

12/11/98

Dear Hal,

Thought these
enclosures from The
Heymann Book would
interest you.

A very much "anti-
Kennedy" Book albeit fascinating
Although you are listed
in the bibliography, R.F.K.
is blamed for The J.F.K.
autopsy, a Posnerian trust.

Note The Garrison - R.F.K.
Conversation.

One of the few
things that L.B.J. and
R.F.K. agreed on was
their mutual contempt
for The Warren Report.

Why did L.B.J. have
The F.B.I. investigate you

Get agreeing with him!

L.B.F. and R.F.K.

Make make conspiratorially
Minded than you.

Day one R.F.K.

suspected The CIA and
anti - Castro Cubans.

Later, he blamed The
Mob.

R.F.K. must have
gotten Mae's tapes.
Ha Ha!

On Nov. 22, he tells
Haynes Johnson, "One of
your guys did it", a
reference to anti - Castro
Cubans.

Hal, you make me
make make and responsible
in your criticism than
R.F.K. or L.B.F.

Hope Lillian is
better.

Sincerely,
Ed Williams

D HEYMANN

poetry)

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racy:
ames Russell,
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Girl:
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Elizabeth Taylor

RFK

A CANDID
BIOGRAPHY OF
ROBERT F. KENNEDY

C. DAVID HEYMANN



A DUTTON BOOK

Suddenly, the world now?" RFK had cried come to know in child-

of his eight children, den, who had worked grief to her. "My heart Braden said. "He had e met] me in George- aden, happened to be upstairs, I did. On the ie. But I could not go ooking out the window s he walked toward his ould have understood

e appeared on national thousands of messages l then left immediately nesia—this time, Pro ysia—and some White approve Bobby, e as a presidential eny l as much desire to e left for Tokyo, wher o Malaysia, and final Although RFK helple interest in the 7. Unlike his prede retaries of state sity, where a lev y his deft hand claimed to the st as the leader of s fight against s young people essage of Januar th the same th . But there her, he used

tense; and when he challenged Japan's youth to fight the world's ills, he was also challenging himself to live up to his new, brotherless, purpose.

Bobby's despair was in no small measure a result of survivor's guilt. JFK had been warned of a climate of hatred in Dallas. Senator William Fulbright, the target of vicious attacks by the *Dallas News*, had declined several invitations to visit the city and had pleaded with JFK to do likewise. Byron Skelton, the Democratic National Committeeman from Texas, had written to Bobby on November 4, 1963, "Frankly, I'm worried about President Kennedy's proposed trip to Dallas." The city wasn't safe, Skelton argued. But political commitments had been made, and RFK, preparing for his brother's reelection campaign, had favored keeping them. Moreover, it was RFK who suggested that the president ride through the streets of Dallas in a car without using the specially outfitted bulletproof bubble top. "It will give you more contact with the crowd," he had said.

Bobby's advice to visit Dallas, however, weighed less heavily on him than did his conduct over the whole of his brother's term in office, for he had been the driving force in the Kennedy administration's most aggressive operations. He had pushed the government to hound the mob, to bring down Hoffa, to destroy Castro. He had "taken care" of Marilyn Monroe. Less than a day after Jack was declared dead, Bobby told Larry Schachtel, "I'm sure that little pinko prick had something to do with it, but he certainly didn't mastermind anything. He should've shot me, not Jack. He's the one who's out to get them." News about Jack's assassin, and about the assassin's assassin, was not slow in coming. By the day of the funeral, Bobby knew that Lee Harvey Oswald had Communist ties and had demonstrated in New Orleans as a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He knew that Jack Ruby was a Dallas racketeer connected to the Dallas Mafia. As John H. Davis observed in his book *Mafia Kingfish: Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, RFK "could probably have escaped the awful suspicion that his aggressive campaign against Castro and the mob might have backfired on his brother." CIA's John McCone remembered conversations with the attorney general shortly after Jack's death: "He wanted to know what we knew and whether it had been a Cuban or perhaps Russian hit. He asked me if the CIA could have done it. I mentioned the mob, but he didn't want to know about it. I suspect he thought it was the mob. 'They'—whoever 'they' were—'should have killed me. I'm the one who wanted.' He blamed himself because of all the enemies he'd made along the way and also because he'd advised his brother to go to

Dallas." At the time of Jack's death, the pursuit of the Mafia was continuing unabated. Indeed, when the telephone rang with J. Edgar Hoover's word of Jack's shooting, RFK was awaiting another call: one bringing news of the verdict in the federal trial of New Orleans godfather Marcello. (The don was acquitted that day.)

Over the next year, Bobby kept his distance from the Warren Commission, the blue-ribbon panel, headed by the chief justice, to look into the assassination.* J. Edgar Hoover, whose Bureau was the investigative arm of the commission, sent the attorney general the raw materials developed by FBI agents during the probe, but Bobby did not seek to acquire them. Earl Warren's group issued its report to Lyndon Johnson on September 24, 1964. Oswald and Ruby, the document concluded, had both acted alone. Did RFK maintain his detachment from the inquiry into his brother's death—an inquiry in which he, as master of the FBI, had significant official responsibility because he was too heartbroken to dwell on the grisly details? Or did he fear that a truly comprehensive investigation might uncover details about Marcello and Roselli, Giancana and Campbell, Monroe and Castro? Was his brother's assassination the act of a solitary lunatic, or an expertly devised reprisal for the administration's efforts and Bobby's vendettas? At a champagne party following Jimmy Hoffa's court convictions in early 1964, a glum RFK said, "There's nothing to celebrate." The labor leader had gloated after Jack's death, "Bobby's just another lawyer now." Hoffa

*The other members of the commission were U.S. senators Richard B. Russell, Democrat of Georgia, and John Sherman Cooper, Republican of Kentucky; U.S. representatives Hale Boggs, Democrat of Louisiana, and Gerald Ford, Republican of Michigan; Allen Dulles, former CIA director; and John J. McCloy, former president of the World Bank.

†Privately, RFK expressed dismay over the Commission's report, telling Laverne Duffy it was "impossible that Oswald and Ruby hadn't known one another." Recently issued assassination files (CIA and FBI) indicate that on November 23, 1963, the day after his brother's death, RFK had telephoned Harry Ruiz-Williams, a CIA operative, at the Ebbitt Hotel, 8th Street N.W., in Washington, D.C., a CIA-operated safehouse used primarily to house Cuban exiles. After speaking with Ruiz-Williams, RFK talked to journalist Haynes Johnson, who was also at the Ebbitt, telling Johnson he suspected CIA-backed anti-Castro forces of having been involved in his brother's death. Bobby later told Duffy the same thing. "Those Cuban cunts are all working for the mob," said Bobby. "They blame us for the Bay of Pigs, and they're trying to make this look like a Castro Communist hit. I don't buy it. And I don't trust those guys at the CIA. They're worse than the Mafia." In the end, said Duffy, "Bobby simply didn't want to know who did it. But at the same time, he couldn't put it behind him. He wanted to bring his brother's murderers to justice, but he didn't have the strength to do it. He must have felt tremendous guilt over his failure to act."

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Jim Garrison, the flamboyant New Orleans district attorney who challenged the Warren Commission's conclusions, recalled a telephone conversation he had with RFK in 1964: "I told him some of my theories. He listened carefully, then said, 'Maybe so, maybe you're right. But what good will it do to know the truth? Will it bring back my brother?' I said, 'I find it hard to believe that as the top law man in the country you don't want to pursue the truth more ardently.' With this he hung up on me."

Indications of a second gunman and a mob-controlled hit have grown considerably over the years. The House Select Committee on Assassinations, which convened in 1979, acknowledged the likelihood of a "second gunman" theory. Then, in May 1997, Gerald Ford publicly admitted that in 1975, while president of the United States, he had suppressed certain FBI and CIA surveillance reports that indicated that JFK had been caught in a crossfire in Dallas, and that John Roselli and Carlos Marcello had orchestrated the assassination plot. Roselli resented the fact that the Kennedys had tapped the Mafia for campaign contributions, then used the mob for vote-control purposes at the same time that RFK continued to persecute and prosecute leaders of the group. Marcello's animosity toward RFK [and thus the Kennedys] began in 1961, when the attorney general made him a primary target in his massive drive against crime, eventually "kidnapping" him in an effort to have him deported.)

Suspicion of conspiracy was not Bobby's only motivation to avoid a high-profile probe into Jack's death; the attorney general's efforts to avoid disclosures about his brother—and to control those he couldn't control—began only hours after the shooting. As physicians at Bethesda Hospital conducted the autopsy on the president's body during the night of November 22 and into the early morning of the twenty-third, Bobby and Jackie spent part of the night in a private suite on one of the higher floors. Dr. George C. Burkley, the White House physician who accompanied the president to Dallas, represented the family at the mortem. "I supervised the autopsy," he remembered, "and kept in constant contact with Mrs. Kennedy and the members of her party. I made trips back and forth . . . and talked to her on a number of occasions." Dr. Pierre Finck, a surgeon at the procedure, later said that the high-ranking military officers present instructed him not to

not only didn't pursue the facts behind his brother's assassination, he went so far as to join the Organized Crime Task Force, which he had earlier formed to probe Mafia activities, including Teamster racketeering and overt police corruption.

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dissect the track of the bullet wound in the president's back. Finck maintained, originated with "the Kennedy family." Bobby and Jackie meddled with the autopsy to avoid exposing the dead president's adrenal glands, atrophied from Addison's disease, revealing that infirmity would lay bare the deception Jack and Bobby had perpetrated over the years by portraying his outward image of robust health.

RFK's attempt to limit the investigation into Jack's death. Immediately following the autopsy, a variety of forensic materials, including photographs and X rays, 119 microscopic tissue slides, 58 slides of smears taken during JFK's senatorial and presidential years, and the president's chemically preserved brain—were moved from Bethesda Naval Hospital to the Executive Office Building, next door to the White House. Though technically in the custody of the Secret Service, the materials, and the locked file cabinet into which they had been sequestered, were controlled by Dr. Burkley. The materials remained stored in that location for nearly a year and a half, with neither the Warren Commission nor the FBI examining them before the commission filed its report.

In April 1965, with Congress debating a bill calling for the government to acquire certain pieces of evidence relating to President Kennedy's death, Bobby directed Burkley to transfer "the file cabinet contents" from the custody of the Secret Service to the care of Evelyn Lincoln for "safekeeping" at the National Archives. Lincoln, working temporarily at the Archives on the indexing of her late boss's papers there, stored the items in a footlocker, which Angie Novello removed, on Bobby's order, four weeks later. Novello, according to Davis, then placed the footlocker in a storage space the Archives had been making available as a courtesy to RFK.

In November 1965, Congress enacted the law calling for the acquisition of forensic evidence related to JFK's autopsy. Several months thereafter, Ramsey Clark, who had become Lyndon Johnson's attorney general, asked RFK to comply with the new statute. Although Bobby was generally uncooperative, he agreed, after prolonged discussion with Clark, to release the items. On October 29, 1966, Burke Marshall, representing the late president's estate, signed an agreement with the government to donate to the National Archives the autopsy materials in the estate's possession. Parties to the deal also approved an inventory of the items; the list included the X rays and photographs, the tissue slides and the remains of JFK's brain. But when officials at the National Archives were given the key to the footlocker a few days later, they discovered that although the majority of the photos and X rays were present, pictures of

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the brain and of the interior cavity of his chest—that is, those showing the sites of the gunshot wounds—were gone. The tissue and blood slides had also disappeared, as had the stainless steel container holding the brain itself.

In the late 1970s, the House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that "circumstantial evidence tends to show that Robert Kennedy either destroyed these materials or otherwise rendered them inaccessible." The probable reason the panel cited for RFK's actions was that the materials "would be placed on public display in future years in an institution such as the Smithsonian." But was defense of Jack's dignity in death the only reason? Or did Bobby fear that forensic evidence might point to more than one gunman, a conclusion that could lead to disclosure of the deepest secrets of the Kennedy administration? Was he still looking to prevent public knowledge of the president's Addison's disease? Or of his amphetamine use?

The Kennedy myth had grown large since Jack's death. The truth could not be permitted to tarnish it.

Someone was sitting in John Kennedy's chair.

Despite the gulf separating Jack's East Coast sophistication from Lyndon Johnson's Texas earthiness, JFK had liked his vice president. His drawl, his outlandish stories, his barnyard vocabulary, had amused the urbane president. And Jack had sympathized with the plight of his fellow politician: once the domineering leader of Congress, Johnson had found himself in a ceremonial post with little more power, as he put it, "the frigging Queen of England." He would ultimately claim that he was being second in command; he loathed it mainly because he was expected to fulfill only one major function: to show the president unwavering loyalty. "I never heard Lyndon Johnson criticize John Kennedy in any way, publicly or privately, while he was vice president," in-terviewed George Christian, an LBJ aide who would become White House

probable involvement in the disappearance of autopsy materials may well be politically motivated. His own political future would have been in danger had his dealings with the Mafia been revealed. He pursued organized crime figures on one hand, and courted them on the other. And those he did pursue, such as Carlos Marcello, were often the target of illegal Justice Department activity. In April 1961, when he became attorney general, Bobby authorized an operation which resulted in the kidnapping of Marcello by Immigration Department agents and his immediate flight from New Orleans to Guatemala City. Returned to the United States, Marcello's fact have been the brains behind the murder of JFK. He was once quoted as saying, "I got the wrong Kennedy."