

CHAPTER 1

Competing Literary Bordellos

Here I am, past 80, frail and fragile, a first-generation American who's lived a third of the life of the United States of America with devotion to its principles, and I am about to be charged in a book with being an accessory in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

I've known for more than six months as I write this that there is this guy who has very serious problems in his head who'd been saying and writing that, but that it could be published in a book?

A book whose first printing was announced at not less than 50,000 copies- in hardback?

That means there will be a strong effort to sell it.

Including talk shows, an author's speaking tour, the promotions that would have the effect of defaming me and others coast-to-coast.

A hardback first-printing of 50,000 copies is large and represents a large investment. That requires the strongest possible sales efforts.

And by, if it can be said that I have a publisher, by my very own publisher? (He had by then reprinted my 1972 book on the King assassination.)

I'd known for several weeks that Kent Carroll, of Carroll & Graf, had told Robert Dahlin of Publisher's Weekly that this was coming but the full incongruity of it, the absolute irrationality of it did not strike me until 1:17 a.m. the morning of Sunday, June 27. I can pinpoint the very moment.

All of whatever Carroll told Dahlin I do not know but this is what appeared in the May 3, 1993 issue:

"Most people who've done the research and interviewing on the assassination have been

independent writers,' says Kent Carroll. 'Killing the Truth is about who those people are. It suggests that many have for one reason or another, put out a lot of disinformation, *furthering the conspiracy*.' (My emphasis.)

"Livingstone,' continues Carroll, 'knows what he is talking about. He's the guy who discovered and made known the fact that President John F. Kennedy's adrenal glands had atrophied because of medication he was taking. He (meaning Harrison Edward Livingstone) also theorized that he (meaning Kennedy) would probably have died in office anyway.'"

Welcome, dear reader to the irrational world of the crazy assassination conspiracy theorists and those who profited so unhandsomely by making several of them rich and famous, the unreal world I have avoided as much as possible for nigh onto 30 years.

Publisher's Weekly, which lives on publisher advertising, is not about to tell those it wants to buy those books that a publisher is full of buffalo chips.

The first published and proven report of Kennedy's adrenal deficiency was by my friend the late Dr. John Nichols. When we first met, when he was attending a medical seminar at the Army's Walter Reed Hospital, in Washington. (I spent four months as a patient there during World War II). He then handed me a copy of a reprint of what he wrote about it for a medical journal. That was in early 1967.

So, says Carroll after referring to writers "who've done the research and the interviewing," as helping the assassination conspirators, his maven "discovered" what was published 26 years earlier. And besides that, what the hell difference does it make that JFK was assassinated, he was going to die in office anyway, according to Livingstone. If not according to the autopsy!

Livingstone said it, so it had to be true, didn't it?

And thus, Carroll added, his first printing of the coming Livingstone masterpiece would be of

more than 50,000 copies, a considerable investment, a considerable cost to be retrieved before there would be a cent in profit.

Carroll's proud boast is appropriate to the coming Livingstone masterpiece's self-descriptive subtitle, "Deceit and Deception in the JFK Case."

To my knowledge, my personal knowledge, only one writer who does not support the official mythology can be believed to have lived and practiced "deceit and deception in the JFK case" as much as Livingstone on his side of the controversy; and no publisher has exploited that great tragedy more often than Carroll & Graf.

As a way of living and working- and most of all writing- David Lifton is more experienced than Livingstone in "deceit and deception," if only because he started earlier and did it longer.

On the personal level, Lifton is without doubt masterful in deceit and deception. In his practice of it Livingstone is in part a bumbler, a fool and an animated stupidity who complicates all with an unimaginable self-concept based on which he makes imperious demand of others.

In October 1992 the sponsors of the second annual Assassination Symposium on John F. Kennedy, in Dallas, threatened Livingstone with being thrown out by the security service if he did not stop his loud hell-raising because they did not abandon their plans to honor grandmotherly Mrs. Mary Ferrell by having her the keynote speaker and having him replace her.

Lifton's mistitled book, Best Evidence (it is neither), according to his own May, 1993 bragging had gone through 40 printings by four publishers by then.

That may very well be true.

My copy of a reprint- it had three by three different publishers- after its appearance as a Macmillan hardback in 1980-is its fourth publication, in a quality paperback, the 1990 eighth edition of

the 1980 version- by Carroll & Graf.

Although it was not long before Lifton and Livingstone were mortal enemies, the self-descriptive Lifton subtitle must have appealed to Carroll & Graf. It is "Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John Kennedy."

Not quite exactly the same as the words used on Livingstone's but the same idea.

In Lifton's defense, no author in the field is more practiced in and proficient with or more totally dedicated to disguise and deception. He is clever, cunning, and uninhibited in what he made up and wrote about the JFK assassination. He was particularly uninhibited in his adept articulation of what he knew was impossible; and among his practices with those from whom he wanted information he believed they had was blackmail. With his blackmail there was neither disguise nor deceit. It was bluntly stated.

Whichever may be preferred, deceit or disguise, each of these very profitable writers is skilled at both.

Much as each hates the other, Carroll & Graf had no trouble publishing both- at the same time.

In this it published contradictory explanations and "solutions" of the JFK assassination at the same time.

That, of course, was not dictated by greed, by the large profits made from as weird an assortment of books, each contradicting all of the others by this one publisher, Carroll & Graf. Obviously they are dedicated to the right of the people to know what really and truly happened when their President was killed.

Without exhausting the catalogue, there is Lifton who said JFK's body was snatched and toyed with before it reached the Bethesda Navy hospital for the autopsy about which there has been so much

controversy. Livingstone's book advanced several "solutions" at least one of which he abandoned briefly. That is the basis of his first book, High Treason- his claim that the autopsy film was doctored.

Then there is the account of the imagined trial by a former FBI Special Agent, Walt Brown, The People v Lee Harvey Oswald, published in 1992. Not surprisingly for a former FBI agent, he found Oswald guilty.

Dick Russell's 1992 contribution is a "confession" that was well-known for 25 years when no publisher would touch it. It is titled, The Man Who Knew Too Much. (Richard Case Nagell did not know too much about robbing banks. He served time for that.)

This should be enough to establish Carroll & Graf's determined effort to see to it that the people can learn the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, all the different versions of the one truth. To assure that they published Jim Marrs' book as a hardback in 1989 and then reprinted it beginning as a "quality" hardback in 1990. Its title is Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy.

"The" plot?

Marrs' is a compendium of all of the "plots" he heard about. How many, how mutually self-contradictory, how sick, how impossible made no difference to those who see to it that the people would know the truth. Every contradictory version of it. Not to be sucker-bait, Carroll & Graf says on its Marrs book cover that there was but one plot. And there is no better way to sell books on that assassination than to deceive and mislead purchasers into believing that the book details the one and only plot, the one that succeeded, "The plot" on the Marrs cover.

Although fabled Oliver Stone had so high an opinion of Marrs' book he bought the rights to use it in his very successful movie, JFK, in fact, as I told Carroll & Graf, who had asked my opinion, Marrs' book is ignorant and uninformed trash.

Marrs can't even keep his conspiracies straight.

He has never had any interest in the facts of the assassination. He is a conspiracy aficionado. He collects them and despite his lack of interest in or knowledge of established facts of the assassination, he teaches a course in it at a Fort Worth, Texas college.

His is the most trivial of trash, so let us dispose of that now.

With his very first words.

Under the title on the title pages he has, "The great masses of the people will more easily fall victims to a great lie than to a small one ... (sic) Adolf Hitler Mein Kampf."

Marrs reaches his high point in with the first words of his preface, the best advice he could possibly give:

"Do not trust this book."

I did not need this commendable honesty to discourage my plowing through 625 pages of what I knew to be the most careless, incompetent, uninformed, indiscriminate, illogical, unreasonable and in truth outrageously sloppy slop from my earlier skimming of the manuscript. But to be able to speak about it with honesty, accuracy and fairness if asked I did some spot checking. What I read was ghastly. I illustrate with what Marrs terms "Convenient Deaths" (paperback- I can't bring myself to refer to any of these commercializations and exploitations as "quality") beginning on page 555.

The least Marrs could do in cribbing what the former courageous if also paranoid and overly-imaginative small-town Texas weekly editor Penn Jones had describes as "mysterious" deaths is to use a different word to describe them. Marrs treats them as mysterious. He asks the reader if they are the end product of a conspiracy.

The most common cause of his nine pages of them is natural causes, like heart attacks. Thus

when J. Edgar Hoover, his former special agent Guy Bannister, Jack Ruby's first lawyer Tom Howard, Joe Brown, who was the judge in the trial of Jack Ruby, Hank Suydam, described by Marrs as what he was not, "Life magazine official in charge of JFK stories; Charles Montesana, a Dallas citizen who exposed some 8mm amateur film at the scene of the assassination in Dealey Plaza; Earl Warren, who was chairman of the Presidential commission to investigate the assassination and a few others, including Dallas policemen and a doctor died of heart attacks they became part of this massive conspiracy Marrs envisioned.

All these deaths from natural causes are somehow mysterious and conspiratorial. If not, why mention them?

Although a former reporter, Marrs can't even copy newspaper accounts straight.

For example, on page 561 he gives the cause of Jack Ruby's death as "lung cancer."

It wasn't.

I spent several hours while awaiting the filming of a TV show on which we both were to appear in February, 1967 with Elmer Gertz, one of Ruby's lawyers, and Mrs. Gertz. That was in Chicago, in the studios of WBBM-TV. They had just come from Ruby's funeral. There was no doubt at all in Gertz's mind that the official cause of Ruby's death was accurate. It was cancer of the brain.

Well, Marrs had it in the same body, and that is pretty good for him.

(Ruby was indeed sick in the head, whether or not before he shot and killed Oswald it was then from the beginnings of the cancer that killed him. Before my friend Henry Wade, then Dallas county prosecutor, brought the case to trial the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals wrote him to express their concerns. Ruby always referred to his dachshund Sheba as his "wife." The SPCA believed he was treating his favorite dog that way.)

My favorites of this truly astounding listing of so many perfectly natural deaths of people most of whom had no connection at all with the assassination or its investigations as conspiratorial are these two:

"12/65, William Whaley*, cabdriver who reportedly drove Oswald to Oak Cliff, Motor collision (the only Dallas taxi driver to die on duty)"

Note the asterisk.

With the omission of one word this is without credit cribbed from Penn Jones. Jones described Whaley as the only taxi driver to die on "active" duty in 37 years. Surely in the long history of cab driving in Dallas more than one taxi driver died "on duty"!

As Jones gave no further explanation, Marrs also did not.

As I used to ask those who sought my opinion of what made Marrs famous, "Whaley was killed in a head-on collision when his taxi was struck by an 80 year old man who was driving the wrong way on a divided highway. Now do you think the CIA has 80 year old kamikazes? Or that if they do these kamikazes have the extra-sensory perception that tells them that Whaley and Whaley alone would be precisely where he had to be for them to wham him head-on?"

The asterisk, Marrs tells his readers of these deaths, "means the death is a particularly suspicious one." (page 558)

The second of Marrs' suspicious deaths, by which he made it clear he means as part of those conspiracies, the supposed topic of his book, is on the next page, 561. There, the death of "Philip Geraci," also denoted as "particularly suspicious" with that omnipresent asterisk, Marrs describes him as, "Friend of Perry Russo, told of Oswald/Shaw conversation." Geraci's cause of death, Marrs says, with no further explanation, was "Electrocution."

This entry typified Marrs at the pinnacle of his perceptiveness, wisdom, dedication, and as befits

a former reporter, his accuracy.

Do not fear, gentle reader, that Philip Geraci was an assassin who was for his heinous crimes, electrocuted by some state.

But the reader cannot tell which state in which this sinister Geraci was electrocuted because with all the reporters true instincts Marrs does not include either the city or the state of that "electrocution."

It takes a few more words to straighten this not atypical Marrs mishmash out, to the degree it or anything else in this Carroll & Graf masterpiece can be straightened out.

First, in the New Orleans area, there were three Philip Geracis. I did not bother, for my own, not Marrs' reasons, to find and speak to Philip Geraci. I did spend an evening with Mr. and Mrs. Philip Geraci II in their Metairie home, in Jefferson Parish. That parish adjoins and is virtually part of New Orleans, which is Orleans Parish. I questioned them about Philip Geraci III, the one in whom, if Marrs had any interest at all in or knowledge of the assassination as distinguished from all the insanities about it that he compiled, he would have been interested. Their son was then in Viet Nam.

How would this Fort Worth demon sleuth have known which Philip Geraci?

It is in the Warren Report!

Did Marrs write his tome without even looking at the Warren Report?

It seems so because in the Report's list of witnesses, on page 488 "Geraci, Philip, III" is listed as having been deposed, with his testimony in Volume X of the hearings, beginning on page 74.

One of the importances that, if Marrs cared about the assassination and real conspiracies rather than the nightmares so appealing to Carroll & Graf he would have been interested in, is that their son was one of two youths who were in the French Quarter catch-all store of one Carlos Bringuier when Oswald was there. Without going into all that is officially alleged about what Oswald did and said to

Bringuier then or what Bringuier said under oath about it to the Warren Commission, Geraci's parents gave me receipts given to their son by Bringuier for the minuscule sums the boy collected for Bringuier's anti-Castro activities in selling "bonds"- for fifty cents each.

Those receipts, of which Philip Geraci II gave me xeroxes, are dated. And their dating, in Bringuier's own handwriting, makes him a liar if not a perjurer in his testimony. They prove that Oswald was in Bringuier's store at least three months before the date Bringuier swore to as an alibi if not an explanation of what Oswald was doing there and what as a result Bringuier later did.

That business of the misidentified Philip Geraci being a "friend of Perry Russo" who "told of Oswald/Shaw conversation" is what for Marrs is not atypical. That was two entirely different persons, as the newspaper accounts made clear. In fact there was no reason at all to connect any Geraci with Russo. Russo was the "star witness" in New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison's fiasco when with no evidence at all but with profound faith in what he imagined he charged Shaw, Oswald and David Ferrie with conspiring to kill JFK.

Although Russo imagined and swore to much, he neither imagined nor swore to the "Oswald/Shaw conversation" of Marrs' concocting.

That myth was invented by a jailed drug addict, Veron Bundy, in the hope that if he helped Garrison, Garrison would help him get a reduced sentence.

And then there is that "electrocution"!

Philip Geraci II was a professional electrician working for a major defense industry.

He also moonlighted to increase his income.

While working on the wiring of a home he did kill himself by accident, with an electrical charge. That is, of course, electrocution. But should not a careful writer with 25 years to prepare his magnus

opus see to it that there was no confusion?

But I suppose that is asking too much of the Marrses who Carroll & Graf found so publishable because, without endless confusion, he and they would have had no book at all.

There was, however, a reason, really an additional reason for interest in Philip Geraci III. I do not go into all of it here. But I did get a first-person account from both the mother and the son.

The kid had ignored three grand-jury subpoenas from Garrison after the army returned him from Viet Nam on his father's accidental death. A friend of the kid's, who was a source for me, told me he was worried. So, hoping thereby to avoid further trouble for him or his mother, I made a deal with Garrison. Of course, he could have charged Philip with ignoring a so-to-speak legitimate subpoena. But that would have done Garrison little good. Jim agreed that if Philip talked to me and I told him what I learned he would leave Philip alone. I believed he would talk to me from my interview of his parents.

But to protect him I asked the family lawyer to be present.

Mrs. Louis Trent, wife of a judge, practiced law under her maiden name, Lillian Cohen. She had both Geracis at their Broadway Avenue home in uptown New Orleans the Saturday afternoon I interviewed Philip for several hours. They all agreed to my taping the interview. I placed the recorder where the lawyer could turn it off whenever she might want to. She never did. She was astounded by what she heard. I here report only one of the importances of that interview.

Philip, who had run away from home when in high school, had been the subject of a juvenile case in as it is there called "Jeff Parish." (Parishes are the equivalent of counties.) I had the official report on the runaway case by Sergeant Bourne who was in charge of it.

Also involved was another Warren Commission witness. Frederick S. O'Sullivan had been a schoolmate of Oswald's. In fact, from FBI records I got from John Mitchell when before Watergate he

was the attorney general, records that had been kept secret until then for no legitimate reason at all, it was O'Sullivan who got Oswald to join the Civil Air Patrol. Those same records, however, whether or not accurately, also say that at the time Oswald was in it so briefly, David Ferrie was not officially active in the CAP.

Two paragraphs of O'Sullivan's Warren Commission testimony were suppressed when printed.

According to Philip's statement to me, confirmed by his mother, the night of the day Ferrie died Philip III was in effect kidnapped by Bourne and O'Sullivan. They said they were acting for Garrison. They took Philip, with family assent, out of Orleans Parish, where Garrison had jurisdiction, into Jeff Parish, where he did not. In the home of a relative he did not leave for two weeks, they questioned him extensively in connection with the assassination. If Philip told me the truth, and from other things he told me there is no reason to believe he did not, their questioning was so skilled he hadn't any idea of what they were driving at for those two weeks.

With a live one like that Garrison had no interest. A kidnapping by a former Ferrie chum who was a New Orleans vice-squad policeman and by a Jeff Parish office, too- but Garrison had no interest at all. He did not even speak to Geraci III, did nothing about the ignored grand jury subpoenas, and instead set his staff to destroying the credibility of my source.

Moreover, as Garrison knew very well, those two police were not acting for him, their explanation of this family agreed-to kidnapping.

Between what else I knew and the difficulty of carrying that and other Geraci information forward in the scant time I could afford to spend in New Orleans, and largely influenced by the opposition of Garrison's chief investigator, Louis Ivon, for whom I had high regard, I made no effort to develop this kidnapping lead that is so strange and seemingly inexplicable.

There is much more that here is not appropriate. This serves to reflect more than that Marrs could not keep his Geracis straight or separated from others- he had no interest in developing any fact about the assassination or its investigations.

In Carroll & Graf's defense, they offered me \$500 for less than a peer review of the manuscript. They did not want a word-by-word reading and I declined to put my name on anything less than that. Without fee I read one chapter and told them what I believed about it.

Had there been any legitimate peer review of the mutually-disproving Lifton and Livingstone exploitations and commercialization of that great tragedy it is not likely that I would not have known about it. There are that few working in the field who are capable of an authentic peer review.

With this limited but one-hundred percent faithful encapsulation of the realities of book publishing supposedly about the assassination of the President who in his superb address at the June, 1963 commencement exercises at The American University in Washington, D.C. first went public with his hopes for achieving peace in the world in which nuclear disaster could blow and burn most of it up in an instant, I return to the beginning.

Of this book and then of me as an assassination investigator and writer and how I did not become, in the words of an editor who read the manuscript of my first book, "rich and famous in six months."

And what I experienced and experiences I believe qualified me for that role.

Then what there is to show for it.

And then the Kennedy-assassination industry.

Welcome to the world of the JFK assassination industry, to the world of the unreal and the profits to be made from unreality that, always, is presented as the only reality- by those who contradict

each other in their versions of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me publishers!

Who, of course, thereby also help themselves.

To a pot of dough.

It should be born in mind that similar language and criticisms can properly and accurately be applied to the other extreme of assassination theoreticians. The official "solution" it must be born in mind, also is only a theory, no more. The theory of the lone-nut, no-conspiracy "solution" on one extreme with the opposite end/opposite theory, formulation varying with inventor and exploiter, the "solution" based on the imagined and never proven "conspiracy" whose visionaries never see the same unproven conspiracy.

With the official theory also palmed off on the troubled people as the solution, those who made it up should have known from their own evidence they suppressed from their Report, with those in official positions of trust winding up theoreticians, they deserve even more thorough condemnation than their counterparts on the opposite extreme.

Those who support them and their travesty are in a sense even more culpable than the lunatic fringe of the "conspiracy theory" exploiters and commercializers.

They had the benefit of the factual criticism of the government's failures and dishonesties, of fact that cannot be refuted.

The new line of these self-enriching sycophants is that although the Commission was wrong in virtually all it did, for which there is superficial criticism to make it appear that the sycophants are impartial, wrong as it was in virtually all it did and did not do, the Commission nonetheless wound up with the correct solution.

Welcome to the JFK assassination industry, to the extremist, confusing world of conspiracy/no conspiracy theorizing in which those who labor come from competing literary bordellos.