

Reaction and New 'Revelations'

BOOKS

Patricia Holt

"Shame on you for your ignorance!" writes Nancy Gilmore of Vacaville about my characterization of Charles Crenshaw, the Dallas doctor who says that John F. Kennedy was shot twice

from the front (not the back) in "JFK: Conspiracy of Silence" (reviewed here April 3).

Having heard from vehement readers who either loved or hated the review, the book, Oliver Stone, his movie and the continuing controversy about JFK's assassination, I thought Gilmore had discovered something I had missed — and she did, sort of.

"You state that (Crenshaw, a third-year resident) was 'not even a real doctor yet,'" she writes. "A third-year resident is a person who has graduated from medical school with an M.D.; done a year's internship (this is no longer the case, but was in the 1960s); done two previous years of residency ..."

Right. It seems my attempt to make a short-cut by assuming Crenshaw's voice ("Who would have believed Crenshaw ...") did not show the complexity of the author's tight situation. Here's a fuller explanation: Earlier in the book, Crenshaw explains that even before the JFK murder, resident surgeons at Parkland were doing so much trauma work that "the hospital was nervous about the image of residents playing such a supreme role in its services ... As a result, certain med-school officials deliberately masked the major role that I and other resident surgeons played in the medical aspects of the Kennedy assassination."

Readers Perturbed

Many readers were exercised about this point, as became apparent later when I appeared on Kevin Pursglove's "Forum" program on KQED radio the other day. Readers heatedly called to say they could not understand why Crenshaw "did not come forward 30 years ago," "did not tell the Warren Commission what he knew" and "waited until he could make a buck, just like Oliver Stone has," to paraphrase the comments.

It's important to recognize that Crenshaw names every doctor who worked on Kennedy and singles out Dr. Charles Baxter, director of the emergency room at Parkland, whose "edict of secrecy proclaimed in Trauma Room 1 ... just after President Kennedy died," prohibited all doctors from speaking or writing about their experiences.

Tantalizing Mafia Book

We can better understand the

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Over JFK



Sam (Mooney) Giancana: a tell-all book by mobster's kin

stars such as Mickey Mantle and Willie Mays; about working for the CIA as hit men; and about Mooney personally saving "bootlegger" Joseph Kennedy's life by convincing the New York mafiosi to cancel a death warrant.

We hear practically no details about any of this, since Chuck rarely knew how the mob worked. But when Mooney starts talking about how Joe Kennedy promised him the reins of the White House if Mooney could get JFK elected to the presidency, and how, years before, Mooney erased all records of Jack's unfortunate first marriage, we start craving hard evidence.

Details Are Sparse

It's not forthcoming, even when Mooney vows to crush JFK's reputation by using the CIA to bug a hotel room where Jack Kennedy is taped having sex with three women. Then, Mooney gets the CIA to bug the home of Kennedy's lover, Marilyn Monroe, on the night Robert Kennedy arrives to find her so angry at him that he has his doctor give her a sedative — on the same night, according to the book, that Mafia hit men kill her off.

So where are these tapes and why didn't Mooney Giancana use them to blast the Kennedys in public? If he had, Chuck says, the Mafia's relationship with the CIA would have been revealed. Is that a reason? Mooney couldn't have hired a San Francisco private eye to do the bugging? Is any of this true? When Mooney winks at Chuck that both the RFK and JFK assassinations were Mafia-CIA conspiracies, we throw up our hands. Even Oliver Stone gives us more facts than this guy.

One enjoyable way to get the gist of "Double Cross" is by listening to Jerry Orbach's reading of the abridged book on tape (Harper Audio, two cassettes, \$17). Orbach's low-rent tough-guy impression is perfect for the sleazy Mooney, and he makes little Chuck sound like such a stupid pug that the essence of the book — exonerating the author and his son — comes through loud and clear.

crucial role of such details when trying to read "Double Cross" (Warner; 366 pages; \$22.95), the best-selling book about Sam (Mooney) Giancana by his brother, Chuck, and his godson, Sam, in which JFK is also a featured character. This is one of the more tantalizing Mafia books to come along this decade because Chuck, much younger than Sam, appears to have been privy to all the dirt and bad deeds conducted by the Chicago Mafia under Mooney Giancana's leadership.

We listen to Mooney brag about the Mafia controlling every presidency from Franklin Delano Roosevelt on; about muscling in on Hollywood to control the careers of Jean Harlow, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and dozens of others; about owning the careers of baseball