

**THE THIRD DECADE** A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH ON THE  
JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

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response provides a strong indication that "late in 1963," as the CIA vaguely described it, was, in fact, the night of the assassination. Sorrels states that after the film was developed, he obtained "two copies" from Zapruder (the standard explanation), "one copy of which was immediately airmailed to chief (Director of the Secret Service in Washington)."<sup>19</sup>

"Immediately" would be sometime late in the afternoon following the 12:30 P.M. assassination, after Sorrels had caught up with Zapruder. After a three hour flight from Dallas to Washington, the film would arrive at Secret Service headquarters, be taken to CIA headquarters, then to NPIC---probably not before early- to mid-evening. So NPIC would be working late into the night on its rush analysis of this most important piece of evidence. It now seems clear that "late that same night," as CIA described it, was actually the very night of the assassination. Why after all---after rushing the film to Washington by plane---would the Secret Service delay an expert analysis of a film which could conceivably reveal the President's assassin(s)?

And why would the Secret Service be satisfied with a copy which was less clear than the original? Since it seems certain that NPIC conducted its analysis on the night of the assassination, this greatly increases the likelihood that NPIC had the original (as is indicated by the notations on the CIA Item #450 which described the photographic work). Life took possession of the original on November 23; but, before then, Zapruder could have secretly loaned the original to the Secret Service.

In addition to the chain of possession of the film, there is also the matter of Zapruder's camera. The Z film's evidentiary potential is, to an important degree, dependent upon calculating the average running speed of the camera. The reader will recall that at the time of its analysis, NPIC did not know the exact speed of Zapruder's camera. Without this data, absolute and precise determinations of the elapsed time between shots are not possible. An interval of forty-two frames between shots with an estimated camera speed of eighteen frames per second would produce an elapsed time of 2.33 seconds. This would allow enough time for a lone gunman to have done the shooting, according to the FBI's calculation of 2.25 to 2.30 as the minimum time needed to aim and fire. But if Zapruder's camera actually ran at 18.8 frames per second instead of 18.0, this same 42-frame interval would be only 2.23 seconds and would fall just below the lone-assassin minimum.

The FBI, having official investigative responsibility, obtained the camera from Zapruder, tested it, and found the average running speed to be 18.3<sup>20</sup> frames per second. This took place nearly two weeks after the assassination.<sup>21</sup> But what of NPIC's very-rushed, very-sophisticated analysis conducted the night of the assassination? It makes no sense that after calculating the time between shots in terms of tenths of seconds, NPIC and the CIA would sit back and wait for a couple of weeks until the FBI provided this key piece of data---the camera speed.

In October 1982, while searching through the FBI's voluminous, poorly organized assassination files, I came across a memo which strongly supported the notion the NPIC had not waited for the FBI. The December 4, 1963 memo, written by FBI agent Robert Barrett, reports that on the date Zapruder handed his camera over to the FBI. Barrett goes on to say that, "He (Zapruder) advised this camera had been in the hands of the United States Secret Service Agents on Dec. 3, 1963, as they claimed they wanted to do some checking of it."<sup>22</sup>

We do not know how long the Secret Service had the camera or when they got it from Zapruder. Zapruder told the FBI that the Secret Service had the camera on December 3, when they returned it to him; the Service could have borrowed it



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from him days before that. Thus we have an important break in the known chain of possession of the camera. It went not from Zapruder to the FBI but from Zapruder to the Secret Service then back to Zapruder and then to the FBI. It was then that the FBI made the crucial calculation of 18.3 frames per second, which everyone henceforth would use as the time frame for analyzing the Z film. It is surely possible, even reasonable, that the Secret Service might have done with the camera what it did with the film---secretly rush it to NPIC where it could be analyzed, but where it also could have been tampered with.

The search for additional documents continues. Someday, we may know the real chain of possession of the film and camera. For now, this much is clear. The official, historically accepted chain of possession is wrong. The film's secret journey to a CIA laboratory in Washington on the night of the assassination raises serious doubts about the film's integrity as evidence. It also raises questions about who in the intelligence community knew what, when and how concerning John Kennedy's assassination.

If, as appears to be the case, it was the original of the Z film that was secretly diverted to the CIA laboratory on November 22, 1963, then 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. But it would take an extraordinary sophistication to do so in a manner that would defy detection---the kind of sophistication that one would expect of CIA photo experts.

Between Zapruder and the Secret Service, they had possession of all three of the Dallas-made copies for nearly twenty-four hours. With the original at NPIC and with three copies made there, it is possible that if the film was doctored, the three NPIC copies of the doctored film were substituted for the three Dallas-made copies. It is even possible that all of the Dallas-made copies went to NPIC along with the original and that the switch was made there. We have only Zapruder and the Secret Service's assertions as to where the copies were for twenty-four hours.

Setting aside the worst-case scenario (an alteration of the original film in order to hide a conspiracy), there is still the fact that NPIC generated data which would logically support a conspiracy theory, and that this data never reached the Warren Commission and appears to have been withheld from the Secret Service as well.

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.

1. See David S. Lifton, Best Evidence (New York: Macmillan, 1980), p.555n,557n.
2. Zapruder testimony in Warren Commission Hearings, vol. 7, pp 569-76; Lifton, loc. cit; FBI report of agent Robert M. Barrett, Dec. 4, 1963; statement of George Hunt, Managing Editor, Life (cited in Josiah Thompson, Six Seconds in Dallas Berkeley Ca.: Berkeley Publ. Co., 1976, pp. 217-18); Richard B. Stolly, "What Happened Next?" Esquire Nov. 1973, pp. 134-5; 262-3.
3. CIA memo of June 5, 1973 "Secret Service Request," (for technical equipment). This document was part of the CIA's "Domestic Police Training File" (362 pages) obtained by the author through a 1982 Freedom of Information Act request. Pins: 1976 hearings of the House Intelligence Committee (Pike Committee).

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4. I am indebted to Elaine Fisher, Professor of Visual Design at Southeastern Massachusetts University, for providing expertise and suggesting other resource persons.
5. New York Times May 11, 1975.
6. Warren Commission Hearings, vol. 7, pp. 569-71.
7. Sorrels testimony: Warren Commission Hearings vol. 7, p.352.
8. Stolly, "What Happened Next."
9. Stolly, "What Happened Next."
10. Warren Commission Hearings vol. 3, p. 407 (Frazer); vol. 5, p. 153.
11. CIA memo of Oct. 28, 1975 for Deputy Director, "The 'Zapruder Film' of President John F. Kennedy's Assassination" (Doc. 1472-492-BJ).
12. CIA memo of Apr. 23, 1975 for Office of the Inspector General, subject: "The 'Zapruder Film' of the John F. Kennedy Assassination" (Doc.1627-1085)
13. CIA "Addendum to Comment on the Zapruder Film," p. 16, 1982; CIA release to Fensterwald.
14. Ibid
15. CIA Item #450, "NPIC Analysis of Zapruder Filming of John F. Kennedy Assassination" (1 page)
16. CIA "Addendum to Comment.." (see citation 13 above)
17. Suydam letter to Rowley, Jan. 7, 1964
18. Rowley memo to Sorrels, Jan. 14, 1964 (Secret Service CO-2-34-030)
19. Sorrels to Inspector Kelly, "Zapruder Film of the Assassination of President Kennedy," Jan. 22, 1964 (1 page).
20. Warren Report, p. 62.
21. Report of FBI Agent Robert M. Barrett (see citation 2). Barrett reports that he received the camera from Zapruder on Dec. 4.
22. Barrett report.

### LOOSE ENDS IN THE DEATH OF GEORGE DeMOHRENSCHILDT\*

by  
Jerry D. Rose

Warren Commission counsel Wesley Liebelier used to infuriate David Lifton by dismissing as one of the "loose ends" inevitable in any investigation just about any evidence counter to the Commission's "lone assassin" conclusion that Lifton might try to present. Liebelier's argument of last resort was that, no matter what other evidence might indicate, the best evidence, the President's autopsy report, firmly supported the Commission's conclusions.

In this article I want to point to another investigation of a violent death related to the Kennedy assassination and that was, as we shall see, bedevilled with the same kinds of unanswered questions that still arrest our concern in the third decade of study of the JFK assassination: the supposed suicide of George DeMohrenschildt in a suburb of Palm Beach Florida on February 29, 1977. To the Wesley Liebeliers of the world my analysis may add up to nothing but the usual accumulation of unsolved mysteries surrounding a violent death; especially since the "best evidence, the official coroner's inquest, quite firmly concluded that the death was a suicide. To those researchers whose consciousness has been raised to the point that an assassination conspiracy can at least be considered, this analysis may suggest if not prove that the same conspirators who murdered the President in 1963 murdered 14 years later a man who may have been on the point of revealing certain aspects of that conspiracy.



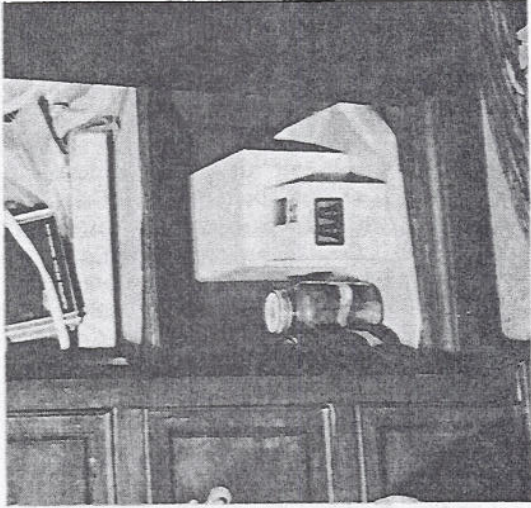
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The "official" story of DeMohrenschildt's life and death is familiar to the longtime researcher, but may profitably be reviewed for the newcomer to this study.<sup>2</sup> DeMohrenschildt was an educated and well-to-do petroleum engineer, an emigrant from Russia who, with his wife Jeanne, befriended Lee Oswald and his Russian wife Marina, becoming something of their unofficial sponsors in the White Russian (anti-communist) community in Dallas and Fort Worth. It was only George and Jeanne DeMohrenschildt, along with Marina, who supposedly had seen a rifle in Oswald's possession; this on a late night visit around Easter of 1963 shortly after Oswald had allegedly used the rifle to fire a shot at the notorious Dallas right-winger, General Edwin Walker. As Marina and George were later to testify, DeMohrenschildt shocked Oswald to his toes by a completely jesting comment about Lee having missed in his shot at Walker.

Shortly after this incident, the DeMohrenschildts went to Haiti where George had started a business project and they were living there when they heard of the assassination. Both the DeMohrenschildts testified at length to the Warren Commission, which was so obsessed with trying to "understand" Lee Oswald. DeMohrenschildt denied, of course, any part in an assassination conspiracy. By 1976 the DeMohrenschildts had returned to the United States and were in deep marital conflict. Late in 1976 George was admitted to Parkland Hospital with psychiatric problems, during the course of which he may have tried to commit suicide. DeMohrenschildt was employed as an instructor at Bishop College in Dallas and, by the Spring break at Bishop in March, 1977, now separated from Jeanne and living at the Dallas YMCA, DeMohrenschildt was visited by a longtime acquaintance, William Oltmans of Dutch television, who long had suspected an assassination role of DeMohrenschildt. George now told Oltmans that he wanted to "confess" and left Dallas with Oltmans for Holland and an interview on Dutch television. At one point Oltmans made an appointment for DeMohrenschildt in Brussels which he never kept; George "disappeared" with his briefcase and the "clothes on his back."

In Oltman's frantic search for his news "scoop," he somehow found out that DeMohrenschildt was visiting in Manalapan, Florida, an affluent suburb on the ocean just south of Palm Beach along with his daughter Alexandra who was, like himself, a houseguest of Mrs. C.E. Tilton, the sister of one of George's ex-wives and Alexandra's aunt. Another individual who had learned of DeMohrenschildt's presence in Florida was Edward Epstein, under contract with the Reader's Digest to write the book that was to be published as: Legend: the Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald. On the morning of February 29, Epstein was in his second day of lengthy interviews with DeMohrenschildt at The Breakers, one of the most famous (and probably most expensive) of the hotels of Palm Beach. Meantime Oltmans had informed House Select Committee investigators in Washington of the Florida presence of DeMohrenschildt. Committee staff, then fighting for their life by virtue of a House vote whether to continue the investigation, called Gaeton Fonzi, the Committee's resident investigator in Miami. Fonzi describes elsewhere in this issue how he went to Manalapan and left a message with Alexandra that he wished to talk with DeMohrenschildt.<sup>3</sup> Returning for a lunch break from his interviews with Epstein, DeMohrenschildt was informed of the Fonzi visit which, Alexandra said, he accepted with equanimity, then went to his bedroom on the second floor to rest. At exactly 2:21, the exact time determined by the sound of gunshot on a tape recorder that was going in a bedroom across the hall (recording a soap opera on TV for an absent Mrs. Tilton), DeMohrenschildt sat in a chair, placed the butt of the shotgun on the floor, the muzzle on the roof of his mouth, and leaned forward and pulled the trigger. His death was obviously instantaneous but his body was not discovered until Alexandra returned from a shopping trip at 2:45. Asking

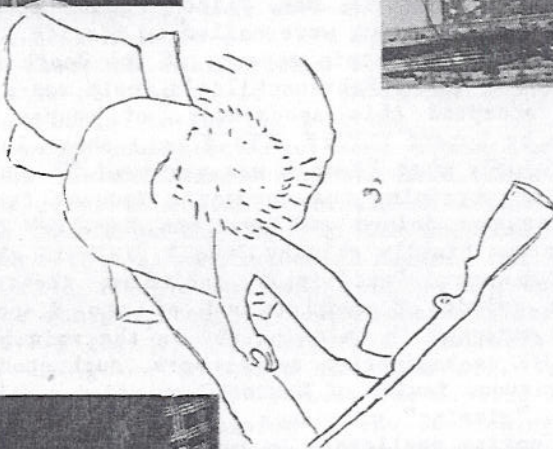




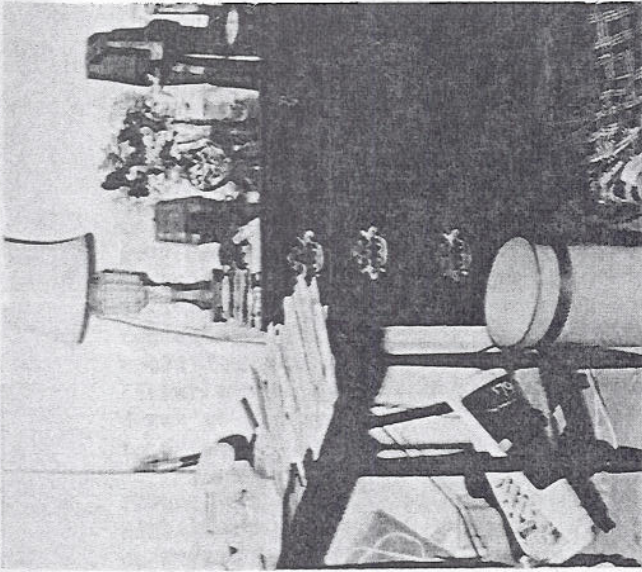
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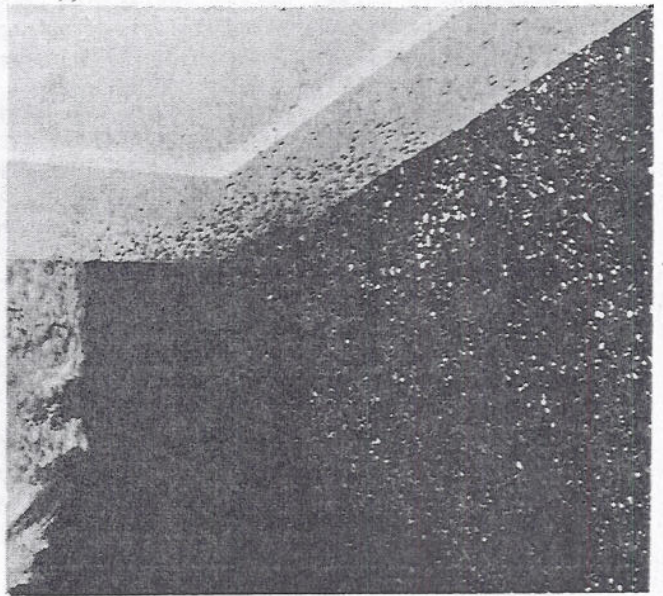
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about her father, she was told by a maid that George was resting upstairs, but had, when the maid went upstairs to tend to the tape recorder, acted rather strangely by complaining about scratching noises and even by insisting that she go down the hall with him in search of a cat. Alarmed, Alexandra went up and found her father; her screams and the arrival of police on the scene are recorded on the tape that was recording the soap opera.

Manalapan and Palm Beach County police seemingly realized in short order the significance of the death to assassination investigators. DeMohrenschildt had left a briefcase (the one supposedly he brought back from Brussels) on a chair in the room and the county detective in charge of the investigation, Lt. Richard Sheets, examined it and saw that it contained information about DeMohrenschildt's relation with Oswald. Sheets fully expected HSCA investigators to pick up the brief case and was expressing surprise a couple of days later when investigators had not appeared to do this.<sup>4</sup> (As a matter of fact, the contents of this briefcase have never been officially accounted for, so far as I know.) An autopsy was done early the next morning by Assistant County Medical Examiner Gabino Cuevas. On April 7, 1977, a three-hour inquest before a 6-person jury was held in Palm Beach County courthouse. Cuevas, investigating officers, Alexandra, Mrs. Tilton and the several occupants of the house at the time of the shooting were called to testify. After some apparent difficulty in understanding certain aspects of the death (discussed below) the jury returned a verdict that DeMohrenschildt's death was a suicide.<sup>5</sup>

Not everyone accepted this assessment, of course. Oltmans, for one, replied to a query by Robert Cutler with a very short letter on September 3, 1977 by asserting simply that "George was murdered."<sup>6</sup> On May 3, 1977, Cutler began the process of obtaining the coroner's inquest from Palm Beach County authorities. After the delays and evasions familiar to all assassination researchers, Cutler was finally able by June 1, 1978 to obtain the inquest and most of the accompanying "exhibits," including the tape recording that supposedly records sounds of gunshot and of the discovery of the body. Examination of the material in this inquest is the main basis of the analysis that follows. To JFK assassination researchers, such study induces a sense of *deja vu*; all the grievous faults of Warren Commission and HSCA "investigations" are repeated here: "missing" witnesses, asserted actions of principals that defy common sense, police negligence in gathering the most basic of evidential items, the real possibility of fabrication of evidence to justify a pre-determined conclusion: in this case the early police certainty that the death was a suicide.

Missing witnesses. One of the last persons to see DeMohrenschildt alive was Edward Epstein. Although Epstein spoke with reporters after the death and expressed great surprise and was questioned by Lt. Sheets whom he told that he called the Manalapan house at around 3 p.m. when DeMohrenschildt failed to return for the afternoon appointment, Epstein did not testify at the inquest, an unexplained omission. A more serious omission from the witness list, perhaps, was one Catherine Hudson Loomis, a friend of Alexandra's who also saw DeMohrenschildt at lunch time, accompanied Alexandra on the shopping trip during which the death occurred, and was on the scene when the police arrived, in fact directing them to the scene of the death.<sup>10</sup> I have been unable so far to determine the identity of this person or the reason for her presence on that scene on that day.

Incomprehensible actions of principals. I have quite a list of "loose ends" in this category. First there are the movements of DeMohrenschildt himself on the day of his death. This matter apparently bothered the inquest jury itself, since DeMohrenschildt's movements were involved in one of the



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"four questions" that jurors returned to the inquest room during their deliberations to ask Lt. Sheets.<sup>11</sup> They wanted to know simply when DeMohrenschildt "went out" that day. Their question was easily answered, but behind the question may have been the jury's unease about precisely why he returned to the house at noon and what was the mode of his transportation. On the first question, perhaps Epstein could have been of help. Epstein was being paid handsomely by Reader's Digest, was probably on an expense account and could well have bought DeMohrenschildt's lunch at The Breakers and perhaps even have offered George his own hotel room if he needed a nap. This would have saved DeMohrenschildt a 10-12 mile trip each way through heavy traffic from The Breakers to Manalapan. (I have personally driven over this route a couple of times; in mid-day oceanside traffic, it is easily a 30-45 minute drive each way.) Concerning his mode of transportation, DeMohrenschildt's car was not with him (he had flown to Florida) and Mrs. Tilton's cars and/or her chauffeur were probably tied up with her own trip elsewhere to play bridge or with Alexandra's and Loomis's movements. It is possible, of course, that his movements were all accomplished by taxi; but it is possible as well that Epstein or someone associated with him picked up DeMohrenschildt and then returned him to the Tilton home. If this were the case, one should expect that arrangements would have been made to pick him up for the afternoon interview session, and Epstein's story of calling when DeMohrenschildt didn't show up would have a slightly strange ring to it. I should be happy to have Epstein clear up this matter in a letter to The Third Decade.

Still considering DeMohrenschildt's actions, I want to comment on the strangeness of the scene between himself and the maid, Anna Viisali, shortly before the shooting; we rely, of course, entirely on Anna's account.<sup>12</sup> Anna says she went upstairs to change the tape in the recorder in Mrs. Tilton's bedroom. Since this was within a few minutes (2 minutes and 21 seconds, to be exact) of DeMohrenschildt's alleged suicidal act, he had apparently by this time already removed the shotgun from its usual resting place beside the cane behind the telephone (See Figure 1).<sup>13</sup> According to Lt. Sheets' reconstruction, it appeared that Anna was going to tarry to clean Mrs. Tilton's room and DeMohrenschildt, fearful that she would discover the missing weapon, devised a ruse to distract her attention, complaining of the scratching and taking Anna down the hallway with his saying "psst, pussy" as he went.<sup>14</sup> George DeMohrenschildt was notorious for teasing people (e.g., the "Walker" remark to Oswald) and making bad jokes, but isn't it wonderful that a man on the verge of self-destruction would have the presence of mind to play such an elaborate trick on an innocent victim? The wonder in all this is enhanced by the extremely tight timing of the recorded gunshot in relation to Anna's last visit upstairs. As Lt. Sheets reconstructed it from the tapes, Anna turned the tape at 2:19, only two minutes before the death at 2:21.<sup>15</sup> It seems totally unlikely that DeMohrenschildt could have done the psst-pussy routine between 2:19 and 2:21. If George and Anna looked for the cat before 2:19 (Anna's testimony didn't specify this) then her return to the Tilton bedroom at 2:19 would have spoiled the DeMohrenschildt ruse, as he could easily have seen. Either way, Anna's version of her last encounter with George DeMohrenschildt doesn't square with Sheets' interpretation of George's behavior as an attempt to divert the maid so he could carry out his suicidal act.

To turn to other witnesses, we may question the comprehensibility of Mrs. Tilton's leaving a shotgun in plain sight with an ammunition supply in a nearby cabinet (See Figure 2),<sup>16</sup> when she well knew of her brother-in-law's distraught condition. Mrs. Tilton testified that she knew of previous suicide attempts by DeMohrenschildt and also that George told her of his recent "harassment" at the



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hand of William Oltmans.<sup>17</sup> In the light of these circumstances, surely it was reckless for her to leave a lethal weapon in so easily accessible a place.

The maid, Anna, and a cook, Lillian Romanic, who lived on the third floor of the house, are also persons whose behaviors and experiences are not entirely comprehensible. Anna was for sure in the kitchen at 2:21 when the shot was supposedly fired, and Lillian was either in the kitchen or in an adjacent yard section sunning herself. Neither woman heard the gunshot.<sup>18</sup> Although Anna affected confusion about the location of the kitchen in relation to the death room<sup>19</sup> and Lillian's questioner himself offered the observation that "it's a large house,"<sup>20</sup> Cutler's study of the floor plans of the house shows that the kitchen was directly under DeMohrenschildt's bedroom.

Then there is the matter of Lillian's behavior immediately after Alexandra discovered her father's body. Alexandra apparently screamed for the police to be called and Lillian, after an abortive attempt to "get through" on the kitchen phone, went to the gardener's house behind the main house and asked to use the phone to report that DeMohrenschildt had killed himself.<sup>21</sup> Shades of the DPD's instant certainty that the man they arrested at the Texas Theater had killed both Kennedy and Tippit! Without even seeing the scene for herself, Lillian Romanic deduces that a suicide has occurred. Would it have been more natural for her to fear that, if a dead man were in the house, a killer might be at large who might endanger the other occupants? None of the witnesses, in fact, expressed any of this kind of fear reaction.

Contrived or fabricated evidence. My study of the photographic exhibits that accompany the coroner's inquest raises many questions as to the possible fabrication of elements of the "crime scene" as so depicted. It is *deja vu* time again: who can take seriously the "official" photographs of the "shield of cartons" on the 6th floor of the Depository which are obviously rearranged in different photographs; or a police photographer's picture of the floor of the same area that does not include the paper bag in which the rifle was supposedly carried, but only dotted lines where the bag should be shown?

Likewise, it strains credulity to believe the the scenes as photographically depicted were produced by a DeMohrenschildt "suicide." Apparently it strained inquest jurors' credulity, since 3 of their 4 questions after beginning jury deliberations focussed on these matters. One of their questions dealt with how the shotgun was positioned for the shot and how DeMohrenschildt pulled the trigger.<sup>22</sup> Behind the question may have been a very reasonable doubt concerning the location of the shotgun with reference to DeMohrenschildt's body. While this is shown in lurid color detail in several inquest photographic exhibits, I refrain from reproducing any of these in a journal of general publication circulation; but this is represented in Figure 3, drawn by tracing over the outlines of the body and the shotgun in one of the inquest exhibits.<sup>23</sup> This can be verbally described as follows: DeMohrenschildt was wearing black socks (no shoes) and the shotgun---a double-barrelled model---"fell" trigger side up with the barrel resting on one of his feet, the butt to his left and the whole weapon parallel to the front of the chair in which he was sitting. In explaining this peculiar position for the rifle, Lt. Sheets suggested that in DeMohrenschildt's forward slump after pulling the trigger with a right hand finger or thumb, his left hand pushed the butt of the rifle away from himself.<sup>24</sup> To me this makes absolutely no sense, and this may have motivated the inquest jury's question whether DeMohrenschildt were right-handed or left-handed.<sup>25</sup> It seems to me that, since the weapon was apparently tilting right-to-left when fired,<sup>26</sup> any impact with other objects would tend to drive the butt end of the rifle to the right. This is very conjectural and a reconstruction firing into the heads of cadavers would be



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possible if we really wanted an answer to the question. As it stands, to the layman's eye it will appear all too obvious that the rifle was placed in that position by a living person: whether by a murderer or by the police who "rearranged" the scene for some purpose. If the latter sounds slightly libelous, we are going to observe shortly a self-admitted instance of police re-arrangement of the crime scene.

Another question raised by the inquest jury concerned the pattern of splatter of blood on the walls of the room. The jurors wanted to know whether the door to the bathroom was open or closed at the time of the shooting.<sup>27</sup> The jurors had observed---see Figure 4---<sup>28</sup> that the splatter on the walls and on the door seemed to indicate that the door had been closed during the shooting, since the similarity of splatter pattern on walls and door suggested one continuous surface at the moment of the shooting rather than the very different pattern to be anticipated when hitting a wall head-on and a door at a sharp angle. (I have also noticed, in studying the color photographic exhibits, a rather sharp drop-off in floor blood in the immediate vicinity of the door opening, which also would be consistent with a closed door obstructing the splatter of blood onto the bathroom floor.) Lt. Sheets, perhaps to cover for the integrity of the crime scene photographs, told the jurors that the door was open and asserted that "I don't think you understand about the way this blood was splattered around there" and then proceeded to another topic.<sup>29</sup> I also "don't understand" the splatter pattern, especially when one notes that there is blood splatter in the area adjacent to the door hinges which could only happen if the door were open, while the other observations suggest a closed door.

Before we quite leave the matter of blood, we must note another impression that comes across from study of the death scene pictures: the enormous quantity of blood on the floor and the surrounding areas. This is only a speculation, but one wonders if the amount of blood depicted could have come from one man. One also wonders if someone simply dumped a bucket of blood on the floor in an "appropriate" place; one yearns for a simple test to determine whether the blood on the floor came <sup>30</sup>from George DeMohrenschildt; but this of course was not determined at the time and could not be determined 7½ years later. What was determined at the time was that there were no "fingerprints of value" on the shotgun (sound familiar?), only some "smudges" here and there,<sup>31</sup> "largely" because of the quantity of blood on the smooth surfaces of the gun.<sup>31</sup> Does this make sense? Would blood wash away fingerprints but not "smudges?" (Apparently the inquest jurors were troubled by the absence of fingerprints on the gun because, after beginning their deliberations, they asked Lt. Sheets to "explain again" why there were no fingerprints.) The mention of smudges on the shotgun evokes the thought that the weapon may have been wiped after the shooting and obviously not by DeMohrenschildt.

We come finally to one of the strangest elements in police depictions of the scene of DeMohrenschildt's death: their depiction of the tape-recorder that was allegedly recording Mrs. Tilton's soap opera and fortuitously allowed investigators to "prove" the exact time of DeMohrenschildt's death. When Cutler first saw the inquest exhibits he noticed---as may the reader---that Figure 5 depicts a tape recorder but no TV set.<sup>32</sup> Cutler wrote to Sheets for clarification on March 22, 1978 and Sheets wrote back that "subject TV was a 9 inch portable located at the foot of the bed approximately 2 foot from the recorder."<sup>33</sup> Figure 6 does not seem to show what Sheets described. Writing again for clarification on March 31, 1978, Cutler was now told by Sheets "at the foot of the bed in the attached photocopy you can see the antenna in the upper left corner."<sup>34</sup> This seems to locate the TV set a bit removed from "the



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foot of the bed." Sheets also included in his reply a response to an obvious question that had not been asked: why is the recorder as depicted in Figure 6 at the head rather than the foot of the bed, as Sheets previously described it? Sheets now said "also be advised that the recorder had been moved from the foot of the bed by the first officer at the scene."<sup>35</sup> The first officer at the scene, Donald McBride of the Manalapan PD, testified at the inquest that nothing was moved or changed at the "crime scene" after he arrived, though he did not indicate whether Mrs. Tilton's bedroom was considered part of this "scene."<sup>36</sup> When I later saw the picture of Tilton's bedroom, I noticed something else: that the recorder as depicted seems to be plugged in behind the telephone on a cord that would apparently not reach the foot of the bed so that, if the first officer on the scene or anybody else moved the recorder before it was photographed, he also went to the trouble of re-plugging the appliance, with no obvious reason for so doing. The suspicion begins to dawn that perhaps the whole business of a tape recording of Mrs. Tilton's "soaps" was an after-the-fact fabrication to "prove" that DeMohrenschildt died at 2:21 in the Tilton home when in fact he may have been murdered at some other time and place.

Oltman's expressed certainty that "George was murdered" is perhaps a certainty that goes beyond the evidence as we presently have it. However, I have tried to show some grounds of suspicion at least that the death was not the suicide that it was officially adjudged to have been. If it was a murder, then we need much more study of the people involved in DeMohrenschildt's life at the time of the event: his daughter, Mrs. Tilton, Catherine Loomis, Oltmans, Epstein, the domestics in the house. While none of these persons are likely candidates as murderers, some of them may yet have information to shed light on the nature of the conspiracy that may have resulted in DeMohrenschildt's death. The "investigation" as it has so far existed is hardly more adequate than in the case of the John F. Kennedy assassination, an event which may be better understood when and if we are able to tie up some of the loose ends connected with the death of George DeMohrenschildt.

\*This article is based largely on research material accumulated with great effort and industry by Robert Cutler. If this analysis has any merit, Cutler should be given at least co-credit for it. However, in view of his current preoccupation with other research, I have not "cleared" the contents of this analysis with Cutler, so he may well disagree with portions thereof; for which purpose he or any other reader is more than welcome to use the pages of The Third Decade.

1. David Lifton, Best Evidence (New York: Macmillan, 1980).
2. This account is based on DeMohrenschildt's testimony before the Warren Commission (Hearings, vol. 9 pp. 168-249); staff report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA XII 47-315); and the various news accounts in the New York Times and the two daily newspapers of Palm Beach, Florida.
3. On one small point I must point out that Fonzi was probably misinformed. He says that his card was found in DeMohrenschildt's shirt pocket at the time of his death. Inquest photos show that DeMohrenschildt was wearing a polo shirt that probably had no pockets. I do not doubt, of course, that Fonzi was told that his card was so found, perhaps to reinforce an impression that people in some quarters were trying to foster: that Fonzi's appearance was the immediate precipitant for DeMohrenschildt's suicide.
4. Palm Beach Post April 1, 1977, p. 9.

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5. In the County Court of the Fifteenth Judicial Court, Criminal Division, In and For Palm Beach County, In re: The Death of George DeMohrenschildt, Coroners' Inquest (West Palm Beach Florida, April 5, 1977), cited hereafter as Inquest.
6. Oltmans to Cutler in Cutler's DeMohrenschildt file.
7. Cutler's DeMohrenschildt file.
8. ibid.
9. Palm Beach Post March 31, 1977, p. 12.
10. Inquest, pp. 48, 49, 52, 57.
11. Inquest, p. 107.
12. Inquest, p. 72-74.
13. Inquest, Exhibit 5.
14. Inquest, p. 109.
15. Inquest, p. 93.
16. Inquest, Exhibit 8.
17. Inquest, pp. 67, 68
18. Inquest, p. 86.
19. Inquest, p. 86.
20. Inquest, p. 85.
21. Inquest, p. 84.
22. Inquest, pp. 101, 102.
23. Inquest, Exhibit 13.
24. Inquest, pp.102-104.
25. Inquest, pp. 101, 102.
26. Inquest, p. 37
27. Inquest, p. 104.
28. Inquest, Exhibit 12.
29. Inquest, p. 106.
30. Inquest, pp. 37, 38.
31. Inquest, p. 110.
32. Robert Cutler DeMohrenschildt file.
33. Sheets to Cutler in Cutler DeMohrenschildt file.
34. ibid.
35. ibid.
36. Inquest, pp. 58, 59.

PROFILES: ASSASSINATION RESEARCHERS AT WORK

(Note: the information for this directory was furnished by the listed individuals in response to a solicitation from the editor. By no means all active researchers were reached by this solicitation; and any person wishing to have his or her profile included in one of the future issues of The Third Decade should send the relevant information to the editor.)

BARBER, Steve 548 S. Diamond St. Mansfield, Ohio 44903; tel. 419-526-2849.  
Interested in: acoustics, limousine, ballistics, photographic evidence, autopsy of JFK, eyewitness accounts and Warren Commission testimony.  
Methods of study include personal interviews, personal contact with authors and other researchers; tapes, documents and files.  
Has NAS public access file, correspondence with NAS panelists, DPD radio tapes.  
Steve would like to say that just because of his discovery that the voice of Sheriff Decker on the DPD radio tapes disproved the HSCA's "gunshot



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theory does not mean that he doesn't feel that there was a conspiracy.

- BOATES, Donald A. 7411 S.E. Knight Portland, Oregon 97206; tel. 503-775-0690  
Has collection of material (articles, tapes, books etc.) since mid-60s; has appeared on a few local talk shows; mostly the material he has is unsorted, awaiting the day when he has the wherewithal to go over it and "digest" it.; Boates considers himself a collector of information more than a researcher; he collects information, newspaper and magazine articles runs them off at the quick print and spreads around. Boates is a Certified Internal Auditor, operates a wholesale distribution center for Shaklee Corp., is establishing an American Jazz Archives.
- BRAUN, Joanne 7 Plymouth Ave. Delmar, New York 12054 tel. 518-439-1793.  
Interested in anything having to do with assassination, but especially the "two casket" evidence uncovered by David Lifton and all its ramifications, including the role of LBJ.  
Methods of study: mostly published materials: books, articles, newsletters, Warren Commission and HSCA volumes.  
Braun has been working on an analysis of "Best Evidence" and related subjects and will be glad to make this available to anyone interested.
- BROWN, EMORY L. JR. R.D. 3 Box 618 Howell, New Jersey 07731 tel. 201-928-9311  
Interested in ballistical and medical aspects.  
Methods of study: published materials, FOIA documents, National Archives, correspondence.
- CASSIDY, Keri 10 Hanover Square 11th Floor New York, N.Y. tel. 212-747-2682  
(home) 87-21 252 St. Bellerose, N.Y. 11426 tel. 212-470-0012.  
Interested in Secret Service, FBI, autopsy.  
Methods of study: published material, Archives, FOIA. conversations with fellow researchers (Barber, Lifton, Cutler, Weisberg, etc.)  
Cassidy (with Steve Barber) publishes The Kennedy Loyalist; see NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE, this issue.
- CUTLER, R.B. Cutler Designs Box 1465 Manchester, Massachusetts 01944 tel. 617-526-1521.  
Interested in matching shots with wounds, the umbrella man, study of A.J. Hidell, CIA agent; Marguerite Oswald's third son killed four years before JFK. Cutler plots information on Dealey Plaza charts; has Crossfire 84, 22 x 34 print of Dealey Plaza firing sequence, and other privately printed research papers are available. Cutler says he is more than happy to discuss shots vs. wounds; has been convinced since 1972 of only one shot to the head from above and behind the limousine. Publishes Grassy Knoll Gazette, see NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE, this issue.
- EVICA, George Michael 107 N. Beacon St. Hartford, Connecticut 06105 tel. 203-243-4538.  
Interested in ballistics evidence, forensics/medical evidence, Jack Ruby (life, career, connections), plots against Castro: assassination content. Methods of study: Archives documents and hearing materials, FOIA documents, published materials, scientific analysis (e.g., computer-assisted analysis and reconstruction). Evica has published a book And We Are All Mortal, available from University of Hartford Purchasing Dept. 200 Bloomfield Ave. W. Hartford, Ct. 06117; teaches

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"Investigative Reporting" at U. of Hartford, frequently focusses on JFK assassination; writes and broadcasts a public affairs program on WUWH-FM W. Hartford Ct. every Tues noon: Assassination Journal.

FREEDMAN, Keith David 152 Greenmeadow Dr. Rochester, New York 14617; tel. 716-544-6867.

Interested in ballistics and trajectories, evidence alterations. Methods of study: published materials, interviews. Freedman is a research associate of Dr. Jerry Rose; assisted in interview of Jerry Belknap (epileptic seizure), preparation of Library Exhibit on JFK assassination at SUNY Fredonia.

GOLZ, Earl 7130 Gaston Ave. Apt 201 Dallas, Texas 75214 tel. 214-321-0594

Interested in entire Dallas scene, possible intelligence connections. Methods of study: interviews, scientific analysis, FOIA documents, other government documents. Golz has written numerous newspaper articles and magazine articles over the past 15 years; is now associate editor of Financial Trend (southwestern journal for corporate investors) but still active in research developments.

GRAHAM, Warren D. 5031 Knoll Ridge Ct., Charlotte, North Carolina 28208 tel. 704-393-7102.

Interested in: Tippit murder, Cuban refugee participation in assassination, "black dog" man. Methods of study: National Archives, interviews, regular visits to Dallas area. Publishes bi-monthly November 22nd Society Newsletter, subscriptions \$8.00 per year if ordered before 1985. See NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE this issue.

HAAPANEN, Dr. Larry 107 Dearborn Baldwin City, Kansas 66006 tel. 913-594-6613

Interested in Oswald's links to intelligence, George DeMohrenschildt, KGB and Yuri Nosenko; CIA assassination plots; all aspects of Garrison investigation and especially public opinion and public information aspects of the assassination. Methods of study: published sources, National Archives, some personal interviews, information from other researchers. Has collection of about 135 books on assassination, clipping file and scrapbooks, various newsletters; about 7 linear feet of unpublished documents from National Archives, FBI, CIA., etc.; correspondence, interviews, copies of several unpublished manuscripts. Haapanen taught a course on JFK assassination at Baker University. 1983.

HOCH, Paul L. 1525 Acton St. Berkeley, California 94702 tel. 415-525-1980.

Interested in the Warren Commission investigation, medical evidence; acoustical evidence; FBI and CIA cooperation with WC; Oswald's relationship (if any) with intelligence agencies. Methods of study: FOIA and Archives documents, published materials, contacts with other researchers. Hoch currently produces a newsletter "more or less quarterly," Echoes of Conspiracy; see NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE this issue.

MACK, Gary 4620 Brandingshire Place Fort Worth Texas 76133 tel. 817-292-5656

Interested in Dallas police radio recordings, transcripts, local news media coverage: films, photos, recordings, transcripts; Mary Moorman photos, other amateur films, photos; local witnesses. Has HSCA public hearing tapes, DPD radio tapes, extensive video tape collectio, including local news coverage from 1978 on. Publishes bimonthly newsletter,



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COVERUPS! featuring relevant clippings and his own original research, also some work by others either updated or expanded. \$1.00 per issue in US. \$1.25 outside; see NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE, this issue.

MELANSON, Philip H. 18 Partridge Place Marion, Massachusetts 02738 tel. tel. 617-748-2118; Interested in intelligence and related aspects (CIA, anti-Castro Cubans). Methods of study: published materials, Archives, FOIA documents (CIA, FBI, Secret Service), and occasional interviews; does the same kind of research on RFK and MLK.

MILAM, Wallace 103-C Oceanway Avenue Dyersburg, Tennessee 38024 tel. 901-285-8400. Interested in medical evidence (major interest by far) Tippit murder, Oswald's period in New Orleans. Methods of study: published materials, FOIA documents, telephone exchanges with other researchers. Milam teaches a course "Who Killed JFK?" fall quarters at Dyersburg State Community College; lectures regularly (colleges, clubs)---over 200 lectures since 1975; uses AV program with slides, motion pictures, videos, audio tapes. Milam says he is willing to exchange letters with seriously interested persons, prefers telephone exchanges.

PETROCY, Lindsay J. South Ostrander Road East Aurora, New York 14052 tel. 716-652-0348. Interested in: CIA, military intelligence. JBS Society; Methods of study: published materials. Archives. Petrocy says he is very interested in the conspiracy and coup that murdered President Kennedy.

RITCHIE, Raymond E. 5 Belmont Ave. Randolph, Maine 04345 tel. 207-582-1220 Interested in bibliographic anomalies in JFK literature; HSCA exhibits, documents and witnesses, Methods of study: published materials. He has prepared a comprehensive and systematic listing of HSCA exhibits, documents and witnesses; contact him for information. Ritchie is a University of Maine Law School graduate and since 1976 has been State of Maine Assistant Attorney General assigned to Dept. of Human Services.

ROSE, Jerry D. 27 Hamlet St. Fredonia, N.Y. 14063 tel. 716-672-8350 (home); 716-673-3421 (office). Interested in assassination generally, with focus on investigative (FBI, WC, HSCA) failures and reasons therefore; also detailed study of fabrication of evidence (physical, witness), forgery of Oswald identity documents. Methods of study: 26 volumes, HSCA hearings, FOIA documents, correspondence with researchers. Files of Evidence, a few witness interviews (e.g., Jerry Belknap, epileptic seizure). Professor of Sociology at SUNY Fredonia where he teaches a course on the JFK assassination. Editor and publisher of The Third Decade.

SALANDRIA, Vincent J. 2110 Locust St. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. Interested in CIA and American military involvement in the assassination and cover-up. Methods of study: legal analysis of published materials; has some early articles and "would provide copies free to a limited number of persons who could convince me that there is any good research reason to have those articles." Salandria describes his researcher status as "semi active to dormant, but I am always willing to be drawn by the truth in this area to a more active role."

SHACKELFORD, Martin 216 N. Webster Ave. Apt 2 Saginaw, Michigan 48602, tel. 517-792-5488, Interested in photos, slides, films, audiotapes,

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videotapes, main focus on photographic evidence, primary documentation. Methods of study: published materials, photographic materials from other researchers and specialized sources (e.g., The Collector's Archives in Winnipeg); National Archives, original materials from Ian MacFarlane. Shackelford has an article on magazine coverage of the assassination published in MacFarlane's Proof of Conspiracy which he will copy for anyone for \$1.00, title: "What We Were Told About the Assassination of John F. Kennedy: A Weekend of Newspapers, a Decade of Magazines." For another kind of work see "Dealey Plaza in Three Dimensions," The Continuing Inquiry August 1978.

STONE, Gary 22 Cazneau Ave. Sausalito, California 94965.

Interested in location of wounds, treatment at Parkland and autopsy at Bethesda; history of Carcano rifle and Mauser rifle. Methods of study: source material from collection of books written since assassination, magazines, interviews.

TATRO, Edgar F. 51 Edgemont Road, Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

tel. 617-848-5282. Interested in "anything and everything pertaining to the case.": origin of bullets, birth to Dallas; grassy knoll south "gunman," neutron activation analysis, Roger Craig, etc. Methods of study: published materials, FOIA documents, correspondence throughout the globe. Tatro says he is willing to share anything of value he has with other researchers (within reason), including copies of anything previously published; has written for The Continuing Inquiry, JFK Assassination Forum, local newspapers, etc. Tatro has taught a JFK Assassination course at Quincy Junior College for 9 years and lectures at colleges and universities in the Boston area.

TRUBY, J. David PO Box 163 Shelocta, Pennsylvania 15774.

Interested in the assassination generally but especially in the area of weapons: techniques, tactics and the actual assassination team. Methods of study: published materials, Archives, currently seeking FOIA releases from FBI. Truby will send copies of published materials to anyone willing to pay postage and copying costs. He is an editor for National News Service, has experience in radio, TV and magazine journalism, several national awards for investigative reporting; taught both journalism and criminology at university level. Truby has been an expert witness in federal court system, was US Army intelligence NCO.

WECHT, Cyril H., M.D., J.D. Department of Pathology, Central Medical Center and Hospital, 1200 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219, tel. 412-281-9090. Interested in all medical and forensic scientific (pathology, criminalistics, photographic, acoustical, etc.) aspects. Methods of study: examination of autopsy materials at National Archives (1972); Forensic Pathology Consultant to District Attorney Jim Garrison re Clay Shaw trial, testimony before Rockefeller Commission, member Forensic Pathology panel, HSCA; numerous TV, radio and personal interviews. Wecht was the first independent, non-governmental forensic pathologist to examine autopsy materials. He is a Clinical Associate Professor of Pathology, University of Pittsburgh Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine; Adjunct Professor of Law, Duquesne University School of Law.



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WILBER, Charles G. Director, Forensic Science Laboratory, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins Colorado 80524 tel. 303-491-5474. Interested in wound ballistics, terminal ballistics. Methods of study: model tests, scientific analysis. Wilber's book on the murder is in print; will answer questions from interested persons. For biographic information, see Who's Who, Who's Who in Frontier Science and Technology, Who's Who in the World.

SHORT TAKES: ITEMS FROM THE FUNNY FILE

1. They didn't do their homework. Who can ever forget Marina Oswald's dramatic "identification" of CE-139 as "the fateful rifle of Lee Oswald" in her Warren Commission testimony? Well, apparently Marina Oswald for one, and the House Select Committee on Assassinations for another. When Marina Oswald Porter testified before the Committee in 1978 there was the following exchange between Marina and staff counsel James McDonald:

"Mr. McDonald: Mr. Chairman, let the record reflect that Mrs. Porter was unable to identify Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle, which was marked CE-139 before the Warren Commission. She was unable to identify it in 1964 when she testified before the Warren Commission, and consequently we will not show it to her today since such a showing would serve no useful purpose.

Mrs. Porter: Thank you." (HSCA Hearings, vol. II, p. 229)

And thank you, Mr. McDonald, from all of us; your "questioning" served the "useful purpose" of allowing us no longer to have to worry about how a self-admittedly gun-ignorant person like Marina Oswald could identify a specific weapon as that belonging to her husband. McDonald's solution: she didn't; Warren Commission is inoperative.

2. Extraneous material. In March of 1964 the FBI produced one of those innumerable late-appearing evidential items: a slip of paper supposedly found in the clothing Oswald was wearing at the time he was murdered and containing several phone numbers used by Oswald in trying to contact a "communist" lawyer, John Abt. Why such a late appearance for this item? Suppose we let Director Hoover explain, as he did in a letter of March 3, 1964 to the Warren Commission: "Prior to showing the items of clothing to Messrs. Melvin Eisenberg and Norman Redlich on February 2, the clothing was examined to see if any extraneous material was located in the pockets." (Archives, INV-3) J. Edgar Hoover is a true magician of the English language; for all we know Oswald might have been carrying a complete blueprint of a conspiracy to assassinate the President of the United States as "extraneous material" in his pocket. Still, it never occurred to these guardians of justice and presidential security (the Secret Service had also had the clothing) to look for such material until it was realized that pesky outsiders like Eisenberg and Redlich might go poking in the pockets for extraneous material. So the FBI bestirred itself to search the pockets and sure enough the slip of paper was found.

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3. Startin' Over. Warren Commission counsel David Belin was questioning Lt. J.C. Day of the DPD about the circumstances of Day's apparent failure to place identification marks on the empty cartridge cases found on the sixth floor of the TSBD. (Warren Commission Hearings, vol. 4, pp. 254, 255). In the course of his scrambling for an explanation, Day mentioned that he told Belin one thing in a "conversation" in Dallas but that he (Day) now remembered events differently. Such pre-testimony "conversations" were against the rules of the Warren Commission and Belin now asked Day the following "question": "At that time what is the fact as to whether or not I went into extended questions and answers as contrasted with just asking you to tell me certain areas as to what happened? I mean, I questioned you, of course, but was it more along the line of just asking you to tell me what happened, or more along the lines of interrogation, the interrogation we are doing now?" The cop from Dallas, perhaps taken aback at suddenly being asked to cover the posterior of the lawyer from Des Moines, responded, reasonably, "Wait a minute now, say that again, I am at a loss." The lawyer, equally reasonably, said "maybe it would be easier if I just struck the question and started all over again." Surely many of us can sympathize with Belin. We must all have our days in which we wonder if it wouldn't be easier to strike the years of pseudo-investigation and start all over again.

#### NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE

From Berkeley, Ca: Paul Hoch's Echoes of Conspiracy issue of October 31, 1984 reports information from a "sensitive source" of the appearance of an "American" weighing 8 lbs. at a California hospital; Paul's inimitable way of announcing the birth of the second Hoch child. Hoch reports on the status of his current FOIA suits against FBI and CIA along with the usual listing of articles and news clippings and a generous plug for The Third Decade, which is acknowledged with thanks. If there is anything like an indispensable source of information in a "newsletter" format for serious assassination researchers, EOC has to be it. For information on the EOC operation, write: Paul Hoch, 1525 Acton St., Berkeley, Ca. 94702

From Ft. Worth, Tex.: Gary Mack's COVER-UPS! edition for September, 1984 contains an analysis by Mack of "missing" DPD radio broadcasts of messages between the dispatcher and Officer Tippit. The omission from official transcripts of a report that Tippit was "out of car" at 12:17 leads to the speculation that the next time Tippit left his car, on East 10th St., he may well have called the dispatcher again with a message that may have been inconsistent with the conclusion that Oswald was the assailant; evidence of possible tampering with the DPD tape is reviewed. COVER-UPS! contains frequent research articles by Mack and reprints of news media cover of assassination-related matters. If interested, write: COVER-UPS!, 4620 Brandingshire Place, Fort Worth Tex. 76133.



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From Manchester, Ma.: Robert Cutler's Grassy Knoll Gazette, though focussed recently on Cutler's research on KAL flight 007 contains in the latest issue (October, 1984) some of the results of Bernard Fensterwald Jr.'s poll of assassination "experts" on their opinions about the event and the investigations thereof. Conclusion: most of us are "conspiratorialists" of various stripes. When Cutler researches a matter (e.g, "the umbrella man") he does it thoroughly and tenaciously, often with very controversial conclusions. If interested in keeping up with "assassinology," RBC-style, write: The Grassy Knoll Gazette, P.O. Box 1465, Manchester, Ma. 0194

From Waxahachie, Tex: Penn Jones Jr.'s The Continuing Inquiry continues despite the rumors its demise, primarily emanating from Penn himself. TCI has been a main outlet for assassination research since 1976, and it deserves all the support that we can continue to give it. The latest issue at hand contains an article by Paul Daniel detailing some of his difficulties in dealing with David Lifton. For information on this newsletter, write: The Continuing Inquiry, Rt. 3 Box 356 Waxahachie, Tex. 75165.

From New York, N.Y.: Keri-Ann Cassidy of New York City and Steve Barber of Mansfield, Ohio are publishing a new periodical called The Kennedy Loyalist. There will be a "Camelot" aspect to the publication with articles dealing with the Kennedy administration generally, but also material on the JFK Assassination. In the inaugural issue (October 1984) articles by Cassidy on the inadequacy of Secret Service protection for the President in Dallas and by Barber discussing the implications of the picture outside Parkland of the Secret Service and DPD with a bucket of "water" alongside the limousine and a photograph of the rear seat of the limousine later that evening in D.C. For information on this publication, write: The Kennedy Loyalist 10 Hanover Square 11th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10015.

From Charlotte, N.C.: Warren Graham recently began publication of a November 22nd Society newsletter. No copies of this newsletter have yet been received for review. If interested, write: Warren Graham, November 22nd Society, 5031 Knoll Ridge Court, Charlotte, N.C. 28208

And From Right Here in River City (Fredonia, N.Y.): The Third Decade strives to maintain diplomatic and non-competing relations with all existing periodicals on the JFK assassination, those listed here or any others. All the publishers here listed are subscribers to The Third Decade and subscriptions to all these periodicals are maintained here. NEWS FROM AROUND THE LEAGUE will be a regular feature of this Journal to keep our readers abreast of the work being done elsewhere, and also of any other opportunities for those interested in the assassination to contact others so interested. Please send your news items about these matters to the Journal!

So what did you think of this issue? Please send your reactions, including any suggestions for improving the quality of this Journal to Jerry D. Rose, Editor, The Third Decade, State University College, Fredonia, New York 14063.

COMING IN JANUARY: An article by G.M. Evica on the Ruby/Hoffa/Castro assassination connections; by J. D. Rose on how the FBI/Secret Service "Coordinated" the testimonies of Roy Truly and M. L. Baker and also those of Jack Ruby, George Senator, Karen Carlin and Larry Crafard...and MORE!

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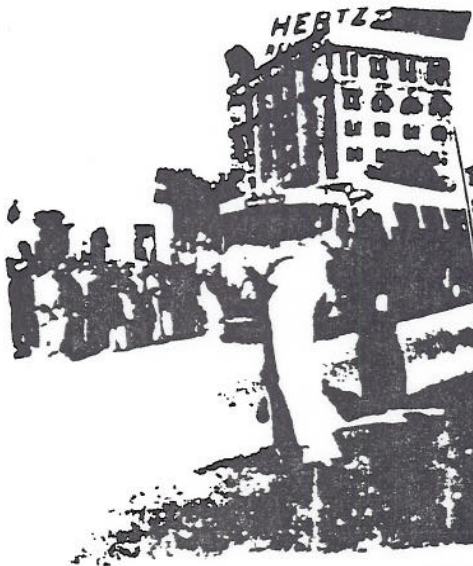
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nk and say of the behavior of Americans in the aftermath of the murder of n F. Kennedy? Will they say, perhaps, that most Americans disbelieved conclusion of the Warren Commission that the President was killed by a and unaided individual; that in spite of their belief in a conspiracy failed to support actively a re-investigation of the matter; and that



**By TOM WICKER**  
Special to The New York Times  
**DALLAS, Nov. 22**—President John F. Kennedy was shot and killed by an assassin today.

gerald Ken  
sassin tod  
He d  
a rifle b  
riding t

# Murder Weapon Difficult to Trace

**By ED WALLACE**  
The rifle which killed the President was a 7.65 mm. Mauser, a military weapon made in Germany long before World War II, first produced in 1891, and made obsolete by other Mauser models adopted in 1925 and 1926.

One gun dealer

Miami. Fonzi describes elsewhere in this issue how he went to Manalapan, N.J., to talk with Demohrenschildt. At exactly the same time determined by the hall (recording a soap opera on TV for an interview conducted at the room. I was resumed again at 3:30 PM.



Chairman Stokes. I guess there is no gun in it. Thank you very much. The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Devine. Mr. Devine. Mr. Witt, we understand your reluctance to would you tell the committee what picture in the paper? To whom?

## Leader of a Pro-Castro Group Is Suspect—Policeman Slain

**Special to The New York Times**  
**DALLAS, Nov. 22**—The chairman of a pro-Castro "Play for Cuba Committee," LeRoy H. Oswald, was arrested here today in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy.

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**W. Reichert**

it and only periodical devoted exclusively to the assassination, edited at an American university. The journal will be published in November 1984. For a subscription rate, send the coupon below with your name and address. You will be receiving the first issue before November 1984.

Jack H. Ruby was advised by SA [redacted] that he did not have to make any statement. He was informed that his statement would be made for him. He was informed that his statement would be made for him. He was informed that his statement would be made for him.

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\*Pending approval by P.A.I.S.

## THE THIRD DECADE

### EDITORIAL: HISTORY ALSO HAS ITS CLAIMS

Anyone these days who devotes time and attention to the study of the John F. Kennedy assassination is likely to experience negative vibes with his or her friends and associates. Who but a rather foolish "buff" or an hysterical "sensationalist" could maintain an interest in a subject that has been written and talked about so widely over the last twenty one years? Almost the best treatment that one can anticipate is that others will allow one the same condescending tolerance they may grant the old man building models of railroading of a bygone era in his basement or the true believer in flying saucers meticulously recording the "sightings" of these objects. Harmless occupations, surely, but what serious person of "the world" would care to join them?

Such thoughts as these were seemingly in the mind of former Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter in 1953 when he wrote a dissent to the Court's decision that allowed Julius and Ethel Rosenberg to be executed; and wrote it after the executions had been carried out. Thinking that it might seem foolish for him to devote his writing efforts to an obviously lost cause, Frankfurter observed that "history also has its claims" and that it was in response to those claims that he was endeavoring to set straight the record of the Rosenberg case.

I believe that history also has claims with reference to the Kennedy assassination, at least if those claims are understood in a certain way. I am not here thinking of an imperative that an absolutely accurate record of events be preserved for posterity, an aspiration that can excite perhaps only the professional historian. No, I have in mind a much more popularized version of the "claims" of history on people who are living today. I refer to people's anticipations of how their behaviors during their earthly sojourns will look in the eyes of people of the future. Winston Churchill articulated one possibility of historical judgment when he asserted, of the British people during the early days of World War II, that people a thousand years hence would say of them: "this was their finest hour."

On the other hand, what may we suppose that people of the future will think and say of the behavior of Americans in the aftermath of the murder of John F. Kennedy? Will they say, perhaps, that most Americans disbelieved the conclusion of the Warren Commission that the President was killed by a lone and unaided individual; that in spite of their belief in a conspiracy they failed to support actively a re-investigation of the matter; and that when, in spite of their apathy, a congressional investigating committee produced evidence of a "probable" conspiracy, they simply commented to one another "that case will never be solved" and ridiculed or quietly ignored the few remaining "nuts" who persisted in trying to keep alive an issue about which most people were thoroughly bored? Based on our performance during the first two decades since the President's murder, I should have to guess that this is precisely the historical judgment that will be made on the people of our time: that a thousand years hence people may well say about us: "this was their darkest hour."

This Journal is dedicated to making some contribution toward reversing this likely historical judgment by accomplishing in the third decade since the assassination that which has eluded us during the first two decades: a reasoned discussion among earnest students of the assassination; to proceed in fact in the spirit that Gerald Ford quite wrongly attributed to the Warren Commission when he asserted that "truth was our only client." To satisfy the heavy demands of that client we must forswear allegiance to some of the competitors for our loyalty, especially the ever-pressing demands



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of our personal Egos which constrain each of us to shout "look at me! gaze on the One and Only person who understands where others are confused!" The researcher who thinks that he or she "knows it all" with reference to the assassination will not find the pages of this Journal especially congenial to the promotion of his or her certitude. The Journal is intended rather for those students who want to work on the frontiers of knowledge in the area and who want to share their discoveries with others working in the same territory. People engaged in research at this level frequently become "carried away" with the excitement of what they believe to be new and original information in their field of study. By the "reasoned discussion" with other equally "earnest" students that I referred to above, it should be possible actually to advance considerably our individual and collective understandings of this historical event.

This is, at least, the spirit in which THE THIRD DECADE is launched. The heart of the Journal will be a series of research articles submitted by those engaged in original research on the JFK assassination. Manuscripts are invited from all interested persons, whether they happen to have academic credentials or not, whether their perspectives happen to agree with those of the Journal's editor. After selected manuscripts are published, readers are invited to submit critical comments in the form of Letters to the Editor; all such letters will be forwarded to authors for their personal benefit and, in the case of those letters published in the Journal, authors will be given the opportunity to reply to criticisms of their research in the pages of the Journal. In addition, the Journal will try to make some contribution to putting assassination researchers in contact with others who may share similar specific interests and who may be able to complement one another's resources. Beginning with this issue, a series of "profiles" of active researchers will be published, based on the information about themselves and their interests that these persons have furnished the Editor.

In closing this first editorial I want to acknowledge with special thanks the help of several people whose assistance and encouragement have been extremely valuable in helping get this enterprise off the ground. These people are: Robert Cutler, Paul Hoch, Edgar Tatro, Elaine Kavanaugh and Penn Jones Jr. Without the help of these people---and quite a few others as well---the reader would not have in his or her hands the first issue of THE THIRD DECADE on or near the twenty first anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

### THE LAST INVESTIGATION\*

by

Gaeton Fonzi

Years ago, in reviewing a book about the Warren Commission for a small magazine called Minority of One, critic Sylvia Meagher wrote: "There are no heroes in this piece, only men who collaborated actively or passively---willfully or self-deludedly---in dirty work that does violence to the elementary concept of justice and affronts normal intelligence."

It didn't take long for those who examined the final report of the Warren Commission and its volumes of published evidence to conclude that its investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy was deficient. Considering the Commission's resources and the opportunity it had at the time to do a thorough investigation, its failure was, indeed, a "violence to the elementary concept of justice." Its legacy was a burning scission in this country's psyche.

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The Warren Commission Report, with its strained case for a lone-nut assassin, eventually became too hard for the public to swallow. By the early 70s polls showed that only a small percentage of Americans believed it. Finally, on September 17th, 1976, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Resolution 222 which established a Select Committee to "conduct a full and complete investigation and study of the circumstances surrounding the assassination and death of President John F. Kennedy..."

The politicians may have given it legal status, but the mandate came from deep within the conscience of a nation fed up with the deceptions and confusions spawned in the wake of the assassination. When the Select Committee finally expired more than two years later, it issued a report that appeared to have more substance and depth than the Warren Commission's report. But, like the Warren Commission, what the Select Committee did not do was "conduct a full and complete investigation." It performed its role with---to use the phrase its report repeated in evaluating the performance of the federal agencies---"various degrees of competency."

What it did not do was respond to or even consider the higher mandate of attempting to pursue the priorities of truth with unmitigated vigor. In that failure, it too, committed violence to something basic in the democratic system. What the House Select Committee did do---with a high degree of competency---was conduct a political exercise.

On the Tuesday morning of July 17th, 1979, the Chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, Ohio Democrat Louis Stokes, called a press conference to formally release the Committee's final report. The resulting front-page headline in The Washington Post reflected the report's implications as well as the gist of the press conference attending its release: "MOBSTERS LINKED TO JFK DEATH."

The Committee Chief Counsel and Staff Director, G. Robert Blakey, wanted to be absolutely certain that the reporters at the conference would accurately interpret the report's interlinear message. "I am now firmly of the opinion that the Mob did it," he told them. "It is a historical truth." Then, backstepping from such an impetuously blatant declaration---or, to use an expression popular among Committee staffers---"covering his ass"---he quickly added: "This Committee report does not say the Mob did it. I said it. I think the Mob did it." Well, I don't know if the Mob did it, but I strongly doubt it. From my experience as a Committee staff investigator and team leader, I do know this: the Committee's investigation was simply not adequate enough to produce any firm conclusions about the nature of the conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. To give the impression that it was, is a deception.

When the Committee's report was finally released in the summer of 1979, it had been long overdue. After consuming more than \$5.4 million over a two year period, the Committee had legally ceased to exist the previous December. At that time, however, Chief Counsel Blakey wasn't satisfied with the report the staff had compiled. He felt it had to be completely re-written. So, in a bit of bureaucratic legerdemain, he had himself and a few staff members temporarily attached to the Speaker of the House's Office for administrative and pay purposes. It took them almost seven months to reconstruct a "new" final report. ("This, I can assure you, will be the absolutely final report on the Kennedy assassination," he had told the staff. "This will be the last investigation. After us, there ain't gonna be more more.")

The Select Committee on Assassinations was born in the septic tank of House politics. To many members it was simply a necessary device politically inexpedient to oppose. Early in 1975, two Congressmen had each introduced their own bills to reopen the Kennedy assassination. A fiery Texas named Henry



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B. Gonzalez, who had been a passenger in the Dallas motorcade, included in his bill probes also into the murders of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King. A respected Virginia veteran lawmaker, Thomas N. Downing, introduced his bill when he developed serious doubts about the Warren Commission Report. Both bills were stuck in the Rules Committee for more than a year, until the Black Caucus put pressure on the House leadership. The bills were then merged and the resolution passed.

The seeds of dissension were sown early. Traditionally, the author of a resolution establishing a select committee is named chairman of the committee. Downing, however, was a lame duck congressman who had not sought reelection in 1976. His term would expire three months after the new Committee was formed. Gonzalez, on the other hand, was a barroom-brawling Mexican-American not especially respected by the House power brokers. Thus, despite Downing's lame duck status, House Speaker Tip O'Neill named him chairman of the Select Committee. That really burned Gonzalez.

The first month of the Committee's life was a harbinger of what was to come. It immediately mired itself in internal squabbling. Downing's first choice as the Committee's chief counsel and staff director was Washington attorney Bernard Fensterwald, an early Warren Commission critic who had established a research clearing house and lobbying operation called the Committee to Investigate Assassinations. Although, after Gonzalez objected to him, Fensterwald withdrew himself from consideration, a story appeared in the Washington Star headlined: "Is Fensterwald a CIA Plant?---Assassination Inquiry Stumbling." It was later learned that material for the story had been leaked from Gonzalez's office.

Downing and Gonzalez finally got together in early October, 1976, and settled on Philadelphia's Richard Sprague as the Committee's chief counsel. Sprague had gotten national attention with his successful prosecution of United Mine Workers President Tony Boyle for the murder of UMW reformer Joseph Yablonski. In Philadelphia, where as First Assistant District Attorney he had run up a record of 69 homicide convictions out of 70 prosecutions, Sprague was known as tough, tenacious and independent.

Early in November, Sprague had lunch with Senator Schweiker in Washington. He knew, of course, of the work of Schweiker's Senate Intelligence Subcommittee but Schweiker also filled him on the files his personal staff had compiled. In those files was a fat stack of informally written memos reporting what I had dug up in the field over the past year. Included were rough notes of the Antonio Veciana and Maurice Bishop area of the investigation. Schweiker, anxious to help Sprague as much as possible, arranged to turn over some of these personal staff files to him. In a letter to Sprague accompanying them, Schweiker noted: "Because of my concern for the personal safety of some of the individuals who came forth to my staff, neither my staff nor I have publicly divulged their names. I strongly urge that this confidentiality continue to be respected."

When he took the job, Sprague had done so with the stipulation that he would have complete authority to hire his own staff and run the investigation as he saw fit. He proposed setting up two investigations, one for Kennedy and one for King. He insisted on handling both cases as if they were homicide investigations.

In the annals of the John F. Kennedy assassination, it was a novel approach. And, judging from the reaction of many congressmen, it was a far too radical approach. Especially since Sprague was obviously serious about it, as indicated when he said he needed a staff of at least 200 and an initial budget of \$6.5 million---and then refused to guarantee that would do the job. Sprague hadn't settled into his shabby Washington office in the rat-infested



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yet unrenovated former FBI Records Building when the attacks against him began.

In December, Sprague called me and asked me to come to Washington to talk with him. When I got there I found that he had turned over the material Schweiker had given him to Deputy Counsel Bob Tannenbaum, a veteran homicide attorney Sprague had recruited from the New York District Attorney's office. Tannenbaum reviewed the material and suggested that Sprague ask me to join the staff. I told Sprague I would if I could be free to pursue those areas in which I had the most background and considered the most potentially productive, especially that of intelligence agency involvement with the anti-Castro exiles in Miami. He said I could.

I remember having lunch with Sprague and a few of his staffers that day in Washington. I talked about some of the things I had worked on with Schweiker, and what I thought needed to be done. But Sprague, despite the fact that he had been on the job for more than two months, seemed still less occupied with the substance of the case than he did with other problems. He had gotten critical blasts, played large in the press, from a few congressmen after word got out that the Committee would probably use such investigative devices as lie detector tests, voice stress evaluators and concealed tape recorders. Some lawmakers, including a few right-wing conservatives, suddenly expressed their grave concern for individual rights and said that Sprague was threatening to trample on the civil rights of people he would investigate. At lunch that day, I commented to Sprague about the heat he seemed to be taking. Sprague shook his head. "You know, I don't understand it. I've never been in a situation like this before where I'm getting criticized for things I might do. It's nonsense, but I don't know why it's happening."

I would not find out what was happening in Washington until much later. It was arranged that I would officially join the Committee as a staff investigator on January 1st, 1977. I returned to Miami and got immediately to work renewing the contacts and sources I had let lapse over the previous few months. I had accumulated file cases of documents and background material which I used to begin structuring an investigative plan. After talking with Sprague I was now certain he planned to conduct a strong investigation and I was never more optimistic in my life. I remember excitingly envisioning the scope and character of the investigation. It would include a major effort in Miami, with teams of investigators digging into all those unexplored corners the Warren Commission had ignored or shielded away from. They would be working with squads of attorneys to put legal pressure on, to squeeze the truth from recalcitrant witnesses. There would be reams of sworn depositions, the ample use of warrants and no fear of bringing prosecutions for perjury. We would have all sorts of sophisticated investigative resources and, more important, the authority to use them. The Kennedy assassination would finally get the investigation it deserved and an honest democracy needed. There would be no more bullshit.

Little did I know.

What Sprague discovered when he arrived in Washington was that his first order of business was not in setting up an investigation but simply keeping the Committee alive. The Committee had been officially established in September. All congressional committees legally expire at the end of each congressional year and then, if they were mandated to continue under the terms of their originating resolutions, the new Congress reconstitutes them as a matter of course.

As soon as Sprague hit Washington, however, and it became obvious he meant to conduct a true investigation, the flak began to fly. Fueled by some of the press, including the New York Times, talk started circulating that the



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reconstitution of the Assassinations Committee might not be as "automatic" as it was assumed. The attacks increased when Sprague announced his staff plan and budget. He did not pull either figure out of the air, but analyzed the resources that the Warren Commission had available from its own staff, the FBI, the Secret Service, the CIA and the Justice and State Departments. Sprague figured that the very nature of a truly independent investigation would preclude the use of the investigative forces of those other governmental agencies, especially since some of them would be under investigation themselves. With a staff of 170 and a yearly budget of \$6.5 million, the Assassinations Committee would not have far more than the Warren Commission in resources. (The Commission employed 83 people but used 150 full time agents from the FBI alone.)

Nevertheless, the budget was used as the focal point for additional attacks on Sprague. He was accused of being arrogant and disrespectful of congressional protocol. Sprague, they said, had made a "mistake" in coming on so strong. "Several people around here who are familiar with the bureaucratic game told me to first present a smaller budget," Sprague admitted. "They assured me that I could always go back later and plead for more. That's the way they do things in Washington, I was told. Well, I won't play that game." Perhaps Sprague didn't realize the power of the forces he was up against.

On January 2nd, the day before the convening of the 95th Congress, there appeared in The New York Times a major story headlined: "Counsel in Assassination Inquiry Often Target of Criticism" It reviewed Sprague's 17-year career as a Philadelphia prosecutor strictly in terms of the controversies he had provoked. There is no doubt that Sprague's record has points worthy of valid criticism, but the Times' piece left out the grays and painted Sprague a heavy black.

Intended or not, the piece had the effect of a well-placed torpedo. It almost sank the Assassinations Committee. On January 4th, an attempt to get a resolution reconstituting the Committee through by a unanimous-consent voice vote failed. That meant the resolution would have to go through a lengthy bureaucratic labyrinth, including passing through the Rules Committee and a budget review exercise, before the Committee could officially be reconstituted. It would take weeks.

In Miami, unaware of the behind-the-scenes details, I was anxious to get rolling. I kept calling Bob Tannenbaum, the boss of the Kennedy side of the investigation. "Bob, I think it's initially important to coordinate my area with what the rest of the staff is doing," I said. "I imagine the staff is already organized into teams, but I think it's important that a program for constant communication between teams and field investigators be developed." I suggested I first come to Washington to get a better idea of staff organization. Tannenbaum agreed. He was a guy in his early 30s, very big, beefy but fit---a former Columbia University basketball star and student radical who, rising quickly in the New York DA's office, became the epitome of the quick-thinking, fast-talking prosecutor. Tannenbaum didn't want me to know how chaotic the mess was becoming in Washington. "Let me work things out on this end," he kept saying, "and we'll plan on getting together. Stay loose."

On February 3rd, the House voted to reconstitute the Assassinations Committee. Temporarily. Still under sharp attack by certain conservative lawmakers suddenly turned civil libertarians, the Committee was, as the Washington Post put it, "given less than two months to justify its existence under conditions that...make it impossible to develop new evidence." The House, in keeping the Committee alive, provided only a maintenance budget, just barely enough to cover the reduced salaries of its then 72-member staff. (Everyone had taken a 40% pay cut while waiting reconstitution.)



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In Miami, I was keeping myself busy but without the guidance of a structured investigative plan, all I could do was continue a scattergun approach to the leads. More and more, when fresh information or a new lead would come in, I found myself saying, "That seems worth checking. As soon as we get some help down here and this thing gets organized, I'll get back to you...Oh, yeah, just a few problems in Washington. They'll get ironed out. We're beginning to get organized now. I didn't realize that the chaos was just beginning.

About a week after the Committee was temporarily born again, I received a call from Bob Tannenbaum. "Well," he sighed, "World War Three has started in Washington. It's Gonzalez versus Sprague. You wouldn't believe it. Gonzalez is taking back his stationary." His what?

"Let me read you a letter. It's dated February 9th, 1977. 'Dear Dick. Until the Select Committee is properly organized and its rules established, a number of steps are necessary. Accordingly, I hereby request and direct that you provide me at the earliest practical time, but no later than noon Friday, February 11th, your written assurance as given verbally to the Committee yesterday that, failing to recommend necessary reductions in force, you guarantee compliance with the financial limits imposed on the Committee. Owing to an evident inability of the Committee in past times to adequately control the use of its letterhead and franked materials, and in the absence of any present controls on such materials, you are directed to return to me immediately any and all letterhead materials bearing my name.'

Since all congressional committees use the postal franking privileges of its chairman, and every expense voucher, travel order and most directives and requests are made under the chairman's signature, what Gonzalez was doing, in effect, was virtually stopping the operation of the Committee.

Gonzalez had been furious at not being named chairman of the Committee when it was originally formed. He automatically stepped into the post, however, when Downing retired, and the new Congress convened in January. (It was, of course, something of a Catch 22 position since the Committee, not yet reconstituted, was officially non-existent.) Gonzalez, however, wanted more than just the title. He wanted control and power to staff the investigation with his own people. Sprague wasn't about to give him that.

In December, Gonzalez had told Sprague that, under the formula in the Congressional Rules, the Committee could operate with a budget of \$150,000 a month until it was officially reconstituted. On that basis, Sprague began beefing up his original start-up staff with new additions, all of whom were put on the payroll January 1st. I was in that group. Gonzalez, however, had been mistaken about the Committee's budget. The rules actually permitted it only \$84,000 a month in expenses while it waited reconstitution. When Gonzalez was called on the carpet by the Rules Committee for the budget over-run, he said that Sprague had hired the new staffers without his knowledge or permission.

At a meeting of the members of the Assassinations Committee on February 8th, Gonzalez repeated his charges against Sprague and ordered Sprague to fire the people he had put on the staff on January 1st. Sprague denied he had not told Gonzalez about the hirings and refused to fire anyone. The other Committee members backed Sprague. Gonzalez fumed. The next day he wrote the letter cutting off the staff's resources and demanding the return of his stationary.

"And we just got another note from Gonzalez today," Tannenbaum added. "Listen to this: 'Dear Mr. Sprague. You called me at 10:10 yesterday morning. I was out. I returned the call at 11:30. You were not in. You were at a staff meeting. Your secretary said she would get you if it were important. I said 'I



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don't know if it's important. I'm returning his call.' I hung up. I then met the President of the United States. I am the chairman. You are my employee. Do not forget that.'"

Tannenbaum had a problem reading that note to me because he was laughing so hard. The next day, I received my own letter from Chairman Gonzalez. It was a form letter to all staffers: "This is to convey to you my profound regrets regarding the circumstances which surround your present employment...It is highly deplorable that the person most responsible for your employment did not advise you of the possible difficulty in getting the Committee reconstituted... No one likes a reduction in personnel, but...I hope that as soon as possible I will be able to convey to you what the future status of personnel will be with the Select Committee."

Gonzalez did not mention that not one other Committee member had backed him on his demand that some of the staff be fired. Nevertheless, Gonzalez kept on swinging. He went to the Attorney General and demanded that Committee staff members, who while waiting for the investigation to get structured had begun researching the FBI files, be denied access to those files. (It was probably the first time in congressional history that a committee chairman wanted non-cooperation.) Next, Gonzalez cut off the long-distance telephone calls, thereby isolating the only investigator---me---the Committee had in the field at that time. Sprague later put it succinctly: "Gonzalez went berserk."

Gonzalez finally threw what he thought was his Sunday punch: he fired Sprague. In a hand-delivered letter, Gonzalez charged that Sprague "has engaged in a course of conduct that is wholly intolerable for any employee of the House," and ordered him to vacate his office by 5 p.m. that day. Gonzalez had uniformed Capital Police officers arrive at the staff offices with orders to physically evict Sprague if he wasn't out. But within a couple of hours after Gonzalez had sent the letter, the Committee's 11 other members signed their own letter directing Sprague to ignore Gonzalez.

What was supposed to be an investigation into one of the most significant and tragic events in this country's history had turned into, as George Lardner of the Washington Post put it, "an opera bouffe." Editorial cartoonists around the country were having a ball. "Pardon me, is this the offices of the...nice shot...House Assassinations Committee?" asked an Oliphant character walking in on a roomful of stomping, swinging, kicking, brawling lawmakers.

Then Gonzalez took that one step too far. At an open meeting of the Committee, he attacked the second-ranking Democrat, Congressman Richardson Preyer, head of the Kennedy Subcommittee. Judge Preyer, a gray-haired, soft-spoken, Southern gentleman known for his fairminded, liberal intellect, was one of the House's most respected members. When Gonzalez began flying off the handle, Preyer suggested the Committee adjourn until some problems were ironed out. Gonzalez exploded. "I'm the chairman! I know you want to be chairman and you're trying to get rid of me! he yelled at Preyer.

According to Bob Tannenbaum, who was there: "Preyer's head actually jerked back. It looked like a shot from the front, but it was really a neurophysical reaction. It was really an embarrassing moment for the old guy." Preyer recovered and said quietly, "I do not seek the chairmanship, nor do I want it. I have a motion to adjourn." The Committee quickly backed him and the members hurried away---except for Gonzalez, who held an impromptu press conference at which he called Sprague a "rattlesnake."

The next day I received a call from Tannenbaum. "Preyer and the other members of the Committee are going to House Speaker O'Neill to ask him to remove Gonzalez from the chairmanship," he told me. "We're down to the final act. If Gonzalez is not removed, we're leaving. There's no way we can go on with this man. He's gone mad."



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Confronted with the unprecedented situation of committee members rebelling against their own chairman---and a problem fraught with untold dire consequences to the House's historical system of broker brokerage---House Speaker Tip O'Neill waffled. Appearing on a Face the Nation telecast, O'Neill said he lacked the power to remove a select committee chairman. He also said that the Assassinations Committee's problems would probably be worked out and that he believed it would stay in business beyond its March 31st deadline.

Cryptically confusing, perhaps, but behind the scenes there must have been some pressure brought on Gonzalez. "They tell us that Gonzalez is going to go," Tannenbaum reported to me, "but I think the bastards are lying to us. I think what they're really angling for is a trade-off. If Gonzalez goes, then Sprague will have to go." Although it wasn't immediately apparent, Tannenbaum was right about the bastards.

Chairman Gonzalez resigned from his post---and the Assassinations Committee---in the first week of March. He then flew home to San Antonio and gave a long, raging "exclusive" interview to hometown newsman Paul Thompson of the Express-News. The next day I received a call in Miami from Associated Press reporter John Hopkins. "Have you ever been to Washington?" he asked. I said sure I've been to Washington, why? "Because Gonzalez gave an interview in which he claimed you've never been to Washington," Hopkins said. "He said he didn't know what you did in Miami and Sprague wouldn't tell him."

Hopkins also told me that Gonzalez claimed that he was forced out of the investigation by "vast and powerful forces, including the country's most sophisticated criminal element. "By the way," Hopkins asked, "do you have any connections with Organized Crime?" WHAT? "In that interview," Hopkins said, "Gonzalez claimed you are supposed to have underworld connections."

I had never met Gonzalez and I doubt that he knew anything about me personally. But he did know my name from the list of new staffers whom Sprague had hired. Gonzalez was making assumptions strictly on the basis of my name. That steamed me. I don't think I've been more angry in my life with someone I had never met. That night, if Gonzalez had lived in Miami, I would have had his car blown up.

It was nearing the end of March, 1977. Again the Assassinations Committee was due to die unless the House granted it a continuance and approved a budget for it. The resignation of Gonzalez and the appointment of a new chairman, a big, balding, low-key Democrat from Ohio named Louis Stokes, finally gave the Committee and its staff the chance to concentrate on the problem of survival. From its birth, the Committee had been faced with the possibility of premature termination. It was established in September, 1976, with a token budget and the right to live only until the end of the year. The attacks against it had delayed its being reconstituted for a month, and then it was given another token budget and the right to live for only two more months. At each resuscitation, the dictates of continued survival had to be met. The internal feuding naturally exacerbated the situation tremendously.

The investigation of the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King? Oh yeah, that's what the Congress expected the Committee to be doing while it kept it in a financial armlock and permitted the Committee's own chairman to saw away at its legs. Even House Speaker O'Neill said at one point he thought the Committee would have to produce "something of a sensational nature" to survive.

All too quickly the lesson of the Warren Commission had been lost. There could be no valid investigation of the Kennedy assassination unless there was an objective, thoroughly structured approach unencumbered by political pressures or lack of resources. But all Sprague and Tannenbaum and the other staff directors could do in the first six months of the Committee's life was



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concern themselves with political pressures and the question of survival. A structured approach to the investigation could not be formulated. What was needed was eyewash. The Committee had to look good. The Committee had to look as if it were making progress. The Committee had to look as if it were digging up sensational, new revelations. If it didn't, there were too many members of Congress ready to kill it for not performing.

Under such conditions, it is no wonder that within the Committee staff itself problems began to arise. Tannenbaum became paranoid. He took a small group of staff members into his confidence and distrusted everyone else. His paranoia was reinforced when one staff member was revealed to be feeding Gonzalez reports of Sprague's confidential talks to the staff.

Isolated in Miami, without authorization or funds to go to Washington to find out what the hell was really going on, I was at least able to function a bit on my own, put up a good front with the people I was talking with and chip away in a random way at the mountain of work to be done. In Washington, the staff of investigators were, for the most part, spinning their wheels. All they could do was handle what came across the transom. Cliff Fenton, the chief investigator, was a former top New York homicide detective brought in by Tannenbaum. Like all the other ex-badges from the Big Apple on the Committee, Fenton was a sharp dresser. A hefty, easy-moving fellow, Fenton gave the appearance of being a mellow, ramblin' type of guy who spoke with an inevitable chuckle that was indefensibly contagious. I often envisioned him back in Manhattan shuffling easily into the lock-up with a killer in tow, the guy chuckling right along with Fenton as he was led to his cell.

But Fenton was a shrewd, street-wise cop who knew only one way to handle an investigation: By putting men out to investigate. Before Gonzalez cut off authorization to travel, Fenton had sent a few of his men to Dallas to take random shots at leads that came in. They came back with enough to convince him that, if he had his way, there would be investigation heavy with field work. Fenton never got his way. In the beginning, in fact, he had a rough time keeping his men busy in Washington. Accustomed to being on the street, they got itchy staying inside. But since only one or two had any background familiarity with the Kennedy case, Fenton suggested they spend their time reading the shelves of books that had been written, mostly by Warren Commission critics. It was, however, a case of the blind leading the blind.

Although the Committee had been in existence for almost six months, it was nowhere close to being able to function as an effective investigative body. I didn't fully realize that until the last days in March, 1977, just before the question of its survival would come up again on the floor of the House.

Late Monday afternoon, on March 28th, I received a call from Bob Tannenbaum. The House was scheduled to vote that Wednesday whether or not to continue the Assassinations Committee. The Committee members as well as the top staff counsel had been spending most of their time lobbying among the individual lawmakers for support. Although many of his fellow congressmen didn't care for Gonzalez, he was a member of the club. Some resented Sprague---viewed by at least one congressman as "just a clerk"---for besting Gonzalez in a head-to-head confrontation. That day, Gonzalez himself had been on the floor of the House ranting again about the Chief Counsel's "insubordination." He had even distributed a "Dear Colleague" letter to every House member urging that the Committee be dropped. He was thirsting for revenge.

I asked Tannenbaum how it looked. "It depends on who you talk to what time of the day." He did not sound optimistic. "Anyway Wednesday is the day. We'll know one way or the other." We talked about the situation for a while and then I started to tell Tannenbaum what I was doing while waiting for the investigation to get organized. "By the way," Tannenbaum interrupted, "I just



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got a call from this Dutch journalist, William Oltmans. He's the guy I was telling you about."

Tannenbaum had told me about Oltmans but he needn't have. Oltmans had gotten national publicity by appearing on various television interviews and then going to Washington to tell his story to the Committee. He had interviewed Oswald's former friend George DeMohrenschildt, and claimed that DeMohrenschildt had confessed that he was part of a "Dallas conspiracy" of oilmen and Cuban exiles with "a blood debt to settle." DeMohrenschildt admitted, Oltmans said, that Oswald "acted at his guidance and instructions."

DeMohrenschildt had reportedly suffered a nervous breakdown at the time he was talking with Oltmans, but he left a hospital in Dallas to travel with Oltmans to Europe to reportedly negotiate book and magazine rights to his story. Then in Brussels, Oltmans claimed, DeMohrenschildt ran away from him and disappeared. Now Tannenbaum told me that Oltmans had just called him from California. Oltmans said that in tracking DeMohrenschildt he had just found that DeMohrenschildt could be reached at a telephone number in Florida. Tannenbaum gave me the number.

That afternoon, I checked the number. It was listed to a Mrs. C.E. Tilton III in Manalapan. That was a small strip of a town on the ocean south of Palm Beach noted for its wealthy residents (I would later learn that Mrs. Tilton was the sister of one of DeMohrenschildt's former wives.) I decided it would be best if I could contact DeMohrenschildt directly rather than by telephone. I planned on driving up to Manalapan the next morning. I was excited about the opportunity to talk with DeMohrenschildt and thought it incredibly fortuitous that he should turn up in south Florida.

On the morning of March 29th, 1977, I went looking for George DeMohrenschildt in Manalapan. I found the Tilton home sitting on the edge of the ocean highway behind a barrier of high hedges. It looked as if it belonged more in New England than Florida, a large, two-story structure of dark shingles and green trim. To the rear were a series of garages with a carriage house above them. I drove directly into the wide yard beside the house. As I got out of the car, there appeared from behind the garage a tall, strikingly beautiful woman. She had smooth olive skin, deep dark eyes and long black hair. Her statuesque body was clad in a clinging black leotard. She was carrying a small towel and glowed with a sheen of perspiration. She had obviously been exercising.

The woman turned out to be DeMohrenschildt's daughter Alexandra. After I introduced myself, she told me that her father was in Palm Beach and that she didn't know how to reach him. She said, however, that she was certain he would be in that evening and that I could reach him if I called about 8 o'clock. She gave me the telephone number I already had. The only identification I had at the time was a business card which identified me as a staff investigator for Senator Schweiker's office. I crossed out Schweiker's name and wrote "House Select Committee on Assassinations" above it and gave her the card. She said she would tell her father to expect my call. She was cordial but direct, as if she had taken my sudden appearance there as inevitable.

I would later learn that as I was talking with Alexandra DeMohrenschildt her father was in a hotel room in Palm Beach being interviewed by a freelance writer named Edward J. Epstein. Although the author of Inquest, one of the first books critical of the Warren Commission, Epstein was then working under a lucrative contract from Reader's Digest to write a book about Lee Harvey Oswald's alleged connections with Russia's intelligence service, the KGB.

The drive from Manalapan back to Miami takes about an hour and a half. That afternoon I called Cliff Fenton, the chief investigator, and told him what had happened. I said I would call DeMohrenschildt that evening and probably



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set up an appointment to see him the next morning. "Fine, fine," Fenton said. "Well you just keep on it." He was obviously more occupied with the frantic efforts to keep the Committee alive when it came up for a vote before the House the next day. "This is crazy up here, just plain crazy," he said with his characteristic chuckle. "I have never seen anything like this place."

About 6:30 that evening I received a call from a friend who was a television reporter in Dallas. "Funny thing happened," he said. "We just aired a story that came over the wire about a Dutch journalist saying the Assassinations Committee has finally located DeMohrenschildt in South Florida. Now DeMohrenschildt's attorney, a guy named Pat Russell, he calls and says DeMohrenschildt committed suicide this afternoon. Is that true?"

My card was found in George DeMohrenschildt's shirt pocket. He had returned to the Tilton home in Manalapan about four hours after I had left it that morning. Alexandra told him of my visit and gave him my card. He put the card in his pocket and, according to Alexandra, did not seem upset. But shortly afterward he said he was going upstairs to rest. What DeMohrenschildt apparently did was to take a .20-gauge shotgun that Mrs. Tilton kept beside her bed for protection, sat down on a soft chair, put the stock of the shotgun on the floor and the end of the barrel in his mouth, leaned forward and pulled the trigger.

As soon as I confirmed DeMohrenschildt's death, I called Sprague in Washington. It was about 7 p.m. Sprague was shocked, but suggested I get on the scene immediately while he attempted to get some staff members together and contacted Committee members to ready subpoenas. Sprague, I later learned, was unable to do anything and never did get back in touch with me. The inability of the Assassinations Committee to effectively react to the death of a key witness revealed that it was still---six months after it was formed---totally incapable of functioning as an investigative body. It reflected six months of political reality and how successful its opponents had been in keeping it distracted and off-balance. No subpoenas were ever issued, no witnesses ever called to testify, no independent investigation was ever made of George DeMohrenschildt's death.

Numerous times later that evening, as I rushed around Palm Beach County attempting to learn the details of DeMohrenschildt's death, I attempted to contact Sprague or Tannenbaum or Fenton or someone who knew what the hell was going on in Washington. I was trying to coordinate the Committee's handling of the case with Palm Beach State Attorney David Bludworth, who was being cooperative but increasingly confused about the obvious lack of coordination. The only one I was able to reach at the Committee's offices was a lone junior staffer who knew only that Sprague and the top echelon staff had been urgently called to Chairman Stokes' office.

The next morning the newspaper headlines blared the news of what had happened in Washington that night as I was frantically scurrying around Palm Beach: Sprague quit. Later I would learn the details. Despite the Committee finally getting unified as a result of the departure of Gonzalez, an early straw count indicated that the House might not approve continuing the assassination probe. As one of the old guards told Committee member Bob Edgar: "You guys dumped Gonzalez. I don't know Sprague at all, but if you don't dump him too, you guys are dead in the water." Sensing that feeling, Sprague had early offered to resign if it meant the difference in keeping the Committee alive. Chairman Stokes assured him that would not be necessary and that the Committee would stick with him. Then, in the last hours of the evening before the House vote, Stokes called Sprague to his office. Repeatedly, Stokes reviewed the situation and each time painted it in gloomier terms.



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Finally, near midnight, Sprague realized that despite Stokes' earlier assurances of supporting him, the ground was being shoveled out from beneath him. "Do you want me now to resign?" Sprague asked, incredulous that Stokes was suddenly swinging with the wind. Stokes put his head down and remained silent. Bristling, Sprague stood up. "Gentlemen," he said, "it's clear it's in everyone's best interest if I resign." He then called his secretary and dictated a two-sentence letter of resignation.

Sprague drove home to Philadelphia at 2 a.m. that evening, about the time I was driving back to Miami from the State Attorney's office in Palm Beach and wondering what the hell was going on in Washington. By 8 the next morning, while I was again trying to contact someone at the Committee offices in Washington, Sprague was on a plane to Acapulco.

That day, after four hours of stormy debate, the House voted to continue the Assassinations Committee at a budget pared to \$2.5 million for the year. The resignation of Dick Sprague and, ironically, the death of George DeMohrenschildt were the key factors in the affirmative vote.

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### HIDDEN EXPOSURE:

Cover-Up and Intrigue in the CIA's Secret Possession of the Zapruder Film  
by  
Philip H. Melanson

It has been called the film of the century. It is surely America's most historically important twenty-two seconds of film: the Zapruder film (the Z-film, as researchers call it.) On November 22, 1963 Dallas dress manufacturer Abraham Zapruder had come to see President Kennedy pass through Dealey Plaza. Zapruder had forgotten his camera; he rushed home to get it and returned just in time to view the motorcade. Standing on a low concrete wall to the right front of the approaching Presidential limousine, Zapruder peered through his 8-millimeter, zoom lens, Bell and Howell movie camera. The camera was fully wound and set manually on maximum zoom.

The shocking tragedy captured in color by the Z film is all-too-familiar to many Americans: the death of John F. Kennedy. As the film begins, the motorcade turns and comes toward the camera. President and Mrs. Kennedy smile and wave from inside the open limousine. For several seconds the President is blocked from Zapruder's view as the limousine passes behind a street sign. When the limousine emerges from behind the sign, Kennedy is clearly reacting to a wound: his hands move up to clutch his throat. He totters to his left; Jacqueline Kennedy looks toward him anxiously. Then the fatal head shot impacts; the President's head explodes in a ghastly corona of blood and brains. His body is thrust violently backward against the seat then bounces forward. Kennedy's exposed skull gleams in the bright Texas sunshine. He falls sideways into his wife's arms. Mrs. Kennedy climbs onto the trunk of the limousine to recover a fragment of her husband's skull. A Secret Service agent jumps aboard and pushes her into her seat as the limousine speeds away.

The Z film is more than gruesome history; it is also the best evidence of the assassination, the baseline of time and motion. By analyzing blowups and calculating elapsed time according to the running speed of Zapruder's camera, investigative bodies from the Warren Commission to the House Select Committee on Assassinations (in 1978) have drawn their conclusions about the timing, number, and direction of the shots, as have scores of private researchers. It is the timing between shots that provides crucial data for the key question: was it a conspiracy? If the elapsed time between bullets hitting the President is too short for a lone assassin to have aimed and fired, then there is proof



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of conspiracy.

Over the years there have been allegations that elements of the American intelligence community, especially the CIA, were involved in covering up a conspiracy in the JFK assassination, or were active participants in a conspiracy. Some assassination researchers have also suggested that the Zapruder film may have been subjected to sophisticated altering designed to hide a conspiracy. They point to apparent anomalies in the motion of the President's body and to an apparent shadow appearing toward the front of Kennedy's head.<sup>1</sup> The speculation is that the original film may have shown that Kennedy was shot from the front, from the grassy knoll, rather than from the rear (from the Book Depository from which Oswald was supposed to have fired); but that the film was altered before it reached the hands of official investigators.

In any criminal case, the integrity of evidence depends upon its chain of possession: who had it when, how and for what purposes before it came into the possession of official investigators to be analyzed by them. In the JFK case the Warren Commission was the official investigating body and the FBI its official investigative arm which conducted tests and analyses of the evidence, including the Z film.

Documents obtained from the FBI, CIA and Secret Service through the Freedom of Information Act contain startling revelations about the Z film's chain of possession. The first documents surfaced in 1976; others in 1981. They provide considerable support for allegations of a CIA cover-up and for allegations regarding possible CIA manipulation of evidence. There is now good reason to question the evidentiary integrity of the Z film. Moreover, it is clear that before the FBI had obtained the film, CIA experts had already analyzed it and had found data which strongly suggested a conspiracy.

The official version of who had the film and camera when and how is as follows.<sup>2</sup> The afternoon of the assassination Zapruder took his film to a commercial photo studio in Dallas for rush developing. Word of the film's existence soon leaked out and, within hours, several news and publishing organizations contacted Zapruder with offers to buy it. Zapruder had three copies made. He immediately gave two copies to the United States Secret Service. The Service kept one copy for itself and gave one to the FBI the day after the assassination. Zapruder sold the original and one copy to Life magazine on November 23, reportedly for \$25,000. Life published pictures from the film in its November 29th issue and locked the original film in a New York vault. Zapruder's camera was given to the FBI by Zapruder so that the Bureau could determine the running speed (the number of frames per second at which the film moved through the camera). This figure would then be used to clock the precise time between shots. The FBI later returned the camera to Zapruder, who gave it to the Bell and Howell Company for its archives.

I had long suspected that the official version was incomplete. Several Warren Commission witnesses had mentioned that a copy of the film had gone to Washington, but their references to such an event were vague and conflicting. According to FBI documents, the Bureau did not obtain a copy of the film until the day after the assassination when it borrowed one of the Secret Service's copies. The FBI had the technical expertise for analyzing the film but did not have the film for twenty-four hours; the Secret Service got two copies right away but, by all indications, lacked the technical capacity for a sophisticated in-house analysis. It was clear from CIA documents declassified in the 1970s---documents unrelated to the assassination---that the Secret Service of the 1960s and early 1970s had some sort of technical dependence upon the CIA. The CIA had provided technical assistance, equipment and briefings to the Secret Service, even to the point of manufacturing the color-coded lapel pins worn by Secret Service agents.<sup>3</sup> It made sense that the Secret Service, lacking



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its own high-powered photographic expertise, might turn to the CIA for help in analyzing the Zapruder film; but there was nothing to substantiate this hypothesis.

Then, in 1976, assassination researcher Paul Hoch discovered CIA item # 450 among a batch of documents released by CIA because of a Freedom of Information Act request. Item 450 consists of nine pages of documents relating to an analysis of the Z film conducted for the Secret Service by the CIA's National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) in Washington, one of the world's most technically sophisticated photo-analysis laboratories. For the first time, there was evidence that CIA had possessed and analyzed the film. Apparently CIA had gotten the film from the Secret Service. There is nothing in Item 450, however, that states when the NPIC analysis was done---hours after the assassination? weeks? months? Nor is it clear whether NPIC analyzed a copy of the film or an original.

Among the nine pages in item 450 are four pages of handwritten notes and calculations. One notation describes photographic work done by NPIC:

Proc. dry	2 hrs.
Print test	1 hr.
Make 3 prints	1 hr.
Proc. and dry prints	1½ hr.

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7 hr.

In Dallas, Zapruder was supposed to have had an original and three copies. No other copies were known to exist. Now we find that the CIA laboratory in Washington made three prints---the same number as were supposed to have been made in Dallas. Did NPIC make extra, unaccounted for copies; or did the NPIC-produced copies somehow end up as the Dallas copies? Was NPIC producing third-generation prints; or had it somehow obtained the original?

It was researcher David Lifton who, through our discussions and exchanges of data, first suggested that the previously described notation ("proc. dry," etc.) referred to work being done with the original film, not a copy. My discussions with a half dozen photographic experts, from both academe and commercial photo laboratories, confirm this point. "Processing" refers to developing an original. If NPIC had been working with a copy, the first step would have been to print, then process. The NPIC notation "print test" refers to a short piece of film printed from the original and used to check the exposure---to see if the negative is too light or too dark---before printing copies from the original. Thus there is strong indication that NPIC had the original.

The original is assumed to have remained in Dallas in Zapruder's possession until he sold it to Life on November 23, the day after the assassination. This allowed time enough for the original to have been flown from Dallas to D.C., analyzed, and returned to Dallas before Life got it. Yet, according to Zapruder and the Secret Service, the original never left Dallas until Life purchased it. Perhaps the original made a secret trip to Washington.

Zapruder had already kept one secret about the film from the Warren Commission. In his testimony to the Commission, Zapruder stated that Life had paid him \$25,000 for the film, all of which he had donated to charity. What he did not reveal, even under questioning, was that the deal actually called for \$125,000 more to be paid in five yearly installments.<sup>5</sup> Zapruder also told the Warren Commission that immediately after the assassination, he went to his office and told his secretary to call the police or Secret Service because "I knew I had something, I figured it might be of some help."<sup>6</sup> But according to Dallas Secret Service Agent Forrest Sorrels, he was alerted to the film by



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a reporter from the Dallas Morning News who contacted him and informed him that a man had made some movies that the Secret Service might be interested in. The reporter took Sorrels to Zapruder's office. As Sorrels described it, "Mr. Zapruder agreed to furnish me with a copy of this film with the understanding that it was strictly for official use of the Secret Service and that it would not be shown or given to any newspapers or magazines as he expected to sell the film for as high a price as he could get for it."

Whether Sorrels was summoned by Zapruder or got word of the film by some other means and surprised Zapruder by showing up at his office, the question still remains whether the Secret Service would be willing to accept only a copy of the film instead of the original. In 1973, Life's Richard B. Stolly, who negotiated the purchase of the film from Zapruder, opined that "If the federal government had not been in such disarray at that moment (immediately after the assassination) somebody with authority and a sense of history would probably have asked Zapruder for the original film and he probably would have relinquished it."<sup>8</sup> Whether someone in authority asked or told Zapruder, indications are that he did indeed relinquish it.

Was Zapruder really in a position to get the Secret Service to accept his conditions concerning the use of the film? Presumably, the original could have been subpoenaed as evidence, thereby delaying---perhaps even ruining---Zapruder's chance to make a lucrative deal. The Secret Service, having just lost a President, may not have been inclined to accept a copy of the film instead of the original or to adhere to conditions set by Zapruder. Out at Parkland hospital, Dallas County Medical Examiner Earl Rose, accompanied by a Justice of the Peace, informed Secret Service agents that they could not remove the President's body and take it to Washington, a position fully consistent with Texas law. The Agents drew their guns, pushed the medical examiner and the justice against the wall and took the body. If Service agents were such Lions in dealing with Earl Rose, why their Lamb-like behavior with Abraham Zapruder?

If Zapruder did manage to strike a bargain with the Secret Service; the terms may well have been that the Service took the original for a brief time (perhaps only eighteen hours) but promised to keep the loan secret so as not to jeopardize Zapruder's chances for a deal. If potential buyers knew that the original had been out of Zapruder's hands, they might have perceived it as second-hand merchandise; if they knew the government was printing extra copies, the exclusivity of the purchase-rights might be in doubt.

Exclusivity was very important to the deal, and Zapruder knew it. Life's Richard B. Stolly recalled that through all the chaos, Zapruder kept his "business sense." Stolly says that Zapruder claimed to have obtained sworn statements from the employees at the film lab in Dallas where the film was first developed, stating that no extra copies of the film had been "bootlegged"; thus "whoever bought the film would have it exclusively."

Even if NPIC was not analyzing the original film but only a copy, documents in CIA Item #450 reveal that the analysis produced some striking data which logically supported a conclusion of conspiracy. The main thrust of NPIC's analysis was to construct various three-shot scenarios. The film was studied and the elapsed time between the frames on which the shots occurred was estimated. Nine different three-shot scenarios were produced, by varying the points (frames) at which the President appeared to have been shot and by varying the estimated running speed of the camera.

Whether NPIC knew it or not, the majority of their scenarios precluded a lone assassin. In 1964 the FBI tested the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository. The Bureau discovered that marksmen could not re-aim and re-fire the weapon any faster than 2.25-2.30 seconds.<sup>10</sup> Thus any interval



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between shots which is shorter than that would constitute persuasive evidence that there were two gunmen. Five of NPIC's scenarios had intervals that were too short---2.1 seconds, 2.0, even 1.0. There is no indication in the released documents that NPIC thought that the five two-gunmen scenarios were any less valid than the four scenarios which allowed sufficient time for a lone assassin.

One of the scenarios which does allow enough time between shots for a lone assassin is labeled "Life Magazine." The calculations in this scenario are identical with those appearing in Life's December 6, 1963 article "End to Nagging Rumors: Six Critical Seconds." The article used an analysis of the Z film to attempt to prove that Oswald acted alone. The question arises: was NPIC generating data for Life magazine or was the country's most sophisticated photo-analysis laboratory reading Life for analytic clues? So far as we know, Life conducted its own analysis for its own article, and there is no conclusive evidence to the contrary. But one handwritten note scrawled near the Life magazine scenario reads, "They know the exact time of the 1st and 2nd shot?" It is a strange question if they is Life and if their article is already finished or on the stands. Presumably, Life should already know whatever their article states that they know, and the article boasts that Life has reconstructed the "precise timing" of the shots.

In 1982 Bernard Fensterwald Jr., a Washington attorney and assassination researcher, filed suit in federal court against the CIA and forced the release of six hundred pages of previously classified documents relating to the assassination. Among them were additional documents concerning NPIC and the Z film. The documents dated back to the mid 1970's when assassination researcher Paul Hoch asked the Rockefeller Commission, which was investigating possible CIA involvement in the JFK assassination, to check into the NPIC analysis of the Z film. The documents, which were withheld by the CIA until Fensterwald's suit in 1982, concern CIA's response to a Rockefeller Commission query about the NPIC analysis.

By itself, and if believed, the 1982 release seemed to minimize CIA's involvement with the Z film. CIA documents claimed that the Agency never possessed its own copy of the film until February 1965 when Time Inc. (Time-Life) provided a copy to the CIA's Office of Training.<sup>11</sup> According to an agreement between Time and the CIA, the film was not to be duplicated, exhibited or published but only used for CIA "training"---whatever that meant.<sup>12</sup> There was no mention of the three copies mysteriously printed by NPIC.

As for the NPIC analysis of the film, the CIA told the Rockefeller Commission that the Secret Service did bring a copy of the film to CIA Director John McCone "late in 1963." NPIC conducted an analysis "late that same night." But "it was not possible to determine the precise time between shots without access to the camera to time the rate of spring rundown." Furthermore, said CIA, Secret Service agents were present during the analysis and "took the film away with them that night."<sup>13</sup>

All of this certainly refers to the same NPIC analysis described in CIA Item #450. The "rate of spring rundown" (running speed of the camera) was not known and had to be estimated by NPIC. Again, if the Secret Service took one "copy" away with them, what happened to the other NPIC copies? Did the Secret Service know about them? And what about the substantive data produced by the NPIC analysis (the nine scenarios, five of which precluded a lone assassin?) There are indications that the Secret Service never got that data, even though it was precisely the kind of information that they hoped to get from the CIA experts at NPIC.

In responding in 1976 to the Rockefeller Commission's query about the NPIC analysis, the CIA stated: "We assume that Secret Service informed the Warren



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Commission about anything of value resulting from our technical analysis of the film, but we have no direct knowledge that they did so."<sup>14</sup> There is no evidence that the Secret Service ever told the Warren Commission about the existence of the NPIC analysis much less about its results. One possible explanation for this is that the Secret Service withheld the data so that the Warren Commission wouldn't see the five conspiracy scenarios. Another possibility is that the CIA withheld the data from the Secret Service so that the Service wouldn't see them.

One CIA memo contained in Item #450 states "We do not know whether the Secret Service took copies of these notes (on the three-shot scenarios) at the time of the analysis."<sup>15</sup> It would seem odd for the Secret Service to go to the trouble to seek out an expert analysis and then not take away any of the data. Yet, no trace of the NPIC analysis has ever appeared in declassified Secret Service files or Warren Commission documents, only NPIC-CIA files. Perhaps the Secret Service never knew that the data existed; perhaps Service agents were only "present" for part of the analysis.

The most intriguing reference in the 1982 release is the CIA's description of when NPIC performed its analysis for the Secret Service: "late in 1963." This could mean November 22 or December 31. Didn't CIA know the date when the analysis took place; or was it using the euphemism "late in 1963" because it was unwilling to admit that it had the film within forty-eight hours of the assassination? CIA stated that NPIC's analysis was done "late that same night"<sup>16</sup> that the Secret Service brought the film to CIA. Why rush or work overtime, unless "late in 1963" really meant November 22nd or 23rd?

I decided to pursue another avenue. Several months after the 1982 CIA release, I initiated a Freedom of Information Act request to the Secret Service and asked for "any and all documents relating to Secret Service possession or analysis of the Zapruder film of the John F. Kennedy assassination, or of Mr. Zapruder's camera, inclusive of any and all documents relating to possession of the film and/or camera by the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) or the Central Intelligence Agency."

The Secret Service response came as a surprise. They claimed that in 1979 they had turned over to the National Archives in Washington all documents relating to the Kennedy assassination. I had previously researched all of the Warren Commission records in the National Archives pertaining to the CIA and the Secret Service but had found nothing relevant to NPIC's analysis. I called Mr. Marion Johnson, the archivist in charge of the Warren Commission records, to inquire whether the 1979 material passed on by the Secret Service had been in the files I had already examined. It had not. Due to a shortage of staff, the Archives had not yet security-cleared and processed the six boxes of "new" material. Johnson and his staff processed the boxes within two weeks.

After five hours of wading through the hodgepodge of newly processed documents--which included everything from carbon copies of previously released documents, to copies of the contents of Lee Harvey Oswald's wallet the time of his arrest, to 5x8 close-ups of the blood stains and brain matter on the seat of the limousine---I came across the only documents related to the Z film. They reveal that, in 1964, Henry Suydam, Life Bureau Chief, wrote to Secret Service Director James Rowley to say that Life believed that the Secret Service had two copies of the Zapruder film.<sup>17</sup> Suydam stressed that the copies were the property of Time, Inc. and that they should not be shown to anyone outside the government. He further stipulated that the Service could keep them as long as it needed them but must return them to Time, Inc. when it was finished.

Secret Service Director Rowley wrote to Forrest Sorrels, the agent in charge of the Service's Dallas office, and asked for a detailed account of how the Zapruder film came into Secret Service possession.<sup>18</sup> Agent Sorrels'