

THE FOURTH DECADE

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talking to Castro about the possibility of rapprochement with the US; but for John Kennedy on the record he remained anti-Castro, even in his trip to Tampa, which was arguably the area with the largest pro-Castro sentiments in the nation and one whose radical political roots can be traced back to the 19th century.

While JFK was in Tampa, Guy Banister was in New Orleans fretting over the secret war with Fidel Castro. VT Lee was on tour in the US. And Lee Harvey Oswald was looking toward another work day at the Texas School Book Depository. Both Banister and Lee were aware of Oswald. Banister was aware of the other two. And VT Lee knew about FBI agents hounding him. When one considers the debate over Oswald's political leanings, at some point a conclusion that it doesn't really matter should be made by any thinking person. Political forces of either political stripe could be using him, and at the very least were well aware of this well-traveled political dilettante's activities.

Notes

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3. "Cuban Connections and Organized Crime" ASK Smposium on the JFK Assassination, November, 1993, Lamar Waldron presentation.
4. Anthony and Robyn Summers, "The Ghosts of November," Vanity Fair, December, 1994, p. 132.
5. Tony Durr and Skip Johnson, "Ex-Tampan Key Figure in JFK Probe; Lee Headed Pro-Castro Group," Tampa Tribune, September 7, 1976, pp. 1-4.
6. Interview with VT Lee.
7. Garrison Investigation. New Orleans Public Library Collection and Florida Johns Committee.
8. Hearings of the Louisiana Joint Legislative Committee, March 7, 1957.
9. Florida Johns Committee Box 16 (142-3)
10. Florida Johns Committee Box 16 (142-3).
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13. Arthur E. Carpenter, "Social Origins of Anti-Communism: The Information Council of the Americas," Louisiana History March, 1986, pp. 121-143.
14. This kind of propaganda activity by INCA and its

affiliates (especially the DRE) before and after the assassination is the theme of: Jerry D. Rose, "INCA Dinka Do," The Fourth Decade vol. 4 #3, March 1997, pp. 28-31.

15. Clarence Doucet, "INCA," New Orleans Times Picayune. May 6, 1974.
16. Report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, pp. 118-121.
17. Interview with VT Lee.
18. Guy Richards, "Mystery Contact of Oswald Revealed," New York Journal American December 8, 1963, p. 1-L, 31-L.
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20.

ADDRESS TO THE 1997 SUMMER MEETING OF COPA

by

Harrison E. Livingstone

I want to discuss some of the main problems we are faced with in our research, and how these are perceived by the outside world. That such serious divisions and conflicts exist within the so called "research community," has been a matter of great concern for all of us. The question this suggests is: "How can we accomplish much without unity?"

Well, this nation isn't really listening to us, and it's not because the media cannot be expected to report every little thing we say and every conflict that comes up. Although it's true that the majority may still believe there was a conspiracy in the JFK case, they always did so. Certainly, in 1963 and 1964, most people probably thought President Johnson and his buddies did it, but few among the critics at that time ever espoused that position, and they certainly did not bring about the gut suspicion which the nation held that there was a domestic plot and the winners were in charge. The critics only served to water that down and defuse it. The leading critics co-opted this energy to a large extent, though

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some were in fact pure of heart. We have to face the fact that some critics of the Warren Report, along with the Warren Commission, had a hidden agenda to get us off the track.

There is no unanimity among the public as to who did it—the Russians, Castro, the Mob, or the CIA. None of the above. Clearly, there is no unity among us, and there may never be. We must not forget that the vast majority of those interested in the JFK and other cases are not attending these meetings for one reason or another, so it is a mistake to believe that the unity we have to worry about is limited to those who are either at these meetings, or who are the most visible in the case. We have to be speaking to and thinking about a lot more people than ourselves.

All of us need to keep ever in our minds the millions and millions of people, the vast majority in this nation whose opinions and feelings matter, and the vast majority who read our books and follow the cases but who are not heard from, the media who must remain impartial, and the authorities and politicians who might be able to do something about the cases we are dealing with. Keeping in mind all those who are not here but who are, or who might be, interested, gives us perspective that we often don't have when we are drowning in a minutiae of detail in our research, or grasping at each other's throats for whatever reason.

My intent is to try to put all this into perspective so that we might better prepare for the Millennium, and perhaps have a better idea how to take effective action with regard to these cases in the press and the nation. We simply cannot succeed if we continue with so little understanding. My goal for a number of years was not only to advance the evidence in the JFK case to a higher level of understanding, but to bring us all to a better understanding of why that never happened in the preceding three decades, and why we could not succeed so long as we were unable to work towards consensus in the evidence. The media simply was not going to take us seriously the way we have been: fractious and irrational.

The problem has been us! Many will be quick to accuse me as one of the guilty, and that I have been a problem. True, I tried to stir things up for just this purpose, so that we can face some hard facts and face each other. Without conflict, there can be no clearing of the

air. The smoke of battle has to clear to see anything. The sun also rises, as the Bible and Hemingway said. Conflict is perhaps essential to achieving a higher understanding.

Only by process of self examination do we learn and grow. None of us are perfect, and we often have tragic character flaws. But that should not interfere in our work, as those flaws clearly interfere, in some cases with disastrous consequences, in our community.

Our first problem was that we were led by people whom we imperfectly understood. It never occurred to many that the assassination was simply political (was there a reason for that?), and therefore the evidence would be politicized. The large majority of people in this nation understand that instinctively, because they have a clear understanding of politics and what it is really all about, not having been victimized by university political science departments. I think those of us imprisoned within the narrow confines of our very parochial and thoroughly isolated community, having willingly given up our freedom for the sake of comradeship, a social life, and power like that of big fish in a small pond, were too smart to see the truth. We couldn't see the forest for the trees with all our self importance and intelligence.

That meant that there would be political operatives among us because politics in most countries is a dirty game. Paranoia existed in this community for a damn good reason. There were spies and provocateurs among us, and until we knew just what everyone thought, what they were about and why they were in this case, we were often being obstructed and defeated before we could either get our own message out or fully develop our own research. Preemptive strikes were being launched on many of us.

Every political or social issue attracts activists. We have to face the hard facts of the psychopathology often at work in those who seek an outlet for their energies in such activities, whether environmental or economic. We are often invaded by hoards of immature, psychologically flawed people seeking to gain a new measure of power or achievement somewhere in their and our lives, if there was no chance of working at McDonalds or as an architect. This is not to discount or offend the many well meaning, mature and decent people who have become active in the assassination cases. As well, oth-

erwise absolutely crazy people often achieve a great deal of good in the world. Madness, aberration and the bizarre go with creativity and genius. Take for example the phenomena of Bill Gates. But that is something quite different from the kind of psychopathic thieves, liars, and criminals with whom we sometimes have to deal.

I am trying to point out what so many of you know very well: We get a lot of kooks and nuts, even psychopaths. Mental disorder and flawed personalities are often the rule, and the JFK case has become a sort of therapy for many. Many people get into this or on the Internet looking for a social life. None of us are perfect, but some are worse than others. Our field certainly attracted your average everyday power-tripper and control-freak in spades. Such an atmosphere is going to warp a lot of us because it is a descent into madness. What we ended up with, as the press so gleefully noted years ago, was a "lunatic network." My publishers at Carroll & Graf continually referred to many of you as "lunatics," (I'm sure I was included on the list) but sold our books anyway. Many could not take our research seriously because too many of us were discredited at the outset either on personal grounds, such as happened with the book The Scavengers and Critics of the Warren Report, or because of the vast amount of conflicting theories that canceled each other out.

The press and the authorities, the politicians and the average interested reader ended up not knowing what to believe. The JFK case was open season, and anyone could get into it. It is my position, now that I think I have an overview of the evidence, that the case had to be co-opted from the beginning by political operatives, and it was. They got our attention by putting forth valid criticism of the Warren Report, credentialed themselves in the trenches just as revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries have always done, and then misdirected and sold us out. We have been betrayed constantly by those among us who have had another agenda, whether strictly commercial, political, or psychopathic.

You can't exactly have any credibility if you are in the business of selling evidence. Your words, theory, and evidence become worthless. It is interesting that I was smeared that way from the moment of my first big achievement in this research. I was discredited with a lie, and that lie was planted by those who stood the most to lose. The point is that nobody said life would be

fair. Nobody said that our work in these cases would be on a level playing field—meaning that we would not be free to express our opinion or present our research without dirty politics reaching out and wrecking our work and us in the process.

What was the bottom line? There was one primary area of investigation that was off limits to us: that was any question that went to the authenticity of the physical and visual evidence in the case. Almost nobody ever asked those questions.

If there had not appeared some maverick magazines and journals, some of which became most important in helping us to free our minds from the control mechanisms at work among us, we would not be as far as we are today. I first mention Penn Jones' The Continuing Inquiry, followed by Jerry Rose's The Third Decade, and its successor, and The Investigator, by Gary Rowell. These magazines served as a forum for much new research, both good and bad. I often wished that they would screen out the bad, but it helped us to think and develop our powers of discernment if we had to do it ourselves, since the editors refused to play God. These were not normal editors, obviously, and unfortunately, like the great sins of Internet and its predecessors, this forum gave vent to much opinion that was passed off as fact and readily believed by the unwary.

There was an unhealthy atmosphere where criticism of ideas and research was taken personally by some who could not distinguish between criticism and slander. They never bothered to look up the meaning of the words "slander" or "libel." I don't make a knowingly false (one of the elements of libel or slander) statement about anything or anyone, but some of these creatures do that as a matter of course. They will do anything to someone competing with them in the market place of ideas in a free country, as this is or is supposed to be. Some will use the most terrible lies to destroy a competitor.

The utter lack of education, culture, and real literacy among a few of the more sensational and famous among us was a great threat, because they threatened those who criticized them with suit or vicious retaliation and poisonous slander. They often played God and sat in judgment on their betters, as common people are wont to do, and hurt us out of jealousy and envy. This caused vast damage and emotional injury to many who were traveling down the right trail in their investigations and

research. They made us crazy under that kind of vicious pressure. To be crazy is to be discredited. Trust me.

There will never be unity among us until we learn to live with criticism and benefit by it and grow. You cannot have unity when you don't know that some among us believe the Russians killed Kennedy, or are ready to say that at the right moment, after they have led us down the garden path and got our trust and confidence.

In fact, we harbor some of the best con-artists around. Its just a scam to them. "Originales antiguas?" the Mexican souvenir hawkers ask, as we walk around the pyramids of their forebears.

It is essential that we work towards a construct of what the evidence really shows and what it means in terms of determining the true nature of the conspiracy. We all know there was a conspiracy, right? Prove it. It isn't enough for some to merely assume a conspiracy, as Anthony Summers and Peter Dale Scott do in their fine books. We have to prove from the evidence that there was in fact or had to be a conspiracy, and this is what was so hard because we were psychologically headed off at the pass with the medical evidence inquiry in terms of the real questions that had to be asked, and prevented by the government from seeing that evidence. Above all, our minds were tampered with and prevented from asking the right questions by some of the so-called "respected" critics.

Some don't want to admit that they could make mistakes or be easily led or misdirected, but the truth is, we were all being psychologically manipulated in a classic mind control operation of major proportions. I have seen such experiments on entire towns and trust me, the Big Lie works on entire nations, if not the world. Mere gossip can destroy a community, let alone an individual's life. Certainly it can work on a bunch of piss ants like us.

President Johnson had a lot of "piss ants" circulating in the background of his life, and that attitude towards potential enemies is the first step in dehumanizing the target for the control-freaks we have been living with. That is the primary reason why the JFK case was not solved years ago: because it was being controlled by the cover-up we all knew was there. We just didn't want to believe it was among us, and those who spoke of agents were just paranoid idiots. Those who even mentioned "agents" discredited themselves. Watch out for

those who toss around such charges, of course. So we have to try at all times to figure out what is, and what isn't. Who is what.

The fact is, according to Penn Jones and others in the Dallas area, every time they tried to have an open meeting in the 1960s about the evidence and conspiracy in the assassination of John F. Kennedy, there were more FBI and private intelligence agents present than researchers and critics. They stopped having those type of meetings and went underground for a period of time.

All this leads to the issue of "weighing evidence." The goddess of justice holds a scale for good reason. Weighing the pros and cons of evidence is what this process is all about. I need to remind you of this, because so few realize that is how it actually works. So we have to marshall the evidence on each issue.

Few of us are trained lawyers or have had courses in evidence or law enforcement or forensic investigation. Few of us, who have every kind of job and profession under the sun—those who are lucky enough to have a job and who haven't already had their lives and bank accounts ruined by this case—have any real training. We are a bunch of amateur detectives. That, again, is the problem. We have had an occasional police officer or former officer come among us, such as those who stormed into my life after I published, or Gary Rowell or Ian Griggs. They needed to train us, and as I have written, my eyes were opened and I began to look at the case, the evidence and the people involved through the eyes of a tough cop. Not that they weren't investigating us. Or a tough reporter. Reporters and cops are very much alike in certain ways. They both wear white socks and black shoes, for instance, and cheap clothing. Nobody makes much money in these lines of work, and they get pretty jaded, like the detective in Raymond Chandler's wonderful novels, Phillip Marlowe.

We have to learn how to weigh the evidence.

The real question all along has to be first and foremost: Is a piece of evidence authentic, and how come it is out in the open now? How come some things seem to have been leaked? Or were they merely stolen? When Daniel Ellsberg got out the Pentagon Papers, he did not charge for them, so there was no question about his motives in that regard. Was all that material on the up and up, or slipped in among them, as in Khrushchev's famous speech which was got out to the West, was there

something added to it? Was Ellsberg merely a tool, as Fletcher Prouty inadvertently suggests when he indicated that the Pentagon was telling us what they wanted us to know?

Often, we get a dose of the truth along with the lie they wanted to get out. We get the revelation of the names of CIA front companies and agents when this has already been exposed all over the world. They tell us what they want us to know, and then set up new fronts with different names. How do we know that in the papers now going into the Archives is not the contrived history they want everyone to believe? Isn't it clear that the transcripts of Dr. Finck's interviews with the HSCA were edited? How many of you read them?

Oliver Stone did not get the Assassination Records Act passed. It was already in the hopper because they wanted to discount the research that was coming out at that time. They wanted to back up JAMA. The House Assassinations Committee was set up in order to stop what Coretta King was saying. She got that Committee set up, and it wasn't Congressman Downing or anyone in touch with him, and when it was politically impossible to stop it, Congressman Gonzalez' resolution was junked in favor of that of Downing's, as Right Wing as they come. He was rated 100% by a Right Wing conservative think tank, and therefore got to be the first chairman. He packed the HSCA staff, and it was sabotaged from the start.

Assassination investigation was something the conservatives of this nation had to derail at all costs. So we have to think about those who supported Downing et al, and the results of their work and why some of their better work was suppressed. No matter how well-meaning the intention of those who set up such commissions and investigations, they are going to be co-opted by powerful forces and entrenched bureaucracies, often in the back pocket of rich people and companies. The Warren Commission was controlled from the start by the FBI, LBJ, and the CIA. The Commission only learned what those agencies wanted them to learn and no more. The findings of the HSCA were programmed to self destruct. A time bomb was planted in them.

Two early researchers who questioned the authenticity of the Zapruder film, Newcomb and Adams, were promptly buried. Their work was interwoven with such wild theories that what was important was obscured by

the smoke screen. What happened to them? Why did this happen?

In November, 1984, Phil Melanson suggested in his landmark Third Decade article, "Hidden Exposure, Cover-Up and Intrigue in the CIA's Secret Possession of the Zapruder Film," that the original Zapruder film was in the hands of the CIA first before anyone had it. This was based on a memorandum uncovered by fine researcher Paul Hoch. Phil stirred up thought with this, but the whole idea was soon obscured in mountains of other minutiae on other issues that bogged people's minds down so greatly that his important line of inquiry was lost to all but a few of us for a lot of years. Melanson wrote that " ...the means and the opportunity for sophisticated alteration did, in fact, exist—alteration that even the most expert analysis would have difficulty in detecting. By the 1960s cinematography labs had the technical capacity to insert or delete individual frames of a film, to resize images, to create special effects."

And scientist Robert Morningstar, who has also achieved the level of imbalance so familiar to some of the rest of us geniuses, was right on target when in 1991 he strongly attacked the film as being no chronometer at all of the assassination. He wrote in his short paper "The Z-Fraud," that his time motion studies of the film revealed extensive editing. He maintained that many frames were removed to hide the stoppage of the car under the large oak tree where Elm Street and the Elm Street Extension come together. Morningstar, once one sorts through the verbiage and some questionable claims, gives us one of the most important concepts in understanding the evidence in this case, and that is the concept of what he calls "gestalt" alteration of the film to distract the eye from what they don't want you to notice. "The Zapruder film is a total fabrication, in the truest sense of the word, and a false rendering of the events of Friday, November 22nd, 1963, and cannot be relied upon as a chronometer or 'stop watch' of the assassination."

Weatherly's massive mathematical study of the measurements and vector analysis is esoteric, but greatly supportive of major alterations in the film.

One of our problems is the constant invasion of lightweight authors and researchers of insubstantial work who try to fill the power vacuum and lead us. I am always amazed but not amused when I find these people usurp-

ing, or trying to assume some authority over the rest of us by virtue of their credentialing via pure fluff, much rehashing of old stuff, and often little or no original research. It can hurt a little, though, when you know just how useless a lot of this is.

In the ARRB's (the government's Assassination Records Review Board) recent hearing on the Z film, though, the question of authenticity was mentioned by perhaps everyone who spoke. How come the authenticity of the Zapruder film is suddenly on people's minds? What will probably be ignored is that the government (and those with an inside track with money and influence) has access to the technology to manufacture just about anything long before some things are thought possible, including undetectable copies of films being passed off as originals, and the point of what Melanson was suggesting was that there was opportunity to alter the film at the very start. And the same for the X-rays and photographs. Concurrent with this was my direct information in Dallas about the slight of hand shell game that went on there with that film as it passed from one photographic lab to another on November 22, 1963. The film was copied and preliminary alterations made and a new film substituted at once. Later on, the copies were switched as the alterations became more complete. And perhaps inexact.

The film may have been tinkered with and adjusted during the several years that it was in possession of Time/Life, an organization much in the power of the government then. Interestingly enough, a key "researcher" worked there throughout that period and walked out with a copy of the film. For many years after, his explanation for tinkering with the film was "to make it easier to watch." This was the perfect cover for someone to make ongoing adjustments, even though he may not have been doing them himself, though it was claimed that the film showed that Kennedy was shot from in front.

My information direct from those who should know in Dallas was that H.L. Hunt had a copy of the film bought and paid for before LIFE even heard about it. But LIFE was a good cover, and easily used. Either way, somebody else, either the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) or Hunt, with his co-conspirators, had the original and made a new original. After all Zapruder did not collect his film from Kodak until late that night. Or, they let him have a partially altered copy,

which Dan Rather saw and reported on, then it changed pretty quick, but not before Rather reported things in the film that did not survive. I now realize that some folks in Dallas were very afraid of Dan Rather and what he knew, because he saw a quite different film than what we have now, and he is corroborated by other information.

In any event, I have a highly placed source who was at Jamieson Film Lab on November 22, 1963, and he saw J. Walton Moore, the head of the local CIA office there, and though he did not see it, thinks that Moore collected the original film. My source insists that numerous copies were struck off that day, and not just three copies. Think about it: It is illogical for the authorities to have returned the original film to Zapruder. They had to take it someplace with the capability to make an apparent original film which would include the sprocket information to give to Zapruder, since so many people knew about the film at that point.

So, yes, they throw us a bone and show President Kennedy's head going backwards, but suppose that the jet effect really is true and that is why the head goes backwards? There is no proof of a frontal shot in the film, but, like the shooter behind the three foot retaining wall, we are overloaded with data indicating whatever we want to hear. There never is any real proof, and the visual investigation is the blind alley we have all been led down. There are a lot of false trails. There are answers, of course, once we cut through the dross. And of course, the shooters were more to the front of the car, not to its side, which wouldn't make any sense at all.

I am certain that LIFE magazine never had the original film. They worked so closely with government, though, that it would have been easy for the film to be switched while ostensibly in their possession, and then the private backers of the conspiracy would soon have it from their corrupt operatives on the government payroll.

Philip Melanson wrote that "It is possible that the film of the century is more intimately related to the crime of the century than we ever knew—not because it recorded the crime of the century, as we have assumed, but because it was itself an instrument of conspiracy."

My take on the evidence in these cases is that it is all fake. It took me a long time to realize that—very painfully, I might add—and, the truth of this is clear as a bell now. It's all fake as hell, according to the weight of the

evidence.

If the autopsy photographs don't show what is in the autopsy report and what every witness described in Dallas and at Bethesda, then the pictures, or so called scientific evidence, were faked. We hear with great regularity about scientific studies at universities that are fudged. There is a lot of grant money tied up in that business. Criminal cases and "scientific evidence" were always subject to possible fabrication. Old time law enforcement often picked the patsy, sometimes on a hunch or false accusations when for political reasons they had to sacrifice somebody, fitting the evidence to his size in a classic frame-up. And, obviously, there are serious problems in the forensic laboratories that we have come to rely on so heavily for truth, such as the recent FBI laboratory revelations. Reliance on the highly technical sciences available today make us that much more vulnerable to those who fudge their findings in order to make a deadline and a luncheon appointment, or get rid of a costly case.

If you studied closely the tape of the Oprah Winfrey show last fall with Marina Oswald and Judge Tunheim of the ARRB, John Elrod flatly denied that he had ever made the key statements attributed to him by his interviewers. But it went right by everyone. This is a lesson in how we perceive the best evidence that we might have, and ignore conflicts in what we want to believe. In time the distortions become reality.

These meetings of assassination researchers should have open, free-ranging and spontaneous discussions hashing out the evidence and the issues. I have yet to see this. Most of the meetings I have attended are pretty rigidly controlled and choreographed. Don't be afraid of a little chaos. Chaos is good for us. Like a good fight or any kind of quicky, so to speak, it sharpens the edge, and puts us right on top. It is not so good to be so well trained that we have to have everything handed to us on a silver platter, and it's better to make sense out of a mess, and find order where there was none. Like shuffling the deck, things find their own level.

Once, I succeeded in getting a discussion going in the first Fredonia meeting; it was quickly cut off before it even had a chance—just at the very moment that the most important question of "who do you think did it?" came up. That is what we have to discuss first and foremost, and it has to be within the context of what evi-

dence seems to be most significant. So the medical and other evidence should be hashed out in public. We have had the very false and authoritarian or teacher centered classroom structure, as well as a whole damned curriculum imposed on our meetings when we also need a great deal of intense and wide ranging discussion. Evidently no one among us has experience in conducting such a town meeting. We simply are not going to get anywhere, not going to get any unity until we can all talk freely and hear what everyone has to say and work towards consensus. Nobody in the real world is going to listen to us until we do that. I don't mean to attack the forums that have brought forward the fine research that so often needs hearing.

What we ended up with was a carnival—various side shows on various issues often leading nowhere, but certainly taking our energy, our money, and our time. Far too much of all that.

What all of you have done is stick your head in the sand because you know that there are so many different opinions on everything and are afraid of it. You run from the problem instead of grappling with it. That's left the field open to every kind of fraud and imposter, and left us with an unsolved case. How many of you have ever been a member of a major urban political club, as I have been, or participated in a town meeting? And after someone has been caught up on a scam or a fraud, are they still allowed to have power, or conduct classes? No. So why do the biggest impostors and liars among us still continue in all of this, continually discrediting us before the media and the authorities by their mere presence? Obviously, like the Mob, they have protection. Is it because of their "past contributions?" Because they kept the case alive? Because they did "some good work?" I'm sorry, but sometimes malefactors have to be purged, and not on the basis of secret slander and personal reputation and fear, but because they are a fraud, pure and simple. They have to be exposed publicly, as any good political club does when it purges its own crooks. Or as any company or university that cannot jettison its fruitcakes and failures. That's life and we cannot run from how it has to be played. We cannot sell our souls to the devil or lie in bed with him or her, (politically correct compromises often tie us into knots), though politics does make strange bed fellows at times, they say! We have to be better than that if anyone is going to listen to us, and

if we are going to be truly united. We have to be more honest and call a spade a spade. And people have a right to confront the charges against them.

Group-think is the first step to fascism, and control and propaganda is what lets fascism come into being. Yet, we have to find a consensus

I taught at Harvard, so I know something about this. When I give a lecture, I try not to give a speech. I try to get everyone talking. Some of my answers to questions may turn into mini lectures, but I get down in the middle of the room or hall if I can, in among the students or audience, and get them all talking. I want a wide-ranging and free discussion.

In March, I took a group of 13 university coeds into very rugged mountains for their Spring Break wilderness experience out West. I had quite an experience too, and some wondered how the hell you get work like that, especially when it comes to getting clean at night down at the stream, but I can tell you I taught the whole way, and today I am very proud of the thank-you letters I get from them and how much they felt they learned. And they were from all over the world, so I was able to introduce them to perhaps America's premier national forest. See, I have another life beside the assassination business! Do you? I am an artist, primarily. Right now, I am re-reading Lawrence Durrell. I can really drop some names in literature—quite a few great writers few have heard of or read, but lots of us can drop names.

I literally had the student's lives in my hands but all got out alive and uninjured, safe and sound. Bodies are taken out of that forest every so often, though not easily, and one of their friends was killed that week hiking in Yosemite. How many of you really know me? Do you know how infinitely varied and complex some human beings can be?

Dishonest operatives have led many of the truly dedicated researchers down the garden path. Perhaps COPA's (Coalition on Political Assassinations) purpose was to absorb their energies by offering them false shelter, or they simply didn't understand what these people really are doing, which is often taking over the ideas of others and capitalizing on them—while watering it down with conflicting false evidence.

The popular media doesn't seem to care what COPA has to say or does, and I think it is because of its association with so many purveyors of confusion, fluff, re-

hashed old stuff, and plain crazy ideas. Do you just want to go on talking to yourself and living in a dream world? Why have press conferences at all, if they achieve nothing?

Perhaps COPA was somewhat ill conceived—not well thought out at the start, and certainly the notion at the start that “unity” meant the inclusion of some of the most destructive, insubstantial, or even fraudulent operatives in the spotlight or in prominent positions (at the cost of humiliating, offending, and turning away many other fine people of much higher professional character), was beneficial, but in fact greatly counter-productive—since it is these very character's inclusion that insured the failure of COPA to make a dent in the nation's marketplace of ideas. The media already knew about them and mistrusted their words. COPA shot itself in the foot.

In other words, why have a coalition if its structure precludes gaining national attention or some basic unanimity beyond the mere presumption of a conspiracy? What the nation did not get was the very cutting edge of the most important research, by those who developed it (as must be the case in any scientific forum), until it was old hat and ignored by the media when their work was a potentially hot item if it had been presented with the integrity and clout of a major organization that would capture the nation's passion for solving the JFK case. There was no unity, obviously, and no attempt to heal wounds but only provocation and antagonism. What I saw was every kind of personal attack launched on the people that probably had the answers. They were prevented from speaking to the country by many in this group. Doug Mizzer and Daryll Weatherly are examples of researchers who are on the cutting edge, but who goes out of their way to get them involved at all costs? Or me? Doug made another startling discovery about the Zapruder film, one of several, in 1996. But who knows about it? Many like him just give up trying to get through. I think my original criticisms of COPA have been born out by the history of the past two years and what we have learned about a lot of things. About reality. Does COPA, Lancer, and the other organizations before this, seek out the most promising research? Are they really as open minded as Jerry Rose and The Fourth Decade, which set such an example for all of us? Maybe we are not that big. Do you and the rest of us go out of your way to nurture and display that work no matter

what the personality differences are, or does vindictiveness, jealousy, selfishness, and sometimes viciousness rule? If you've hurt one valid researcher this way, you've hurt a lot, and your own cause.

Pretending that the ARRB is the new Warren Commission isn't going to lead anywhere. Those who do so are living in a dream world. These folks are collectors and that's what you've been talking to them about, but now we have the illusion or hope that some sort of reinvestigation has occurred. Of course, just maybe, collecting documents was their cover and they really got something out of the pathologists last year. Something that might move us more than an inch closer to the truth. Maybe a few miles or light years closer.

So how do we get some credibility and get to be heard in this nation? That is the problem we must solve now before the ARRB delivers what could be a crushing blow with their medical investigation last year. We do not really know what questions were asked of the pathologists and others, and we don't really know how the whole process was handled. Believing that the Board's general counsel, Jeremy Gunn, actually asked the hard questions we submitted is what we hope, but what will happen to it once the political animals get a hold of his work product? Why think the doctors would give a straight answer now, after all these years? We hope. . . .

Did some of the leaders or key players of COPA have a hidden agenda? Was COPA's only real purpose to act as counterpoint for the Assassinations Records Review Board? It certainly seems that way. What else have the past very expensive hotel circuses and conventions from ASK in Dallas to COPA in Washington achieved by way of moving this nation, if not in the wrong direction, towards weariness and ennui? Networking and the presentation of papers is not enough, as the numerous failed press conferences testify to. Somebody had the idea that we could get the word out, but obviously, it wasn't working. Why?

The deadly charade acted out between the two organizations serves to delude both, if not the public, into thinking that the play must go on and is accomplishing something. Certainly the ARRB is doing its job, we should hope, in collecting documents, but can it truly ask all the right questions when it's only public foil, COPA, may be tainted by those with another agenda?

I've used the word "hope" quite a bit so far. So let us

look at the realities. This nation and many other democratic countries have at least two political parties for the obvious reason that there can be no complete unity of opinion on how to run a country. The divisions of opinion between so-called conservative and liberal notions of nation-running are at times vast, and they are of course in conflict with dictatorial and authoritarian methods, and anarchy at the other extreme. There isn't going to be constant and total unanimity in the normal conduct of human affairs. The whole point of democratic institutions or even that of a king's council is for opposing ideas to be developed and heard and hopefully for some sort of consensus to develop in order to deal with problems and to get things done.

We have a massively fractured research community. What was lacking from the start after the Warren Report was issued was public debate. Various opinions were expressed as to whether or not there was a conspiracy and who did it, but very quickly certain individuals basically co-opted the case and became the famous people in it. They usurped power, as it is human nature to do, and everyone else sat at their feet, at the font of wisdom and drank in the golden words amid the stink of their unwashed feet and socks. This later is an actual scene witnessed in front of me by police observers. It does not help to have some of the most respected doctors, as well, picking their nose at the head table during an important meeting at a university while the outside press, what is left of it that came, watched closely. Those doctors, who sat in judgement on their betters and moved in to take over and displace those who did the work, never see themselves and their own faults for what they are.

How many thought for themselves in an atmosphere that subtly controlled all thought and seemed to have asked all possible questions already? Not for us to ask too many questions in those days.

In my opinion, many abused their power because they could not be voted out and because their co-option of the case resulted in the stifling of opinion and healthy debate. For many years, few new people had a hope of shouldering their way in, and few new leaders seemed to be anointed by the old, who were going to hang in there until they died. I find that one of the reasons that the history of their activities is suspicious is because we have the evidence of that stifled debate for so many years.

Very many silent people chaffed at the bit and had no means of being heard, until some journals appeared and offered a forum. Vicious power struggles ensued. None of the leaders withdrew lightly, and it seemed that if any stranger or new and unknown person tried to enter the fray, it was almost on pain of death. Certainly at great emotional and even financial risk. Some of the leaders fought bitterly to maintain their power. For many of them, power itself was the goal.

Still we often did not know what they thought. To try to get that thinking and their opinion out in the open and subject to democratic discussion was a dangerous thing because the opinions of some of the leaders had to be smoked out. This was war, and the only way to get everything out in the open to have a hope of clearing the air—let along working towards some consensus on the evidence—was to start shooting and smoke everyone out of their holes. It took some heavy artillery to do it.

Understanding evidence is only part of the problem. We have for a long time had the spectacle of valid research into the medical evidence or other areas being put forward only to be discredited in the same TV show with some wild theory of French assassins or whatever. Even aliens killed the President, and from time to time, the dark shadow of UFO's have entered the case. We have to somehow stop this circus. There is no end to the trouble we have known.

Our job henceforth in the years remaining to us is to get out as much evidence as possible, and try to work towards some consensus. We have to debate all the evidence and weigh it. Weighing the evidence is the job of a judge or jury, and we may be the only jury that this case will ever have. Our problems have revolved around a lack of training in law enforcement and investigation, and a lack of legal training in evidence. We have not faced the fact that most or all of the big-mouths and leaders in this case are not lawyers and have no idea how to treat evidence.

We have to work for a far more open community, and far more open and free debate. We have to set as a goal the finding of consensus on each area of the evidence, perhaps establishing committees and having hearings, and creating position papers that will last for a long time.

Above all, we have to show what sort of conspiracy could have resulted from the evidence that we have

worked out. But have we not wasted the last several years and a lot of money and avoided just what we needed to have been doing? Is there the time or money left to do this for the sake of the future history of our nation?

In other words, if much or all of the medical evidence in the case was faked, and if the Zapruder and other films were altered, if people were forced to lie to the Warren Commission, that is a good indication of what sort of power was in play and where the conspiracy came from.

That is the kind of thing that we ought to be working on and discussing together at every opportunity. In my view COPA sabotaged its own credibility at the start, and if it has a hope of salvaging anything, it must start now. Today. My job as a writer is to speak to the world. That's what COPA ought to be doing. But no matter how you cut it, we are all little fish in a small bowl with the outside world no longer looking. One of the reasons is that this community, on one level, is about as crazy as those who guide hundreds of tourists to the top of Mt. Everest because they needed a job. If a lot of the tourists die, that's their responsibility, right?

We have to come to some unified conclusions, and perhaps something of a unified theory, so that the public will listen to us and understand what the evidence is and what it means. We must explain the conspiracy in cogent terms that the public, the authorities, all politicians, the press, and history can understand. What is the best way to start going about it? That is what this meeting should be about, and I suspect there can be no "unity" until we do it. We have to put the case in order.

The time is now. To endure, we cannot drift in a confused sea without a rudder, and we cannot allow assassination or violence of any kind as an instrument of our political process in this nation.

But perhaps I ask too much.

(A wide ranging and lengthy discussion should immediately follow delivery of this paper. I wish, to conduct, not control, that discussion.)

Author's note: This address was never given because the Board of COPA was afraid of it and anything else I might have to say.

less advocates of the communist philosophy and both wanted to go to Russia. They had an interest in classical music and opera, and they both responded to the first name "Lee" rather than the middle name "Harvey." Did Marguerite have identical twins?

In closing, I would like to tell about a moment of insight that came during one of my interviews with McBride. We had been talking about the possibility that there were two Oswalds. I took out of my briefcase Robert Groden's book The Search for Lee Harvey Oswald and opened it to page 36. It had a picture of Hollywood actor John Wayne eating in a dining hall on Corregidor Island. Oswald can be seen in the background of this picture doing mess duty. According to the caption, the picture was taken in January 1958. Despite the blurriness of the picture, McBride could definitely recognize the man in the background as being the co-worker he knew at Pfisterer. And yet how could he be on Corregidor, when McBride was working with him every weekday in New Orleans? What was going on? And why would one be at Pfisterer (of all places) and why the other at Corregidor? Whoever the two Oswalds were, they left a tangle of mysteries that seem to defy unraveling.

Notes

1. 22H710-712 (McBride affidavit), as well as author's interviews with Palmer McBride. According to the affidavit, McBride said that Oswald had a mustache. I asked McBride about this, and he said that he never said that. Oswald never had a mustache during the time he knew him. The affidavit also said that McBride started at Pfisterer in June 1955. The month was actually September. With the exception of these two errors, the affidavit is otherwise correct.
2. Warren Report, page 680.
3. 8H15-21 (Wulf) and FBI reports of William Wulf, Jr. and William Wulf, Sr. dated November 25, 1963 by FBI agents Reed W. Jensen and John M. McCarthy NO 89-69. According to the text printed by the Warren Commission, the year when Wulf met Oswald was 1956 not 1958. Because of the discrepancy involved, John Armstrong recently contacted William Wulf and had an extensive interview with him. Wulf reconstructed his years in high school from memory and thus determined the year when he met Oswald was 1958. It would thus appear that the testimony printed by the Warren Commission had been deliberately altered to conceal the truth.
4. Telephone interviews with Sherman Cooley. See also Cooley's account in Edward Epstein's book *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald*, pp. 62-63.
5. Telephone interview with Zack Stout. See also his account in Epstein's *Legend*, p. 69-78.
6. 23H797-798 (Felde affidavit).

BUCK FERRELL-AN OBITUARY

by
Wallace Milam

(Editor's note: this material was forwarded to the editorial office by Robert Chapman of Memphis. With its publication goes the most sincere condolences to Mary Ferrell and her family on the loss of their "Daddy.")

With much sadness we announce the death of H.A. "Buck" Ferrell. Buck died at 9:25 a.m., January 24, 1998. He was the husband of legendary JFK researcher Mary Elizabeth MacHughes Ferrell. They were married for 58 years.

Buck Ferrell was born on November 7, 1919 near Morrilton, Arkansas. For much of his working life he ran dealerships for the Chrysler Corporation in Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco and Houston.

Buck was preceded in death by a son, Larry A. Ferrell and a grandson, David L. Haggard. In addition to this wife Mary, Buck is survived by a daughter, Carol Anne Burtchaell and two sons, William E. Ferrell and James L. Ferrell, and three granddaughters, Karen Taylor, Mary Elizabeth Lynch and Dawn E. (Miskey) Ferrell, and 4 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Jennie McLain of Memphis TN, and five brothers—Herbie W. Ferrell, James L. Ferrell, H. Parnell Ferrell, and Charles W. Ferrell (all of Memphis TN) and Glendon N. Ferrell of Williamsburg, VA.

Wallace Milam, veteran researcher and long-time friend of Buck and Mary Ferrell, wrote a remembrance of Buck Ferrell. It is reproduced below.

H.A. "BUCK" FERRELL

Buck, the colorful husband of Mary Ferrell, was buried today (Monday, January 26, 1998) in Dallas. He died Saturday, January 24, 1998, at the age of 78. Gary Shaw conducted the services. Buck had suffered from cancer for the past six years.

If 4406 Holland Avenue in Dallas has been the Royal Palace of the JFK research movement and Mary Ferrell its Queen, then Buck Ferrell was the Royal Gatekeeper. Buck was willing to recede into the background; he read his paper and watched TV programs while talk of single bullet theories, Cuban exile groups and Mexico City cable traffic swirled all around him.

Buck was the quintessential red-faced Irishman. He could tell you off in a fraction of a second (as more than one assassination researcher discovered). Buck Ferrell stories abound; Mary would tell them and Buck would glory in their telling. He could drink with the best of us (and did) and Mary was fond of telling how she met Buck in Memphis just after he knocked a fellow into the street from a downtown bar.

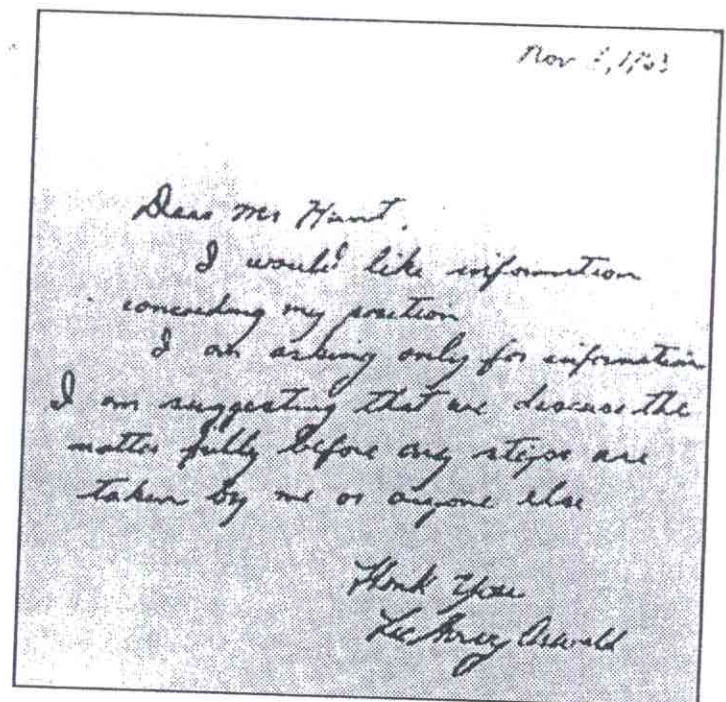
I always marveled at his tolerance. The telephone calls were not for him. The strange visitors (a list of JFK researchers who slept over at "Mary's and Buck's"—never "Buck's and Mary's"—is a Who's Who) were not there to see him and often proffered him little more than a nod. Yet he was willing to give Mary the stage and the applause. It was sometimes hurtful to see how willingly he stepped back and gloried in her awards and acknowledgments. They also serve who sit in silence.

Mary has always argued that Buck and I are related. She's got her evidence and, since it's Mary, it's pretty good evidence. I hope it's true. I'd be honored.

OSWALD'S HUNT NOTE

by
John J. Johnson

The handwritten note (reproduced here and furnished courtesy Jim Marrs) dated November 8, 1963, two weeks before the assassination, and signed "Lee Harvey Oswald" is addressed to a "Mr. Hunt" asking about "information concerning [sic] my position." It



[along with a covering letter written in Spanish] was mailed anonymously from Mexico City in 1975 to newspaper editor and assassination researcher Penn Jones, Jr. Three handwriting analysts - all certified with the International Graphoanalysis Society - concluded that it is "the authentic writing of Lee Harvey Oswald." (National Enquirer, 1977, p. 4) Some researchers believe the "Mr. Hunt" referred to may have been Dallas oilman H. L. Hunt. The FBI investigated the note as having been intended for one of Hunt's sons, Nelson Bunker Hunt. Several FBI reports dealing with the investigation of this note remain classified to this day. E. Howard Hunt is said to have been acting as CIA station

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quire much more space than he required to make them. In several respects we are accused of lacking any "shred of evidence" for articulating our suspicions about the Pitzer death. Of course there are shreds in every instance; whether they are sufficient to weave a durable fabric of suspicion is a matter of interpretation, and the reason really that we have these exchanges: reasonable people may indeed reasonably disagree. The "shred of evidence" that Pitzer was at the autopsy is the consistent claim that this was the case by Pitzer's friend Dennis David, who assuredly was there; David's own credibility is an issue of legitimate doubt.

The point about the questionable significance of unidentified fingerprints at the scene is perhaps Mr. Joliffe's best-taken point; but—even here—the apparent failure to follow up that "loose end" is bothersome and, as we said in the article, we don't know the identity of those whose fingerprints were compared to the latents found at the scene, as this material is "redacted" from the file documents.

Joliffe's point about the inconsequential issue of the body's location is not so well taken. No, the file does not contain photographs of the crime scene and no, I have never "set foot" in the Naval Hospital, and I don't know whether Colonel Marvin has done so. So what? There is a drawn sketch of the scene that shows the position of the body, and the verbal testimony of several investigators who did go to the crime scene. Why is a photograph so vital as evidence? Perhaps Mr. Joliffe finds Deputy Coroner Ball's "kinda sorta" explanation of how the victim's head got under the ladder as less "absurd" than a hypothetical positioning by murderers. But if the Pitzer death were a warning to others (rather than an effort to torment JFK researchers) that we suspect it was, wouldn't this be a reasonable signal to other people whom the conspirators wished to silence: we did it to Pitzer, we can do it to you?

Finally I would comment on the most questionable statement in Joliffe's letter, in my opinion: that the paraffin tests (negative) for Pitzer having fired a weapon should be discounted because the "FBI hotly contests the integrity and merit of such tests." Based on the Bureau's performance in the Oswald case, I should say it is more likely that the FBI "hotly contests" paraffin test results only if they don't seem to show what the FBI

wants them to show. I have Archives documents to show that, after the disappointing results of the Oswald tests, the Bureau demanded examination of the container of paraffin and various paraphernalia associated with the tests, as though it was interested in discrediting the test results by showing some element of contamination. Would the Bureau have "hotly contested" test results which showed that Oswald had fired a rifle and a pistol that day? You make the call!

Mr. Joliffe has, of course, the right to spend his time in any way he sees fit. Some of us will see fit to spend a great deal more time on the Pitzer matter. -Jerry D. Rose, editor and publisher.

EDITORIAL: THE PASSING OF TWO GIANTS

The year 1998 has already brought us two great misfortunes: the deaths of two men who, in very different ways and with very different personalities, are similar in that they had profound but seldom-acknowledged influences on the JFK research community.

I refer to H.A. "Buck" Ferrell, whose obituary is featured in this issue, and Penn Jones, Jr., whose likeness appears on the back cover. I am pleased to count myself among that horde of researchers who frequented the sacred haunts of 4406 Holland to benefit from the wisdom and inspiration of Mary and the tolerance and "good ole boy" friendliness of Buck. Where Penn Jones is concerned, there is much that needs to be said about his pioneer work and his influence on later researchers, including quite a few things that I should like to say personally. To this end, I want to devote some space in the next issue to what would amount to a researchers' "memorial service" to Penn, since it obviously is not feasible for people from all corners of the earth to gather in person to acknowledge his significance to the research community. So I am asking each of you who knew Penn personally and/or benefitted from the fruits of his research and publication, to write a short personal statement on the matter. If you will keep them short—say no more than a couple hundred words—I'll hopefully be able to print each and every one of them. And, oh yes, let me have them no later than April 15, 1998.