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## FOCUS ON: THE J.F.K. MURDER

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GENESIS

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# THE GREATEST COVER-UP

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President Kennedy was shot to death in Dallas. Lee Harvey Oswald, a lone gunman sitting behind the sixth-floor window in the Texas School Book Depository building, is supposed to have killed the President with three shots from an old mail-order rifle. This was the finding of the eminent Warren Commission Report. If anyone today, eleven years after that well-planned murder, believes that the Warren Commission finding is correct, then he believes the world is flat, that man will never fly, and that Richard Milhous Nixon had nothing to do with Watergate. Not only was there a major conspiracy behind the Kennedy killing, but it is most likely that Oswald did not even shoot at the President. By now many people know this.

But some people would still like to have us continue to believe the cover story. One of the real experts in cover stories, E. Howard Hunt, the Watergate mastermind, says in his new book *Give Us This Day*, "... let this not be forgotten, Lee Harvey Oswald was a partisan of Fidel Castro and an admitted Marxist who made desperate efforts to join the Red Revolution in Havana. In the end he was an activist for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee."

"But for Castro and the Bay of Pigs disaster there would have been no such 'committee.' And perhaps no assassin named Lee Harvey Oswald."

Coming from Hunt at this time, a sort of gratuitous outpouring in a book that he says is nothing but the whole truth, and a book which is about the Bay of Pigs and not about the Kennedy assassination, this is an interesting bit of folklore. I know Hunt and I worked on the CIA's Cuba Committee from its beginning and I can say categorically that there is much in Hunt's "true story" that is not correct. Much about that later.

Governor George Wallace was shot and seriously wounded while campaigning in Laurel, Md. Moments after that assassination attempt, Charles Colson, then one of President Nixon's closest advisors and the man whom Nixon called "a tough son of a bitch," contacted Howard Hunt and ordered him to get to Milwaukee and break in to Arthur Bremer's (the Wallace gunman) apartment. No one has said what Colson wanted from that apartment, what he expected to find there, or what he needed to get out of that apartment (or put into it) before someone else found it. But Hunt's role, again in relationship somehow to another assassination attempt, is worth noting.

During the heyday of the Nixon Committee to Re-elect the President, someone got the idea that it might be necessary to do away with the President of Panama. Without delay, and to the surprise and consternation of his less professional CREEP colleagues, it was Howard Hunt who hustled off to a familiar action area, Mexico, and without delay began to round up a team of assassins to

do the job. Hunt knew what he had to do, whom to contact and exactly how to do it. All he needed was the green light. He already knew the "mechanics"—assassins—who would do the job.

After Hunt's first interview on July 1, 1971 with his old friend Chuck Colson, Colson said "He [Hunt] told me a long time ago that if the truth were ever known, Kennedy would be destroyed." We do not know the exact context of that statement and we do not know for sure whether Hunt had said that to Colson before or after the assassination in Dallas; but we do know that Hunt's words so impressed that "tough son of a bitch" that the very next day he repeated it to H.R. Haldeman. Clarified or not, the real significance of that statement, repeated in the inner sanctum of the White House two weeks after the Pentagon Papers had been released and printed, leaves little to the imagination.

Then, less than a week after Howard Hunt was hired by Haldeman, he met in the White House with his old friend, Lucien Conein, the CIA agent most deeply involved in the assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam and his brother Nhu. Later, having discussed this meeting with Colson, Hunt was asked to call Lucien Conein and get him into a conversation to which Colson could listen and which could be recorded. Again it is Hunt who was the go-between between the White House and known assassination professionals.

What is the role Hunt played, both before and during his White House and Watergate career with the CIA? In his book, which he says he intended as his memoirs and a private legacy for his children "perhaps to be lodged in a university library," he says that it is an account of "the true role that I and others played in the Cuba Project." We should take careful note then of what he means when he says, as quoted above, "But for Castro and the Bay of Pigs disaster there would have been no such 'committee' and perhaps no assassin named Lee Harvey Oswald."

We must not take Hunt's remarks lightly. When he says there would have been "no assassin named Lee Harvey Oswald," then he knows what he is talking about. Howard Hunt more than any other man alive in this country today understands the assassin business. One may be inclined to discount his roughly fifty lighter books that he wrote during his long CIA career; but one should not overlook the fact that also among his books are some which do not bear his name or any nom de plume he ever used. Hunt ghosted for Allen W. Dulles, former head of the CIA, his most important book and a summary account of his life in the intelligence business. Dulles called it *The Craft of Intelligence*.

Hunt would hardly have been selected to pen the life story of a man as prominent and as influential as Allen Dulles unless

he possessed some very special credentials. Howard Hunt had them and he has them now. The White House knows this to the extent that the President was willing to raise one million dollars in "hush money" for Nixon's protection.

Nor should one take lightly Hunt's "true account of the Cuban Project," his book *Give Us This Day*. I have known Hunt. I knew Allen Dulles quite well. I served for many years in support of the Cuban Project with such agents as J. C. King, Chief of Western Hemisphere, Jake Esterline, Disk Bissell, and Tracy Barnes. As a result I can state categorically that much of *The Craft of Intelligence* is incorrect, misleading, and blatant revisionism and I have dealt with this at some length in my book *The Secret Team*. Furthermore, I can add that much of *Give Us This Day* is incorrect, untrue and revisionist. Hunt designed those books as cover stories, and they are excellent propaganda.

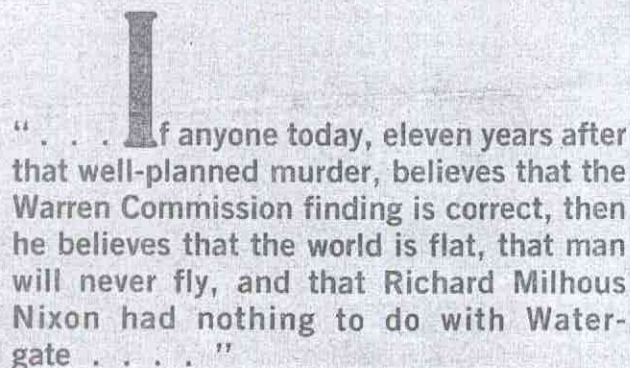
Through all of his career Hunt seems to have spent much of his time and utilized his rather considerable skills as a participant, not a planner or an operator, and as a cover and cover-up expert. With this in mind we may return to Oswald. Hunt pushes the theme that Lee Harvey Oswald was Kennedy's assassin and that Castro and the Bay of Pigs fiasco had something to do with the Dallas assassination. This is the cover-up. It certainly is not fact, and Hunt knows it. We don't know for sure what else Hunt knows.

But one thing we do know by now, and that is that Lee Harvey Oswald did not kill President Kennedy. There are so many things wrong about the police work, the work of the FBI, and particularly with the Warren Commission work and its report, that no competent researcher could find any room for the belief that Oswald by himself killed President Kennedy. It is just impossible. Yet men like Hunt, men who perhaps know more about this assassination than we have been able to piece together, still say as late as 1973 that Oswald was the lone assassin.

Let's look at some of the facts. Oswald was supposed to have been on the sixth floor of the School Book Depository Building overlooking the motorcade. A tight-knit band of hard-working researchers—Lawyers, bankers, computer experts, writers, former government investigators, and others—have been going over the records, have been interviewing countless people and have been building a vast reference library of everything connected with this murder. One of the most amazing things that grows out of this investigation by The Committee to Investigate Assassinations is that 75 photographers, at least 30 of them professionals, took 510 pictures (one movie strip equals one picture), for a total of 25,000 exposed frames during the one-hour period surrounding the assassination.

The Warren Commission looked at 26, only 26, of these pictures; and records





By plotting very precisely the position of all of the photographers on a master chart, then by plotting the pictures of photographers taking pictures of other photographers in the act of taking pic-

Furthermore, it is possible to work out the position and movement of each per-

One of the great problems confronting anyone attempting to research the JFK murder is the necessity to go up so many blind alleys in search of information. For



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example: there is a crucial point in the Zapruder film of the impact of the shot fired from relatively close range and from the front, the shot that really killed the president. Harold Weisberg, a most resourceful researcher, found that the FBI had actually cut the Zapruder film and had reversed two frames in order to make it appear as if the bullet that hit the president from the front had actually hit him from the rear. (From the front, the head was thrown backward; from the rear it would have been thrown forward—reversing these two frames made it appear just the opposite.) After Weisberg's disclosure of the FBI's manipulation, the FBI admitted that it had “inadvertently” reversed the frames.

So, if there was more than one gunman, and there had to be, then Lee Harvey Oswald was not the lone assassin. If he is not the lone assassin, then there was a conspiracy. And if the government has known that there was a conspiracy, as Lyndon Johnson admitted, then there has been a monumental and most ominous cover-up somewhere since that time. Johnson said that he did not believe the “lone assassin” theory and he added that he knew “we had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean.” Before he died in a mysterious plane crash in Alaska, Congressman Hale Boggs, a member of the Warren Commission, said that he had grave doubts about the Commission's findings, as did Senator Russell another Commission member.

A crime such as the bold assassination of the President of the United States can be solved only by the forces and resources of this government. One of the reasons we have a government is that a crime can be prevented, or when committed, can be solved and the guilty punished. Researchers can open new avenues and can discover new clues and come up with new interpretations; but they lack the great investigative powers of the Executive Branch of this government, and they lack the legal authority of the Attorney General and the Courts. A great crime has been committed. It is unresolved, and it is up to our government to

do its duty.

In this Watergate era, the second aspect of this crime looms even larger than the murder itself. What of the cover-up? Had there been a trial in Texas of Oswald dead or alive, as there should have been, one might have excused or at least understood an attempt at some aspects of cover-up on the part of the confused and embarrassed Dallas Police Department. But again, had there been a trial this cover-up would have been exposed, and eventually the crime, vast as it was—at least 50 people took part in the assassination and its planning—would have been solved.

Failing a trial in Texas, if the Warren Commission had really done its job, it would have discovered the hundreds of discrepancies buried in its own report and it would have found a conspiracy. It would then have been necessary for the government to dig out the crime and the criminals and to bring them to justice.

Neither of these things have been done.

We have had a president who took office that bloody day in Dallas and who lived out his years knowing he was on top of a powder keg. Johnson was there. He heard those bullets at Dealey Plaza. He saw the young President die. Yet even he could do nothing.

And then we have seen Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy slain—also crimes unsolved and covered up. Hunt says if it were not for Castro and the Bay of Pigs we might not have had such a thing. His unexplained relationship with Lucien Conein, an acknowledged assassination expert, the very first week he was employed in the White House also serves to remind us that there were other powerful forces at work just before JFK died. Only 60 days before JFK died the Diem brothers had been killed and there were many in Washington who felt as strongly about those deaths as Hunt feels about the Bay of Pigs fiasco—and both groups blamed John F. Kennedy.

Also recall that it was Charles Colson and Howard Hunt, perhaps also with the assistance of Lucien Conein, who dug

into the secret files of the government and actually clipped and pasted up some false messages from the White House to make it appear that President Kennedy was irrevocably involved in, and was directly responsible for the death of the Diem brothers.

The Diem killings and the Bay of Pigs, among other things, ignited very volatile and powerful forces deep within the most secret channels of our government. The men who felt this most were also the men most closely associated with what LBJ called “our Murder Inc.” Once an unbridled team finds a way to rationalize the assassination of one chief of state, all for “the good of the government,” it is not too much to expect that some such team can very well rationalize the “removal” of its own “Chief of State” if they believe it to be “for the good of the government” too.

These are serious thoughts to ponder during the time of Watergate. Remember that it was President Nixon who said that it would be possible to raise one million dollars and even more to silence Hunt. What is it that Nixon knows that Hunt and his associates know that is worth one million dollars? It had to be more than a “third-rate burglary” at Watergate.

Remember also that Richard M. Nixon himself was in Dallas the day JFK was killed. Many people think this might mean that somehow Nixon is among those to blame for the Kennedy murder. Might it not be more realistic to conclude that Nixon might have been lured to Dallas at that very time for much the same reason as LBJ, John Connally, and others were—to assure that they would never forget for one moment the significance of Dallas? If this could be true, then the significance of Dallas has been for Nixon what it had been for Johnson, a nightmare. And, such a recognition may begin to unlock some of the mystery of that day and of events since that time.

Anyone conspiring to assassinate the President of the United States would plan to do so for really big stakes—in order to assume control of the government in one way or another. Placing LBJ in an adjacent automobile would forever and indelibly mark that man and put him under control. Placing Connally in the President's car would mark him not only with the stray bullet that wounded him severely, but forever with the continuing threat of the ring of those shots over Dealey Plaza.

Having also the resourcefulness to be able to bring other prominent men into the fold—men such as Allen Dulles, Earl Warren, Gerald Ford, and in a lesser sense many of the men even now prominent in the Watergate scenario—could lead one to believe that the plans laid in and around Dallas were meant to last and for at least a full generation. And then came Watergate. Small as that event was, it has been the small cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, which has loomed over the horizon signaling the opportunity to win back our government.