

# ...and in sewers, Parkland and over 300 books

*Doug Bedell is a Times Herald staff writer. Hugh Aynesworth, a recognized expert on the Kennedy assassination, is a former Times Herald reporter and state editor who witnessed the arrest and shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald.*

By DOUG BEDELL  
and HUGH AYNESWORTH

**J**ACK RUBY AND Lee Harvey Oswald were homosexual lovers who had a friend 12 inches tall who stood in a sewer to shoot JFK.

The attack was extremely well executed and, to this day, the furtive planning sessions they held with the Red Guard and KGB, the CIA and FBI, Nikita Khrushchev, Sirhan Sirhan and militant Cuban exiles have never been fully uncovered.

If the secret Parkland Memorial Hospital room where Oswald and Kennedy are being kept alive on sophisticated life support systems could only be located, perhaps part of the mystery could be laid to rest.

It certainly wasn't laid to rest with the body in Fort Worth's Rose Hill Cemetery. That, as we have been told, belongs to a Russian imposter whose "overembalmed" remains, investigators will soon find, have been reduced to ashes.

We may never know who's really down there. We may never know the real story of the Death of a President.

That, at least, is what the authors of more than 300 books on various conspiracy theories would have you believe. In the 17 years since John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dealey Plaza, parades of the most unlikely and bizarre investigators have come forth with their own accounts of what was missed in the thousands of pages of the Warren Commission Report.

A second gunman, a third. Gunmen in the sewers, gunmen in trees. Three shots. Four, five, six. Manuscripts and kooks have streamed through publishing houses and talk show sets in an unending motorcade of the macabre.

The latest of the conspiracy boost-

ers is an Englishman by the name of Michael Eddowes, who published his first work on the subject, "Khrushchev Killed Kennedy," before ever venturing overseas. With his second expose, he has managed to create enough brouhaha over minor discrepancies in the autopsy reports and listings of Oswald's height to convince Oswald's wife that her late husband's body should be exhumed.

It is said Oswald's widow, Marina Porter, simply wants to settle once and for all the question of the cadaver's true identity.

However, from a look at the past "revelations" concerning the Kennedy assassination, the opposite would seem more likely to occur: For every

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new revelation, another hundred questions emerge.

Take first the more serious transgressions of fact.

The origins of the so-called Grassy Knoll theory of a second gunman can be traced to the simple mistake of a Dallas Morning News reporter out for lunch with her cohorts to watch the motorcade on that Nov. 22 in 1963. When Kennedy was shot, she raced back to her office to file a tearful

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*Fort Worth police helicopter guards Rose Hill Cemetery during controversy over exhuming body from Oswald's grave*

— Staff photo by Rebecca Skelton

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account of what she had seen. Gunfire, she wrote, came over her right shoulder. The way she was facing, that would mean the shots would have come from the knoll, and when her friends saw the story they rushed to correct her. It came from the left, they said. And she admitted her mistake. The story was corrected for later editions.

In spite of affidavits to the contrary, attorney Mark Lane used the woman's uncorrected account of the shooting to bolster his assertion another gunman was involved.

Armed with that and other varied accounts gathered in two days of research, Lane embarked in late 1963 on a fund-raising tour of Europe that resulted in the founding of "Who Killed Kennedy Committee" outposts in London, Denmark, Sweden and Poland.

It was a venture that would soon net him more than \$2 million in dividends.

Lane then wrote an article entitled "Twenty-six Reasons Why Lee Harvey Oswald Wasn't Guilty" for a New York newsletter. From that, he expanded his work into a book, "Rush to Judgment," which no fewer than 20 publishing houses refused to touch.

Until, that is, a doctoral student named Edward Epstein put out a purportedly scholarly paper questioning some investigation techniques used by the Warren Commission. The seeds of skepticism were planted. And Lane's ragged manuscript turned quickly golden.

As the conspiracy thesis began making headlines and big bucks for Lane, housewives began forsaking sweepers, turkey farmers their flocks, attorneys their clients, just to pore over the Warren Report for any signs of coverup. A turkey farmer did, in fact, publish one of the first Lane follow-ups entitled, "Whitewash! The Report on the Warren Commission."

And with the publicity, all manner of witnesses claiming to have seen just about anything imaginable came forward with visions of fame in their hearts and dollar signs in their eyes.

S. M. Holland, a man in his 70s with lenses in his glasses as thick as the bottoms of soft drink bottles, got a lot of play. He said, and pictures verified, that he had watched the assassination from the railway overpass. He remembered, quite suddenly, that he had seen a wisp of smoke appear over the grassy knoll fence about the time Kennedy clutched his throat in agony.

Holland's poor eyesight aside, CBS-hired investigators were unable to reproduce anything even vaguely resembling a furl of smoke from any of the multitude of weapons they tested under a broad range of weather conditions.

Holland, by the way, first said he heard four shots; later, six.

Someone dug up the statements of a deputy constable named Seymour Weitzman, who told a gaggle of newsmen outside the book depository that fateful day that the assassin's rifle had been found. It was a Mauser, he said. His mistaken identification of Oswald's Mannlicher Carcano rifle served as fuel for postulations a second gun had been located and then covered up.

At the height of the hysteria, hundreds of still pictures were being scrupulously analyzed by conspiracy zealots. The Umbrella Man was discovered. Shadows were enhanced to reveal strange figures in the Dealey Plaza foliage and in the assassin's window at the Texas School Book Depository.

And the witnesses to strange events involving Ruby and Oswald came out of the woodwork with tales that got harder and harder to repudiate. A ventriloquist who had worked in Ruby's nightclub before taking his sagging career north popped up on the talk show circuit claiming he had seen the alleged assassin at Ruby's club on "numerous occasions."

A host of people besieged Parkland hospital officials with their sightings of JFK cadavers and Oswald mummies.

A San Francisco man even managed to interest Life Magazine in investigating his encounter of Ruby and Oswald in a sexual embrace at the downtown Dallas YMCA pool. However, he had also noticed a huge scar on Ruby's leg — a scar that never existed.

But nothing that preceded it could compare to the stories New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison elicited from a flock of bizarre witnesses he used in attempting to convict a 54-year-old businessman with conspiracy in the Kennedy murder. It was his contention during the 1967 trial of Clay Shaw that American and Cuban anti-Communists had conspired to have the President killed in retribution for the botched Bay of Pigs invasion and failure to pull down Fidel Castro.

With such conspiracy notables as Lane and comedian Mort Sahl at his side, Garrison marched through the courtroom a procession of witnesses bedeviled by pills and psychoneuroses.

Garrison's two-year investigation turned up characters like the man they called Julius Caesar, who dressed in toga, sandals and spicurils. He claimed to have known Ruby and his sister as dope pushers in Dallas but the story was later discredited.

The district attorney also turned up evidence that a second assassin had secreted himself inside a storm sewer during the motorcade. When he was informed that access to the sewer was a drain pipe only 12 inches in diameter, he responded, "Well, it was a very small man." Later, he scrapped that theory entirely.

More than 70 witnesses were found to have made up evidence that supposedly linked Shaw to the planning of the Kennedy assassination.

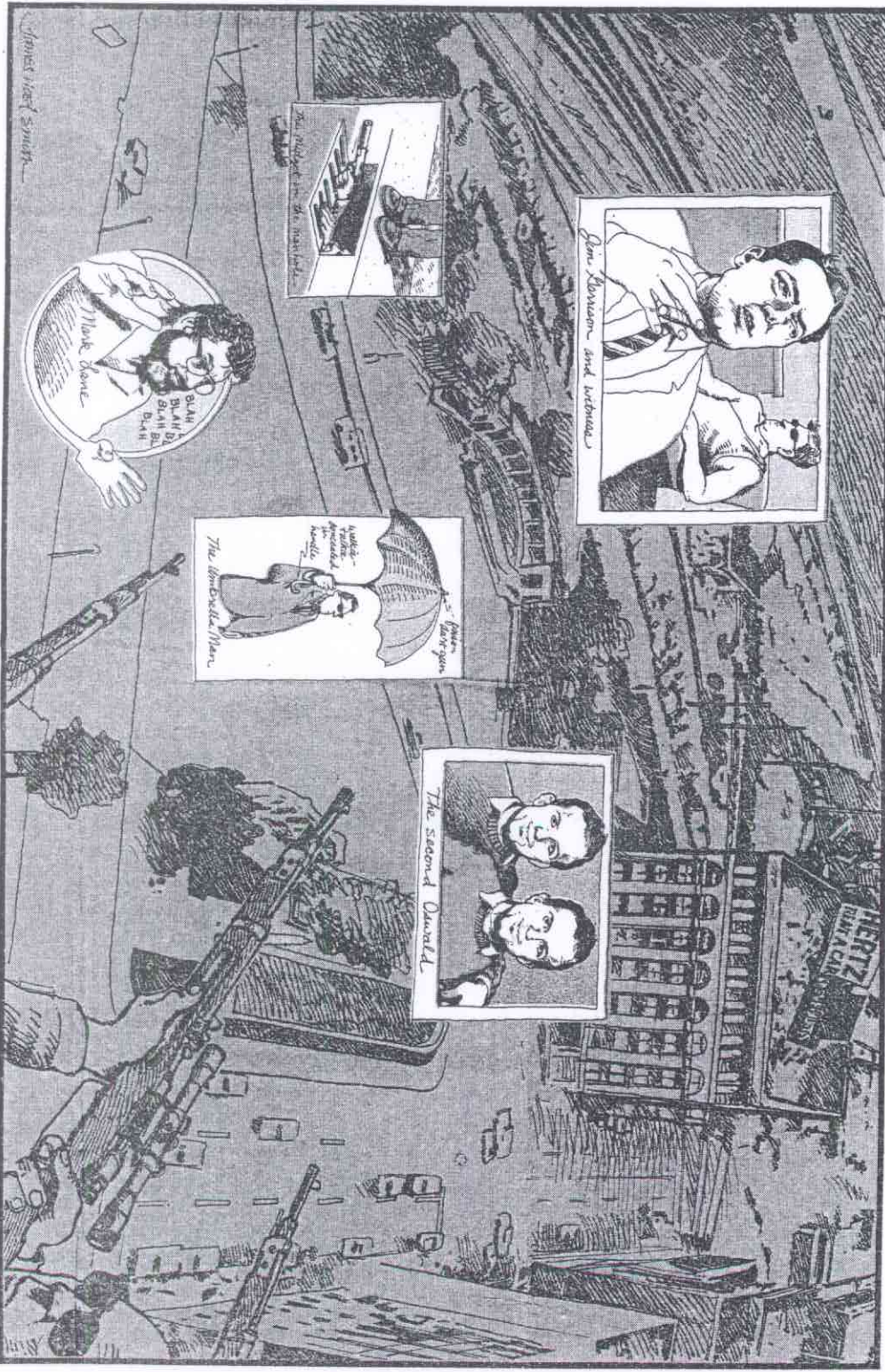
In the end, the seemingly precise testimony of a dapper accountant from New York City, Charlie Spiesel, nearly convicted Shaw. However, late in the trial, this same man admitted believing that Pinkerton detectives were disguising themselves as members of his family, causing him so much distress he turned impotent. And, he said, he was so sure of that conspiracy that he made it a habit to fingerprint his daughter every time she visited.

"Well of course," he testified. "She disguises herself all the time."

And now, with Eddowes' Oswald-imposter theory, the nation enters a new chapter in the morbid search for a conspiracy. In light of the past history of this case, one has to wonder whether even a perfect match of Lee Harvey Oswald's medical and dental records would satisfy the questions of a cynical populace.

But one thing's for sure. It'll make a good book.

# A conspiracy behind every tree...



— Staff Illustration by James Hoffmann