

Entertaining so-and-sos at Thanksgiving



Sometimes people would come for Thanksgiving. We always referred to them as "company," and this meant that even their little

JFK buffs

By David Real

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

When Massachusetts native Dave Perry first visited Dealey Plaza seven years ago,

■ Buff reverses opinion. **56A**

■ Creating the eternal flame. **1C**

he was hooked.

"You could have knocked me over with a feather," the insurance executive said. "I could not get over how small it was. I said:

ropolitan

tirelessly pursue truth

Researchers sift facts of 27 years ago

"This could not happen this way. This absolutely could not happen this way."

Another skeptic was born.

Since that day, Mr. Perry has moved to Dallas and spent thousands of dollars and countless hours interviewing witnesses and conducting his personal investigation of the assassination of President John F.

Kennedy 27 years ago.

He calls himself an assassination researcher, a member of an exclusive club of perhaps no more than 200 people worldwide and 20 in Dallas.

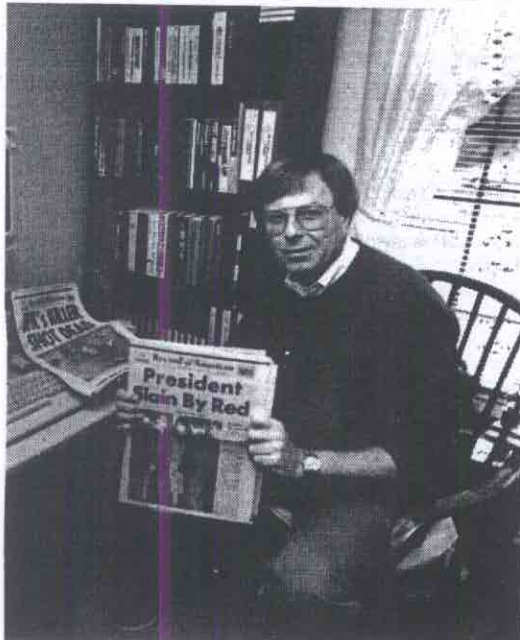
Researchers retrace the steps of assassination principals, time motorcade routes and sift through millions of pages of gov-

ernment documents hoping to discover clues about an assassination conspiracy and cover-up.

Their unwritten code requires them to share information freely with others and to debunk assassination myths in pursuit of the truth.

Mr. Perry said wild theories from assassination "nuts" discredit the work of serious researchers. He dismisses those who say the slaying was planned so perfectly. Please see JFK on Page 56A.

JFK buffs tireless in pursuit of truth



The Dallas Morning News: Milton Hinnant

Dave Perry has 100 books and 80 hours of videotapes on the Kennedy assassination.

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that no one could ever discover it.

"That's the dead end," he said. "That's where you go from research to religious experience."

A prime target of researchers is the Warren Commission report, the government investigative document that concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone on Nov. 22, 1963, killed Mr. Kennedy in Dealey Plaza and Dallas police Officer J.D. Tippit at 10th and Patton streets in Oak Cliff.

Researchers still discover troubling discrepancies within the report and evidence that seems to contradict parts of it.

Mr. Perry, 47, now works downtown about a mile from the assassination site and spends most of his free time researching Officer Tippit's death.

His business card, which carries a computer-generated drawing of a Dallas patrol car, reads: "Tenth and Patton Investigations: Searching for tips on Tippit."

Mr. Perry's assassination library is stocked with 100 books and 80 hours of videotapes, and he uses his computer to cross-reference witnesses' testimony on the Tippit killing. He racked up a \$140 phone bill last month talking to witnesses and other researchers.

Mr. Perry said he is convinced that his work is important but cannot explain why he is so devoted to investigating a crime that occurred 27 years ago.

"Some people will tell you I'm obsessed with it, and there are times that I am," he said.

Mr. Perry teamed up recently with Gary Mack, a long-time researcher from Fort Worth who is known for his study of Dallas Police Department tapes, which he said might have recorded the gunshots at Dealey Plaza.

The U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations later concluded that the recordings proved the existence of a second gunman on the grassy knoll who fired one shot that missed the president. However, a later investigation by another government agency cast doubt on the recordings' authenticity.

Mr. Mack, 44, who keeps his Kennedy research separate from his work as an announcer for KXAS-TV (Channel 5), said he has interviewed about 300 witnesses since moving to the area in 1976 and owns 100 hours of audio tape and 100 hours of videotape containing assassination-related hearings and newscasts.

He and Mr. Perry often attend a continuing education course on the Kennedy assassination in which researchers trade information and propose new theories. The class at the University of Texas at Arlington, which usually draws 40 students, is taught by Jim Marrs, author of *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy*.

Researchers in the course have an obligation to assess each other's work, Mr. Mack said. Many students who are struggling to become researchers think they have discovered something important, he said, but usually they do not know the material well enough and jump to false conclusions.

"Finding inconsistencies is one thing, but finding the truth is a lot harder," Mr. Mack said. "You have to realize that the case was studied by human beings, and none of us is perfect yet."

Another researcher, Jack White of Fort Worth, has developed a four-hour slide show of assassination photographs as well as a videotape. Mr. White appeared before the House committee in the late 1970s in an attempt to prove that incriminating photographs of Oswald were

fakes, but his testimony was rejected.

The network of researchers across the country keeps up with developments through newsletters, including the *Grassy Knoll Gazette*.

Probably the largest newsletter is *The Third Decade*, published by Dr. Jerry D. Rose, professor of sociology at State University College in Fredonia, N.Y. He said about 300 people, some from as far away as Greece, subscribe to the publication, which is named for the third decade of research on the assassination.

The granddaddy of all researchers is Harold Weisberg of Frederick, Md., who owns a third of a million pages of assassination documents.

His self-published volumes, including his first book, *Whitewash*, dissected the Warren Commission report and other official government investigations to fault their accounts of the assassination, the 77-year-old author said.

But almost all the current assassination best sellers are "phony books" that offer "totally untenable theories," he said.

"The theorists mislead and deceive the people, and I think that's terrible in a representative society which works on the people being informed," he said.

He said researchers who try to verify official reports have the correct approach and are the only hope for proving what really happened.

"The only thing that can be done in a responsible way is to bulldog all of the records that have been disclosed and to see what we can find from them that might be a lead," he said.

Dallas researcher Mary Ferrell, who has one of the world's largest collections of assassination documents, said she has found that a younger generation of researchers is taking up the fight.

"I don't have any answers," Mrs. Ferrell said. "I don't know any more today about who was behind it or who executed it or who planned the cover-up."

"But we have to have the young people because we've got to leave what we have to them and hope that they will continue it," she said. "These very bright young people really have great hopes that they will be the one to solve it — and so do I."

Conspiracy buff reverses opinion

By David Real

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

The newest theory on the Kennedy assassination is also the oldest: Oswald did it.

Waco author Jim Moore, who once was an avid conspiracy buff, now says the Warren Commission found the correct suspect but just did a lousy job proving it.

His first book, *Conspiracy of One*, rebuts the other theories point by point, attacks part of the Warren Commission findings and concludes that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin.

The main problem with the single-gunman theory, as far as conspiracy authors are concerned, always has been the graphic Zapruder film showing the president thrown backward by what appears to be a shot from the front.

But Mr. Moore says that a careful examination of the film shows a vi-

Sixth Floor exhibit open as usual on anniversary

The Sixth Floor, an educational exhibit examining the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thanksgiving Day. Museum officials said no special events are scheduled in the old Texas School Book Depository to mark the 27th anniversary of the assassination.

olent forward movement for a split-second — caused by a shot from the rear — before the president is thrown backward by the "jet effect" of the bullet exiting and causing a massive head wound.

Mr. Moore also explains that the bullet that struck President John F. Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Con-

nally did not emerge "pristine" as has been described and was tough enough and traveling fast enough to wound both men.

He also says the president was shot later than previously believed. He says the Zapruder film showed the president reacting to the first rifle shot that missed — by raising his hands to shield his face — when he was struck by a second shot.

Mr. Moore says his book, which was released several weeks ago, does not contain "those awful autopsy photographs" found in other accounts.

Conspiracy theorists have rejected the new book as "goofy," but Mr. Moore attacks them as a "handful of individuals bent on personal gain and recognition," who have been "tearing down our system, have fooled us, have duped us, have lied to us."