



By Mark Law

WAS KENNEDY'S DEATH A SOVIET PLOT?

Michael Eddowes is a private investigator extraordinary. He is a wealthy man who uses his money and leisure to untangle the web of conspiracy in which he believes the West is now entangled

Akhtar Hussain



It looks peaceful enough at Yeoman's Row, this quiet and expensive cul-de-sac off Brompton Road in London. One house, with its bevy of plants beside the door, seems particularly tranquil. But beyond that door one hears of another world – a world of assassination squads, governmental skulduggery, fiendishly cunning conspirators and dark plots. This is the world of Michael Eddowes, a 73-year-old lawyer with a passionate belief that the West is struggling in the tentacles of a massive conspiracy.

Some of the evidence which might reveal this conspiracy, he feels, lies buried at Fort Worth in Texas, in the grave of Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who is presumed to have assassinated President Kennedy. Except that, according to Michael Eddowes, private investigator extraordinary, it may not be Lee Harvey Oswald's body in the grave, but that of a Russian imposter – a clever member of Department 13, the KGB, who staged and assassination squad.

In pursuit of conclusive evidence for his controversial theory, Michael Eddowes gained agreement from Oswald's widow, Marina, for the body to be disinterred and examined. However Oswald's brother, Robert, won the latest round in his battle to keep the grave undisturbed. Eddowes is appealing against this



His Bistro Vno restaurants (above) pay for Eddowes' investigations. Since the first opened in 1958 he has taken a keen interest in their management

decision and awaiting the outcome.

Michael Eddowes is a small, smart energetic man. With a red and white spotted handkerchief at his neck, a gold watch chain and neatly casual clothes he looks like a successful English actor in Hollywood. In fact he seems a little out of place in the old-world splendour of his study, with its dark red carpet, velvet curtains and large gilt mirrors. The books on the far side of his vast leather-topped desk are turned to face the visitor's chair. Most of them

are about John Kennedy, his assassination and the KGB. The tall-ceilinged and large-windowed room would be bright in the daylight, but a venetian blind reduces it to the gloom of dusk. In this light, conspiracy can thrive.

Eddowes is rather in the tradition of the amateur English sleuths of fiction. He is a rich man using his wealth and leisure to untangle mysteries of his choice. One could believe that in the course of a day he might be encountering as equals Richard Hannay, Sherlock Holmes or Lord Peter Wimsey. He says things like "poor devil", and "a great dark conspiracy". He has always known important people.

As with those heroes of Buchan, Conan Doyle and Sayers, events seem contrived to occur around him. When Eddowes went on a jolly jaunt in Germany in the thirties with some aviator chums, he arrived in Munich on the Night of the Long Knives (he rivetingly re-enacts an encounter at his hotel with two blackshirt bodyguards, whose comrades were at that moment murdering brownshirts elsewhere in the city; he plays all three roles, moving deftly around the snarling head and curled claws of the giant tigerskin covering the floor beside his desk).

When he was back in Germany two years later he saw a German Labour Corps as it marched along a road. Out of curiosity he followed it at a distance on his bicycle. "They carried spades on their shoulders and sang marvellous songs. They marched all day and never put a spade in the ground. In the evening they went through some gates. There were two sentry boxes and inside them were men with spades on their shoulders". He rushed back to England and told John Walter, whose family owned a share of *The Times*, that Germany was building an army. "I didn't know his wife was a member of the Anglo-German

Society associated with Cliveden".

While Eddowes was staying with a Hungarian count in Budapest, the German invasion began. He and his wife managed to get out just in time. The count was murdered by the Germans the next day.

Now England faces other enemies and Eddowes is on their trail. A series of conspiracies, he says, can be traced through the Profumo affair, the Chinese invasion of India, the Cuba crisis, the Kennedy assassination and the war in Vietnam.

He says he first became aware of it in 1962 when, after a car accident, he went for treatment to Dr Stephen Ward, an osteopath. Through him he met Christine Keeler and Commander Eugenie Ivanov (the Soviet Naval Attaché). "The Ward consulting rooms were an espionage centre", says Eddowes. "His contacts were enormous – the Cabinet and so on. I realised I was on to something terrifying."

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Eddowes' public part in the story was confusing. He delivered and published a letter to the Admiralty alleging that Ivanov had asked Christine Keeler to get secret information about the West's nuclear plans from John Profumo, the Minister for War. Very soon after, Eddowes left for the U.S.

While in America he was interviewed by John Malone, the head of the FBI in New York, and Eddowes claims he was able to help him establish that Ward was involved in arranging the departure for New York of the beautiful Maria Novotny to compromise the newly elected President Kennedy. The lawyer from London was getting attention at a high level in America – and not for the last time.

Michael Eddowes works for 14 hours a day – now mostly on his Lee Harvey Oswald investigation. He rises late and works through to the small hours of the morning, spending the spare time he does have tending the fruit trees in his roof garden or driving off in his Rolls-Royce for a trout fishing weekend in south Wales or Derbyshire. It was in Derbyshire that he was born.

He comes from a family of lawyers and went to school at Uppingham. He was unable to go on to Oxford, as planned, because his father, a solicitor, had a heart attack and at 19 Michael Eddowes had to help out in his office. He then served his articles in Leicester and London before rejoining his father's firm. He stayed for two years, but was ambitious and decided to seek his fortune in London. He became a

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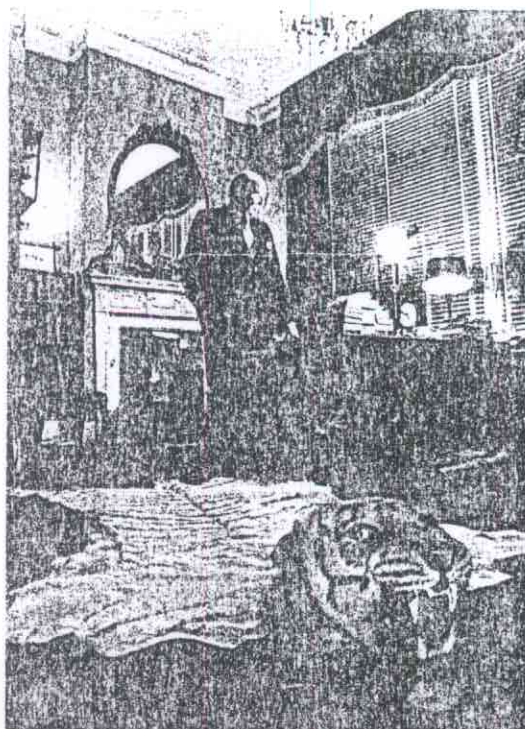
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The skin of a man-eating tiger watches from the floor of Eddowes' study, where he conducts his fight against conspiracy and injustice

managing clerk at Gray's Inn for a year before setting up his own solicitor's practice in Holborn. A year later, in 1931, he moved to the West End and occupied an office overlooking Berkeley Square.

"It was a desperate struggle to make money at first", he remembers. "All the office furniture and carpets were hired". But he prospered and by 1956, at the age of 49, he had been successful enough to dispose of his practice and involve himself in other things.

His interests had always been wide ranging. He had been a director of a successful property company called Mervyn Estates; he had designed his own car and had it built; he had started Legastat, a photocopying company (it is still going and is run by one of his two sons - Eddowes has been married three times, but now lives alone).

His remaining business interest is the small chain of Bistro Vino restaurants in Kensington and Fulham. He founded them with two partners in 1958 because he believed there was a market for "the sort of place I would have liked when I was in my twenties. I could never find anywhere which provided cheap food in pleasant surroundings". The formula worked, and the patronage of showbusiness celebrities added to their popularity. Eddowes learned every job in the restaurant business by doing it himself. He evolved an accounting system and has since bought out his partners. He visits the restaurants four or five times a week. Their

turnover is now about £1m. a year.

In 1953 he became interested in the strange circumstances surrounding the conviction of Timothy Evans, who was sentenced to death for the murder of his baby daughter.

Eddowes was suspicious about a murder in a house which had been the scene of several other murders - for it was there the notorious Reginald Christie killed eight people. Christie was hanged in 1953. Evans had been his lodger and Eddowes suspected that it was Christie who murdered the child. For 13 years he gathered evidence and campaigned for the reopening of the case, furious at what he felt was a miscarriage of justice. He even bought 10 Rillington Place, the scene of the murder, to help prove his point.

He conducted his research alone, but made it all available for the Brabin Enquiry in 1964 to which he was asked to give evidence.

Ludovic Kennedy, who also played an important part in securing Evans' eventual pardon, says that "Eddowes was the first link in the chain which led to the pardon. I was asked to review Eddowes' book on the subject, *The Man on Your Conscience*. He had the truth of the matter and must be given the credit for that. If it hadn't been for that book I don't think I would have ever got involved in the case".

But since then Eddowes has started on a larger case - the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. Aspects of this have baffled many people. It is a saga of loose ends. It provides just the right sort

This shower began a gallon of temper... It's on show... When be... the Dol... itself... If the...



of intriguing challenge for Eddowes.

Lee Harvey Oswald, the supposed killer, was believed by some to be a deranged man acting on his own. Others believe that he was part of a conspiracy; even that he was one of two gunmen who fired at the Presidential motorcade as it passed through Dallas. The conspiracy theory is given weight by the fact that two days after the assassination Oswald was himself killed in the basement of a police station by an underworld character, Jack Ruby.

The Warren Commission was formed to investigate the assassination, and seven months later, reported that there was insufficient evidence to support the idea of a conspiracy. Michael Eddowes was among many who were not so sure.

Several books were written on the subject, and for a time there was enough raw material in the form of new evidence and enough curiosity to support a thriving assassination-theory industry. Eddowes is one of very few investigators who have continued working on the idea. With the professional expertise he devoted to the Evans case, Eddowes perseveres, searching the motives, memories and the documents of those connected with the business.

Much has come to light since the *Warren Report* and he has produced some compelling evidence to show that the physical characteristics of Oswald before and after his visit to Russia suggest the assassin may

have been an imposter. But he says he also has found lines of conspiracy in the assassination, the ramifications of which link the Cuban missile crisis, the Chinese invasion of India and the war in Vietnam. Eddowes is not afraid to think big.

It all goes back to a chance meeting with Ivanov at a coffee bar in Marylebone High Street (Eddowes had gone there to meet Stephen Ward). It was the time of the Cuba crisis. In the course of their conversation, Ivanov told Eddowes that if Kennedy were to intercept the Soviet warships approaching Cuba, among other consequences "England would be destroyed within seven minutes".

"Then I asked him: 'Do you approve or disapprove of the Chinese invasion of India'? And he replied, 'There are good and bad men in China, just as there are good and bad men in India'. This absurd reply satisfied me that there was a link between the Cuban crisis and the Chinese invasion of India".

A rose sheds its petal on to the desk. It is getting hot in Michael Eddowes' study. One feels like a stupid Watson trying to understand why that reply was, in the circumstances, any less absurd or relevant than the question.

"But why did you ask that"?

There is a long pause before he answers. "Inspiration . . . and experience. Don't forget I'm very experienced. If you've practised in

Berkeley Square, you can't be anything else - police, prostitutes and princes... the lot".

"So what is the link with China?"

Eddowes replies with a confusing chronology of events. The going is getting heavy and Eddowes obliges by asking the questions as well as answering them.

"Why did the Chinese suddenly halt their invasion of India on October 20, 1962? Because, on October 16 the assassin of President Kennedy, who called himself Oswald, was spying in a photographic company in Dallas which carried out secret work for the U.S. government. They were working on material connected with spy-plane photographs taken above Cuba on the 14th". For emphasis he strikes his desk top with his index finger. More petals fall. "So 'Oswald' knew the Americans knew about the Soviet missile build-up on Cuba. He passed the information on. As a result Russia advised China on the 20th to halt its invasion (even though Kennedy did not disclose America's knowledge of the missiles until the 22nd).

"The Russians asked the Chinese to wait until the outcome of the Cuban crisis. If the rockets had been allowed to remain and perhaps used to destroy the U.S., then the Chinese could well have taken over



When Michael Eddowes is not fishing for clues he is often fishing for trout (above), tenting fruit trees in his roof garden or driving his Rolls-Royce

all India, Asia and Australasia". Eddowes produces a pipe, starts to blow into it and stares at the window. "I am very suspicious of China. Very! The Chinese fool you every time". He shakes his head in wonder. "Their army is 250 million trained men who can run along with a gun on a handful of rice. Imagine them, coming like locusts!" He speaks of "the Yellow Peril". The origins of Kennedy's assassination, he believes, also lie in the Far East. It was part of a Russian plan

to pave the way for the invasion of South Vietnam by the North. "Two months after the *Warren Report* was published, the North Vietnamese crossed the parallel", cites Eddowes. "Kennedy's death marked the decline and fall of the West in my view. Within six hours they knew the assassin was a Soviet imposter. But the FBI could never admit to having allowed an imposter entry to the U.S. without keeping him under surveillance". He also believes that the American authorities

covered the imposter's Russian tracks to avert a war which might have been triggered off by American public reaction on learning the assassination was a Soviet plot.

Robert Oswald, Lee Harvey's brother, has accused Eddowes of acting as he does for publicity. But so far Eddowes has received only a modicum of that and certainly no riches. His book *How They Killed Kennedy*, written with Neville Spearman and published in 1976, sold only 2,500 copies in this country - not even enough to pay for his trout fishing for a year. It is, in fact, Eddowes' restaurants which have made the researches possible.

His researches are costly. He has employed numerous assistants ("they prefer to remain anonymous for various reasons"). For his current battle over the exhumation of Oswald's body he has two firms of lawyers acting for him in the U.S. He has spent £110,000 on the case. He has amassed a mountain of evidence to support his theory that Oswald was a Soviet imposter. The most crucial part of this is a set of X-rays of the real Oswald's teeth.

The disinterment of the body could reveal conclusively whether or not it was the real Oswald. And Michael Eddowes, at least, believes that those silent jaws might yet tell a tale which will surprise us all. (2)