

FOCUS ON: THE SHADOW OF DALLAS

By L. Fletcher Prouty

The cabal that planned the behind-the-scenes take-over of the U.S. government in November 1963 did so with consummate skill and foresight. It had one big thing going for it and one big problem. The first was that they knew that the government under its control would never really investigate the murder in Dallas that month of President John Kennedy; the second was the problem of succession. Under the Constitution, we elect a president every four years; but the cabal intended to control the

government for a long, long time.

This problem required elaborate planning because the group wished to exercise control of a government that would outwardly appear normal. Therefore the plotters' plans encompassed not only the assassination of Kennedy but also developing relationships with a number of potential figureheads who would be emplaced in the successor government. These would be men who were already aware of the enormity and closeness of the plotters' threat, men who could be dominated by fear.

President Eisenhower had warned that the country faced a serious threat, not from international communism, but from the insidious forces of the military-

industrial complex. He had sensed during his administration the beginnings of a stealthy movement into the nerve centers of power by the major industrial organizations, who used secrecy in the Defense Department and especially in the CIA to conceal their actions. Their greatest motivation was to get more defense dollars. For instance, when Lockheed, the largest of the military contractors, was unable to sell the F-90 fighter plane to the Air Force, it redesigned the plane and came up with a high-flying reconnaissance aircraft, which it sold to the CIA. The plane was the U-2, and though it was "sold" to the CIA, it was actually purchased with secret Air Force funds. Another example is the Bell



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Helicopter Company. By 1959 so few helicopters were being purchased that Bell was near bankruptcy when a Boston bank working with a textile manufacturer, Textron, came up with the idea of having Textron acquire Bell Helicopter. (Textron now plans to acquire Lockheed Aircraft.) Shortly after, General Charles Cabell, deputy director of Central Intelligence, and long the right-hand man of the director, Allen W. Dulles, called the Secretary of Defense and ordered that a whole squadron of helicopters be moved from a becalmed war in Laos to a conflict in South Vietnam that could potentially escalate. In other words, more money could be spent in Vietnam than ever could be spent in remote Laos. This was the first big move of American military hardware into South Vietnam. Helicopters are costly to build and maintain. The helicopters in Vietnam assured big money and lots of men.

Quietly and under cover, moves such as these were being made in late 1959 and 1960. President Eisenhower sensed what was afoot, but he did nothing to stop it except to speak of the “military-industrial complex” in his last speech before leaving office. Eisenhower’s inaction was not lost on those who took advantage of his indecision. During 1960 the CIA was heavily involved in Tibet, in Africa, in Laos, and was stepping up its activities in support of South Vietnam’s undemocratic regime, while in the hinterlands of Panama, Nicaragua, and Guatemala it was secretly building its major forces for the invasion of Cuba.

Other secret forces were shaping the future. In 1960 the Army’s nearly defunct Special Forces were secretly expanded. The Special Forces, which had been created to support secret missions in the event of nuclear war, were cleverly transformed by CIA personnel into a sinister peacetime force. By the winter of 1960, before the inauguration of John Kennedy, the Deputy Secretary of Defense went to Fort Bragg (N.C.), home of the Special Forces, to dedicate their new school. The school’s CIA-oriented curriculum was written by one of the CIA’s most important operatives, Edward G. Lansdale, and his covert staff.

All this had been set in motion, quietly and effectively, by men who believed firmly that Richard M. Nixon would be elected President after Eisenhower. Kennedy’s narrow victory over Nixon upset those plans, but did not slow their momentum. The effectiveness of the plans is seen in the fact that the Bay of

Pigs invasion of Cuba, which Nixon had actively supported but which Eisenhower had never approved, went right ahead almost before Kennedy and his administration knew what was going on.

After the invasion debacle, the CIA quickly transferred its military assets, people, and hardware—a large force—to South Vietnam. After the Bay of Pigs, John Kennedy, and especially his brother Robert, who was Attorney General, began to realize some deep problems. In a directive issued in June 1961, President Kennedy undertook the task of establishing control over the CIA and its willing accomplices in the clandestine units of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Only recently have copies of these National Security Action Memoranda been made available from a hesitant National Security Council.

But the Kennedy team, unskilled in such maneuvers of power, was unable to gain control of Secret Operations from the CIA and the Defense Department. And so for the next two years, the United States was drawn into South Vietnam regardless of the will of the President. In fact, the reduction of forces ordered by John Kennedy began in late 1963. After his death, one can find back-page reports in the *New York Times* reporting the return of small numbers of troops from South Vietnam.

Those who plotted his death had moved with great skill. They had arranged it so that the vice-president, in a rare action, was on the scene of the assassination. He was in a car right behind John Kennedy in the Dallas motorcade. Ordinarily, the president and the vice president would never have been in the same motorcade. The plotters had made certain that the succeeding administration would be under control. Johnson said shortly before he died that he knew the CIA operated a “Murder Inc.,” but that there was nothing he could have done about it.

But the cabal did even better. It arranged a sure parlay. On the morning of Kennedy’s death someone had seen to it that Richard M. Nixon would “just happen” to be in Dallas. The thud of those bullets fired in six seconds by experts who were never apprehended was not lost on his ears, either. In a television interview in January 1971, Nixon said he had inherited nightmares. He did, and he knew the power of the threat.

When Lyndon Johnson decided to give up his office rather than continue under those conditions, the stage was

already set for another “Dallas-conditioned” man to take over. Nixon rose from the ashes of his disastrous California campaign, ran for the presidency, and squeaked through. Watergate shows us now how cleverly this succession of Dallas-lainted men had been worked out, and how much under the control of “higher forces” Nixon had been.

Consider the tape that brought him down. Not until that last day, when the tape of June 23, 1972 was released, did his last-ditch support collapse. It is most significant to consider carefully what really brought about Nixon’s collapse.

On the June 23 tape there was undeniable evidence that Nixon had taken direct action to cover up the Watergate break-in. But what is absolutely astounding is that what bothered Nixon only five days after the break-in was not Watergate at all. It was “that Hunt thing” (E. Howard Hunt, the former CIA agent) and “the Bay of Pigs.” Why, at that crucial time, should Richard Nixon have been so worried about Hunt and the Bay of Pigs? Why did those two things scare him so much that he organized one of the greatest cover-ups in history? Later, Nixon said it would be easy to raise one million dollars in “hush money” to pay Hunt. What did he know? What did he fear that much? What did he know that Hunt knew? Whatever it was, Nixon feared it more than the Watergate break-in.

It was the crime of “cover-up” that pushed Nixon out of the White House, not the crime of breaking into Watergate and all of the other White House “horrors.” Thus it has been with the murder of John Kennedy. Oswald did not murder JFK; most everyone knows that now. The continuing crime of the cover-up of John Kennedy’s murder festers on the body politic of our country.

No wonder Nixon had to order the otherwise senseless “Saturday night massacre” of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox. Highly motivated and skilled lawyers like Elliott Richardson and Cox would have continued the Watergate initiative and would have pursued the sources of the real crimes. This investigation would inevitably have led to Dallas and John Kennedy’s murder. This is what Nixon really feared: so even though it hurt his own defense badly, he had to remove them in favor of more “reliable” prosecutors.

The sinister forces behind all of this have contrived that the men who now appear high on the national scene are still tainted or threatened by that day in Dallas, and the later, related killings of Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

President Ford himself was the most active and vociferous of all of the Warren Commission members. In effect, he played a major part, perhaps unwittingly,

in the greatest cover-up in our history. It was he who authored the widely-read Life magazine article that preceded the Warren Commission report. That article, more than any other, set a very special tone. It prepared the American public for a report they wanted to accept on face value but which history will prove false. It was also Gerald Ford who wrote *Portrait of an Assassin*, a book frequently credited as being the authoritative examination of the Warren Commission report.

Because of that, he too, suffers from the implied threat of that day in Dallas. Or, if by some turn of events John Connally is

brought back into the national spotlight, he too, will be under the same threat. He sat in the car with John Kennedy and he bears the wounds of one of those bullets. Or would one wish to see Teddy Kennedy mount the platform of the Presidency? Could he be as fearless and as free as one must be to serve as President? Could he serve under that kind of duress every day he was in office and every time he traveled? And so the list goes. What about Senator Charles Percy of Illinois? Who killed his beautiful daughter and what did that mysterious slaying signify?

Until our government moves positively against this continuing cover-up of the three assassinations, and the many related crimes, we shall not have a free and unfettered country. The "offer they cannot refuse" hangs over the head of every man in office and over his every decision.

Watergate has helped us considerably. It has shown us what the will of the people can do. But until the people of this country rise up and demand that the stains of Dallas be removed, we shall continue in an uncertain manner and with an unknown shadow over us all.

Why Teddy Won't Run

By John Vergara



Teddy Kennedy's announcement that he would not accept the Democratic nomination for president in 1976 under any circumstance (including a draft) because of personal family reasons was a story he felt the American public would have to accept at face value. It was a human story, an understandable play for sympathy and a gambit aimed at mass consumption. Considering the tragedies that surround the senator, the statement sounded sincere. *But what Senator Kennedy did not say is significant.* Even if one is willing to accept his rationale that he could have turned the country's attention to more significant issues than Chappaquiddick (which most certainly would have come up and proven a major handicap—a brief reexamination of that mystery with all its loopholes was discussed in Time magazine (October 7, 1974) after his announcement, there are yet other reasons why the Democratic front-runner would not have gotten the nomination. In this time of moral reevaluation there is too much other political dirt that could not have been swept under the rug.

Violation of the Federal Election Cam-

paign Act of 1972 probably played an important part in Senator Kennedy's decision not to seek the presidency. It is ironic that the senator should have broken that law as he was one of the key sponsors of the Campaign Spending Reform Bill.

Two years after it was due, Sen. Kennedy filed a report stating that he owed \$10,020.71 from his 1970 Senate campaign. Richard C. Drayne, the senator's press secretary, said that Mr. Kennedy acknowledged "the oversight" and a "misjudgment or misinterpretation of the law" by Clifford J. Shaw of Boston. Mr. Shaw, 73 years old, is one of Mr. Kennedy's longstanding fund raisers in Massachusetts and was treasurer of the Committee to Re-Elect Senator Edward M. Kennedy United States Senator in 1970.

The incident for which the tardy report was filed took place on Feb. 4, 1970. The Boston committee working to re-elect Mr. Kennedy held a \$1,000-a-plate dinner at the Senator's estate in McLean, Virginia. The affair was attended by thirty eight persons, mostly from the Boston area, who were wine and dined under a tent. Some sources indicate that news of the proceeds from the dinner were then swept under a rug.

Mr. Shaw said that he had misinterpreted the Federal Campaign Finance Law and had believed that no federal reports were required. He said that he had filed periodic and continuing reports with the Massachusetts secretary of state to conform to state law. He was not aware, he said, that he was in violation of any federal law. Shaw is a film distributor in New England and is also treasurer of the John F. Kennedy Library and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation.

It wasn't until a newsman queried the absence of any federal disclosure statements pertaining to the \$1,000-a-plate dinner that the violation was discovered.

"As soon as we looked into it," Senator Kennedy's press secretary said, "we realized that the committee was remiss in not filing a report with the Secretary of

the Senate as required by the recently passed legislation." The report, filed in August, should have been filed no later than April 17, 1972, ten days after the campaign spending act took effect.

"The omission," according to Orlando R. Potter, the Senate official in charge of supervising the financial statements of senators during campaigns, "is in violation of Federal law. There is no doubt about that. It is fair to say that there was ample and widespread publicity about the requirements of the law. Any lateness will be referred routinely to the Justice Department."

Mr. Shaw said that the money raised at the dinner was used to repay \$44,000 to five persons who made personal loans to Teddy Kennedy's 1970 Senate campaign.

The senator, in stumping for public financing of presidential and congressional elections, told the Senate that its enactment would mean "no more Watergates." The bill, he said, would, for the first time, put dollar limits on political contributions and spending by candidates for federal offices.

Prior to the 1972 election finance act, there was no effective limit on personal expenditures by wealthy candidates. Under the bill no candidate would be allowed to contribute more than \$30,000 of his own money to his campaign.

It is likely that the publicity that would have accompanied this violation of the Federal Election Campaign Act in the national press (had the senator decided to seek the presidency) would have been so damaging that it would have spelled "finis" to the Senator Kennedy's political career. It is more than likely that the senator was aware of that.

Watergate has shown us that once the judicial system rolls into high gear with special investigators poking deep into personal and party records, revelations frequently result in page 1 headlines.

It is fair to conjecture that by looking into Senator Kennedy's campaign funding mess, investigators might well have come up with information from which the senator could not have politically recovered.