no more than mention Crenshaw's name as one of the medical personnel there. (page 40)

Dr. Don Curtis, an oral surgeon, also said no more than that Dr. Crenshaw was present. (page 60)

Nurse Margaret Henchcliffe, asked who she remembered being there, included Dr. Crenshaw but said not another word about him. (page 141)

So how did the Warren Commission manage to overlook the one and only doctor "who ~~thought~~ tried to save JFK and Oswald!" and why was he "not allowed" to testify to his heroic efforts to the Warren Commission?
and the alleged secrets he knew

Dr. Kenneth Salyer ~~is~~ provides the answers ^{to}

Asked "To what extent did Dr. Crenshaw participate" in those hectic emergency room efforts to "save JFK", Dr. Salyer, a year out of medical school and a first-year resident at Parkland, answered, "about the extent that I did. We were both occupied in making sure that an I.V. was going and hanging up a bottle of blood." Dr. Salyer remembered that Dr. Crenshaw also was a resident "because we were sort of working there together on that." (page 81)

Unlike Dr. Crenshaw, Dr. Salyer, who ~~is~~ did exactly what Dr. Crenshaw did and what I've seen nurses do, made no claim to being "the" ~~doctor~~ surgeon "who tried to save JFK."

The book ~~has~~ can claim at most two of the "headline-making revelations." One is that the President was shot from the front. The other is that LBJ ^{phoned} ~~called~~ and made him leave his efforts to save Oswald's life to tell him, "Dr. Crenshaw, I want a deathbed confession from the accused assassin." (page 187.)
& the first is not at all new and the second is impossible from records I have

The rest, ^{of this thin, small book,} aside from a few details of no special interest in ^{of Crenshaw's} his life, is largely ~~distorted and inaccurate allegations about~~ ^{representations} fanciful representations and misrepresentations of alleged JFK assassination information from Shaw. He is an assassination conspiracy theorist who has no trouble espousing two contradictory theories at the same time, having found none not worth consideration; who has seen no fact he cannot improve upon and often does; and who still loves those theories so dearly he clings to them after they are proven impossible.

Show
He thus is, ~~Mr.~~ Crenshaw writes, "one of the world's top authorities in the Kennedy assassination." (page 10.)

as a result all the digressions into alleged fact about the assassination is from *range from imagined to dubious*
dubious to very wrong.

On the simplest level, William Walter, *kid still in* a college ~~kid~~ *and* working as a night clerk *on weekends* for the FBI, is described in consecutive paragraphs as an "FBI Security Code Clerk" and as an "FBI Agent." (page 42)

JFK's planned November 2 trip to Chicago was cancelled, we are told, over a threat against him by one Thomas Vallee. (page 37-8) *in well-known fact it was because of* ~~it was because~~ the tense international situation *following* from the assassination of South Viet Nam's president and his right-hand man, *Diamond Nham* is said to recall being there only Richard Nixon ~~remembered being in Dallas only~~ *that* November 20 and 21 and "he was not *(page 50)* there the day of the assassination." In fact Nixon has written and spoken of his ~~recollection~~ recollection of leaving Dallas on the twenty-second and when and how he learned of the assassination. *(page 50)*

~~Mr.~~ Crenshaw described the Secret Service virtually as thugs and ~~did~~ *who* "strong-arms" around and "took President Kennedy's body out of Parkland at gunpoint. They had their orders from a high official *B* in our government who was afraid of the truth." Or, it was a government conspiracy. *(page 12)*

Not a word of this is true. There were no such orders. The decision to take the body to Washington was made at the hospital in deference to what were assumed to be Mrs. Kennedy's wishes. *"It was* ~~and~~ *"* It was not at gunpoint *"* but after conferences with local authorities.

Consistent with this, Clint Hill, who was within an inch of being killed in the performance of his duty, is castigated: "Hill had failed to do his job, which was to protect the President of the United States." In fact he was assigned to protect Mrs. Kennedy. His post was on the left running board of the follow-up car, from which there was quite obviously no way in the world he could prevent a hit on the President. *He* was almost run over *my* ~~by this car~~ *the car from which he ran to her* when he saw Mrs. Kennedy seeming to be about to fall off the back of the President's car, ~~and~~ *Hill* without regard for his own life, *He* ran to save her ~~and~~ *He* pushed her back into the seat, ~~which he did do.~~

Of the Secret Service itself this jewel: Its "one and only job was to protect the President of the United States and other government officials around him."

This is just plain ignorance. The Secret Service has a multitude of duties that do not include protecting "government officials" around the President. Its protection of the President is limited to one of its smaller branches.

With this these the level of "information" in this "headline-making" sensation, no purpose is served by footnotes ^{and there are none} of sources, ~~not one is cited and obvious most cannot be, not being real, and~~ ^{cheap non-fiction} the hallmark of a publisher doing a book on the cheap ~~is no index and no bibliography, there~~ ^{is no index and no bibliography. This book has neither.}

Dr. Crenshaw's duties when he was allegedly "fighting" to save Oswald's life were so insignificant he is not even mentioned as one of the assistants to the surgeon who was in charge, Tom Shires, according to the Parkland official "operative record." (Warren Commission Exhibit 392, published on pages 536-7 of its Report.)

But if this were not true, and if it were not true that his JFK-saving duties were identical with those of a doctor just out of medical school, to keep the IVs working, how about that phone call ~~from~~ ^{from} LBJ when he was "fighting" to save Oswald?

The book got major TV and print-press attention but nobody bothered to make the simple phone call to the LBJ Library to get the facts, as my friend ^{Gerald Binocchio} Wofford College professor of sociology did at my suggestion. Almost by return mail he got the records of all of LBJ's calls, meetings and trips for that day.

That call had to have been made ^{between} after 11:32 a.m. Dallas time, when Oswald was wheeled into the emergency room (page 182) ^{and} 95 minutes later, when Oswald was given up as dead at 1:07. (page 189) Washington time is an hour ~~earlier~~ later.

Every minute of LBJ's time is accounted for. He left his residence with his family at 10:33 a.m., Washington time, going to St Mark's Lutheran Church, stopping en route to pick up an old Texas friend, Homer "hornberry." They left the church at 12:26 and reached the White House nine minutes later. They there picked up the Kennedy family and left "in the Funeral Procession" to the Capitol, getting there at 1:46. ^{LBJ} They left for the Executive Office Building at 2:19, arriving at 2:25.

This is from the report of the Secret Service agent in charge of the "White House detail" Gerald Behm. It precludes the possibility of any such phone call as ~~the~~ Crenshaw sensationalized the country and, with, of course, sold books by. It did make and remain on the "non-fiction best-seller lists. ^{minutes possible in that call JBS was with dozens at the church or with the Kennedy family and at the funeral.} ~~For every possible minute, LBJ was with the Kennedy party or at church with dozens.~~

another and more detailed Secret Service record has ^{JBS} ~~him~~ reaching his ^{ECB} desk at 2:30, which is after the time permitted by ~~the~~ Crenshaw's sensational ^{cal call. He met} with a series of meetings with cabinet officers and an ambassador followed by other officials, ending at 6:25.

The telephone logs reveal that ~~the first telephone call was made to Dr. Crenshaw or to that hospital.~~ ^{no call was made to Dr. Crenshaw or to that hospital.}

The Secret Service also keeps a record, by the minute, of each person the President phones or meets with and the subject discussed. For that day it has no Dr. Crenshaw, nor Parkland hospital.

^{another record it} ~~it~~ also keeps ⁱⁿ handwritten ^{minutes} form, also by the minute, each of the President's activities. No Crenshaw, no hospital.

There was not a second, beginning before ^{Oswald reached the hospital} ~~Jack Ruby shot Lee Harvey Oswald,~~ that LBJ was alone. ~~Beginning before that shooting he was with many people.~~ ^{He} got to the White House and joined the Kennedy funeral party about the time Oswald was wheeled into the emergency room and that lasted until after Oswald was pronounced dead.

These White House records, ^{created} by the pre-LBJ staff, are unaltered handwritten and retyped records prepared and filed when nobody anticipated that the third-year Parkland resident would write a book some 28 years later in which he represented himself as "the surgeon who tried to ^{JFK} ~~save~~ ^{and} Oswald!" and would say in it that LBJ phoned him to say, "I want a ~~deathbed~~ confession," in obtaining which "I will expect full cooperation in this matter." (page 187)

None of the top TV news and interview shows on which he appeared and ^{and reviews} ~~none~~ of the newspapers reporters, and interviewers, bothered to wonder whether, if the new President did demand a confession from the unconscious Oswald, he would have phoned a mere hospital resident with his demand. and, of course, none got and used the actual records, ~~or~~ checked

~~these~~ of the Warren Commission's readily-available publications.

Both of these books, neither credible on cursory examination, were among the many faulty JFK assassination books most of which did become best sellers.

There should, I believe, have been outrage at these vicious, malicious commercializations ^{and exploitation} of the dead and of those who cannot defend themselves.

That "Mortal Errors" itself died soon, as was being talked about in the trade by the end of ~~the~~ April (when it should have died in ~~the~~ ^{the} publisher's reader's hands), does not undo the damage it did, ^{Even} including in England, where it was serialized in ^{9. To describe} a mass-circulation newspaper ^{as the President's killer did great harm to him,} to the ill and victimized retired Secret Service agent ^{and/} to his family ^{to} the public's understanding of ^{these} crimes so important in our history.

The publishers of assassination books and the media that promotes them are on the intellectual, moral and professional level of the supermarket tabloids.

This is the regard and concern they reflect for these major and terrible events in our history. ^{and The Americans involved in them. It is shameful!}

But it was profitable.

Dear Harold,
 Just got home from a pilgrimage to Oradour
 and Lourdes. Before my departure I took care
 to check I thought of writing off their article
 about JFK's assassination. *Walt Whitman* is apparent from
 Monday, September 14, 1987 The Jerusalem Post Page Four
 Yours,
 S. Golan

'The bullet that killed JFK was fired by a Secret Service agent'

Occupation: Private eye



he cable address on his business is reads: "SLEUTH." Nicholas, 66, is a former chief inspector of police in Washington, D.C., and has been called "a dean of American private eyes" by *The Washington Post*.

Beltrante personally takes only "with very large fees" or of great interest. He is currently investigating, together with ballistic expert Howard Donahue, the 1963 assassination of President John Kennedy. "Howard came to me four years ago and said: 'I have only \$500. I read my report.' " Beltrante was initially very sceptical. "I took it up very reluctantly. It seemed far-fetched. But the report convinced

The 40-page Donahue report "howed" that - on the basis of analysis of remaining metal fragments - the bullet that struck Kennedy in the back of the head and killed him "could not have been fired from Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle. The wrong calibre." Donahue determined that the bullet in fact came from a "special report" held by one of the Secret Service agents who was in the car behind the president's. "What happened was that after the first-shot or

shots the president's car jerked to a halt. The Secret Service car then came to an abrupt stop - and the Secret Service agent accidentally let off a shot, the shot that killed the president. But the administration refused to admit this as it would have discredited the agency whose job it is to protect the president."

Beltrante relates - "we know this for a fact" - that several weeks after the assassination, while driving in Texas, President Johnson stopped his car and told the Secret Service men in the car following: "Keep further back. I don't want to be a victim of a Secret Service agent."

Beltrante says: "We have determined which agent in the Kennedy backup car was responsible. He was retired from the service a year and a half later. He suffered an emotional breakdown." Beltrante attributes the breakdown to the assassination. "He hasn't worked since. He lives like a recluse. He refuses to answer the telephone. We have him under surveillance." He declines to give the name because of "possible libel actions."

He says that the "media, especially in the U.S., misrepresent the profession of private investigator. Their life-style as portrayed on television is far-fetched, exaggerated. It makes the profession look ridiculous."

contemporary detective fiction.

His firm handles 750-1,000 cases a year, mostly "background investigations of people or businesses. I generally don't ask clients, 'Why do you want this done?'"

Beltrante says there are around 100,000 private investigators working in the U.S., and perhaps 150,000 worldwide. "It is a growing profession. But only about 100 of them are good, capable, serious, a handful in each country. We know each other. In Israel there are four or five."

Nonetheless, Beltrante believes the profession generally is steadily gaining recognition and respectability. "The CIA and the Justice Department now occasionally use private investigators on a contract basis." Beltrante himself has been so used by the Federal Trade Commission.

Is there a danger that a client will hire him for illegal purposes?

"Look, the law allows us to investigate. I don't normally go into the 'whys.' " He himself usually handles "short trading" cases - in which people or companies covertly and usually illegally buy out businesses.

In 1972 Beltrante was hired by the Committee to Elect Senator George McGovern for President to investigate the Watergate burglary. "The burglary was on June 17, my birth-

day. A few days later, I was hired. I was asked to determine who was responsible and why."

Beltrante's investigation ran concurrently with several police and federal investigations. "At that time, politicians didn't trust the federal law enforcement agencies and the police. For example, I was asked by Congresswoman Bella Abzug to see if her office phones were tapped [by the authorities] - and they were. That's why I was hired."

After a four-month investigation, Beltrante "discovered that Gordon Liddy's men - some of whom it was later found were implicated in Watergate - had rented rooms near the offices of the Committee to Elect McGovern. We also discovered the McGovern committee had been infiltrated [by Liddy men] who wanted to get hold of their records. Yes, we had the names."

Beltrante recalls that *Washington Post* reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward worked with him during the investigation. "We exchanged information, though I know they didn't give me everything they had, just as I didn't give them everything. They sent me the first signed copy of *All the President's Men*."

Beltrante "firmly believes that *Deep Throat* was no specific person or source; "it was a combination of sources and contacts whom Bernstein and Woodward called *Deep Throat*."

Beltrante, who hails from Atlantic City, is president-elect of the Council of International Investigators, which has a ceiling of 300 investigators.



Nicholas Beltrante

Beltrante, of Italian stock (his name means "brave warrior"), says that the "treatment of private detectives in literature is more realistic." He names Sam Spade in Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* as a good portrayal of the trade. Raymond Chandler? "Good, definitely." But Beltrante isn't up on