

Fred DeVinney  
1613 Oakcrest Dr.  
Alexandria, VA 22302

6/11/91

Dear Fred,

I read your letter and paper on receipt but other matters delayed my responding. The beliefs you express in your letter, as you know, coincide with mine.

I think you earned the A for effort. If the instructor expressed any interest I'd like to know.

As so often happens now I soon forget too much and I no longer have a clear recollection of the paper I read only a week ago.

As I read it I highlighted it in the event you want to discuss it later.

I remember that you treated Groden as a dependable source. And if I remember correctly, although your notes may have clarified it, both books as one by citation of "Groden." Neither has any new factual information and they do advance theories they do not prove. Model ripped much off for the first one. And I'm confident that Groden did little or none of the writing.

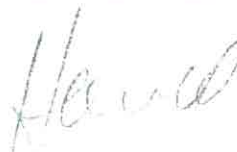
Thumbing through it I see there is not much highlighting.

I hope everything is going well for you and that your plans become possible as you'd prefer.

By the way, I just did remember. It was quite a few years ago that Nancy Stond was here. She promised to send me a copy of her dissertation but never did. If it is worth reading I'd like to read it.

Zelizer I'd never heard of. The same is true of his paper.

Thanks and best regards,



Fred G. DeVinney

---

June 3, 1991

Harold & Lil Weisberg  
Route 12, Old Receiver Rd.  
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Harold & Lil,

I thought you might be interested in a copy of my JFK paper, which I finally completed this past weekend. I received an "A" for my effort, but I don't mean to suggest that this would rate as an "A" effort in your eyes – I now know more than ever how much I still have to learn. Perhaps that is the factor for which I owe you the most thanks – that is, not only for your time and what you taught me, but more so for your having given me a whole new perspective on this matter.

To than end, I am slowly wending my way through your books, and also attempting to gather a scholarly collection of other materials that I can use for learning and for future reference. I only hope that I can somehow make a bit of a contribution along the way.

I don't know any more about who killed JFK today than I did 28 years ago, or even 28 days ago – and I guess I'm resigned to the idea that I never will, either. In any event, I've come to believe that the most important thing now is not to solve the murder per se, but to try to analyze and learn from the myriad of ways in which so many of our cherished American institutions, political and otherwise, totally failed us in a time of such great national crisis.

That our President was murdered on that terrible day in Dallas is an awesome enough tragedy in and of itself. But that our governmental institutions, our law enforcement agencies and our highly trumpeted "free" and "objective" press so utterly and miserably failed us – and have continued to do so for almost three decades now – is a tragedy of such stunning significance as to be almost incomprehensible. That this could have happened makes me wonder if we really do have a democracy in this country.

I wish you both the best of everything; and I hope to talk with and see you many times in the future.

Best Regards,

  
Fred

Fred G. DeVinney

Instructor Snell

COMP 112

May 28, 1991

Who Killed JFK? Why No One Can  
Construct a Rational 'Whodunit' Theory

Who really killed President John F. Kennedy? Like the murdered corpse of a family member secretly buried in a basement grave, that question has lingered in the depths of the collective American conscience for almost three decades. For many, the mystery has become an obsession. Countless words have been written and small fortunes have been made and lost by people trying to solve it. Certain serious, scholarly researchers have labored for years in virtual obscurity, some even exhausting their own funds in a fruitless search for the answer. On the other hand, certain charlatans have become celebrities of a sort, fattening their bank accounts by exploiting this great American tragedy for every sensationalistic penny it's worth.

But in all the rhetoric and all the hypothesizing, the single most critical and commonly overlooked factor is that any theory about who killed President Kennedy that relies upon "evidence" from either the Dallas Police Department (DPD) or the Warren Commission (WC) "investigation" is simply groundless speculation, since neither the DPD nor the WC ever conducted a legitimate murder investigation in the first place.

This paper began as a 'whodunit' expedition. I intended to investigate the various 'whodunit' theories and then defend or refute one of them. My journey eventually led unexpectedly to the realization that I could neither prove nor disprove any of these theories without first dealing with this seminal investigative issue – for how can you solve a murder if no one has yet truly investigated the crime?

I began in an upbeat mood. "What a great subject to write about," I thought. Like many people, I had my own pet theory about the assassination; but I was far from

being some wild-eyed conspiracy theorist. I had mapped out a course of action in my head, confident that I already knew enough about the "terrain" that I could easily locate a wealth of "solid" resources where I could search for the "real" answer. In addition, the opportunity to ponder what is perhaps the single most intriguing question in all of American history seemed like such an interesting and worthwhile endeavor. It proved to be that – and much more!

Like most people, I knew about the WC's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald had acted alone in killing the President; and, like most of them, I did not believe it. According to a 1983 *Washington Post* survey, less than twenty percent of the American public believe that Oswald acted alone, if at all, in killing JFK ( ). Furthermore, I knew that the government had succeeded in contradicting itself in the final report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) in 1978, when they concluded that Kennedy "was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy" (HSCA 344) – although no other government agency or official individual has ever otherwise publicly supported that conclusion.

So who did do it? As already noted, that question has spawned a wealth of both responsible and irresponsible theories for almost three decades. The WC's preposterous "single bullet" theory had first been totally discredited in Harold Weisberg's seminal book *Whitewash: the Report on the Warren Report* in 1964. His subsequent books had further destroyed almost every other aspect of the WC "investigation." These included: *Whitewash II*, *Whitewash III*, *Whitewash IV*, *Photographic Whitewash*, and *Post Mortem*. They all added up to a complete negation of the U.S. government's official conclusion that Oswald acted alone – if, indeed, he acted at all in the actual murder – although he was almost certainly involved in some peripheral way. Incredibly, the contradictory HSCA conclusion suggesting a "conspiracy" was never pursued by the government, so they had no suspects to offer. I would simply have to search elsewhere for the answer. I decided to examine and compare the various theories, the three most prominent being: the

Mafia theory, the CIA theory, and the "Band of Conspirators" theory. I would then simply select what I thought was the most credible of the three and then defend or refute it.

I began with the Mafia theory. "The mob did it. It is a historical truth" (Schein cover). So claims G. Robert Blakey, Chief Counsel to the HSCA, being careful to note that this was his conclusion and not that of the HSCA. I was excited anyway. After all, a man with Blakey's credentials certainly seemed to be a credible source; and his "solution" supported the same one reached independently by both David Scheim in *Contract On America: The Mafia Murder of President John F. Kennedy* (Schein 301) and by John Davis in *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (Davis). As we'll soon see, the Mafia, especially Marcello, had "understandable" reasons for wanting to murder Kennedy.

I had already read both the Scheim and Davis books. They were sincere pieces of work. Both were apparently well documented and very well reasoned; and both presented sensible, plausible and compelling arguments to support their contentions – even if they didn't ultimately produce the clinching, "smoking gun" proof.

It was easy to believe that the Mafia had "sufficient" motivation to kill JFK. For example, Attorney General Bobby Kennedy was exceptionally zealous and successful in weeding out and prosecuting mob corruption. The Kennedy-led Justice Department even had Marcello temporarily deported in 1961 (Davis 101); and Marcello later "swore blood revenge against both of the Kennedys" (Davis 105). But many factions of the mob had reason to want Kennedy killed in retaliation for the Justice Department's relentless crusade. They included notorious Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, Chicago boss Sam Giancana and Miami boss Santos Trafficante, as well as many others. Certainly the Mafia hated Kennedy enough to want him dead. It all made a perverse kind of sense to me, at least on the surface.

I soon learned that other very credible researchers completely dismiss the notion of mob involvement. One respected example is Gaeton Fonzi, a former staff investigator

for the HSCA. "I doubt [that the mob did] it," says Fonzi, noting that "there were areas of the Committee's investigation that, if pursued, could have negated 'the mob did it' implications of the [HSCA's] final report" (Fonzi 159). He goes on in his famous "Who Killed JFK?" article to argue, with many apparently well documented, well reasoned, and plausible ideas, that the CIA had orchestrated the President's murder, along with the willing and eager assistance of a few frustrated, right wing Cuban exiles.

This theory also holds a certain amount of gut-level credibility for many students of the assassination. For example, some speculate that the CIA – or, at least, a few rogue members of that agency – conspired to murder the President in retaliation for his failure to authorize critical air coverage during their disastrous 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba (Grodin 310-311). As a direct result of this, they believed, the invasion failed. In addition, Kennedy had fired both CIA Director Allen Dulles (who, unbelievably, was later appointed to the Warren Commission by LBJ) and the CIA's Chief of Covert Operations, Richard Bissell ( ). In another, little known incident in 1962, Kennedy had actually ordered the FBI and other federal agents to raid and forcibly shut down two secret, unauthorized CIA-operated Cuban guerrilla training camps in Louisiana and Florida (Grodin 411), after Dulles and Bissell had repeatedly ignored his direct Presidential order to do so.

So indeed there were some CIA – or, at least, ex-CIA – people who also had potential motives for wanting to kill the brash, young President. Even such conservative writers as Bill Moyers leave open the possibility of CIA involvement. Consider the following exchange between him and Richard Bissell, along with Moyers's commentary, in his chilling book *The Secret Government: The Constitution In Crisis* (Moyers 43-44):

MOYERS: At one time, the CIA organized a small department known as "executive action," which was a permanent assassination capability. How did that – ?

BISSELL: Well, it wasn't just an assassination capability, it was a

capability to discredit or get rid of people. But it could have included assassination.

[Moyers commentary]: And it did. There were at least eight documented attempts to kill Castro.... To help us get rid of the Cuban leader, our secret government turned to the Mafia, as they once had made use of the Nazis.

[Moyers then apparently asks Bissell about the CIA's hiring of the Mafia as contract killers and Bissel responds].

BISSELL: I think we should not have involved ourselves with the Mafia. I think that an organization that does so is losing control....

MOYERS: If I read you correctly, you're saying it's the involvement with the Mafia that disturbs you and not the need or decision to assassinate a foreign leader.

BISSEL: Correct.

[Moyers now sums it up]: It's a chilling thought, made more chilling by the assassination of John Kennedy. The accusations linger; the suspicions persist of a dark, unsolved conspiracy behind his murder. You can dismiss them, as many of us do, but since we now know what our secret government planned for Castro, the possibility remains: once we decide that anything goes, anything can come home to haunt us.

Moyer's was probably alluding to the possibility that Fidel Castro might have arranged for Kennedy's murder in retaliation for the numerous CIA attempts against his own life – the so-called "backfire" theory (more later). However, we must also consider the possibility that powerful men like Bissell – men who can so readily admit that the "decision to assassinate a foreign leader" does not trouble them – are arguably capable of orchestrating anyone's murder, even their own President's, especially if they come to believe that such a murder would serve their version of some "higher purpose."

But that the Mafia did it, or that some CIA-sponsored Cubans did it, is too simple a

"solution" to satisfy some researchers. This is the "Gang of Conspirators" contingent – those who postulate that "it was a combination of CIA-controlled Cuban exiles, Organized Crime, and the Ultra Right Wing], [along] with the support of some politically well-connected, wealthy men [primarily Texas oilmen and certain defense industry moguls]...." who bankrolled the entire effort for their mutual satisfaction and/or financial gain (Grodan 421). They believe that certain ultra right wing groups could have been motivated by their hatred for Kennedy's racial policies, the oilmen by Kennedy's plan to discontinue the lucrative oil depletion tax allowance, and others by their desire to profit from escalating the Vietnam war – something Kennedy was determined not to do.

So say highly credible researchers such as Robert J. Groden and Harrison Edward Livingstone in *High Treason: John F. Kennedy's Murder. Our Government's Secret. A Nation's Betrayal*. Several other seemingly credible books support this "gang" idea. Believing that so many factions, necessarily involving dozens of people, could have been involved in such a complex plot smacks of paranoia to me, at least at first glance. Yet Groden and Livingstone also make what seem to be very well documented, well reasoned, plausible and compelling arguments – just like many Mafia and CIA theorists do!

For example, they point to politically powerful, extremely wealthy, ultra right-wing Texas oilman, H. L. Hunt. On the day before the assassination, there is evidence (Warren Commission Exhibit 2270) that Jack Ruby met with Hunt at his Dallas office, along with a man named Jim Braden, who was also known as Eugene Hale Brading. Braden, it turns out, was a suspected Mafia hit man and founder of the infamous, Mafia-run La Costa Country Club in Los Angeles (Grodan 305). He was arrested immediately after the assassination in the Dal-Tex building and then quickly released (Warren Commission Documents 385). Both the Dal-Tex and the Texas School Book Depository Building, from which all of the shots were allegedly fired, border on Dealey Plaza. What else, the Gang theorists ask, could "coincidences" like these



possibly mean, if not “proof” of their contentions?

Some even suspect Richard Nixon of being part of this “gang.” Nixon was indeed in Dallas on the day Kennedy was shot (Grodin 345). Another coincidence? It probably is; but before making up your mind, consider this: “According to an internal CIA memorandum in 1966...E. Howard Hunt, the Watergate burglar and longtime helper of Richard Nixon, while [then] working for the CIA, was [also] in Dallas [on that day]...(Grodin 345). Furthermore, researcher Penn Jones, Jr. “claims that both Nixon and [FBI Director J. Edgar] Hoover were at the home of ultra right wing, Texas oil baron Clint Murchison on the night before the assassination” (Grodin 14). Grodin further cites allegations that “Murchinson’s empire overlapped with that of Mafia financial wizard Meyer Lansky and Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa” (Grodin 282).

It’s all probably just an uncanny combination of bizarre coincidence and outlandish conjecture. But before leaving the “gang” theory completely behind, there is one final item to consider. It is a brief transcript from the infamous White House tapes of Watergate fame. It documents a June 23, 1972 conversation between President Nixon and H. R. Haldeman (Grodin 333):

NIXON: If it gets out that this is all involved, the Cuba thing, it would be a fiasco. It would make the CIA look bad, it’s going to make [Watergate burglar and ex-CIA operative E. Howard] Hunt look bad, and is likely to blow the whole Bay of Pigs thing which we think would be very unfortunate – both for the CIA and for the country....

[Grodin then writes]: H. R. Haldeman tells us in *The Ends of Power*, “In all of those Nixon references to the Bay of Pigs (in the White House tapes) he (Nixon) was actually referring to the Kennedy assassination....”

As I said earlier, a lot of this kind of thinking initially struck me as pure paranoia. Then I read something like all of the above and I can’t help but wonder. There were a few times while researching this paper when I felt a cold chill inside. This was one of them!

The list of alleged, potential conspirators goes on. Some propose that the FBI did it. There were even rumors that Oswald was an undercover FBI agent (Mckinney iii). To some, this is a reasonable, albeit unprovable theory. J. Edgar Hoover's hatred for the Kennedys is well documented, but I found no credible source to support a belief that anyone from the FBI was actually involved in his murder. However, a substantial body of evidence does indeed exist to prove that the FBI, along with the Secret Service, did conspire for some unknown reason, probably political, to cover up the truth and to deliberately obfuscate the entire matter after the fact (Weisberg Whitewash II; Meagher).

Others propose that it was the Soviet KGB who did it. While certainly some high-level Russians might have had reason to despise and fear Kennedy for his humiliation of the Soviet military during the Cuban Missile Crisis, I found no reliable source to substantiate the KGB theory.

As alluded to in our previous discussion of the Moyers interview with Richard Bissell, another faction of researchers subscribe to the "backfire" theory. Simply put, this theory proposes that the CIA's attempts to kill Castro eventually backfired. That is, when Castro found out about these plots, he retaliated by launching a successful murder plot of his own against JFK. In the overall context of things, this theory makes the most sense to me. We know for sure that the CIA attempted to kill Castro on several occasions, so it's easy to believe that Castro might be motivated to retaliate. If he did and was successful, everyone involved would have to play that all-time-favorite American political game – "The Big Coverup." As a result, there would necessarily have to be a bogus investigation designed to both placate a gullible public and throw everyone else off the real trail. A coverup this massive would necessarily need to perpetuate itself for decades. The end result would be an almost total obfuscation of the facts; and that's exactly what has happened. Personally, this is my pet theory; however, I found no substantial sources upon which to base an argument.

Some people claim that certain assassination theories arise from deliberate CIA or FBI disinformation efforts – efforts aimed at obscuring “the terrible truth” about their involvement ( ). However, I also found no documentation to support these allegations.

Through all of this, I remained determined not to let any of these fringe theories get me off track. I was still convinced that, if I just kept digging in the “right” places, I’d soon come to a decision about which theory I could best argue for or against.

Slowly, I began to waiver in that conviction and to suspect that my efforts might be futile no matter how much I dug. Then I inadvertently came across another of Robert Blakey’s decrees about the assassination: “At this stage virtually anyone can fabricate a story by going to the historical record...it’s even too late for anyone to confess and be believable,” he said (Hoch 5). I knew enough by then to sense that Blakey was surely right on this observation. For example, The Assassination Archives and Research Center in Washington, DC alone has over 80,000 pages of FBI documents, along with 2,000 video tapes and a data bank of over 32,000 names and events linked to the Kennedy assassination, not to mention hundreds of books (Lesar).

With that much raw material to play with, anyone who is sufficiently determined could indeed “cook the books” enough to support a myriad of plausible theories. In fact, it had already happened, at least once – the now infamous “Roscoe White story” (Hoch 6-10). In 1990, Dallas citizen Ricky White called a press conference to proclaim that he had proof that his now deceased father, Roscoe White [a Dallas police officer at the time of the assassination] was the alleged “grassy knoll gunman” and that his father had actually killed the President. Furthermore, White claimed that his father was secretly a CIA operative and that he committed the murder under direct orders from his (unknown) CIA superiors. His “evidence” for this amazing claim consisted of a now-missing personal diary belonging to his father – he claimed that the FBI had confiscated it – along with the testimony of his mother. This sensational

story naturally made a big splash in the press. It had enough “factual” detail woven into it to at first seem believable and many were so inclined. After all, who would falsely impugn their own dead father in the murder of a President?

The story turned out to be pure fantasy, eventually collapsing under its own weight; but not until it was discovered that a group of seven Texas oilmen had bankrolled the whole affair. Doing business as Matsu Corporation, they had hired literary agents and negotiated to sell the rights to Ricky’s story (Hoch 10). They were even believed to be paying White a “salary” for telling his story.

I was further reminded of Blakey’s statement that “anyone can (now) fabricate a story” when I read Wallace Milam’s wry observation that “the critics have now positively identified twelve of the [alleged] three gunman” (Hoch 7). As Paul Hoch, a highly respected assassination authority and publisher of *Echoes of Conspiracy: A Journal of Assassination Research* further reminds us with a quote from Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*, some people can “believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast” (Hoch 9). My suspicions grew to the stark realization that, like so many before me, I was up to my neck and sinking fast into the assassination quagmire. Unless I could find a good scholarly rope to grab onto, I was going under!

Then, out of the blue, the thrust of my effort took an abrupt turn. After reviewing a brilliantly produced television documentary named *Reasonable Doubt* – a documentary that, based primarily on Harold Weisberg’s previous work, stunningly and completely destroys the Warren Commission’s preposterous “single bullet” theory once and for all (Selby) – I phoned History Professor David Wrone at the University of Wisconsin for his valuable advice and opinions. Wrone was one of *Reasonable Doubt’s* technical advisors. I was hopeful that he would throw me the rope I needed – which he did, although not at all in the way I had expected.

“Who do you think did it,” I asked Wrone, still doggedly and merrily sniffing down the ‘whodunit’ trail. I was astounded by his answer. It would radically change the

course on which I was heading, not to mention substantially alter my entire foundation for thinking about the assassination.

"Your question is illogical," he answered. His totally unexpected response came in a very sincere tone, leaving me with no doubt about his seriousness. He continued: "First prove to me that your question is logical and then I will attempt to answer it. Your question presumes that there's been an investigation and that, therefore, there are factual grounds upon which to base an answer. But, in fact, there are not, because there never was a murder investigation conducted in the first place" (Wrone). After hours of work and tons of research, here was a respected history professor and published expert on the subject telling me that I had been on a wild goose chase all along – and he wasn't kidding!

Never an investigation? At first, the notion struck me as patently absurd! What about the DPD's investigation? What about the WC, with their dozens of staff investigators and all their help from the FBI, the CIA, the Secret Service and others?

Then it dawned on me that Professor Wrone was my first scholarly source. As a researcher, I was therefore obligated to consider the possibility that Wrone was right – no pun intended! Because if he was, neither I nor anyone else could write a rational 'whodunit' theory without first dealing with this seminal issue.

Every credible, well documented assassination theory that I had read thus far relied heavily upon "evidence" cited in both the DPD and WC investigations. According to Wrone, all of these, including and perhaps especially the HSCA's conclusion, were merely groundless speculation. If, as Wrone had claimed, there never really was a legitimate murder investigation in the first place, then all of these theories were essentially indefensible and I had no business pursuing any of them myself – at least not yet. Furthermore, no 'whodunit' theory about the murder could ever be rationally postulated until a true murder investigation finally took place, thereby establishing a legitimate basis upon which to propose a solution to the crime. How could we solve the murder when we didn't yet have the foggiest notion about

what really happened that day?

To substantiate the validity of Wrone's opinion, I knew I'd have to check further. I therefore scheduled a personal interview with Harold Weisberg – the one man whom almost all respectable researchers generally hail as the most objective, knowledgeable, reliable and dedicated of them all.

"It's true," said Weisberg. "No investigation [into JFK's murder] was ever conducted. And unless you leave behind the notion of 'whodunit,' you're going to lay an egg with your paper" (Weisberg Interview). Now 77 years old, Weisberg is considered by many – especially, it seemed, the more scholarly researchers I was aware of – to be the "dean of assassination researchers" (Wrone; McKnight). He is a former "Senate investigator and an intelligence and political analyst," who has studied the assassination since 1964 (Weisberg Whitewash cover).

Along with fellow researcher and attorney Jim Lesar, Weisberg has been instrumental in getting thousands of important documents on the assassination released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). He and Lesar are now recognized as America's two foremost experts on the FOIA.

Weisberg takes the thesis a logical step further by believing that "not only was there a failure to investigate the murder, there was a determination not to do so" (Weisberg). That made sense to me, since it seemed impossible that both the DPD and the WC could possibly have been so stupid and so incompetent to have simply screwed things up so much.

Gerald McKnight, Professor of American Studies at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, provided further corroboration. Among other classes, McKnight teaches a course on Political Assassinations, almost half of which is spent on John Kennedy's murder. He agreed with both Wrone and Weisberg that there had never been what constituted a legitimate murder investigation (McKnight). (As an interesting aside, McKnight also showed me a Manlicher-Carcano rifle – the exact same model purportedly used by Oswald – which he uses as a visual aid for his Political

Assassinations class. Anyone who has any experience at all in hunting or target shooting, as I have, would find it very difficult to believe that an experienced, ex-Marine Corps marksman like Oswald would ever have selected such a shoddy weapon in the first place. They would find it virtually impossible to believe that he could have succeeded in twice hitting a moving target from that distance – just over 300 feet for the fatal head shot (Weisberg Whitewash II 37) – in the highly accurate, rapid-fire manner that is alleged. Not with the cheap, extremely hard to operate and notoriously inaccurate Italian army surplus rifle that the DPD and the WC claim was the murder weapon).

Now I had three solid sources, each essentially telling me that I might as well be chasing rainbows. Or UFO's, for that matter! That was enough evidence for me, at least for now. I couldn't personally prove the "no investigation" hypothesis yet, but I was convinced enough to believe that it was futile for me or anyone else to play any more 'whodunit' games until we could ultimately prove or disprove it.

That final proof would have to wait for another day, but I couldn't resist sketching out a potential, preliminary outline for such a paper. For the reader's amusement – or, perhaps, bemusement – a copy of that outline follows. Your comments, criticisms and suggestions are welcomed.

Proposed outline for future paper

An Uninvestigated Murder: the Assassination of John F. Kennedy

Introduction -- The question of who really murdered JFK continues to linger in the collective American conscience, and for good reason. But a critical problem with theories about who did it is that virtually all of them rely upon the Dallas Police and/or Warren Commission "investigations." But neither of these entities ever conducted a legitimate murder investigation in the first place. Until such an investigation is conducted, no one can rationally theorize about who actually did it.

- I. Who Killed JFK? Why that question continues to linger
    - A. We don't believe the government has ever told us the truth, and for good reason -- the Warren Commission Report has been legitimately refuted. Here's why:
      1. reasons and sources will be cited which will totally discredit the WC's "single bullet" theory. The primary source will be Chip Selby's *Reasonable Doubt*.
    - B. Besides, it's fun to speculate about major mysteries
      1. Note the popularity of murder mysteries in American culture
    - C. For some, it's therapeutic or otherwise satisfying to speculate
      1. To many, JFK represented more than "just" a President
      2. Many have their own pet 'whodunit' theories or axes to grind
    - D. The conspiracy theory pot is constantly kept boiling by both old and new, and legitimate and illegitimate researchers
- (Note: Sections II and III will contain essentially the same material as the first paper)
- II. Many conspiracy theorists believe that they have solved the murder
    - A. Many are responsible, dedicated researchers who apparently present very well documented and very convincing theories
      1. The Mafia theory - examples: Scheim and Davis and others
      2. The CIA theory - example: Gaeton Fonzi and others
      3. The "Gang of Conspirators" theory - examples: Groden & Livingstone and Fletcher Prouty and others



- B. For profit theories, fringe theories and lunatic fringe theories
    - 1. For profit theory example - the Roscoe White story
    - 2. Fringe theories
      - a. the FBI did it
      - b. the KGB did it
      - c. the "backfire" theory – Castro did it
    - 3. The lunatic fringe - maybe it was extraterrestrial beings
    - 4. Unfortunately, these fringe theories hurt the credibility of all serious researchers
      - a. example - the 11/23/90 Mark Davis WRC Radio talk show
  - C. Further muddying the waters – the alleged "disinformation" conspiracy theories of the FBI and CIA
  - D. Today, almost anyone determined enough can fabricate a plausible theory
    - 1. Robert Blakey's belief
    - 2. the wry observations of Wallace Milman and Paul Hoch
- III. But any 'whodunit' theory – even the most credible – is unacceptable if
- A. It is based upon information from either the Dallas Police Department (DPD) or the Warren Commission (WC) investigations and
  - B. We can prove that neither the DPD nor the WC ever conducted what constitutes a true murder investigation in the first place
- (Note: Next, we establish exactly what practices and procedures are generally agreed upon by law enforcement officials as constituting the essential components of a legitimate murder investigation. Then we demonstrate a myriad of ways in which both the DPD and the WC neglected to follow these critical practices and procedures
- IV. Proof that the DPD and the WC never conducted a valid murder investigation
- A. Specify the basic, established law enforcement procedures for conducting a legitimate murder investigation
    - 1. the chain of evidence
    - 2. the death certificate and autopsy reports
    - 3. sealing off the murder scene

4. selecting and interrogating suspects
  5. selecting and interrogating eyewitnesses
  6. lineup procedures
  7. searching a suspect's residence
  8. ensuring the suspect's civil rights
    - a. the right to legal counsel
    - b. the right to fair interrogation treatment
    - c. the right to protection from harm
- B. The many ways in which the DPD violated these critical procedures
1. the chain of evidence
    - a. the murder weapon and bullets
    - b. the presidential limousine
    - c. the president's body and clothing
    - d. photographic evidence
      - (1) the Zapruder film
      - (2) the Moorman photograph
      - (3) the Altgens photograph
      - (4) the Oswald "backyard" photograph
      - (5) other photos (excluding autopsy photos)
  2. the death certificate; and the autopsy reports and photos
    - a. the president's physician, George M. Burkley
    - b. the Dallas doctors – the unofficial autopsy report
    - c. the Bethesda Navy Hospital doctors – the official autopsy
    - d. the autopsy photos
  3. sealing off the murder scene
  4. selecting and interrogating suspects
    - a. example of Jim Braden, a/k/a Eugene Hale Brading
    - b. example of the four "tramps"
    - c. other examples
  5. selecting and interrogating eyewitnesses
    - a. examples - to be researched
  6. lineup procedures

7. searching for evidence beyond the crime scene
    - a. Oswald's apartment
    - b. searching the Paine family's garage
  8. ensuring the suspect's civil rights
    - a. the right to legal counsel
    - b. the right to fair interrogation treatment
    - c. the right to protection from harm
- C. The many ways in which the WC violated critical investigative procedures
1. the Commission's true mission
    - a. the incredible 11/25/63 memo of Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach
    - b. the incredible Executive Session transcripts
  2. Bruce McKinney's "Groupthink" analysis of the WC
  3. Nancy Stone's WC "Conflict of Interest" dissertation
  4. use and misuse of the autopsy report
  5. selected use and misuse of the photographic evidence
  6. the selection and exclusion of critical evidence
  7. the selection and exclusion of eyewitness testimony
  8. the questioning of witnesses – especially the lack of any cross examination
- D. The HSCA "investigation: – reasons and sources will be cited which discredit the HSCA, primarily by demonstrating how they too relied extensively upon the DPD and WC non-investigations to reach their "conclusion"
- E. Summary: based upon the above evidence, we can rationally conclude that no legitimate murder investigation was ever conducted into John Kennedy's assassination

Conclusion--Let's finally conduct a true murder investigation; then we'll finally have a rational foundation upon which to possibly solve this crime. It's may well be "too late" to find a solution anymore, what with missing evidence and deceased eyewitnesses; but it is probably our only hope. It's at least high time the government finally allowed the American people access to the facts.

But even more important than possibly solving the crime is to use that information as a base upon which to eventually determine exactly what went wrong – that is, how our major institutions so miserably failed us during a time of great national crisis – so that we can hopefully prevent it from happening again. Perhaps in this way, our great democracy might benefit in the long run.

## Works Cited

- Davis, John H. Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy. New York: Signet, 1989.
- Fonzi, Gaeton. "Who Killed JFK?" Washingtonian Nov. 1980: 157-237.
- Groden, Robert J. and Livingstone, Harrison Edward. High Treason: John F. Kennedy's Murder. Our Government's Secret. A Nation's Betrayal. New York: Berkley, 1990
- Hoch, Paul. "The Roscoe White Story." Echos of Conspiracy: A Journal of Assassination Research. Vol. 12, No. 1, November 22, 1990.
- Lesar, James. Telephone Interview. 7 May 1991.
- Meagher, Sylvia. Accessories After the Fact: The Warren Commission, the Authorities and the Report. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967.
- McKinney, Bruce Converse. Decision Making in The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy: A Descriptive Analysis Employing Irving Janis' Groupthink Hypothesis. Diss. The Pennsylvania State University, 1985. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1986. GAX 85-26090.
- McKnight, Gerald. Personal Interview. 14 May 1991.
- Moyers, Bill. The Secret Government: The Constitution In Crisis. Washington, D.C.: Seven Locks Press, 1988.
- Schein, David E. Contract on America: The Mafia Murder of President John F. Kennedy. New York: Shapolsky, 1988.
- Selby, Chip. Reasonable Doubt. Narr. Mike Buchanan. Writ. Chip and Mike Selby. A & E Network Special. Jones Intercable, Alexandria, VA. 23 Nov. 1988. Prod. Dir. & Ed. Chip Selby, M.A. Thesis Proj. The University of Maryland, 1986.
- United States. Pres. Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy (The Warren Commission Report). Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1964.
- . Cong. House. Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA). Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Final Report. 95th Congress, 2d Session. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1978-79.
- Weisberg, Harold. Whitewash: the Report on the Warren Report. Frederick, MD: Harold Weisberg, Publisher, 1965.
- . Weisberg, Harold. Personal Interview. 14 May 1991.
- Wrone, David R. Telephone Interview. 9 May 1991

Works Consulted

- Groden, Robert J. and Model, F. Peter. JFK: The Case For Conspiracy. New York: Manor Books, 1976.
- Hurt, Henry. Reasonable Doubt: An Investigation Into The Assassination of JFK. Holt, Rinehart & Wilson, 1985.
- Kurtz, Michael L. Crime of the Century: The Kennedy Assassination From A Historian's Perspective. Knoxville: U. of Tennessee Press, 1982.
- Lifton, David. Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy. New York: Macmillan, 1980.
- Miller, Tom. The Assassination Please Almanac. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1977.
- Prouty, L. Fletcher. Secret Team: The CIA and Its Allies Control of the United States and the World. New York: Prentice Hall, 1973.
- Rose, Jerry. The Third Decade: A Journal of Research on the John F. Kennedy Assassination
- Stone, Nancy-Stephanie. A Conflict of Interest: The Warren Commission, the FBI and the CIA. Diss. Boston College, 1987. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1989. GAX89-04001.
- United States. Cong. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. (The Church Committee). Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders. Nov. 20, 1975. 94th Congress, 1st Session. Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1975.
- Weisberg, Harold. Whitewash II: the FBI - Secret Service Coverup Frederick, MD: Harold Weisberg, Publisher, 1966.
- Wrone, David R. "The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: An Annotated Bibliography". Wisconsin Magazine of History. 1972 56(1):21-30.
- Zelizer, Barbie. "Covering the Body": The Kennedy Assassination and the Establishment of Journalistic Authority. Diss. The University Of Pennsylvania, 1990. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991. GAX91-01236.

Fred DeVinney  
1613 OAKcrest Dr  
Alexandria, VA 22302



First C

Harold & Lil Weisberg  
Route 12, old Receiver Rd  
Frederick, MD 21701