

# The man behind the attempt to exhume Oswald

By JIM SCHUTZE

Staff Writer

**I**N THE LAST two years, British author Michael Eddowes has been languishing on the periphery of the assassination conspiracy theory community, firing off an occasional angry letter to a British newspaper when he felt some other conspiracy theorist was getting credit for one of his theories and trying unsuccessfully to testify before the House Assassinations Committee.

Now, the possibility that Eddowes actually might succeed in getting Lee Harvey Oswald exhumed has refreshed his currency as a news figure

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in England, where his adventures in Texas are being watched with interest, especially by England's racier papers. Phillip Finn, a reporter in the New York bureau of the London Daily Express, said: "He's very well known for his involvement in the Timothy Evans case several years ago. His credentials there are impeccable.

"Just between you and me, I think this current business about Oswald being a Russian is absolutely absurd. But Eddowes is still an eccentric, ex-

citing figure, and we're watching him."

At the much more staid London Times, reporter David Cross adopted a more detached, amused, but nevertheless interested posture vis-a-vis the exhumation of Oswald.

"Eddowes is obviously a bit obsessed," he said, "but it's interesting nevertheless that he might actually persuade someone to exhume Mr. Oswald."

If Eddowes is given to such behavior, he has turned it into a marketable commodity. Here in Dallas, and in England, the people who are familiar with Eddowes' career as a crusader tend to use the same expressions when they describe him. Charles Cowen, an editor on the foreign desk of the Daily Express in London, hemmed and hawed and then finally said:

"Well I think perhaps he has a bit of a bee in his bonnet."

The bee currently in residence in Eddowes' bonnet is his conviction that Lee Harvey Oswald was really a Russian agent and therefore ought to be dug up. But there have been other predecessor bees.

Eddowes, a 77-year-old retired lawyer, first earned his reputation in England as a crusader during the 1950s and '60s, when he waged a successful campaign to persuade British authorities they had hanged the wrong man in a bizarre sex-ring murder case.

That case, known in England as "The Christie Killings" or "The Rillington Place Murder Case," involved the owner of a boarding house who had been killing his female tenants and burying them in the basement.

Convicted and hanged along with John Christie was a male tenant in the boarding house, Timothy Evans, a truckdriver. By dint of sheer persistence, Eddowes was able to demonstrate that Evans should not have been hanged. Evans was given a posthumous pardon, and the case figured

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— Staff photo

**M**ichael Eddowes at graveside last year in Fort Worth's Rose Hill Cemetery. He thinks a Russian agent, not Lee Harvey Oswald, is buried there.

# Panel wouldn't hear Eddowes

## EDDOWES — From Page One

prominently in arguments that eventually brought an end to capital punishment in England.

Eddowes wrote a book about his work on the Timothy Evans case called: "The Man on Your Conscience." The book was fairly successful and, with that victory under his belt, Eddowes was off and running as a news figure and investigator-crusader.

His next adventure involved Eddowes in the "Profumo Affair," a sex scandal that forced Minister for War John Profumo to leave office in 1963 and almost toppled the government. Profumo had been sleeping with a prostitute named Christine Keeler. Ms. Keeler, at some point in her relationship with Profumo, had gone to Eddowes for legal advice.

Eddowes told reporters that he had made a secret report to Scotland Yard's "Special Branch," telling them several things Ms. Keeler had confided in him. Eddowes said Ms. Keeler had told him she had been sleeping with both Profumo and a Soviet embassy employe, Eugene Ivanov, and that Ivanov had kept asking her to find out when the NATO countries were going to give West Germany an atom bomb.

Building on this foundation, Eddowes erected a global sex-assassination theory that had Soviet agents using sexual compromise to do in people like Profumo and John Kennedy.

In 1976, a British publisher brought out a book by Eddowes called, "November 22: How They Killed Kennedy." The book was published in this country the next year as "The Oswald File."

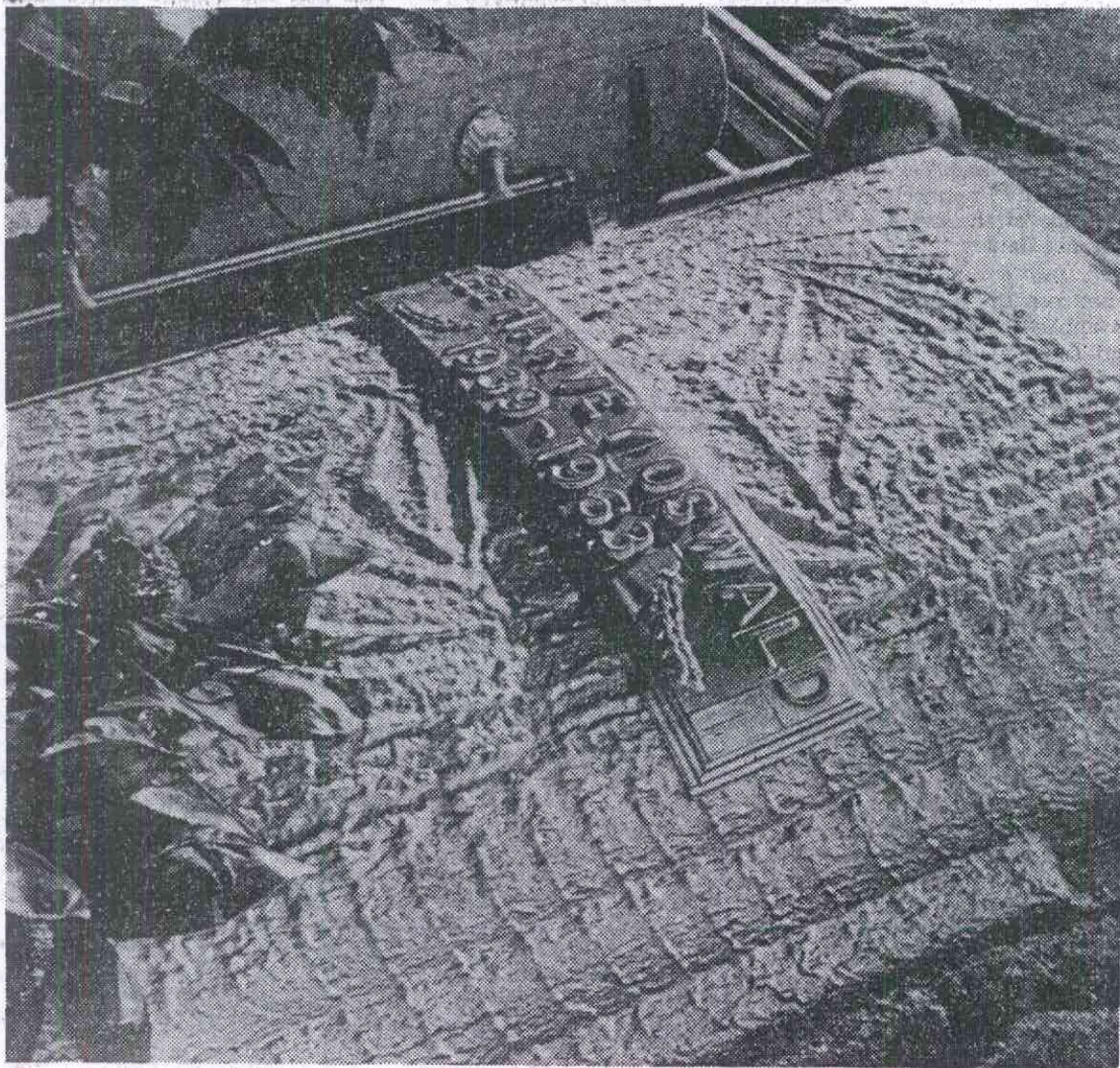
Neither of those books was a tremendous financial success, and for a time Eddowes dropped from view, devoting himself to protecting his conspiracy theories from encroachment by other greedy conspiracists. In 1978, he wrote to the London Sunday Times, complaining that another writer had been given credit for a certain "numbing fact" related to the assassination.

Eddowes wrote: "May I remind you that the 'numbing fact' was first disclosed in England by an English author — myself."

He was disappointed in 1979 when the House Assassinations Committee declined to accept his offer to come tell the committee members about the Profumo-Kennedy connection. G. Robert Blakey, staff director for the committee, refused to hear any of what Eddowes had to say. Blakey insisted that Lee Harvey Oswald was Lee Harvey Oswald, and he dismissed Eddowes' book as "trash."

Blakey's opinion of Eddowes' book seems to be well within the mainstream of critical opinion. A reviewer for the New York Times said: "Eddowes' book is so breath-takingly bad — woodenly written, implausible, contradictory, lacking in evidence — that a real conspiracy theorist might darkly suspect it was intended to discredit the genre."

Undaunted by these severe reviews of his work, Eddowes presses on. His apparent good cheer and determination may be difficult for Americans to understand because Eddowes may have achieved a status or position in British public opinion that does not exist in American public opinion — the status of a well-intentioned, mainly harmless, interesting eccentric.



— AP photo

*Only a judge's order last Thursday kept this vault from being opened*