

CHAPTER 43

The Root of All Evil

There is nothing wrong with making money. In any kind of society that must be done. The bible is often misquoted on this. It does not say that money is the root of all evil. It says that “the love of money is the root of all evil.”

Getting money is a necessity. How we get it is what this oft-quoted and sometimes misquoted passage from the bible is concerned with.

Getting money in return for services or for something of value is the good side. Getting it by stealing or in any other wrongful way is the bad side.

Publishing is a business and an essential service at the same time. If publishing does not show a profit it fails. So, publishers, like all in business, must make money.

Nothing wrong with that.

However, as with any other business, how publishing makes money is in some ways unique to it. In some ways, too, we have a different view of publishing than of most enterprises. We do not evaluate its business practices and what it publishes as we do those of the makers of deodorants, hair restorers and non-prescription nostrums. Or automobiles. Or beers.

This is particularly true of non-fiction book publishing. And the changes in it since the JFK assassination make it markedly different than before that great tragedy.

If books published on the JFK assassination were under such regulations as the Food and Drug Administration enforces, almost all the publishers of JFK assassination books would have been hailed to hearings and before the courts.

If there were an agency like the Environmental Protection Agency to police the pollution of our history, as under the cherished First Amendment to the Constitution there cannot be, its Superfund would by now be bankrupt.

Neither at the time of the assassination nor at any time since then has any publisher been known to seek a good, solid informative factual work on it.

Incredible as it may seem, given the enormity of the significance of a presidential assassination, given the excitement, consternation and interest it stirred in addition, thinking, too, how unusual an event it was, that book publishers were not knocking down the doors of the literary agents seeking such book is perhaps as unprecedented as is the universal publisher refusal to publish any such book.

It was a shock to me when in February, 1965, with my first book the first book on that unusual subject delivered on time under the contract I had, just after that soon deservedly belly-up publisher had told me, "Hal, we have a gold-plated best-seller" from the orders for 39,000 copies in the hardback with the book not even announced and entirely without advertising -- merely from salesman mentions to bookstores -- he broke that contract and did not publish the first book on so exceptional an event in our history.

In fact he did not even return the manuscript.

I got no explanation either.

The good news about the book's promising prospects from that much better than average advance sale was given to me two days before the contract was broken. I then was driving the vice president to the post office to save him time. The next morning he made a one-day trip to Washington. It was the morning after that that I was told they would not publish the book over which they had been drooling into the till.

Whether or not there was a connection, there certainly seemed to be.

Sixteen months later, after I accumulated all those rejections from so many countries, without a single adverse editorial comment and with a number of editorial judgments forecasting a best-seller, when I had published the book for general distribution -- and that was nine months after I published a limited edition of it -- at least a dozen of the publishers who had rejected the book praised me for publishing it myself.

That was at the annual convention of the American Booksellers Association at the Shoreham Hotel, in Washington.

One of the two partners in a then-prominent firm with the reputation of seeking controversial books to publish, told me "I wish we'd had your courage." His partner nodded his head in agreement.

One way or another this is what all of that dozen or so said. And just about all of them said that they would have had a best-seller.

For any business to reject a clean profit and a big success is in itself unusual.

For book publishers to reject both the clean profit and the favorable public relations that comes from a best-seller was a seemingly inexplicable mystery.

Before those partners in The Citadel Press were honest enough to confess that they feared publishing the first book on the era's most sensational event I'd had several indications from friends in a position to know that the fear was of the government.

Our then Congressman and a friend, Charles "Mac" Mathias, a moderate Republican, after reading the manuscript, sought to get the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, of which he was a member, to hold hearings on the assassination. That was about a year after the Warren Report was issued. That committee's Democratic chairman, Emanuel "Manny" Celler of New York, refused to do so. Mathias then spoke to Al Friendly, the liberal managing editor of the Washington Post in an effort to interest the Post

in doing a story about the book on such a vital national interest that could not be published. Reading the triple-spaced ribbon copy of the manuscript was assigned to the well-respected, liberal reporter, Larry Stern. When two months later I asked for the return of that copy of the manuscript, I drove Stern to his home on upper 14th Street northwest for him to retrieve it. He had, in two months, from his marker, read only 47 pages of that triple-spaced manuscript.

Mathias told me, “Hal, when you leave a publisher’s office an FBI agent walks in” to give the publisher to understand that it would not be a good idea to publish that book. I was then unwilling to believe that such a thing could happen in this country but as time passed there were indications that Mathias was close to reality.

There is evidence that the CIA interfered with my publication in the United States, in Germany and twice in England.

If the FBI interfered, I have no evidence of it. I do, however, have numerous instances of the FBI having cozy relationships with a number of publishers from whom it got under the table access to book and article manuscripts. These are in the third of a million pages of its records relating to the JFK and King assassination I obtained as a result of more than a decade of FOIA litigation. Those records also reflect that the FBI fostered, planted and in other ways helped books to its liking.

The hearings of the Senate’s Church Committee, forerunner of its standing intelligence oversight committee, established that the CIA had a program for getting books to its liking published. The CIA also has a record of interfering with the publication of books not to its liking and of interfering with some after they were published.

When my friend the late Ernie Berger had Frederick’s only bookstore he gave me a different view of the government’s influence on books, their publication and their reception.

Ernie explained that the government was the largest single purchaser of both books and magazines. It made these purchases for its innumerable installations throughout the world. The number of military installations alone then was very large and for each and all the many government libraries it purchased books it then distributed. The military posts got in addition monthly sums for their own use in book purchases.

For any publisher to have his books excluded from the government's direct purchases could be disastrous. For his books not to appear on the list of favored books the government then also distributed and by which the individual installations were guided was in itself another disaster for even a major publisher.

This kind of interference with our cherished First Amendment rights does not even require agents' visits by stealth and unofficial expressions of official disapproval. That publishers fear it and have reason to fear it is more than enough interference.

With a single exception the books that followed mine had trouble being published even after I broke the ice of publisher taboo. That exception was Edward J Epstein's highly-praised and seriously flawed Inquest. Viking published Inquest a little more than a year after it was the first to reject Whitewash after the contract to publish it was broken. Consistent with his own political beliefs, Epstein's book focused reader disapproval on the Warren commission's liberals, particularly Warren. His sources were mostly the conservatives on the Commission's staff. In addition to Epstein's scholarly deficiencies, some of them basic, he praised the FBI. That not only made it more than merely "safe" and acceptable -- it made the FBI his visible friend and benefactor in his subsequent writing career. And in this it was not the FBI alone.

In "the land of the free and the home of the brave" there was no freedom in publishing when the President was assassinated in what had the effect of a *coup d'etat*. There was no such thing as a brave publisher.

That Epstein and his book are both conservative should not be misunderstood. Nor should the phony doctrine of Gerald Posner's knowingly mistitled fraud of a book Case Closed, that only those he regards as liberals disagreed with the Warren Report. The most conservative of our newspaper publishers of that period, the late William Loeb, and his wife Nackey (right) Scripps Loeb, who still publishes the Manchester, New Hampshire, Union Leader, both tried to help me get Whitewash published. In fact it was Bill who made the introduction for me that enabled me to find a printer willing to both print the book and extend credit to me. The presses had been about to roll on an agreed-to printing when that printer's lawyer counseled him that with 90 percent of his business with the government printing Whitewash could be a costly mistake. When in shock on learning that I sought counsel from a conservative friend, the late British reporter Steve Barber, Washington correspondent of the conservative London Evening Standard and of its Sunday edition, Steve not only reminded me of the Loeb's friendship, he gave me their phone number at their Pride's Crossing, Massachusetts, home. Steve then pointed to his phone and said, "Be my guest." That is what led me to Merkle Press, the conservative printing company that did print Whitewash for me and was helpful to it and to me in many ways.

The assassination of a President is not of interest to either conservatives or liberals alone. It is of the most serious interest to all Americans.

Soon after the first books critical of the Warren Report appeared there were a number of books that in various ways supported that official mythology. Intermittently books doing that continued to be published thereafter, with no indication that any of them had any trouble finding a publisher. Even when these books appeared not to be profitable they continued to have no problem getting published. Nor did any of them lack for favorable media attention.

Along with these sycophantic books there came a virtual flood of mostly nutty books supposedly

on the assassination and its investigators. They were in fact the ego-indulgences of those who imagined themselves the superior of all fiction's fabled investigators, from Sherlock Holmes to Perry Mason. These took the approach of Mark Lane and the self-described Assassination Information Boston, of saying anything at all that at the time seemed to be what could excite audiences, particularly collegiate audiences.

The beginning of this torrent of misinformation, disinformation and whatever else could be imagined coincided with the attention for his own ravings that Jim Garrison got. After Garrison this kind of so-called assassination book had less trouble being published. The wilder and more irresponsible they were the more welcome they were to publishers. We have taken a look at some of the more successful of these rippings off of the public mind along with the public pocket.

To mark the 30th assassination anniversary publishers brought more of them out than at any earlier times. Not only did they publish new trash, they republished earlier fraudulent books already proven to be frauds. This was safe and it promised to be profitable. I believe it was less profitable than the publishers expected because by then those interested in the assassination had begun to learn that their trust had been imposed upon by those books that commercialized and exploited the assassination. As readers came to understand and many wrote and phoned me to complain about, if any one of these books was correct, all the others were wrong, and each was supposedly shown to be wrong by those others.

Coinciding in time with this virtual Vesuvius of trashy supposed assassination books was the beginning of revisionist publishing about that President himself. Those books not only found a ready publisher, they all were received with great and approving excitement by all the major media. a number of these anti-Kennedy books were featured in the stores at the time of that 30th assassination anniversary.

Several preceded it. In content they ranged from exaggerated accounts of his personal life to angled, distorted and misrepresented accounts of his Presidency and his policies, of his hopes for the country and

of his objectives.

This is not the place for any critique of them. It also is not possible for me to list all the trashy literature that sought to profit in various ways from that tragic anniversary. They ranged in content from Livingstone's personal Killing the Truth to Robert Groden's modestly titled The Killing of a President: The Complete Photographic Record of the JFK Assassination (New York, Viking Studio). Over the years, Groden did acquire a vast collection of these photos, not infrequently by dishonest means. His texts are never to be trusted and in this book that is particularly true from what has been written to me. (See my manuscript, Picturing the Corruption of the JFK Assassination.)

In between these extremes is a wide variety of different kinds of what in varying degrees is without exception bountiful trash.

My purpose here is not to try to cover the field. That is not possible for me. My purpose is to reflect the kinds of books so hurtful to truth and to the record they make for deceiving and misleading history that were published. This is also to say to indicate what could be published for such an occasion when not a single honest and factual book was published to mark it.

A book of which more could have been expected is the also mistitled The Last Investigation by Gaeton Fonzi (New York, Thunder's Mouth Press). Fonzi had been an investigator for the House assassins committee. On it he persisted in the faulty preconceptions that mark his career in the assassination field. That began when he was with Philadelphia Magazine. He then was associated with Vincent Salandria, a Philadelphia lawyer who saw the assassination of the President in terms of the assassination of Leon Trotsky. Salandria held forth on this at great length with me and with Jim Garrison when I was with both of them. Garrison was enthralled by it.

While Fonzi is critical of that committee, his criticism are not new and they add little to those that

were known contemporaneously with the committee's life and assorted misdeeds.

Fonzi's big thing is his preconception that one Antonio Veciana, who was an anti-Castro leader, worked for the CIA. Fonzi gives no proof of this. He merely assumes it and his book and his criticisms are based on it. In quoting Veciana as saying that the agent for whom he worked was one "Maurice Bishop" Fonzi also says that Veciana told him "Bishop" brought him and Lee Harvey Oswald together in Dallas about three months before the assassination. That has as much validity as his and Salandria's first assassination disinformation, that Texas Governor John B. Connally was not wounded until about Frame 284 of the Zapruder film. That is less than two seconds before the fatal shot was fired.

I got more than a belly-full of that in the summer of 1966 when I drove to Philadelphia to be on one of the very best and most responsible of that era's radio talk shows, that of Jack McKinney on WCAU. It lasted for four hours and then was repeated by tape for the next four hours. That clear-channel station reached into the far north, down to the Antilles and to well west of the Mississippi from reactions I later got to my other appearances on it. McKinney also invited Salandria. That was after Fonzi's article in Philadelphia with their impossible theory of how late in the assassination Connally was first wounded.

After three and a half hours of Salandria's determined filibustering about that worse than drivel, when on a station break McKinney left for the men's room I went with him.

"If Salandria opens his yap again, I'm walking out," I told him. "I did not do all this driving and give up a night's sleep to come here to have him take the show over with his worse than nonsense."

McKinney saw to it that I could be heard on the half-hour of the show that remained.

On the assassins committee Fonzi's "Maurice Bishop" mythology was so big a hit its honcho, Blakey, launched a nationwide if not international hunt for him, complete with a sketch allegedly of him. It did get enormous international attention in all the media as a man urgently needed to shed light on the

assassination. It was all based on Veciana's alleged connection with the CIA through "Bishop", his alleged CIA contact or "control", and on "Bishop" having brought him and Oswald together in Dallas in connection with anti-Castro activity there.

This attention forced the FBI, which did not love the CIA, to make its own files search. The results of that search, a careful search because of its political significance and because it was intended for the director, and nobody in the FBI would have dreamed of misleading him into any false statement about what was so controversial and getting so much media attention, is that its files hold nothing that can in any way confirm Fonzi's and the House assassins committee's allegations. (FBI Headquarters file 62-1090607624, 1/21/77. This is the main JFK assassination file.) There is no reason to believe that carefully as the FBI monitored Cuban activities of both sides it would find any confirmation.

When I was in the Office of Strategic Services, forerunner of the CIA, during and for a short time after World War II, I was never a spook. I was a writer and an analyst to whom special trouble-shooting investigations were bounced after my success with the first such assignment. While I was never a spook, my work in the OSS made me familiar with it and my OSS writing about it made me familiar with the training of agents and what is drilled into them in their training. It is without any possibility of any questions at all that for an agent to bring two of his secret sources together in public and during an operation in which they are not jointly involved is the grossest violation of the most basic tradecraft of spooking. Not even by accident and certainly not, as in Fonzi's fiction, by a careless accident. If "Bishop" had been a CIA agent he would never have done any such thing.

It happens that years before Fonzi and the assassins committee went ape with their "Bishop" business I knew about Veciana and his actual connections. Here is how it happened.

One of my dear friend Ernie Berger's two sons, Henry, was working on his doctorate at the

University of Wisconsin at Madison. His thesis was to be on the labor movement and foreign policy. I suggested a slight reformulation of its topic into “The American Labor Movement as an Arm of Foreign Policy.” Henry liked that and I understand evolved an excellent thesis. Ernie was later troubled that Henry had not accepted several offers to publish it as a book because, as Ernie told me, Henry wanted to do more work on it.

There were sources I could open for Henry in Washington and I did.

One of these sources was the AFL/CIO’s International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Its major operative for Europe and Africa was Irving Brown. He even had access to the diplomatic pouch because I was offered his use of it for me on a project then of interest to me. Its main operative for Latin America was Serafino Romouldi. I knew Romouldi slightly socially. But it was not through him that I got Henry access to those AFL/CIO headquarters records he worked in. It was through someone above him in that hierarchy.

When it became United States policy to overthrow the democratically-elected Cheddi Jagan government in what then was British Guyana, as was known then and has since been forgotten, the CIA worked through this AFL/CIO Romouldi operation.

When working in those files in the late 1960's Henry learned of its Cuban aspects and because of their possible relationship with the JFK assassination Henry told me of them before he began writing his thesis, while he was still working in them.

Henry then saw and told me of Antonio Veciana’s connections with that AFL/CIO operation. Only indirectly does that connect him with the CIA, through the AFL/CIO only. This does not mean that Veciana worked for the CIA. It means the exact opposite, that he worked for the Romouldi operation.

Fonzi’s book holds no proof of Veciana’s working for the CIA. The committee’s report holds no

proof of it. It is merely assumption, beginning with Fonzi's assumption of it.

However, if there is any truth to Veciana's claim that he and Oswald were brought together three months before the assassination, and proof of that does not exist -- it rests solely on Veciana's claim that he later recognized Oswald as that man from a picture -- that would have been something worth investigating. And if that committee had had any intent to really investigate or those capable of this kind of investigation on its staff, the records existed within walking distance of that committee's offices.

Having the experience of able police detectives, as some of the committee's staff did, did not qualify them or prepare them for investigations into political matters so foreign to their lives and professional experiences. None of the committee's staff, including its lawyers and researchers, really knew anything about the political aspects of what through persuading Blakey Fonzi got them into. Fonzi himself pretty clearly lacked the political knowledge that other than the CIA spooked for the government as, for example, some corporations were shown to do by the Church committee's and other investigations. Blakey did not get to be savvy through either his teaching or his organized-crime prosecuting experience.

Getting back to title, The Last Investigation. Whether or not it was in fact the last, which is doubtful, it was not in any sense a real investigation. Blakey, who really controlled the committee and did control the staff with an iron hand, began with his own preconceptions. What he actually did was open each hearing with a narration of what would be gone into that day. Each and every one of those "narrations" ticked off what he said some named critics had said, and the hearing that followed was Blakey's effort to refute those published criticisms of the Warren report. That was not investigating the crime. It was propaganda.

There was one exception: he never said a word about what I said and by then I had published seven books.

What Fonzi did, from his own account of it, also is hardly investigation. He began with a preconception, and devoted all his, or Veciana's truthfulness and accuracy, effort to breathing life into it.

Most of the other authors of the flawed and irresponsible books supposedly on the assassination that appeared to mark that 30th anniversary lacked even Fonzi's credentials. Mark Lane, a lawyer, is one who does have credentials. His fraudulent 1991 Plausible Denial, also published by Thunder's Mouth Press, was reprinted, with the fraud they perpetuated and commercialized all over again. Some of their work consisted of spying on those the authors of whom they were enamored do not like, as several of these authors have boasted.

Lane began his political life on the left. His book is about his representation of the most extreme of the farthest-out right, Willis Carto and his major publication, the weekly Spotlight. E. Howard Hunt, the CIA agent of Watergate infamy, was said to have been involved in the JFK assassination by Victor Marchetti, also of the CIA in the past. What was litigated is whether Hunt had been libeled. Nothing else at all.

Lane's implausible book is based on the fiction that in that lawsuit the jury held that the CIA was involved in the JFK assassination. That is not what the jury held. That in fact was not even before that jury. The sole question before it was what is required in a libel suit filed by one who is a "public figure," is there "malice." Was what Marchetti wrote malicious. The decision that he was not was based on what Lane himself presented to the jury, that Marchetti had a number of sources for what he wrote and it thus was not, within the law and relevant court decisions, malice.

What about peer reviews, usually considered necessary with controversial non-fiction?

On assassination books?

Almost unheard of, and within my personal experience the most devastating negative peer reviews were no impediment to publication!

Besides, most are basically fiction anyway.

Such trashy books had no difficulty finding publishers because publishers did not have to fear government reaction against them and because, being made up, they could be made up to excite the uninformed. Publishers expected them to make money so caring nothing about misleading and misinforming the people about this great national tragedy when profit was in prospect, they went for the money and corrupted the public mind with our history.

For its part, from its records I have, the FBI did not have any problem with these bad books. It went over them, selected a few of their more ridiculous claims and wrote and distributed memos pointing these errors out and saying, in effect, they all prove we were right.

There was almost no limit to how the assassination could be and was commercialized and exploited for fame, fortune or both. One result was that those who were among the most uninhibited in what they made up and in fact are assassination-fact ignoramuses came to be regarded as what they are not, authentic subject-matter experts. Some of them developed what amounts to cults and many of those cultists did odds and ends of work for those authors in whom they had implicit faith.

The House assassins' Blakey and its editor, Richard Billings, came out with their own pretended solution of which, like their committee before it they had no proof, that the mafia knocked JFK off (The Plot to Kill the President, New York, Times Books, 1981). With that duffer Oswald as the assassin, was he the best hit man that the mafia could find?

Mafia people themselves cashed in on the assassination with their own fictions.

Chicago boss Sam Giancana, who with Johnny Rosselli entered into a deal with the CIA to get

Castro killed for it, had relatives who turned literary. Both of those mafiosos wound up hit themselves. Giancana got shot in his own home when it was supposedly being watched by the police. Rosselli, dismembered and well decomposed by the time his remains were found, had been floating in the warm Florida waters for an undetermined amount of time, his parts inside a 55-gallon drum. Giancana's brother and nephew had their names on a work of fiction titled Doublecross (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992). The National Enquirer bought the domestic rights to it in this country. It ran an article with the by-line "by Chuck and Sam Giancana" under an exciting main headline and a provocative second one below the fold of the story's first page.

Heralded as "only in the ENQUIRER: the explosive new book all America is talking about," the headline says, "The mob had sex tapes to blackmail JFK -- & used Sinatra to set him up." Its internal headline reads, "Gangsters used Kennedy's weakness for women to put the president in their pocket."

In London the Daily Express serialized it. That phony book.

Two years later what Selwyn Raab ghosted for Frank Ragano appeared as Mob Lawyer (Scribner's, New York, 1994). Ragano, whose many legal problems with the government had not ended, came up with the unoriginal and preposterous mob-did-it that so many, Blakey included, liked so much and all failed to prove. His concoction is easily refuted, including by of all people, by Frank Ragano. In his many confessions in his book there is one, naturally enough not in it. But it is in FBI and CIA records I have.

There is nothing new in his line that Santo Trafficante, Tampa-based mob boss, Carlos Marcello, whose base was Louisiana, and Jimmy Hoffa had the dirty deed done. But that is the exact opposite of what that same Frank Ragano told the FBI, beginning with his letter to J. Edgar Hoover of March 27, 1967. After getting that letter the FBIHQ instructed its Tampa special agent in charge (SAC) to interview

Ragano. Headquarters also told Tampa that when interviewed by the FBI Trafficante would be wired with a body tape recorder. Page 5 of the Tampa SAC's report of May April 11 (62-109060-5099) ought be enough:

RAGANO stated that some of the allegations involving TRAFFICANTE have been ridiculous, and he related the following to illustrate TRAFFICANTE's attitude:

While driving through New Orleans in MARCELLO's car, MARCELLO was driving and TRAFFICANTE was seated in the front seat and he (RAGANO) was in the back, when a radio broadcast related events concerning District Attorney GARRISON's escapades revolving around the assassination of President KENNEDY. SANTO turned and remarked to MARCELLO, "Carlos, the next thing you know they will be blaming the President's assassination on us." RAGANO added that after his return to Tampa his office had received numerous calls from a newspaper reporter by the name of GREEN, associated with a Long Island, New York, daily. RAGANO called the reporter, who related that he had understood that when TRAFFICANTE was jailed by CASTRO in Cuba, some arrangements were made for JACK RUBY to be flown from Dallas to Cuba to expedite his release, since RUBY was friendly with CASTRO. The reporter exclaimed to RAGANO, "Don't you see the significance of this contact in connection with the Communists and La Cosa Nostra being involved in the presidential assassination?" RAGANO stated he told the reporter he was completely off base because he (RAGANO) had been involved in attempting to get TRAFFICANTE back to Florida from the Cuban prison, and that this was done through an individual in Miami who was close to CASTRO before the revolution. RAGANO said he later told this story to TRAFFICANTE, pointing out that he was not very far from wrong since he had told MARCELLO he would some day be blamed for the assassination.

...Mr RAGANO said that TRAFFICANTE has expressed the belief that eventually he will be the victim of a "frameup" on the part of law enforcement agencies anxious to put him in jail. He said that TRAFFICANTE leaves his car unlocked and very frequently his home unlocked and he has told him on numerous occasions that he should not do this, but TRAFFICANTE has said that if they want to get into the house or the car, whether locked or not, they can get in without any trouble.

The supposed Marcello link to the assassination comes from a man who in only a rare few of the newspaper accounts was properly identified.

Ed Becker was an FBI informer whose recollections of a visit to Marcello was magically enhanced when he was working on a book with Ed Reid, a crime writer whose The Green Felt Jungle was the best-

selling book of 1964. Then Becker suddenly remembered that in a fit of anger Marcello had blurted out that Robert Kennedy, then the attorney general, was like a stone in his shoe and had to be gotten rid of.

The convoluted but accepted thinking that was so widely credited “explains” why the President was killed to get rid of his brother as attorney general, not the attorney general himself: to kill a dog, you cut off its head, not its tail. Offing JFK, in this so-called thinking, ended his brother’s forceful prosecution of organized crime.

When Robert stopped being attorney general, that was his decision and it was voluntary -- so he could run for the Senate in New York. While he remained attorney general after his brother’s assassination his prosecutions of organized crime did not diminish a bit.

So, it did not happen as in this preposterous notion it was supposed to have. That it did not happen did nothing to discourage those who wanted it believed that it had and that the mafia had pulled it off.

This is true also of Becker’s claim that Marcello said he would have JFK killed when Becker visited him. From that meeting Becker went to the FBI. I have the FBI’s report on that meeting. It says nothing at all about Marcello having referred to Robert Kennedy as a stone he’d have to get out of his shoe. It makes not even a hint of anything at all along that line, no indication that the President was going to be killed and that Marcello would take care of it.

When the Ragano book came out, even the supposedly sophisticated, like the former Department of Justice organized-crime prosecutor Ronald Goldfarb, were gulled by Ragano’s extension of his crookedness for the mob in his crookedness for money from a book. In a May 12, 1994, review for the Washington Post Goldfarb played it all straight, taking it all as real, even though at the beginning of his review he says that “What the book does not (his emphasis) do, it should be noted, is connect any of these characters with Lee Harvey Oswald.”

Goldfarb also like Ragano's fabrications for money, as continuation of what his book says was his career of scamming when he was a mafia lawyer appears in his book:

He related Trafficante's story about the CIA-Mafia plot to kill Castro, filling in holes in the report of the Church committee, before which Trafficante committed perjury. Turns out, the mob pulled a scam on the CIA, which was pulling a scam on the world. "They paid us a lot of money and nobody intended to do a damn thing," Trafficante told Ragano. He takes his readers to private meetings with the dramatis personae of the Mafia in the 1960's when it was in its heyday, and tells stories about some of their stars, such as Sam Giancana, who complained that his organization stole the 1960 election for Kennedy, "and he gets his brother to hound us to death." There is no honor.

Now retired, ill, broke and recently out of jail, Ragano says "it's my destiny" to tell the story. Cynics will wonder whether "Mob Lawyer" is merely the latest entry in the books-by-crooks genre. Except for the shocking disclosures about his deceased former clients, there is no reason to read this book. With them, however, it joins a select few that provide critical links in the circumstantial case that the mob planned JFK's killing.

Having made it clear that Ragano's word cannot be trusted, Goldfarb proceeds to take it at face value with regard to the assassination. Ragano's is "one of the select few" of "books by crooks" that does "provide critical links in the circumstantial case that the mob planned JFK's killing."

Providing no "link" at all becomes providing "critical links."

Even what Goldfarb quotes as dependable is false.

That the CIA paid those mafia types "a lot of money" is a lie.

The CIA got caught in a silly business and that strange business got to be public. I have the FBI's and the CIA's records on it.

Sam Giancana, who two-timed to the limit of his not inconsiderable capabilities, took offense at reports that Phyllis McGuire, of the then famous McGuire Sisters singing act, was two-timing him with Dan Rowan, of the top show comedy team, Rowan and Martin. "Momo" as Giancana was called, told Robert Maheu, who was handling that ill-starred CIA attempt to get Castro knocked off, look, we are doing all

this for you. Hows about you doing me a favor and finding out if that McGuire dame is two-timing me?

Maheu hired a Miami outfit to send a wire man out to Vegas to return the favor for Giancana. But James Ballelli planted his bugs so unprofessionally the maid discovered them. He apparently was going for sound effects. When the maid reporting finding those bugs to the hotel manager he told the sheriff and Ballelli was picked up.

Ballelli told the sheriff that when he if down he would not go down alone. That started the wheels turning. He was turned loose, and temporarily it was all hushed up. But the FBI wound up with a rather large file that I have.

When this was leaked and became public the CIA was embarrassed. It was necessary to make an inquiry so that the director could be fully and accurately informed. That meant only the truth. He could not be further embarrassed by lying to the President or in public.

According to the CIA's own internal investigation dated May 14, 1962, my copy of which was from the attorney general's file disclosed to me by the CIA, the CIA's report is quite explicit in stating that the mafia "was not interested in any remuneration." This report further stated that "A figure of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was sent by the Agency as a payment to be made on completion of the operation and to be paid only to the principal or principals who would conduct the operation" but "Rosselli and Giancana emphatically stated they wished no part of any payment." (Department of Justice file 82-46-5).

But Ragano quotes Trafficante as saying, "They paid us a lot of money," and nobody doubted it -- or checked it.

Several other mafia-did-it books that reflect little knowledge of the JFK assassination were among those reprinted for the anniversary. John Davis' Mafia Kingfish and David Scheim's Contract on America

got a fresh shot at misleading the people again. Their proof that the assassination was a mafia job is their desire that it be so. So, in their books, mafia did it.

Davis is of the gentry, preferring that his work be done for him. But when he wanted searches in my records, having been correctly told that I gave all writing in the field unsupervised access to them, I could not do it. As he wanted, I got a Hood College student to spend all her spare time in her last year working for Davis. Unless he or she told me, I did not know what she searched or what she copied. From time to time Davis wasted much time for me with phone calls and argumentative letters he asked be responded to. And from time to time his checks -- to her for her work and to me for her copying for him at considerably less than our actual cost per copy -- bounced. He blamed that on his bank.

In his book, Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy (New York, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1989, Davis had the usual problem of that "link." He had only those non-links like the Becker fabrication. So, what to do?

Like all those exploiting and commercializing the assassination and hoping to make themselves richer and more famous thereby, David made his "link" up. Not that this can be detected from his account in his hardback edition (pages 414-415). Perceived? It cannot even be imagined! And in all my too many experiences with a wide variety of some pretty dirty types, Davis is in a class by himself. To help what follows from his book to be understood, and additional explanations will be necessary, I introduce the late Jack Wasserman. He and his role cannot be understood from Davis' writing. Wasserman was one of the country's most highly respected experts in immigration law. Because he was so outstanding in that specialty. Marcello hired him to represent Marcello in an immigration case that by provocative but unrelated coincidence, ended the afternoon of the day JFK was assassinated. Wasserman beat the Department of Justice for Marcello. It had previously kidnaped him and deposited him in Guatemala on

the false claim that he had been born there. Wasserman represented Marcello in that case only. And by another odd coincidence, on the recommendation of one of Marcello's innumerable local attorneys, G.Wray Gill, Wasserman agreed for Gill to hire as the case investigator the same David Ferrie who figured so mysteriously in both the federal investigation and in Jim Garrison's. Garrison charged Ferrie with being one of the assassination conspirators. Davis writes:

What was Carlos Marcello's reaction to the House Select Committee on Assassinations' publicly declared suspicion, that he or his "crime family or organization" might have played a role in the assassination of President Kennedy?

There is solid evidence that he was quite disturbed, for in the summer of 1979, when those findings were finally published by the government printing office, he apparently assigned the matter to his most trusted attorney, the brilliant Jack Wasserman, for investigation. Wasserman immediately set about obtaining the available FBI files on the Kennedy assassination, which included the extensive files on David Ferrie and some documents, but not all, on the allegations of Eugene DeLaparra and SV T-1, as well as the Edward Becker story of Marcello's threat to kill Kennedy.

These files, amounting to well over 220,000 pages of documents, had been obtained through a lengthy and costly Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought against the Justice Department by Harold Weisberg, noted Kennedy assassination researcher and author of several books relating to the assassination. They were the files the Assassination Committee should have had at the beginning of its investigation but did not receive until too late. Now they were being put at the disposal of Carlos Marcello's attorney.

From correspondence between Wasserman and Weisberg that I have examined, it appears that throughout the summer and fall of 1979 Jack Wasserman foraged in Weisberg's files in an attempt to retrieve every FBI document that could relate to the possibility of his client's having been involved in the assassination.

Because of this frantic response of Marcello's principal attorney to the House Assassinations Committee on Assassinations' findings, we can safely assume that those findings were a matter of deep concern to Carlos Marcello.

Of all that Davis says in this lengthy quotation from his book what is correct is limited to his spelling of names. Nothing else. He made it up – lied – to have a basis for his book.

Marcello had no reported "reaction to the House Select Committee on Assassinations publicly declared a suspicion" of his or any other mafia's "role in the assassination." Because I was curious about that I wrote and asked Wasserman.

There not only is no “solid evidence that” Marcello “was quite disturbed” -- there is no such evidence at all. He had and manifested no such interest at all.

With regard to it and the supposed underlying records, Marcello never “assigned the matter” nor was it to “his most trusted attorney” because that case was over and he was no longer Wasserman’s client. He did not ask Wasserman or anyone else for that “immediate...investigation.” Neither Wasserman nor anyone else “immediately” or at any other time “set about obtaining all the available FBI files on the Kennedy assassination.”

What actually happened is that once when I was going to Washington and would be close to Wasserman’s H Street Northwest office I made copies of a few, a very few, of the FBI records referring to Marcello. I took them to Wasserman’s office seeking a reaction I never got.

Davis’ following references to my FOIA litigation is up, which is to say down, to his usual standard. There was not only one lawsuit and they were not against the Department of Justice only.

The files I had were “files the Assassinations Committee should have had” but it never got anything like all that I had and those that it did have it did not “receive until too late.” This combination of overt lies, another Davis specialty he has refined more than most of that ilk, he is apparently made up to explain away the fact that even when it wanted to pin the crime on Marcello that committee could not bring itself to give records the false meanings Davis does.

Neither then, what Davis means by “now,” nor at any other time did I ever “put” them “at the disposal of Carlos Marcello’s attorney.” Neither Wasserman, who was Marcello’s former attorney, nor any of Marcello’s other attorneys of whom I knew a few in New Orleans.

For the reader to be able to begin to appreciate the full impact of the next paragraph I refer to Davis’ earlier reference to Wasserman as the “top mafia lawyer” when he never was that, when his only

connection was on Marcello's immigration matter, which as a matter of law was an interesting and entirely different kind of case, Marcello having been by force and illegally been deported to the supposed country of his birth when it was not that at all.

Davis refers to the "correspondence between Wasserman and" me. He says he "examined it." What he refers to is a total of three letters from me to Wasserman and one -- and only one -- from him to me. Davis "examined" it? Hell, he stole it, through the student working for him, and I had one hell of a time getting him to return either the originals or copies of them and to this day he has not returned all three. He found excuse after excuse for not making the effort and he delayed for months doing the too little he did do.

"...throughout the summer and fall of 1979 Jack Wasserman foraged in Weisberg's files..." This is Davis as his most effective best as both a liar and as a defamer. He has described Wasserman as "the top mafia lawyer." He also says that this to "top mafia lawyer" had the free run of my place and of my files. That is defamatory and it is designed to be defamatory.

Why did Wasserman allegedly spend that summer and fall -- working for the man he no longer worked for? It was "in an attempt to retrieve every FBI document that could relate to the possibility of his client's (sic) having been involved in the assassination."

Only a Davis as bankrupt morally and ethically as this John could make anything like this up -- and every word of it is false.

Jack Wasserman and I never laid eyes on each other!

Not only was he never here, unlike Davis he did not have someone else here in his stead.

Wasserman not only had no interest that impelled him to "retrieve every FBI document that might have been of interest to Marcello -- he did not even ask me for a single one, not for as little as a single sheet of paper.

The truth of the matter is, as Davis knew very well, that if either Marcello or any of his attorneys had any interest at all in those records, all that was required was to ask for them under the Freedom of Information Act (because they related to him Marcello could also have invoked the Privacy Act, as his lawyers could have for him) and on paying ten cents for each page he or lawyers acting for him would have gotten them all!

Moreover, that would have cost immeasurably less than paying an expensive lawyer for a summer and fall's work!

The man is not even a good liar. But he did get away with it.

Non-existing peer reviews not existing. And publishers caring naught for defaming when they see little prospect of being sued.

Moreover, subject-matter ignoramus that he was and never stopped being, Davis did not even know, as he should have from the House committee's records he refers to, that it sought and got mafia records, including on Marcello, that I neither got nor tried to get nor wanted to get. Included among them are extraordinarily extensive wiretap records and some from room and other bugs.

But without all of this, all this most intendedly evil fabrication, Davis would not have had the peg he needed to hang his bad book on. So, he made that peg up and in doing that defamed me. It is to carry this utterly false idea forward that Davis says what is not true, that there was this non-existing "frantic response" by Wasserman. He was never "Marcello's principal attorney" and represented him only in that immigration case. He did not represent Marcello at the time in question at all. And thus, one of the dirtiest kind of lies Davis has the rest of his fabricated peg, Davis concludes that "we can safely assume that those findings were a matter of deep concern to Carlos Marcello" -- who did not even give a damn about them!

And this from the man who had what Marcello neither had nor asked for nor wanted, the

opportunity to “forage” in my files for much of a year!

This kind of stinker that Davis is gives skunks a Chanel aroma.

But there is yet more to the Davis stench.

After reading this above-quoted defamatory lies all of which Davis made up, when it was too late to remove them from all the many copies of his expected-to-be best-seller, I wrote and asked him that they be removed from any other hardback editions and from any paperback reprints. Fine and appreciative gentleman that he is, principled writer, too, he never responded. So, after several letters to which he made no response, I wrote McGraw-Hill. It referred my letters to its lawyers. So, after much more time was wasted for me they decided that they would remove all mention of me from Davis’ book. From even its bibliography.

This is how the respected writer of fine family made his case for Marcello as the President’s assassin, by defaming the writer who gave him free access to all he had obtained through more than a decade of the most difficult and costly litigation and then in the time he took in calls and correspondence in an effort to phony up the case that never existed wasted more of my time. The case he ultimately phoned in as disreputable, as dishonest, as total an abandonment of all the principles of writers as I have even suffered in all the now many years of my life.

It is how he got his fame and his dirty pieces of silver.

How he came to be regarded as an assassination expert, too.

It is -- or at least it appears to be -- a strange anomaly that those who appear to have the best credentials are among the most steadfast, sometimes the most diligent, fictioneers.

What we saw above about Mark Lane is a minor illustration of his fictioneering. He had the credentials of a former state legislator, of an experienced and successful lawyer and professor of law and

as the author of a number of books. Yet the only thing “plausible” about his Plausible Denial is its dishonesty, and that is beyond “denial.”

College professors, especially when they have doctorates in political science or in history, may seem to be well credentially but they are in fact among the very nuttiest of the fictioneers, particularly those who pretend to “solve the case” with conspiracy theories. Perhaps the wildest of the earliest of them is Richard Popkin. His relatively early book The Second Oswald (New York, Avon, 1967) could hardly use the title “The False Oswald,” as I referred to those reports of the counterfeiting of Oswald in my 1965 book. The Second Oswald began as a lengthy review of Epstein’s and Lane’s first books and of mine and was enlarged into a small book. When last heard from in the field Popkin was the loud supporter of one of the least credible of the innumerable incredible conspiracy theories that for a short while captured international attention. In the many years since that obviously false story excited him so I have seen no mention of Popkin’s having any interest in the assassination.

Generally speaking, the more the professors pontificate and are self-important the less they know and the less of what they know do they understand. Louisiana college professor Michael Kurtz is a fair sample of those who deprecate the work of others to try to give their own work value and importance it does not have.

Jim Lesar’s September 1983 review in the *Journal of American History* says all that needs to be said about Crime of the Century: the Kennedy Assassination from a Historian’s Perspective, by Michael L. Kurtz (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1982). Lesar, who had earned his master’s degree in history before deciding to be a lawyer, represented me in my FOIA litigation. He has a good command of the subject and of the available records. He begins his review stating that Kurtz “laments that ‘professional scholars’ have neglected the assassination of President John F. Kennedy; he also disparages

the works of Warren Commission critics” yet

there is virtually nothing of any consequences in this book that is new. With minor exceptions, its valid points derive from the very critics Kurtz deprecates. For example, Kurtz relies heavily on the work of Harold Weisberg and offers little information that Weisberg has not previously revealed.

This book lacks scholarship. The author makes blatant factual mistakes and important errors of omission. ... The book’s footnotes retard rather than advance scholarship: they generally do not support the assertions made in the text, nor do they identify with the requisite specificity the materials cited.

In his last chapter Kurtz foregoes his vow against speculation -- already broken -- and reconstructs the assassination. He hypothesizes that a shot that hit Kennedy in the back -- he asserts at an upward angle -- was fired from the second floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building. Here he whooshes across the line separating speculation from fantasy. His assertion that ‘the first two floors of the Depository were lower than the limousine at the time of the shots’ requires a feat of levitation that is neither recorded on any film of the assassination nor testified to by any eyewitnesses.

This scholarly “historian’s perspective,” in order to make it seem that the President could have been shot in the back, has the shot coming from what would have been more than two stories underground and that when the car was going downhill! And, typically of the work of those who regard themselves as uniquely endowed and as perceiving what mere mortals do not see, use the work of others as their own while disparaging the work they take and use as their own.

Philip Memanson is less inclined to disparage the work of others that he also from time to time uses as his own in his book on the King assassination (The Murkin Conspiracy, New York, Praeger, 1989) and his incredible irresponsible and childishly foolish sequel supposedly on the John Kennedy assassination, Spy Saga: Lee Harvey Oswald and U.S. Intelligence.

This is the book that had peer reviews and was published despite the fact that both utterly demolished the book and Melanson’s “scholarship.”

For the magnificently generous sum of \$100 Greenwood Press, which at least before then was known as a publisher of authentic scholarship only, asked me for a peer review. Being familiar with

Melanson's earlier demonstrations of his "scholarship" that would earn a "hohum" on it if turned in by a college freshman, I had intended to annotate it for the historical record in any event. I had done that with his Murkin Conspiracy, his schoolboy's fantasy supposedly about the King assassination. Among its many flaws -- and it has nothing else except conspicuous dishonesty in it -- is Melanson's unrealized flaunting of his fundamental ignorance about the CIA, of which he had written earlier and persuaded himself he is an expert. His taking as the given word what phonies, frauds, seekers of cheap fame and others of the fantasy world said is the basis of his preposterous making the CIA the principal in that assassination. That particular preposterousness would not be easy to accept in the cheapest of overt novels.

So I did a lot of detailed and documented work that took much time not because a peer review required it but because the record for the history of this self-important Ph.D. of an ignoramus was recognized by those who did not know better as an authentic scholar and a legitimate subject-matter expert. When I was finished that malodorous trash was thoroughly exposed for what it is, the most malodorous of trash. What I sent Greenwood ran to about 18,000 to 20,000 words.

I had been asked if I object to giving Melanson what I wrote. I not only agreed, I encouraged it and I promised to respond to any questions or criticism of what I wrote.

I have not heard from Melanson since.

Imagine my surprise when that terribly rotten book appeared!

But it did not have the Greenwood imprint. It was published by Praeger.

And Praeger owns Greenwood.

I remembered Praeger well, only too well.

One of the first houses to which I went after Viking declined Whitewash in early 1965, despite the favorable recommendation of the Viking editor who introduced it there for me, was Frederick Praeger. A

dear friend was a friend of Praeger's director of special projects. He was excited by the subject and he read the manuscript overnight. He told me it was a good book, that he believed they would do a first print of 50,000 copies, large in 1965, and that it would be the big success it deserved to be. However, he added, his was not the final word. Frederick Praeger himself had to approve it. He would give the manuscript to Praeger when he returned from San Francisco.

Praeger rejected the book. I asked this friend of my friend why. His reply was that Praeger said he published only established scholars.

Years later, when the improper activities of the CIA started coming to light, it was disclosed Frederick Praeger was a CIA publisher. That is, he published books the CIA wanted published and sometimes subsidized.

In the foregoing we have an accurate reflection of the records of some of the professional scholars and of scholarly publishers on a subject that was one of the most important of the century, a record that makes clear what can be published and what cannot be, what is scholarship and what is not.

Two of the professional scholars who also wrote assassination books in which their political views are more important than their representation of the known facts of the crime are Peter Dale Scott, professor of English at the University of California at Berkeley and the New Englander, _____ Williams. His was the earliest of the professorial political philosophizing. Although rarely mentioned even in lengthy bibliographies in recent years, his giving it all a money and power twist in his The Yankees and the Cowboys caused a stir in the late 1960's. Scott's book for the anniversary is Deep Politics in the Depth of JFK.

In their writing about the assassination itself these two, like most of the professors, are not distinguished by their knowledge of the established fact. What is important to them is their political views.

Theirs are whodunits from the ivory towers, with their political beliefs undisturbed by such mundane considerations as fact, fact not being really necessary, in their view, for solving the crime with what they want believed is professorial analysis.

The best, meaning the worst, from the other side was history professor Stephen Ambrose's. His opinion was reported widely because he provided one for Posner's dust jacket. He then enlarged on that when phoned by reporters just as anxious as Ambrose to have it believed that Posner had done it all. Each newspaper quotation was the kind of public attention professors who have books to sell appreciate. It introduces them to new possible buyers of books and to the reporters and editors of the papers that interviewed him. Although it is a bit less unrestrained than a number of his newspaper interviews, that on the dust jacket will do:

“Posner has done a great service in the process proving that a single researcher, working alone, is always preferable to a committee. This is a model of historical research. It should be required reading for anyone reviewing any book on the Kennedy assassination. Beyond the outstanding job of research, Posner is a dramatic storyteller. The recreation of Oswald's and Jack Ruby's, personalities is wonderfully well done. This case has indeed been closed by Mr. Posner's work.”

On reading this and Posner's knowingly mistitled Case Closed my friend Dr. David Wrone, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, wrote Ambrose on October 18, 1993.

After accrediting himself as a subject-matter expert but without mentioning the fact that he is coauthor on the only professional bibliography in the field, here is part of what Dave wrote Ambrose:

In my considered judgment Case Closed is the most error strewn, irresponsible, and knowingly distorted work ever published on the Kennedy assassination. Please note my use of the words knowingly and ever. In the details and in the large, even in the adjectival choice, Posner is consistently false, and grossly manipulative of the truth.

What really stuns me is your praise of Case Closed...I would never have imagined you to have been caught by this kind of imitative scholarship.

So, I write to you to ask you how is it you were tripped up on Posner's effort to depict the reality of the murder of a President?

Ambrose replied on November 2. His claim to professional qualifications consist entirely of having read and reviewed some of the assassination books the general character is by now not unknown to the reader:

I too have read a lot of Kennedy assassination material. a year or so ago I reviewed a number of assassination books for The New York Times Book Review. In that essay I expressed my considerable doubts about many aspects of the case.

Having reviewed a couple of books Ambrose insisted, "I didn't read Posner out of context," which seems to be a remarkably unscholarly response when the only "context" he claimed to have is writing a couple of book reviews. He added "I have no axe to grind. I have no emotional involvement."

What he means by "emotional involvement" is entirely unexplained. To reporters he said he had no connection with Random House.

Ambrose is one of the book review editors of Foreign Affairs. That is published by the Council on Foreign Relations two past directors of which were on the members of the Warren Commission, former CIA director Allen Dulles and international banker and general government political troubleshooter John J. McCloy. Jason Epstein, as of the time Random House published Posner, was its vice-president and editorial director.

Well, maybe this does constitute no connection of any kind, no emotional involvement and maybe it has nothing to do with Ambrose being asked to offer a prepublishing opinion about a book on the subject-matter of which he does not know his appendix from his appetite. How he came to be asked to blurb the book and why he did he does not say.

Ambrose's letter to Wrono closes with, "I am always open to new evidence and have long since learned that my mind is always changing as new evidence comes to light."

His record does not support him on this.

His concluding words are, original expression that it is, “I call them as I see them. Even when I have to eat crow.”

It appears that he has not yet had his fill of crow.

I wrote him on December 9, 1993, in some detail about that “new evidence”. That was after I finished the manuscript. That gave him a table full of fresh crow, not just a plate of it.

He did not write to tell me how much he enjoyed that crow. Nor to tell me that “new evidence” had changed his mind in any way.

Five months later I wrote him again, asking again what basis he had for offering any opinions of the character of those he provided for use to sell a dishonest, ignorant, factually incorrect and spectacularly dishonest book, as he would have learned it is with only rudimentary checking.

He has not responded to either letter.

The professors surely must like his crow. Or something else he likes more than his reputation.

With very, very few exceptions, along with the rest of academe the professors as a class failed the country in that time of great crisis. Particularly the professors of history, political science and of the law.

Very, very few made any effort at all to learn enough fact to be able to respond to their students, contemporaneously and ever since. Students then and since then did and do have great interest in it from my mail and from phone calls they make to me. I’ve helped a half-dozen or more with their doctoral theses.

Student interest is not limited to doctoral candidates. I hear and have heard often from undergraduates and pre-college students of all ages.

The learned ones have yet to learn where their interest should lie.

There are exceptions. These exceptions include Wrone, Gerald McKnight, at local Hood College,

Gerald Ginocchio, at Wofford, Spartanburg, South Carolina, Dennis MacDonald at St. Anselm's, Manchester, New Hampshire and perhaps a few others I do not know. But most are indifferent or go for the nutty stuff of theorized conspiracies, not fact.

While all those keyed to the expected greater interest to be created by the 30th anniversary were not about the assassination itself, all did pretend to be serious. But they, meaning books on the assassination itself, not some that made reference to it while addressing other subjects, like my friend Cyril Wecht's Cause of Death (New York, Dutton, 1993), on his life as a forensic pathologist, were ripoffs. Their timing was clear. It alone indicated commercialization and exploitation of the tragedy.

Of course the commemoration was not limited to books. Newspapers and magazines gave it special treatment, as did TV, with the so-called "specials" most of which were down to the abysmal standards of their disgusting past. By and large their thrust was no matter how wrong we were in the past, no matter how dissatisfied you the viewer were then, we are telling you all over again that we were right, no matter how wrong -- take it or leave it.

This was in effect what all the major media did. Of what I saw there was one major exception. In the first two of their three-part series in the Washington Post reporters George Lardner and Walter Pincus did detail what went wrong in the official investigation. To a lesser degree so did Newsweek, with which they worked in preparing their series.

Of course there were novels for the occasion, and TV shows that were the equivalent of novels. Much of the supposedly serious treatment in book was of this character. If it could be imagined or alleged that there was some connection with the assassination it was keyed to the anniversary to exploit and commercialize it. Of those perhaps the most completely disgusting, the most depraved, the most outrageous

in its abandonment of journalistic and publishing ethics was one of three Simon and Schuster entries in the widespread publisher effort to convert the anniversary into profit regardless of how that was done or what cost to others. Or, of course, to our precious history. To give the book by Joe McGinniss what it deserved, the Washington Post gave its daily book reviewer Jonathan Yardley unusually generous space in its July 23, 1993, issue, about a half page.

Under the headline, “Invented Biography Steeped in Slime,” with the carryover on page 2 headed “Even Worse than You Thought,” Yardley condemned this supposed account of what this subtitle says it is about, “The Rise and Fall of Teddy Kennedy” more eloquently, thoroughly and convincingly than any of the considerable outpouring of the cheapest trash that could be hoped to reap dirty pieces of silver at the cost of history and what we could know and believe of it and at the cost of the decent concern of others about us.

Apparently motivated by his disgust, Yardley began his commentary on this gross commercializing of indecency:

The conventional wisdom had settled into place long before ‘The Last Brother’ lurched into the bookstores early this week. It concluded that Joe McGinniss’s unauthorized biography of Edward Moore Kennedy was a mixture of unattributed fact and unsubstantiated fiction; that McGinniss had borrowed liberally from, if not actually plagiarized earlier books by William Manchester, Doris Kearns Goodwin and other keepers of the Kennedy flame; that McGinniss and his publisher were more interested in quick profits than in responsible publishing.”

As Yardley’s eloquent excoriation of this cheapest of commercializations continues he describes it as “a textbook example of shoddy journalistic and publishing ethics; it is also unrelievedly a rotten book, one without a single redeeming virtue, an embarrassment that should bring nothing except shame to everyone associated w/it.”

Yardley was in this just warming up. Of the McGinniss trash he said it has “not a thing to do with

opinions of its subject. Only those so steeped in hatred of Ted Kennedy and his family as to be beyond the bounds of reason are likely to be blinded to the central reality that “The Last Brother” (also from Simon and Schuster) is slimy, meretricious and cynical. It is, by a wide margin, the worse book I have reviewed in nearly three decades; quite simply, there is not an honest page in it” (it has 626 pages).

About what McGinniss merely made up and pretends is factual, what Yardley refers to as “fictionalizing not merely the remarks, but also the thoughts of the senator from Massachusetts,” he quotes McGinniss as shrugging such criticism off “by claiming that he merely is operating within the bounds of ‘biographers license’ -- a claim that is a slap in the face of every person who has ever attempted to write biography scrupulously and fairly.”

Of McGinniss’s fabrication of Kennedy’s words as well as his innermost thoughts Yardley quotes his “self-serving humbug” of close to the end of the long book. “McGinniss claims that he has chosen ‘an approach that transcends that of traditional biography’ and that ‘I never intended that [the book] be viewed as a formal biography.’”

That is to say that whatever may at any time appeal to a literary whore to be attractive or provocative goes beyond the range of human experience with and is superior to truth and to fact.

Unrelenting as he should be, Yardley says, “It is difficult to imagine a more mean-spirited or small-minded book than this one.” Of what he quotes from some of what McGinniss merely made up and presents as Kennedy’s innermost thoughts Yardley says, “The nastiness of this is exceeded only by the rank hypocrisy of it...Suffice it to say that the pervasive hatefulness of this book eventually reaches spectacular dimensions.”

That a major publisher would give even a second thought to publishing “hateful” and “mean spirited” and “small-minded” complete fabrications, all within quotation marks as direct quotes although

all that was not taken from the work of others was just invented, and expect it to sell well and make money is a fair representation of how publishers thought and what they did to mark the 30th anniversary of the great tragedy that turned the country and the world around, the tragedy that had the effect of a *coup d'etat*.

It says much of what has happened to us, the changes in us and what we get and can expect from much of the major media and of what we can know and understand of and about those 30 years.

It is not only what the assassination itself has done to us. It is what was done and is being done to persuade us that up is down and that in is out. About the assassination and its investigations and about so much else.

As this relates to the assassination, the great good sense of the average American about it makes a spectacular failure of it. From my personal experience speaking about the first book on the Warren Commission, in person and on talk shows, at least half of the people did not believe the official mythology before it was subject to any critical analysis. Most recently, in the poll taken for CBS-TV, one of the prime offenders against truth and against the people's right to know, a poll taken after the simply enormous favorable attention in all the media to Gerald Posner's knowingly, intendedly dishonest book, the greatest percentage ever, 90 percent -- nine out of every ten Americans -- did not believe this official mythology.

Yet with this clear reflection of what the people want, with this indication of the market awaiting a responsible, honest book, not a single publisher or all the many sought or published such a book.

They and their authors seeking anticipated assassination gold went through the bottom of the barrel and explored the most repugnant of intellectual sewers. As what could rip the mind of while taking from readers' pockets was conceived, the pots of the literary alchemists boiled. For a Simon & Schuster subsidiary -- and Simon & Schuster had become "a Paramount Communications Company" -- speech writer Bob Callahan became an instant subject expert. He wrote Who Shot JFK? a Guide to the Major

Conspiracy Theories (New York, Fireside Books). The publisher described it as “a compelling review of the major theories, incidents and compelling suspects associated with the case.” That 154-page was needed when Jim Marrs (Crossfire, Carroll & Graf) had already done that in much greater length, 625 pages, with no less of a determination to set a record for inaccuracy, silliness, stupidity and ignorance?

It was actually reviewed, if that is the right word for any taking of trash seriously. The San Francisco Chronicle's book editor, Patricia Holt, in its September 19, 1993 issue, referred to it as “a nifty new paperback.” She says of it also that it is “Playfully illustrated with comic-strip art by Mark Zingarelli.”

For the Village Voice of that December 6, Mike Rubin, who also said that book “arrives in time for the diamond anniversary” in his review that also treats this junk as serious literature for a column in length has it illustrated by Mark Zingarelli.

These reviewers knew so little about the subject-matter -- and this extends into the supposed serious assassination literature they review -- they illustrate with examples that are fictional, do not exist in the nuttiness of those theories.

Knowing nothing about it at all, Callahan enlisted others to provide him with his raw material. One is a fine man who sells books. Just with theories. No matter that he knew nothing about them. Callahan wanted them anyway. Others Callahan used made some of those theories up.

Naturally, beginning with ignorance and neither knowing how nor caring to make even that sick stuff accurate, Callahan manages to make it all pretty much inaccurate. What else is required to be publishable on this subject? Is anything more prized than ignorance?

Before I saw it I was told of errors in it that were damaging to me. I wrote Fireside about this on August 12, 1993, documenting some of these hurtful inaccuracies. Fireside was a mindful of the hurt to

individuals as it was of hurt to the public mind: it never responded.

So permeating was the gross inaccuracies in this potboiling effort to achieve fame and fortune that it even spelled the names of well-known publishers incorrectly. It refers to what was not planned, leave alone agreed to, the republication of all my books in a single volume. It mistitled at least one of them. It refers to contents they do not have, it not existing.

Thunder's Mouth Press also recovered Marita Lorenz from the tabloid supermarkets for her Marita: One Woman's Extraordinary Tale of Love and Espionage from Castro to Kennedy. No, the title does not mean that she laid Kennedy, too, along with others like Castro. She says she bore his child, too. She claims she worked for and was trained by the CIA and that it not only taught her how to run guns but also sent her to Dallas with Lee Harvey Oswald -- from where he never in his life ever was -- only three days before the assassination, when where Oswald was for those three days is not and never has been subject to any dispute at all, it is that well documented and witnessed.

Her writing was done for her by Ted Schwartz, who lives in East Cleveland, Ohio. Lorenz lives in Queens, New York. No problem at all. The distance between them was not needed to make the book as terrible, as cheaply fictional as it is. The inaccuracies and the impossibilities were built-in and ample without distance between the "author" and the writer needed in any way to add to them.

Thunder's Mouth seems to have kept Schwartz busy. There was his The Kennedys: The Third Generation, with Barbara Gibson.

Bill Sloan ghosted JFK: The Last Dissenting Witness, for Jean Hill. She was not that but it sounded good (Pelican Press, Gretna, Louisiana, 1993). As did she, her story grew with the years. She was standing next to her friend, Mary Moorman, when Moorman took some Polaroid pictures one of which includes the presidential limousine during the shooting and part of the grassy knoll, with a man behind the

foliage. That made her witness to more than standing there when that picture was snapped. For a book, anyway.

Sloan also published another book with the title JFK. Its subtitle is Breaking the Silence. It is described by Taylors Dallas bookstores (Dallas Morning News, November 19, 1993), as “for the first time, twelve overlooked but crucial witnesses share their startling first-hand, accounts of JFK’s assassination.”

That there could after 30 years still be 12 “crucial witnesses to the assassination” who were unknown is indeed startling. If not entirely impossible.

Even a former KGB guy got into the act. He was Colonel Oleg Maximovick Nechiporenko, until 1991. His Birch Lane Press book is Passport to Assassination: The Never Before-Told Story of Lee Harvey Oswald. It was touted by Birch Lane as “By the KGB Colonel Who Knew.”

Just what the market and the people needed, the KGB’s theories to add to our domestic nuttiness.

Yes, according to Birch Lane, “He expresses his own theories as to what happened.”

If this is not all, and it isn’t it is more than enough to make it clear that from the unknown of self-publishing to the biggest names in publishing the sole publishing interest in books with which to mark the 30th assassination anniversary was in trash that would not offend the government, most of all not the FBI, and in making a name and making money, with no concern for how that fame or that money were made. There was nothing too preposterous, nothing too impossible, nothing too dishonest, nothing too outrageous for it to be published.

This is not to say that there was no single factual book about the assassination and its investigations available for publication intima for that anniversary. I know of one, my own, and it could have been published before Posner’s. There was an agreement to publish it, too, I certainly hope there were others

and that in time they will be published, but I've not heard of any one. Indeed, why should a serious writer or a serious scholar take the time to write a book when the publishing record is so clear, that no publisher, large or small, as any interest in a book that is of fact about the assassination and its investigations?

That mine could have been published for the anniversary and before the flood of trash and worse that market it is coincidence. It was not my intention. In writing it I did not have the anniversary in mind. Rather is it that at my age, then 81, and in my impaired health, years ago, when it was obvious that several illnesses could end my life unexpectedly I decided to use what time remains for me in perfecting the record for our history to the degree possible for me.

My manuscript of about a quarter of a million words was completed early in 1993. That book's subtitle accurately describes its content: NEVER AGAIN! The Government's JFK Assassination Conspiracy. It begins by documenting the actual agreement, which was a conspiracy, not to investigate the crime itself and it documents this with White House, Secret Service, FBI and Department of Justice records. As that book develops, again, as with all my books, based entirely on the official record -- not a single theory in its quarter of a million words -- some misrepresented, some lied about, some buried and suppressed, these latter including some of the records of the House assassins committee that never saw the light of day or had any use of any kind, it makes a solid factual case of the question, was there a military conspiracy? That existing case in official records is more than enough to raise questions about it.

As of the date I write this, six weeks after a later book I wrote, Case Open, was on sale, I had no firm date on when NEVER AGAIN! would be published. I've been led to believe that it was being saved for the 31st anniversary and that it would appear in September of this year, 1994. (It finally did appear in 1996.)

This kind of factual, documented book should be delayed? In the publisher's interest, or is that of

the nation? Or mine? These are the kinds of questions public discussion of which should be delayed for an imagined commercial interest?

Case Open that was published is actually about 20 to 25 percent of what I had completed by the end of October, 1993, save for a few additions I did not delay the writing to search for and wrote after the manuscript was completed. The title then was Hoax: The Gerald Posner/Random House/CIA JFK Assassination Exploitation. As it appeared it is titled Case Open (New York, Richard Gallen/Carroll & Graf). It has two different subtitles, this one small fraction of the book I wrote. That on the cover is The Omissions, Distortions and Falsifications of *Case Closed*. That on the title and copyright pages is neither accurate nor descriptive, The Unanswered JFK Assassination Questions.

In the sudden rush to print it after for some time no effort was made to those errors, mostly typographical, that I picked up on the page proofs more than 75 are not corrected. There is no table of contents. There also is no index. These two flaws alone, neither necessary, are enough to discourage serious reviews, those being required in serious nonfiction.

As the proofs were sent to me, to be read, corrected, and returned over a single weekend, there also was no chapter identified as “conclusions”. I was outraged and offended. When I returned the proofs, well within this incredible deadline, I complained strongly about the absence of conclusions and said I’d have them in the publisher’s hands the day after the proofs were there. The conclusions for the much longer book, relating to contents eliminated from it, could not be used. I did write and send by express mail for overnight delivery a new “Conclusion” chapter. It was cut no less mercilessly, or senselessly, when the book ends with a dozen blank pages!

I was given no explanation. I presume, although other presumptions are not impossible, that there was the decision to publish the much smaller book in the belief that the case against Posner and his

dishonest book that remains in the small fraction of what I wrote is overwhelming enough.

There was no editing at all. All that was done was to eliminate most chapters in their entirety, with the last half of two others, used out of the sequence in which they were written and intended, with their last halves just cut off.

The small fraction of that book that was published, with the rest of what I had intended for the record for history consigned to history's dustbin, is this powerful: I have had not a word of complaint or protest from Posner or from his publisher.

Reflecting the media attitude toward assassination books that are factual, those that neither advance nor espouse conspiracy theories, I did not have a single phone call or any kind of inquiry from a single reporter or reviewer from any element of the media or from any radio or TV talk show.

The media that fell all over itself to heap unprecedented praises upon Posner for his most dishonest of books that nobody in the media checked out before telling all Americans to just rush out and buy it.

My address is in the book. For those in the media who do not know me and my work, as many do, the book also has the list of my published works and a reference to the Department of Justice statement to a federal court that I know more about the JFK assassination than anyone working for the FBI. If anyone in the media wanted to do any checking or ask any questions all were told to reach me by phone or by mail. As quite a large number of ordinary citizens did, beginning as soon as the books were out.

So, with serious and factual assassination books, after 30 years the wheel has turned full scale and writers and the people are back where they were at the beginning. Or, in the well-known saying the more things change the more they remain the same.

It happened again, as it never should have: the media failed itself and the nation.

It was in the sense that this should never happen again, all that was wrong and went wrong when

the President was assassinated and thereafter should never happen that I titled the as yet unpublished book NEVER AGAIN!

But it did happen again and it continues to happen and the danger to the country from it is not diminished. It perpetuates, and it should perpetuate, the distrust of the people for all the media.

In a very real sense this is much worse than confronted the people of those unfree societies our government opposed. But in Hitler's Germany and in Stalin's USSR and that of his successors, their people knew that their media was controlled, that it told the people only what those dictatorships wanted the people to know.

But in this country there is no such official compulsion, no "or else" hanging over the media's head like a Damoclean sword.

Our people are told what in theory is true, that their media is free, as the First Amendment to our Constitution guarantees as a matter of right.

But as it relates to the assassination, if the media were controlled by the government it would have been the same. On this subject the media cast and continues to cast itself as the unofficial arm of errant officialdom.

While there are many who understand this there are more who do not.

And so it was that no single element of the media made even a perfunctory effort to tell the people the truth about Posner's book that is so dishonest from concept to execution while almost all of it rivaled the rest of it to praise it as few books have even been praised and for the ancillary rights to have covered so much of the world's readers, listeners and viewers.

No dictatorship could have done this as effectively but had this been done under a dictatorship the people would have had cause not to trust it.

As was not true here in the land of the free and the home of the brave, the bravery not extending to those who publish books.

Land of the free?

Not since John Kennedy was assassinated and the people were lied to about it by their governments they would not have had had he not been assassination; and by their media that never stopped supporting and endorsing these known and well-established official lies about that assassination.

Sweet land of liberty? No.

Not for those writers for whom there are no First Amendment rights unless they can publish their own books on this subject. As I had to do after more than a hundred international rejections for the first book on the Warren Commission to be published at all and so that it could tell the people about that assassination might reach them.

That limited freedom for the writer and for the people who are informed by writers remains but where it was only seemingly impossible for me when I was in my fifties, it is an actual impossibility for me in my eighties and in impaired health.

But even if it were possible for me today, it would still deny most of the people their rights under that Amendment because in fact self-published books are denied the usual means of distribution, the means by which they can reach the people.

The people have no meaningful way of knowing that such books exist. When they do, it is not unusual for their knowledge of the existence of such books to be meaningless for their bookstores normally do not stock and display them and many, within our experience, will not order them.

All of these conditions together create, protect and perpetuate the unseemly, the anti-American, the national disgrace of the JFK Assassination Industry by which the people are denied the truth, while those

who confuse them even more, those who lie to them, publishers and writers alike, thrive from this most indecent, anti-American industry, the means by which some make themselves famous and some are enriched and the errant are protected.

It is true about this industry, as the bible says, that the love of money, greed, is the root of the evil.

The money-changers remain in the temple.

And thus we have the additional tragedy, the additional national suffering so extensively reflected to me in the letters of more than 20,000 strangers who have written and the countless thousands who have phoned, the additional tragedy of the success of the JFK Assassination Industry that we have and can have only because the love of money more than of anything else is, alas, the root of the evil.