**JFK Assassination: An Annotated Bibliography**

**Reviewers:**

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**PIONEER THEORISTS**

Included in these reviews are the very earliest of JFK assassination books, mostly conspiracy or questioning the Warren Commission like authors Mark Lane, Harold Weisberg, and Josiah Thompson, but some, like William Manchester, just telling the story as history and generally supporting conclusions by the Warren Commission. It is from these books that later writers would borrow and would refer to, often as if the ideas were original. Many books after these spend a good deal of their pages restating what has already been alleged. Though there is no set time frame for these, they generally go from 1964 to the early 1970’s.

**Joesten, Joachim, *Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy?* Marzani & Munsell Publishers, Inc., New York, 1964; 158 pp.**

This book is one of the very first published that challenges the official account of the Kennedy murder even before, by some definitions, there was an official account. It was one of the very few that was published before the Warren Commission Report was published. Many of these early authors, including attorney Mark Lane, and their work were taken into consideration by the Warren Commission as it did its work. This short work, complete with 19 pages of photographs and drawings (“Documentary Section”), gives the reader a European perspective and reaction to the assassination and events immediately thereafter written by one of their own – a freelance writer who spent most of his years in most of the countries of Europe.

Joesten asks all the questions that conspiracy theorists and other readers of assassination books have become accustomed to repeating as if they are fact. For example, Joesten identifies Lee Harvey Oswald as a “minor” CIA agent and questioned where all his money came from, as if he spent money hand over fist (see Vincent Bugliosi: *Reclaiming History*). A closer look at Oswald and his life reveals a penny pincher who, at times, would go a day or two without eating, and gave up things his contemporaries were doing to save for something specific. In addition, we have found that Oswald borrowed money both from his brother, Robert, reluctantly, as well as the government when returning from Russia, which he paid back.

The author claims there were four shots, one that was “in Connally,” one of which he suggests came from the railroad underpass. In addition, he suggests that if Oswald really were the assassin, he would not have been so careless with the evidence, citing the three rifle shells found on the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository and the rifle thrown among the boxes there. The author overlooks that Oswald had instead decided it was more important to leave soon than trying to hide all those things. And where would he have hidden them where no one would find them in the building?

Like another early official version critic, Penn Jones, Joesten brings the reader’s attention to the “mysterious deaths” of witnesses and others involved in the investigation or who the author links to Oswald, the authorities, or the tentative force(s) behind the assassination – the *real* perpetrators. The “backyard photographs” taken by Marina Oswald showing Oswald with the Mannlicher-Carcano and his pistol, are presented as being fakes, another commonly repeated argument without much proof by Warren Commission critics.

There are the usual grammatical errors in a book like this, such as the sophomoric use of “how come” instead of “why.” Those aside, there are glaring errors in the picture/document section in the end of the book, previously mentioned. For example, in his diagram of Kennedy’s car and the positioning of the president and Governor Connally, he has the two men lined up exactly one in front of the other, which we know they were not, and the angle of the suggested shots that hit each from behind clearly what we know were not the angles or angle.

The value of reading this book is to gain a taste of how Europeans saw the assassination and whom they suspected committed the crime. Given Europe’s long history of such political murders, one suspects that the European community thought Americans quite naïve to think a confused loner could pull off such a crime. Still, this book is part of the history of the history, and has value in understanding why the public has many of the views that it does. *DK*

**Jones, Jr. Penn, *Forgive My Grief: A Critical Review of the Warren Commission Report on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy, Vol. I,* The Midlothian Mirror, Midlothian, Texas, 1966; 188 pp.**

This first in a series of four self-published paperbacks is one of a handful of what I refer to as “pioneer assassination theorists,” that is, that first wave of authors who offered an opinion of who killed President Kennedy. I include Jones in the group that essentially first published in 1966 or 1967, after the Warren Commission Report had a chance to settle in and people had a chance to digest it. In the group are Harold Weisberg, Josiah Thompson, Mark Lane, Sylvia Meagher, and historian William Manchester. It is this group that got the public interested in the details of the assassination, in particular in who was or might have been behind Oswald’s involvement. Manchester stands out in this group as essentially the only one in the group who wrote a history basically supporting the conclusions of the Warren Commission. These authors were not professional writers and some, like Jones and Weisberg, had to self-publish to get their work out. It is from these that all the others came over the years, right up to the present. Some of the commonly accepted criticisms of the Warren Commission, that keep being repeated as if they were proven in the work of later authors, appear in these works. Penn Jones, one of these authors who is from the Dallas area, clearly belongs in this group.

I have written elsewhere in this bibliography that the divisions between those who essentially believe that Oswald acted alone, the position of the Warren Commission Report, and those who believe it was a wide conspiracy (pick your group here), generally follow conservative/liberal lines respectively. Penn Jones certainly fits that mold. His mention of those who he believes have selective memories, fudge the truth, or act mysteriously are clearly conservative. One theme throughout this volume is the very conservative nature of Dallas and the negative behavior of conservative individuals in general. It is interesting that he does not waste any time slurring “those of the lowest sort” that he considers as having been involved in Kennedy’s murder with, now politically incorrect characterizations as “pimps, homosexuals, perverts, and cheap gamblers.” Even the title “Forgive My Grief” supports the belief of historian William Manchester that this obsession with Kennedy conspiracy theories comes from a sense that Kennedy’s death had to count for more than being killed by a shiftless wanderer with low self esteem.

Basically, this is a compilation of articles that appeared in his weekly newspaper, *The Midlothian Mirror.* Most of the text is taken word for word from the Warren Commission Report direct testimony. There is an emphasis on Jack Ruby and who he knew and associated with through his Carousel Club, as well as police and prosecuting attorney’s office personnel from Dallas. A consistent theme is pointing out where commissioners and the attorneys for the commission should have asked further questions or called others named by those who testified to also testify. Of particular interest is Bernard Weissman, the man whose name appeared on that offensive ad in the Dallas paper a few days before Kennedy arrived in Dallas. There is also interesting detail from the testimony of Earlene Roberts, Oswald’s landlady for his Dallas apartment, and her sister, Bertha Cheek, also a landlady. Jones raises interesting questions about the police car that stopped in front of Oswald’s apartment and bumped the horn when he was there after the assassination.

It was also Jones who introduced the thought that many of the witnesses or should-be witnesses to this crime died “mysteriously” within a few months or years after the assassination. This is also picked up by many future conspiracy theorists.

The lasting value of this work is the detail from the Warren Commission one has to go through in reading this volume, and also the ineptitude and lack of professionalism of the police authorities in Dallas after the assassination. I think most of us who were living then have forgotten how Oswald was paraded in front of the press that added to the circus atmosphere of those days immediately following the assassination. Inadvertently, authors like Jones also reinforce what Warren Commission critic Harold Weisberg has said on many occasions: that a lot of the answers are right in the work of the Commission itself, in Weisberg’s view, contradicting its own conclusion. Indeed, one cannot read the Commission Report or Jones’ books without coming to the conclusion that, in many cases, the Warren Commission went into minute detail in much of their interrogation.

Penn Jones’ work was part of the start of the questioning of the official version of the assassination, and is an important part of the “history of the history” of Kennedy’s assassination. As Jones himself wrote, he does not have all or most of the answers, he is just raising questions. Over the years, some of questions, unfortunately, for some, became facts without adequate proof. *DK*

**Jones, Jr., Penn, *Forgive My Grief II: A Further Critical Review of the Warren Commission Report on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy,* Midlothian Mirror, Inc., Midlothian, Texas, 1967; 192 pp.**

This second installment of this journalist’s pioneer effort at conspiracy theory has much more narrative by the author than the first, though there still is considerable amount of testimony printed directly from the Warren Commission Report.

This publication, though still easily within the description of “pioneer critics,” was significantly written after the author had benefit of release of works by other “pioneers,” such as Mark Lane (*Rush to Judgment*) and Harold Weisberg (*Whitewash*), who are referenced in the work. Yet, this was still an early work in the field, as evidenced by the plea by the author for general release of the Zapruder home movie to the general public, which the author offered would make it clear to everyone that a conspiracy took place.

There is consistent continued discussion in this volume about “plotting from the right,” suggesting any conspiracy had to come from hard-right conservative groups or individuals. As in most of the volumes in this series, Jones continues the fishing expedition, throwing out possibilities of conspiracy from many facets of the assassination story, including, but not limited to the dry cleaning of Governor Connally’s coat not long after the assassination, speculation of (assuming that there were) location of other rifles in Dealey Plaza that day, the “magic bullet” (Exhibit 399) and the possibility of someone planting it on the stretcher at Parkland Hospital, the mysterious Cuban Sylvia Odio and an alleged meeting she had with Lee Harvey Oswald, and the role, if any, of Russian national George de Mohrenschildt. It is the latter that perhaps gives the reader the most in-depth introduction.

De Mohrenschildt, a businessman in the oil industry, was widely traveled in the western hemisphere, he testifies, due to his professional activities. He knew Oswald, he stated, but did not care much for him, and was not surprised when he heard Oswald was arrested for killing the president. Interestingly, the author continues to claim that not nearly enough, nor the right witnesses were called before the Commission in this instance, nor in many others, yet testimony from acquaintance after acquaintance of De Mohrenschildt is printed in the book.

The author places a heavy emphasis on eye witnesses, citing example after example of individuals who were quoted after the assassination whose statements contradicted conclusions of the Warren Commission or raised more questions by doubters. He continued the theme, with less emphasis of the “mysterious deaths, ” within a short amount of time after the assassination, of those witnesses he describes as important to the case.

For those who wish to see, it is evident from the very start that this critic started with an assumption, then presented everything that would support it, even if that may have been contradictory to his own previous references. The emphasis on eyewitnesses, for example, belies the fact that many in law enforcement over the years have suggested that eye witness testimony is unreliable, and not always the best kind of evidence. Common in Jones’s writing is his statement about Jack Ruby’s death, without any other explanation “. . .how he died, we have no evidence . . .” (p. 15). A thought is thrown out there and left hanging, as if the conclusion is obvious. Move on to the next.

This part of Jones’s work is valuable to the researcher in the direct testimony from the Warren Commission that is published, the various angles of the assassination that the reader should take into consideration in coming to a conclusion being introduced, albeit haphazardly, and, in particular, the emphasis on DeMohrenschildt, as far as shedding light on who he was and his relationship to Oswald. Strangely enough, what Jones writes here often proves what he is trying to disprove. By citing the great number of witnesses called link to DeMohrenschildt, for example, he demonstrates that the Warren Commission did go to significant lengths to support or refute testimony by more potentially central characters. This work, and those like them, are an important part of the history of the history of the assassination, but as proof of a conspiracy should be taken to whet the curiosity of the reader, and not much else. *DK*

**Jones Jr. Penn, *Forgive My Grief III Revised,* The Midlothian Mirror, Inc., Midlothian, Texas, 1969, 1976; 111 pp.**

Journalist Penn Jones continues his narrative about the Kennedy assassination with the shotgun style of the first two of four volumes on this topic. This volume, however, and with the revision’s additions, has the benefit of the work of other early Warren Commission critics, such as Mark Lane, Harold Weisberg, and Sylvia Meagher, to draw from and which to react.

Jones now delves into new “leads” he has introduced or that were introduced by others. These include Lyndon Johnson as a suspect, the New Orleans connection, closely tied to prosecutor Jim Garrison and his work, innuendo about oil tycoon H. L. Hunt, the accused assassin’s brother Robert, and the suggestion that the Secret Service, FBI, and CIA were all implicated in some way. The author continues his themes on Jack Ruby, deputy sheriff Roger Craig, the Zapruder film, and the “mysterious deaths,” now up to 68, of people who were witnesses or otherwise related to the assassination story. In addition, the murders of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy are woven into this, although the connection is not clear.

Jones writes that the answer to these crimes rests on the eternal question “Cui Bono?” – who gained? In other words, who benefited from these assassinations and therefore had motive. It is there we should look. Of course, given that broad scope, it brings in a multitude of suspects, and Jones eliminates few if any. His list includes oil interests, Lyndon Johnson, John Connally, big military, and big business, but not foreign interest (especially not tied to communists, though Lee Harvey Oswald was one). This volume continues the scattered organizational approach, with reprints of editorials from his weekly publication, commentary, some as short as a couple sentences, quotes from the Warren Commission testimony, and those from other sources. It is clearly a strategy of throwing things out there, hoping something sticks, since many of the allegations are contradictory if all are true at the same time. Someone once said that if all those accused of being involved in the Kennedy assassination really did it, they would have been physically running into each other in Dealey Plaza on that day.

There are plenty of factual errors in this work. For one example, consider that Jones implies that the FBI is at fault for not protecting the president better, when it is not their responsibility, and, in fact, killing a president was not even a federal crime at that time. (p. 25) He refers to the “1964 inaugural” (p. 16), when, in fact, of course, there was no such thing, the inaugural for the 1964 election results, by Constitution, occurs in January of the following calendar year. For someone who picks at others’ lack of precise information in testimony, this is a bit hypocritical.

Still, works such as this have some value for the reader, as mentioned elsewhere, in giving a degree of perspective in the “history of the history.” We can see where various ideas originated and the logic, proof, or lack thereof that went with them. Certainly there are legitimate questions being raised. If we take the approach in trying to arrive at the truth, however, of throwing out accusations and hoping one sticks, or someone else proves it, the conversation is never-ending, since anyone can, and has thrown out every conceivable possibility in this case. This will not lead to a truthful result, but rather a continuous conversation, and perhaps that is what some would want. *DK*

**Jones, Jr., Penn, *Forgive My Grief IV: A Further Critical Review of the Warren Commission Report on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy,* Penn Jones, Jr., Midlothian, Texas, 1974; 202 pp.**

This is the fourth and final volume of the results of the research and ponderings of the small-town newspaper owner in Texas, a self-professed liberal in a den of right-wing extremism.

Jones continues his themes of fingering the military as the culprit behind the Kennedy assassination, claiming alternately that we are “becoming” a military dictatorship, and also that we already are one. With this volume, self-published like those of fellow Warren Commission critic Harold Weisberg, Jones ends his written thoughts on the assassination with his retirement from his newspaper ownership, and a continuation of the skipping-around from one suspect to another and one scenario and another. Jones had more to include in the vast conspiracy in the 8 years of his writings and research, with assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy and the moral and ethical failings and resignation of Richard Nixon to include. Even the death of Mary Jo Kopechne on Chappaquiddick is linked as a set up and warning to Senator Edward Kennedy related to his brothers’ murders.

Jones’s earlier insistence that the Abraham Zapruder film be release was realized, and by this volume he was offering copies of it for $15. There is some emphasis on Oswald but, like much of Jones’s work, is not in an organized fashion. Jones’s main point about Oswald seems to be that he was set up for quite a long time as the “patsy” he claimed to be after his arrest. Jones even wonders if Oswald could have been set up as early as 1959 – before Kennedy was even elected president! There is a mixture of editorials from his small town newspaper, as in previous volumes, plus excerpts from articles from other publications. There are far fewer direct quotes from the testimony before the Warren Commission staffers and members than in previous volumes, and especially the first volume.

Familiar characters reappear, such as Sheriff’s Deputy Roger Craig, who was reported as seeing Oswald fleeing from the Book Depository immediately after the assassination, and, of course, the lengthening of the list of “mysterious deaths” of witnesses and others tied to the assassination, according to the author. The list goes past seventy, but he does admit at least one probably really was a suicide and is not added to the list. One almost gets the idea that he regrets having to leave one off.

It is interesting to note that, in the heart of conservative Texas, while Jones is a self-admitted liberal, he frequently uses gay- and prostitute-bashing innuendo and negative stereotyping to demonize those he thinks are involved in the conspiracy and are of the “low-life” category. He takes a decidedly conservative tack, by today’s perspective, in stating that the assassination plot and loss of democratic control of our government are good reasons for there *not* to be gun control.

Unfortunately, if there were a place in the encyclopedia for historian William Manchester’s stated view that conspiracy theorists cannot accept a lone gunman because it would mean Kennedy’s death was meaningless and he was not a martyr, Penn Jones’s picture would be next to it as a perfect example of that view. Throughout all four parts of this work he is consistent in starting with the idea that it simply cannot be true that Oswald did this by himself, or that it could have any link to communism. For example, Jones points out that at the time of the assassination, killing the president was not a federal crime, yet is willing to assert that Chief Justice Earl Warren could convene a grand jury in the case, and that the FBI had some kind of jurisdiction as well. He accuses liberal newsman Dan Rather as being a traitor, liar, and part of the plot because he misreported the direction of Kennedy’s head snap from the fatal shot. Jones complains about lack of access of the public in general to assassination materials, then when a doctor Lattimer gets access, attacks him because he came to the wrong conclusion, according to Jones.

The value in these books today to those with interest in this topic, as stated elsewhere in these reviews, is primarily in this being part of the “history of the history.” The reader can see how these theories evolved. There is positive value also in that, with this constant drumbeat by Jones and others, eventually, much of the material did become public and the Warren Commission testimony and exhibits were analyzed and brought to light for the general public. The Zapruder film eventually became public domain for all intents and purposes. Unfortunately, for Jones’s passionate viewpoint, all of that still has not proven what he so badly wanted to believe. *DK*

**Lane, Mark. *Rush to Judgment*. NY: Penguin Books, 1967; 416 pp.**

First published in 1966, ***Rush to Judgment*** was among the first generation of books to criticize the Warren Commission Report. This pioneering work is still considered a classic critique after almost 50 years. Mark Lane was hired by Lee Harvey Oswald's mother to defend LHO before the Warren Commission, and would go on to author a number of other books on JFK’s assassination.

Section I, **Three Murders**, consists of 16 chapters and focuses on the assassination and its aftermath.

Chapter 1, *Prologue*, focuses on the suspicious activity in the parking lot overlooking Elm Street.

Chapter 2, *Where the Shots Came From*, is self-evident. As many have noted, 58 of the 90 witnesses questioned said shots came from the grassy knoll.

Chapter 3, *The Gauze Curtain*, asserts that JFK was hit first by a bullet in the throat and that it was an entry wound. Furthermore, JFK had a massive wound in the rear portion of his skull. Blood and brain matter was on the rear of the limousine and hit the motorcycle cops riding to the left rear of the presidential limousine, and pieces of JFK’s skull were found on the south side of Elm Street, all consistent with a bullet fired from the front. Undoubtedly some shot came from the rear, but the evidence taken in total, particularly the Zapruder Film, suggests a second shooter.

Chapter 4, *The Magic Bullet*, examines CE399, which allegedly struck JFK’s back, exited his throat, then took out 5” of Governor Connally’s rib, broke his wrist, and embedded itself in his leg yet remained in near-pristine condition.

Chapter 5, *Why Oswald was Wanted*, ponders why a description fitting Oswald was broadcast at 12:45 pm when the Tippit murder did not occur until almost a half hour later. Some have incorrectly charged the Lee Oswald was the only employee in the building who wasn’t accounted for after the assassination, a charge that is easily proven false. In fact, no one quite knows where the description came from, though Howard Brennan, who’s vision was poor and who couldn’t identify Oswald in a police lineup seems the unlikely but likely source.

Chapter 6, *The Sky is Falling*, relates of the testimony of three witnesses on the fifth floor, which does not support Brennan’s testimony.

Chapter 7, *The Other Witnesses*, including the testimony of Victoria Adams, the subject of ***The Girl on the Stairs***, notes that all thought the shots sounded like they came from west of the School Book Depositary.

Chapter 8, *The Murder Weapon*, discusses the confusion over whether the rifle discovered on the sixth floor was a 7.65 mm Mauser or the 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano.

Chapter 9, *The Rifle Test*, discusses the tests with the Mannlicher-Carcano. Particularly of note was the inability of the experts who fired the weapon to accomplish what Oswald allegedly did. Lane argues that the ammunition used must have been WWII surplus and therefore not very reliable. [Lane was wrong here. It turns out that the ammunition didn’t have to be WWII surplus because the CIA had contracted for several lots of new ammunition to be produced by the Western Cartridge Company.]

Chapter 10, *A Completely Fictitious Person,* discusses the name *A J Hidell* used by Oswald. Lane points out that just because the post office box was in Hidell’s name didn’t mean that Oswald was the only person authorized to receive mail at that post office box or even that he was authorized to pick up mail there. The part of the federal form with this information on it is missing. How convenient.

Chapter 11, *The Curtain Rod Story; or The Long and Bulky Package*, demonstrates that the Commission arrived at its conclusion in spite of all the testimony it had.

Chapter 12, *The Paraffin Test and the Latent Palmprint*, questions whether or not the paraffin test cleared Oswald of firing a rifle that day! [The test results were negative, which D. B. Thomas finds conclusive since the problem with that particular test was false positives and not false negatives!]

Chapter 13, *43 Minutes*, describes that nearly impossible flight Oswald supposedly accomplished in the 43 minutes from leaving the Depository to the shooting of Officer Tippit. There are many discrepancies in the eyewitness stories.

Chapter 14, *The Murder of Officer Tippit: The Eyewitnesses*, and Chapter 15 *The Murder of Officer Tippit: The Ample Evidence* discusses the eyewitness accounts of the shooting of Officer Tippit. The testimony is contradictory, inconsistent, and incomplete. The four bullets taken from Tippit’s body and four shell casings found nearby also complicate matters and indicate that at least five shots must have been fired.

Chapter 16, *The Murder of Lee Harvey Oswald*, tells of the murder of Oswald while in police custody. There were at least two warnings called in that Oswald would be killed, and requests were made to move Oswald in secret on Saturday, but the Dallas PD held to the announced schedule and did not provide adequate security. The Commission never addressed these issues.

Sections II, III, and IV of the book (Chapters 17 through 30) deal with Jack Ruby, the Oswalds, and Warren Commission and the law.

While interesting as an example of one of the earliest books published that was critical of the Warren Commission, ***Rush to Judgment*** lacks the punch and relentless logic Weisberg utilized to such great effect in ***Whitewash***. It is thoroughly documented though. Where Weisberg is logical, though occasionally over the top, Lane is shrill. In fact, ***Rush to Judgment*** reads a lot like a defense lawyer’s brief, but does, nonetheless, raise many legitimate questions and issues that have yet to be resolved to many researchers’ satisfaction. TP

**Lewis, Richard Warren, and Schiller, Lawrence, *The Scavengers and Critics of the Warren Report,* Dell Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1967; 219 pp.**

For a book published this early (1967) in the assassination literature, this work is surprisingly thorough and even-handed, though the author and his investigator clearly have an opinion, as evidenced in the title. This author, with his journalistic skills, and the investigator Lawrence Schiller, not only researched the Warren Commission report and supporting volumes, but also, like many of the assassination theory “buffs” and authors that they write about, spoke with witnesses and authors, and did their homework on the people they criticize, as well as the events regarding the assassination itself. Above all they take a reasoned approach, bringing to the fore common sense observations that return the reader to facts and logic, as opposed to emotionalism and sentimentality of which they accuse the authors and researches of whom they write.

One by one Lewis takes on the early Warren Commission critics and points out generally, and above all else, that what they have in common is that they commit the very same general errors of which they accuse the Warren Commission, namely seeking and reporting only evidence that supports the conclusion that they wish to see, and ignoring anything that suggests anything different.

The author brings to the reader’s attention the background of each of the early assassination researchers, such as the lawyer Mark Lane, the small-town newspaper publisher Penn Jones, Jr., the graduate student Edward J. Epstein, the former OSS employee and World War II veteran-turned-barbeque king Harold Weisberg, and others who are engineers and other professions that one would not suspect would give rise to assassinology. David Lifton was a student and Sylvia Meagher, who Lewis credits positively with indexing the topics of the Warren Commission Report, were also thoroughly discussed. Lewis appropriately and accurately describes throughout the book the workings of the assassination sub-culture that developed with journals, networking, “superbuffs,” and the housewives’ underground.

Lewis points out that some of the theorists are just downright silly in their allegations, and that their writings clearly take the approach of throwing accusations out hoping one will stick. For example, Lewis describes researcher George C. Thomson’s theories about the Kennedy assassination as involving the conclusion that Lyndon Johnson pulled the trigger, Kennedy was not really in the car in Dealey Plaza, but, instead, his place was taken by slain officer J. D. Tippit, and there were 22 shots fired. Certainly this was the extreme, but Lewis methodically takes point-by-point each of the major authors and researchers up to that time and dissects their allegations.

Lewis explains the most plausible explanations for the single bullet theory, the mistaken identity of Oswald’s gun (Mauser vs. Mannlicher-Carcano), Ruby’s motivations in killing Oswald, the “magic bullet,” the “head-snap” (“back, and to the left”), and the autopsy contradictions. They do not do it with the certainty and condescending arrogance of sum of the alternate theorists, and they minimize insulting remarks of those with whom they disagree. In fact, there is one entire chapter about the problems of the Warren Commission work, including leaving out some research and ignoring some points with which they should have spent more time. What Lewis offers is not a final solution, for he states clearly that all that can ever be offered is the most logical conclusion from the evidence that is there. This comes full cycle, because it is exactly what Harold Weisberg always claimed, and stated to this writer on many occasions – that “the trail is cold, and we will never really know.” This book is really a surprising and welcome breath of fresh air, well written, well researched, and logically presented that is a must read for anyone interested in this topic. *DK*

**Meagher, Silvia. *Accessories After the Fact: The Warren Commission, the Authorities, and the Report on the JFK Assassination.*  NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013; 512 pp.**

In September 1964 the ***Report of the President’s Commission***, better known as the Warren Commission Report, was released to the public. Shortly thereafter the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits were also released. What researchers quickly discovered was that there was no subject index, which made tracking down specific testimony, exhibits, or threads very tedious if not almost impossible. In 1965 Sylvia Meagher provided an invaluable remedy for that problem with her ***Subject Index to the Warren Report and Hearings and Exhibits***.

Meagher then began the task of correlating the two documents. What she discovered, as did many researchers (including Harold Weisberg), was that the Hearings and Exhibits, “instead of corroborating the verdict reached by the Warren Commission, creates a reasonable doubt of Oswald’s guilt and even a powerful presumption of his complete innocence of all the crimes of which he was accused.” (xxiii) Meagher’s careful analysis of the Hearings and Exhibits found the Report to contain, “(1) statements of fact which are inaccurate and untrue, in the light of the official Exhibits and objective verification; (2) statements for which the citations fail to provide authentication; (3) misrepresentations of testimony; (4) omission of reference to testimony inimical to findings in the Report; (5) suppression of findings favorable to Oswald; (6) incomplete investigation of suspicious circumstances which remain unexplained; (7) misleading statements resulting from inadequate attention to the contents of Exhibits; (8) failure to obtain testimony from crucial witnesses; and (9) assertion which are diametrically opposite to the logical inferences to be drawn from the relevant testimony or evidence. (xxviii)

Over 40 years after it was originally published, Sylvia Meagher's ***Accessories After The Fact*** remains one of the best books on the Kennedy Assassination, and is on my top ten list of Kennedy assassination books. The fact is that many of questions Meagher raised then remain unanswered to this day as does her assertion that each of the major conclusions of the Warren Commission Report was the least plausible conclusion *based upon their own evidence*!

In 27 chapters Meagher left almost no stone unturned, addressing the events in Dealey Plaza, witnesses at odds with the conclusions, the police investigation, the Tippit murder, the Mannlicher-Carcano, fingerprints, FBI tests, the Hidell ID, Oswald’s defection, Mexico, Sylvio Odio, the Walker assassination attempt, the Paines, de Mohrenschildt, Jack Ruby, a “second Oswald,” and much, much more.

Meagher focused the last six chapters on Jack Ruby. Let me cite just one example: the Warren Commission vigorously denied that Ruby had attempted to walk into the interrogation room on Friday evening in spite of the testimony of at least five credible witnesses who recalled seeing him there. Vincent Bugliosi, to his credit, admits the Ruby did do this in ***Reclaiming History***, but portrays Ruby as nothing more than, “a misguided patriot” who had innocently tried to walk into Captain Fritz's interrogation room with sandwiches. And, by the way, I have a bridge in Brooklyn for sale if you’d like to buy it.

You may not agree with Sylvia Meagher’s contention that there was a conspiracy but it’s difficult to deny that wittingly or unwittingly the Warren Commission had indeed become accessories after the fact. TP

**Thompson, Josiah, *Six Seconds in Dallas: A Micro-Study of the Kennedy Assassination,* Bernard Geis Associates, New York, 1967; 323 pp.**

Of the early authors in the Kennedy assassination abundance of books, Josiah Thompson is one of the few academics. As Thompson explains himself in his introduction, *Why Another Book,* twenty-seven of the forty-six previous books on the subject were the Warren *Report* and the twenty-six volumes of testimony and evidence supporting its conclusions. The other nineteen were written, among others, by a former OSS operative and World War II veteran-turned-poultry farmer (Harold Weisberg), and lawyers (Mark Lane and Vincent Salandria). Penn Jones, Jr. was a small town newspaper publisher. Many of these just reacted to and criticized the Warren *Report*, and others like Jones had a political agenda from the start. But Thompson was different. Working in part for *Life* magazine, he sought to start with the actual photographic, eyewitness, and forensic evidence and see where it lead. This honest attempt at arriving at the truth produced, not a definitive answer, but more questions, while eliminating some of the wilder allegations.

In 1967 the general public did not have access to the famed Zapruder film that captured the entire time period in which the president and Governor Connally were shot, but Thompson was able to view it, and he had an artist reproduce the key frames in charcoal and placed them in his book. From these frames and testimony of Governor Connally, Secret Service agents, Connally’s wife Nellie, and several bystanders on the street that day, Thompson was able to conclude that there were most likely four shots and three shooters, one of which was probably Lee Harvey Oswald.

Thompson also writes a thorough analysis of the autopsy on the dead president performed at Bethesda Naval Hospital near Washington, D. C. by doctors he describes as inappropriate for this task due to their inexperience with wounds in general. Only Lt. Col. Pierre Finck escapes his criticism on this issue, and he was called in late. What emerges is an autopsy that is concluded after the body has left the autopsy table, and the acknowledgement of destroyed notes made during the autopsy, contributing to more troubling questions and few solid answers.

Analysis of the bullets, fragments, Oswald’s gun, and shell casings also raise more questions than answer them. Thompson gives an honest narrative and description, as he admits when evidence is troublesome for those who adhere to the shoot-from-the-hip conclusions of some of the early critics of the Warren Commission.

This book has excellent supporting photographs, maps, and diagrams that are at once easy to read and informative. They are conveniently placed within the text of the topics they illustrate. Thompson keeps his narrative tight, concentrating only on those well researched areas where he feels comfortable, and not involving himself in left-right political suspicions and accusations involved in potential motive, the murder of Officer Tippit, or Oswald’s time in Russia and association with Russian émigrés in the United States.

Though much has been written since this book, and much has been investigated, partly due to the House Committee on Assassinations work and events such as exhuming Oswald’s body to prove there was or was not a “double” buried there, Thompson dismissed some of these allegations here with logic and the evidence available. It is refreshing to see an author on this subject treat the subject objectively and leave the door open to be wrong if proven wrong, as well as raising questions for which he admits to having no answer. This is a strong book and the place I would recommend any serious researcher on this topic to begin. *DK*

***Six Seconds in Dallas*** was the first book, other than the Warren Commission Report itself, I purchased on the Kennedy assassination. It was an eye opener for me. Until that point---not having access to the 26 volumes of supporting testimony and evidence---I had accepted the Warren Commission conclusions without question: Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, had killed John F. Kennedy. Thompson wisely limited himself to a meticulous study of the shooting itself. There is no wild search for who were the shooters on other buildings or in storm sewers, just a rational assessment of those six seconds that would change American history. I believe that Thompson establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that Oswald, if he was a shooter at all, could not have acted alone. Harold Weisberg once commented to Dave and me that, “[Thompson’s book] is good if for no other reason than it doesn’t say anything wrong.” If that is true, Thompson got a lot right. That said, Thompson’s conclusion that three assassins fired four shots (the first and third came from the Depository, the second came from the Records Building, and the fourth from the Grassy Knoll) is controversial. Very useful is Appendix D where the well-known forensic pathologist, Dr. Cyril Wecht, skewers the methods and results of the Kennedy autopsy. ***Six Seconds in Dallas*** is a book long overdue for a contemporary reprint. TP

**Weisberg, Harold. *Oswald in New Orleans: A Case for Conspiracy with the CIA.* New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013; 444 pp.**

Originally published in 1967,***Oswald in New Orleans*** was Weisberg’s third book and his account of the strange goings on concerning Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans during the summer of 1963. Written while Jim Garrison’s investigation was ongoing and with a forward by Garrison, Weisberg’s hope was that the Warren Commission would finally be exposed for the whitewash he believed it to be. For all sorts of reasons that was not to be. Unlike the Skyhorse republication of ***Whitewash***, however, this printing is a major improvement upon the original Canyon version. Unlike that edition, available from Harold only as a Xeroxed copy bound in plastic, there is a very useful index. Furthermore it has been typeset in a font that is very easy to read. Of course, Harold’s convoluted sentences and tendentious logic are still present, so the reader must be very patient. None of Weisberg’s books are a quick read.

Weisberg unearths an **enormous** amount of circumstantial evidence that there was an intelligence agency connection to Oswald’s activities in New Orleans, clearly laying the groundwork John Newman would pursue in ***Oswald and the CIA***. Discussed are the documented New Orleans anti-Castro Cuban connection, known CIA activities in New Orleans, obvious unasked questions by Commission lawyers, contradictory testimony concerning Lee Oswald from his marine buddies, Oswald’s “crypto” clearance in Japan, Oswald’s documented anti-communist sentiments, the Newman Building, change of address forms Oswald simply could not have authored, Dean Andrews’s testimony concerning Oswald’s connections to Latinos, Mexicans, and Cubans (11H325-339), David Ferrie, Clay Shaw, Warren Commission, FBI, and CIA obfuscation, Sylvia Odio, and the False Oswald. Dean Andrews, in testimony before the Commission, offered his opinion about Lee Oswald as JFK’s assassin. “I know good and well he did not. With that weapon, he couldn’t have been capable of making three controlled shots in that short time.” Andrews based this conclusion on his experience as a former navy ordnance man who fired thousands of rounds and “threw bolts” 8 hours a day. (p. 115) In this conclusion, Andrews is joined by the Italian Army (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1556184/Oswald-had-no-time-to-fire-all-Kennedy-bullets.html) and Josiah Thompson in ***Six Seconds in Dallas***.

Little known is that Weisberg had a 308-page documentary appendix that was not published with any version of this book. That documentary appendix can be found at the following URL: <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=47745>, and it is very important. It contains classic examples of questions not asked that should have been given the information the Commission had, evasiveness, and outright lies; it is an essential addition to the arguments Weisberg makes.

As is typical of his Whitewash series, Weisberg, with one notable exception concerning an anonymous source about Oswald, holds tight to what can be found by anyone willing to research the Commission’s own hearings and exhibits. Many questions raised by Weisberg remain unanswered to this day, and that is the ongoing tragedy of JFK’s murder. TP

**Weisberg, Harold. *Whitewash: The Report on the Warren Report.*  New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013; 232 pp.**

In his introduction to ***Whitewash*** Harold Weisberg noted that, “This is a story like none other in our history.” Little did Harold realize at the time how right he was. Weisberg has sometimes been called the “dean or patriarch of conspiracy theorists.” That title is justly deserved as no honest investigation of the JFK assassination can afford to ignore the debt owed his pioneering work and his almost legendary integrity. ***Whitewash*** was one of the first responsible critiques of the Report of the Warren Commission to be published. It was so controversial that Weisberg had to self publish it in 1965, as no commercial publisher would print it. The resulting work was hard to read and *hard* to read. By this I mean that the self-published work was photographically reduced from a mono-spaced font created on a typewriter (sadly, the 2013 Skyhorse edition has many of the faults of the original in this respect), which literally made it hard to read. In addition to this, Weisberg’s writing style frequently consists of long, convoluted sentences, which are sometimes hard to follow. In spite of this ***Whitewash*** became a best seller. Weisberg would go on to self publish a number of additional books in the Whitewash series as well as to author additional commercial books on the JFK assassination, Martin Luther King assassination, and Lee Harvey Oswald. Late in life, Weisberg donated his over 300,000 documents, materials, and remaining books to Hood College in Frederick, Maryland for use by researchers. At about the same time Hood College awarded both Harold and his wife Lillian with well–deserved honorary doctorates.

***Whitewash*** is meticulously documented using information exclusively found in the Report and the 26 volumes of supporting testimony and exhibits published by the Warren Commission. Each citation is carefully noted using either an R (R-page #), indicating a source from the Report, or an H (V#H-page#), indicating a volume and page(s) from the Hearings and Exhibits. Weisberg used his experience as a former Senate investigator to great advantage: little escaped his trained eyes. His command of the information contained in the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits is astounding, over and over again he poked holes in matters the Report claimed as factual historical evidence. Over and over again he asked how the members of the commission could have expected the general public to swallow such conclusions; he was dumbfounded as to how that same commission could overlook or ignore significant evidence that pointed to conclusions other than those it reached. In his mind their work, without doubt, was the exactly whitewash he labeled it.

***Whitewash*** is a monumental achievement. I did not realize how fundamentally important this book was until I reread it for this bibliography. Using nothing more than its own evidence, Weisberg destroyed the Commission’s conclusions and in the process identified almost every single major issue assassination researchers have grappled with since that time. The number of shots, the badgering and discounting of witnesses who contradicted the predetermined outcome, the timing of the shots, Oswald’s motive, Oswald’s ability as a marksman, the condition of the rifle, the doctoring of photographs, the reconstruction of events in the Texas Book Depository, the lack of securing the Depository, the bag, the sloppy autopsy, JFK’s neck (back) wound, his head wound, the three shells, the magic bullet (CE 399), the sniper’s nest, the Zapruder film, and much more were methodically examined. To his credit, Weisberg refused to speculate who the assassin or assassins might have been and continued to do so until near the end of his life. He correctly believed, in my opinion, that the time to follow critical leads was almost immediately while the trail was hot, and since that wasn’t done there was little to be gained with theories that would almost inevitably prove groundless.

Weisberg did not set out to prove Oswald innocent. “It is not the author who showed Oswald could not have committed these crimes; it is the Commission, for there is nothing in this book not from its record. Hard as it tried to avoid anything tending to show Oswald could not have committed the crime, the Commission could not keep from its record substantial evidence that he did not. How it could accept without question or comment so much nonsense, fantasy, and outright perjury is beyond comprehension.” (p. 188) Amen, Harold, and rest in peace. TP

**Weisberg, Harold, *Whitewash II: the FBI – Secret Service Coverup;* Harold Weisberg (self-published), Hyattstown, Maryland, 1966; 250 pp.**

This second of Weisberg’s self-published books, as his first, uses actual testimony and other reporting in the Warren Commission Report to show inconsistencies and contradictions in the FBI and Secret Service reports on which the Commission heavily depended, though not exclusively, for their report. It includes many photographs, and puts forth one of Weisberg’s contentions that the man pictured in the crowd in front of the School Book Depository was not employee Billy Lovelady, but, in fact, Oswald, and that his presence there eliminates him as an assassin. I believe that this has since been disproven, and it is one of the places where I disagreed with Weisberg about his conclusions. This book, like his others, is written in his unique run-on sentence style, and should not, cannot, be read like a novel. It takes some digesting. Weisberg’s research and meticulous use of the Warren Commission itself continues in this volume. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold, *Photographic Whitewash: Suppressed Kennedy Assassination Pictures,* Harold Weisberg, Publisher, Frederick, Maryland, 1967; 312 pp.**

This book, fourth in Weisberg’s *Whitewash* series, continues his exhaustive research documentation to show the inadequacy of the photographic evidence used by the Warren Commission in coming to the conclusions that they did. Ironically there is not a single photograph in the book. Roughly half of the book, however, is documentation of government documents, letters, and other references that prove his point that what the Commission had to work with was not accurate nor adequate for the task at hand, thus tainting, or completely negating their conclusions. Like Weisberg’s other works, this is not reading for the impatient. Serious researchers will find this a valuable read, but I wouldn’t make it one of the first things that was read for the beginner. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold. *Whitewash IV: The Top Secret Warren Commission Transcript of the JFK Assassination.* New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013; 224 pp.**

The story of Weisberg’s legal battle to obtain this transcript, which went all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States, is told elsewhere in the bibliography by David Wrone and need not be repeated here. I consider the January 27, 1964 transcript to be a smoking gun because there are three very important pieces of information in it. The first was that the CIA would lie under oath. No big shock there, but it came from Allen Dulles, the former director who just happened to be a commissioner. (p.63) The second and third pieces explode the Warren Commission Report as a fabrication. The damning quote is found on page 193 of the transcript. In it Lee Rankin says, “We have an explanation there in the autopsy that probably a fragment came out the front of the neck, but with the elevation the shot must have some from, and the angle, it seems quite apparent now, ***since we have the picture*** of where the bullet entered in the back, that the ***bullet entered below the shoulder blade to the right of the backbone***, which is below the place where the picture shows the bullet came out in the neckband of the shite in front, and the bullet, according to the autopsy didn’t strike and bone at all, that particular bullet , and go through.” (p. 102) Emphasis mine. First, in black and white Rankin confirms that the Commission had a picture that has never been released, just one of many pictures or x-rays that contradict the Commission’s conclusions that have disappeared. Second, he accurately describes where the bullet entered the back AND NOT THE NECK! His description is consistent with every other contemporary document or piece of evidence (Dallas death certificate, Kennedy’s suite coat and shirt holes, Admiral Burke’s signed statement, Sibert and O’Neill’s FBI report, as well as the autopsy descriptive sheet). The only picture and description not consistent with this location are those provided in the Report of the President’s Commission (CE385 and CE386), which supports a contention never investigated at the autopsy. (R 87) As Weisberg contended, the back wound, in and of itself, destroys the contention that there was only one gunman and, therefore, the conclusions of the Report itself. End of story. TP

**GENERAL CONSPIRACY**

Books reviewed in this category describe problems with the original investigation of Kennedy’s assassination that point to a conspiracy, as opposed to the Warren Commission’s conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman. These titles may propose several possible sources of the conspiracy, but will not identify one that is favored.

**Callaghan, Bob, *Who Shot JFK?* Fireside Books, New York, 1993, 159 pp.**

This is one of the flurry of books that came out in the early 1990’s, many of which, like this one, presented a broad overview of the various assassination conspiracy theories. Unlike some of the other critics, this author is a competent writer in his own right, having been a speech writer for the president’s brother Robert. The title, not original, has that in common with several other titles of that era of conspiracy books, such as James R. Duffy’s *Who Killed JFK?* (1989), Carl Oglesby’s work by the same title (1992), and Harrison Livingstone’s more assertive, but no more original title *Killing Kennedy* (1995).

This oversized paperback (almost square in shape) takes a slightly different approach than the other critics’ offerings. It injects a bit of humor, which some might find offensive given the topic, and is augmented by stylized portraits, action scenes, and cartoon figures in the boxed-in issue explanations. One half expects the credits to include Andy Warhol, but instead, the illustrations are by Mark Zingarelli. The first artistic offering is the first printed page before the title page with a sketch of a JFK head looking skeptically sideways, as if he is watching over the Warren Commission proceedings.

This book is actually helpful, and the author tells you his bias from the start. Having said that, it should be noted that the author openly identifies those theories he feels are ridiculous, where other critics try to make everyone happy by the “scatter-gun” approach of throwing as much out there as possible and hope something sticks. Like the others, Callaghan starts with the official story as put forth by the Warren Commission. He then proceeds to devote chapters and those boxed-in sections to various theories, their origins and histories, and the problems and strengths of each. Of course, he spends a considerable amount of print talking about Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby.

Callaghan goes so far as to identify the authors he feel have the most credibility (most notably Anthony Summers and, to a lesser extent Edward Jay Epstein).

There are, of course, problems with some of his arguments, and Callaghan, though not as egregiously, falls into the same habits as other critics of making unsubstantiated allegations and unsupported conclusions. For example, he writes “the evidence suggested . . .” about the CIA, then does not provide actual evidence. His various scenarios involving the CIA as the primary bad guys completely disregards the documented failures of the CIA under counter-spy James Jesus Angleton to bag a single important spy in twenty-five years, and its equal failure to get in and out of Iran under Jimmy Carter without crashing the helicopter and not accomplishing its mission. He, and others, give the CIA much too much credit.

In one of the author’s side notes, titled “What Shall I Tell Mr. Khrushchev if He Calls,” Callaghan seems to be uncertain whether the bag carried by the Secret Service with the president, that he reports was left behind in Dallas in the confusion of the assassination, was to respond to a nuclear attack with one of our own, or communicate with the Soviet dictator. You don’t want to confuse those, certainly.

Despite the questionable propriety of the humor used throughout the book, the cartoonish presentation, literally, of the illustrations, the usual unsubstantiated allegations here and there, and the telltale choices of words and phrases that belie foregone conclusions, this book has more value than most of its era. It is a decent summary of the various conspiracy theories, and it does it in a readable, understandable fashion. The author raises legitimate problems and strengths of the various other critics and defenders of the Warren Commission, and unlike Dr. Crenshaw’s book (*Conspiracy of Silence*), from which Callaghan quotes liberally, this author actually has an index.

All things considered, this book would be as good a place as any to start if the reader intends to do a fair amount of reading on the subject, unless one wants to start with the Warren Commission Report itself, which is considerably drier in presentation. *DK*

**Corsi, Jerome R., *Who Really Killed Kennedy? 50 Years Later;* WND Books, Inc., Washington, D. C. 2013; 370 pp.**

Just when you thought every possible suspect and coincidence had been brought out about the John Kennedy assassination, a new wave of books has been published in the past couple of years that purport to bring new information to the debate. Of such is this example that in its subtitle claims “Stunning new revelations about the JFK assassination.” I read it carefully and deliberately and found none of that.

The author is the holder of a doctorate from Harvard in political science and has written books titled *What Went Wrong* about the GOP side of the 2012 election; *Where’s the Birth Certificate?* about the presidential qualifications and President Obama; *The Late, Great USA,* and others, including others on the *New York Times* best seller list. He currently works for the same company as his publisher as a senior staff reporter.

Despite the subtitle claim, Corsi goes through all the previous narrations of almost fifty years of conspiracy theorists including, but not limited to why this event was so crucial to American history, the single-bullet theory, the role of the “grassy knoll,” mini-histories of Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby, J. D. Tippet, the KGB, the CIA, Cuba, the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam, Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, and how all this ties in with Watergate and “The New World Order.” There is something here for everyone.

To get right to the answer of the title question: the CIA, the Mob, the Military-Industrial Complex, and those opposing Kennedy’s Vietnam policy. Specifically knowledgeable were, among others, Richard Nixon, George Bush, Sr., Lyndon Johnson, and Allen Dulles. Corsi claims “The day JFK removed Allen Dulles from directing the CIA was the day JFK signed his death warrant.” You can’t say it any clearer than that. Unfortunately Corsi has little more, if any, proof of any of this than his conspiracy theory predecessors from which he heavily borrows.

What are some of these evidentiary events? During LBJ’s swearing in on Air Force One, an “eye wink” from Congressman Albert Thomas to LBJ “the moment he lowered his right hand from just having taken the oath of office.” (p. 298) Testimony by Secret Service agent Forrest Sorrels about not seeing anyone on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, even though a number of other eyewitnesses did. Never mind that Sorrels was in the lead car with Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry, and by the time Kennedy was shot the *first time* Sorrels would have been facing forward and well on the way down Elm Street toward the Triple Underpass and in no position to see the window being discussed. JFK’s plans to dump Johnson from the ticket, though there is as much evidence or more that JFK had no such plans. The conclusion by the House Assassinations Committee that there was a conspiracy, based on last-minute introduction of information about a dictabelt from the police that purportedly recorded shots in Dealey Plaza that day. Never mind that since that time those sounds have been determined to be from the motorcade near Parkland Hospital after the assassination, not during, and that all the conclusions of the committee up to that point essentially agreed with those of the Warren Commission. Corsi, also like many of his conspiracy predecessors, points out (whether true or not or relevant or not) that Richard Nixon, George Bush, and Joseph Milteer, the latter who has often been accused of discussing Kennedy’s pending murder in advance in other plots, were all in Dallas the day of the assassination. If one gives that a moment of thought, it would not make much sense, unless they actually pulled the trigger, that Dallas would be high on their list of places to be at the moment if they were knowledgeable of or involved in the plot to kill the president.

Corsi claims a number of parties were involved and there were multiple shooters. What he describes, as is true with most of the conspiracy theorists, is actually more difficult than what Oswald is claimed to have done by the Warren Commission. But never mind; as my father many times said “My mind is made up; don’t confuse me with the facts.” Corsi gives the reader what he or she wants to hear and plows on to the next accusation.

There is a good description of the background and relevance of Mary Pinchot Meyer, wife of CIA operative Cord Meyer and alleged paramour of John Kennedy. Cord Meyer is hinted at as one possible “rogue” element of the CIA that would have reason to see Kennedy dead.

Corsi goes through most of the usual points of the story involving Oswald, his background and behavior, and the alleged ties to the CIA and KGB, using innuendo and assumption that the points made are true before moving on to the next point without actually proving the previous one. He makes mention of a level drop of 24 feet in the street from the Texas School Book Depository to the underpass, making the angle inconvenient for the Warren Commission conclusion that Oswald acted alone, never mind that Kennedy was shot well before the underpass, so, therefore, the drop-off could not have been as much as 24 feet using Corsi’s own information. Corsi makes the tired old argument that Oswald would have no reason to make a “difficult” shot of Kennedy after the motorcade’s turn in front of Oswald onto Elm when he had the very relatively easy shot of Kennedy coming right at him *before* the turn. Of course, that argument has always had the problem that that is exactly when everyone is looking that direction – right at the Texas School Book Depository, rather than away from it if Kennedy was shot, as he was, from behind.

There are, of course, the common number of silly mistakes one expects from those conspiracy theory authors and others who are not trained professionally in writing that appear in this book, that one would expect better of from a well-announced PhD holder from Harvard. For example, there is an unusual number of poorly spelled names and other words. And, on page 275, Corsi writes “On March 23, 1970, JFK held a press conference in the then-new State Department auditorium.” Since Kennedy was killed in 1963, I am not thinking he could have made that press conference. I find it interesting that Corsi can complain about the chain of evidence for bullets and bullet fragments that *were* found that support the Warren Commission’s conclusions, but he can’t present any evidence at all of bullets or fragments from those other shooters that were involved the “triangulation” of fire.

Sadly, this author’s employers have chosen him to write this book that brings nothing new to the table, and embarrasses them and him by putting forth a shabbily put-together work that hardly is worthy of a Harvard graduate. There are plenty of books that cost less, are written better, and are better researched that reach some of his same conclusions (though not all of them in the same book) as Corsi’s to obtain and read for anyone to pay to read this one. *DK*

**Craig, John R. and Rogers, Philip A., *The Man on the Grassy Knoll: Did the CIA Hire a Psychopath to Assassinate JFK?* Avon Books, New York, 1992; 280 pp.**

This work, written during that flurry of post-Oliver Stone-*JFK* books, finally at least names a specific person who was on the grassy knoll shooting from Kennedy’s front and right. His name is Charles Frederick Rogers, “Carlos,” Carlos Montoya,” or “Carlos Montoya,” depending on the context.

The book is written for the most part as a murder mystery or novel about a murder, then turns to the usual rhetoric about democracy being subverted as long as the truth, as presented here by the authors, such as it is, is hidden. The story line is not difficult to follow. It centers around a brutal murder and mutilation in Texas in 1965 of two elderly residents. A lone adult son is known to be living almost as a recluse in an upstairs room, which is found locked when police discover his parents’ bodies. The son then just disappears forever, though, at the end, the authors claim there were “sightings.”

The story continues with Rogers, a World War II Navy veteran, after working for Shell Oil, abruptly quits a good job in 1957 to theoretically do nothing for a living. But the authors know where he went. He went to work for the CIA, got his pilot’s license, and became deeply enmeshed, not only in CIA work, but, eventually with others who went to Dallas to kill the president and set up Lee Harvey Oswald as a patsy.

All the usual suspects are brought into the story, including the “three tramps” who were detained in Dallas the day of the assassination after being rounded up from the railroad yard. The authors are among the strongest proponents of the tramps-as-conspirators story, with one of them being none other than Charles Harrelson (yes, the father of Woody Harrelson), a hired assassin, who recently died in federal prison while serving essentially a life sentence for the contract murder of a federal judge. There are all sorts of connections described here in Texas and New Orleans that link the mob, Harrelson, Rogers, Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby, David Ferrie, and the cast of Jim Garrison characters in Louisiana. Having read this so many times about Harrelson, I decided to write to him myself in the 1990’s. Surprisingly, he wrote back a rather strange handwritten one-page letter denying knowledge of the JFK assassination altogether. A copy is placed elsewhere in this document for your own perusal. How hard could it have been for the authors to just ask him? It cost me a postage stamp and about a month of waiting.

The story is complicated by a fundamentalist minister and his wife in Texas, who run the church where Rogers’ mother attends. It is from these two apparently that the authors link Oswald, Harrelson, and Rogers, as two of them made a strange visit to the minister’s home asking if they could call Rogers from their house. Of course, they were invited in for a meal.

So as not to lose any readers, in addition to the mob, the Russian immigrant George de Mohrenschildt is brought into this, as well as all the Cuba intrigues of the 1960’s and the characters that go with them. Oil companies, mob boss Carlos Marcello, Guy Bannister, and E. Howard Hunt, they are all here.

This is clearly not a scholarly work. There is no index. The bibliography is not mostly of the serious assassination authors, but rather those that put forth their favorite theory that fits the prejudice they already possess. And the book has its share of silly errors. The pages in the Table of Contents do not match some of the pages that are actually in the book. The authors call the Central Powers in World War I “The Axis” (that’s World War II).

There are quite a few problems with this book. In the preface, the authors tell us it is all true, except they have added dialogue to create “dramatic effect.” (p. xiii) The problem is it is difficult to tell where that is and where they really know what was said. Clearly the part where Rogers is arguing with his mother before he slugs her with a claw hammer is made up, since the parents are dead and Rogers disappeared. That is actually a fairly large number of pages and appears twice in the book. It would be less hypocritical if authors such as Rogers and Craig would apply the same standards of knowing everything about those you accuse before they are found guilty just because you don’t have all those details, when Oswald is found innocent because we don’t have all *those* details. And there is a fair amount of overuse of the term “mysterious” to describe anyone that we can’t explain fully, but want to link to the assassination. The reader is encouraged to indulge his or her preconceived notions if they involve perpetrators other than Lee Harvey Oswald as the shooter.

I can’t imagine why a serious researcher would need to read this book, except it is an easy read and shows where some of these wild accusations come from in the assassination literature, and reads, as stated, like a murder mystery until the authors hit their stride in the end with the general conspiracy theories that indicate how our country is going down the tubes. This one is avoidable. *DK*

**Horne, Douglas. *Inside the Assassinations Records Review Board: The U.S. Government’s Final Attempt to Reconcile the Conflicting Medical Evidence in the Assassination of JFK.* Volume 4. Louisville, KY: Douglas P. Horne, 2009; 402 pp.**

I don’t honestly know what to make of this five-volume series of books. I had originally thought that this volume, which deals specifically with the medical evidence from the Bethesda autopsy and Zapruder film, would belong in the forensics section. But this volume seems to be anything and everything but hard science, based almost exclusively upon the conflicting accounts found in the Warren Commission Report, the House Committee on Assassinations, recorded statements, and depositions given to the AARB. I’m left feeling thankful that I didn’t purchase the other four volumes.

Horne makes it clear almost immediately that he thinks the fatal shot hit Kennedy in the head, “probably fired from well down the grassy knoll fence line, near where the triple overpass meets the knoll, at or near the storm drain behind the stockade fence” (p. 1147) and that the throat wound was also a wound of entrance. He accepts the body alteration theory initially put forth by David Lifton in ***Best Evidence***. “First, let us begin with what is not true: the bronze ceremonial casket offloaded from Air Force One at Andrews ARB shortly after 6:00 PM on November 22, 1963, and seen on television by millions of Americans, did not contain President Kennedy’s body at the time it was taken off of the airplane.” (p. 988) He argues that the body was never in the ceremonial casket while it was on the plane, but in a shipping casket stored in another pressurized and heated area, and loading it had delayed AF1’s departure from Dallas. This gave Humes time to alter the head prior to the official beginning of the autopsy. Furthermore X-rays and autopsy pictures were faked. That seems like a lot to ask.

Concerning the Zapruder film, Horne concludes, “There are substantial and responsible reasons to doubt the authenticity of the film because of: 1) serious irregularities in its chain of custody; 2) irregularities in its appearance inconsistent with its processing; 3) photographic inconsistencies between the extant film (the presumed ‘original’) and ‘control’ films shot during the authenticity study; and 4) major inconsistencies between eyewitness recollection of both the hear wound(s) and events in the motorcade, and the image content seen in the extant film.” (p. 1185) I concede that the technical ability to alter the film existed in 1963 and that the chain of possession, as with almost every other material piece of evidence, is unclear, but the logical conclusion is that a very large group of individuals would have had to be involved in this type of cover-up. Feister’s argument that the red halo effect, unknown in 1963, is exactly what should be expected. Furthermore, Wrone argues persuasively in his book ***The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK’s Assassination***, also reviewed in this bibliography, that the film is authentic and a record of a conspiracy. Is that what conspirators would have desired in their alteration of the film? I think not.

I would not waste my money on this book, let alone the whole series, especially at $25 a copy. TP

**Hubbard-Burrell, Joan, *What Really Happened? JFK: Five Hundred & One Questions & Answers,* Ponderosa Press, Spring Branch, Texas, 1992; 320 pp.**

There were so many books written on the JFK assassination in the early 1990’s that authors were running out of unique titles for their books. At first quick glance, this title on the cover appears to be asking JFK himself what happened, when, in effect, it is written as if he is asking the question himself, in the manner of *Why me?* With titles like that of this book, and others like Oglesby’s *Who Killed JFK?* And Callahan’s *Who Shot JFK? –* both reviewed elsewhere in this document – one is tempted to skip to the back of the book, like a mystery novel, and secure the answer without reading further.

This book is yet another from that large stack that was written in the early 1990’s, and like those of Harold Weisberg and Penn Jones, Jr., it is self-published. The difference is, by 1992, the dozens of authors writing on this topic were finding it less difficult to find a publisher than those earlier works by Weisberg and Jones.

Joan Hubbard-Burrell at one time worked for the CIA, then was a Research Historian for the Admiral Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg. As such, one might expect a little more meat to this book than what is there. Indeed, there are 501 questions brought forward in this work, and they are answered immediately, citing references from a selection of 22 books on the assassination written predominantly, if not exclusively, by those who were not satisfied with the conclusions of the Warren Commission on this topic.

The questions offered are very uncreative, to the point of insulting the intelligence of the reader at times. Because of the choice of books from which to answer these questions, described above, has a definite slant to them, it is not surprising that many of the questions are answered definitively, as if we have that answer clearly available to us as the unblemished truth, while other questions inconsistently state “We don’t know” or something similar. Some of the questions are downright silly. For example, at the end of the book, for thirty-nine pages, covering two chapters and involving ninety-two individuals, who died from weeks to decades after the assassination (after all it would take some time for even clever assassins to get around to all those witnesses in a short time), the author asks Who was? – then proceeds to list these names by themselves, with explanations of various lengths mostly involving their “mysterious” or “unexplained” deaths.

The bias in this book is so clear that in many cases the questions themselves have the appearance of being rhetorical. One has to wonder on what basis the author selected the books to include in her answers for reference after each. After all, there were, by 1992, dozens, perhaps hundreds of books, written on this subject or collateral topics. Here are but a few of these kinds of answers: For the listing of the name of Roy Kellerman in the “who was” section earlier in the book (yes, there are two of them), the author writes that this Secret Service agent, who rode in the front passenger’s side of Kennedy’s car that day, “If President Kennedy had from all reports four wounds, Governor Connally three, there have got to be more than three shots, gentlemen.” (p. 89) Really? A bullet can’t go through someone and come out on the other side and create two wounds? In answering the question about what kind of person Lee Harvey Oswald was, Hubbard-Burrell offers that people were “led to believe [by whom? – my insertion]” that “Oswald was a lonely, left-wing nut and a school drop-out,” then proceed to offer that “he was very intelligent.” (p. 117) As a teacher of 43+ years, I am pretty certain I know that someone can be a school dropout and be pretty intelligent. It wouldn’t take me long to think of half a dozen individuals thus described. On page 17, there is a list of “miscellaneous ‘errors in judgment’” that contributed to the negative aspects of this event. Half of them describe events and have nothing to do with anyone’s judgment.

One could go on about the various obvious spelling errors of names and terms and other editing sloppiness. Given the clear bias of the author, the limited selection of books from which she gleans her answers, some of which contradict each other, and outright false information, is reading this book any value at all to the reader? I think, yes, in a limited way. There is an index, and the books referenced for answers are listed at the beginning of this book. The questions, such as they are, give an overview, though incomplete, of the various theories that are out there that are alternatives to the conclusions of the Warren Commission. So, in the “history of the history” of this event, this book can provide a limited view of what is out there in conspiracy books. If there is value in reading this book, it would be to read it before reading some of the more serious books on the subject, as it can set the stage for what you are about to experience and provide a scorecard for the reader. *DK*

**Oglesby, Carl, *Who Killed JFK?* Odonian Press, Berkeley, California, 1992, 95 pp.**

This little book leaves no sense of mystery about where the author is coming from or where he is going from the start. In the Introduction, Oglesby writes “When a public official is killed because some small group doesn’t like his views, the people who voted for that public official are effectively disenfranchised.” Of course, this is a truism, but it does not prove, by stating it, that it applies in any way to the Kennedy assassination. And if that is not enough to tell you the slant of this work, it should be noted that in the back of the book, they point out that this little book is one of several like it from the *Real Story* series and that they are “Short, well-written, and to the point, *Real Stories* are meant to be read.” Other books in the series are written by Gore Vidal, Noam Chomsky, and Alan Clements. Look up their political inclinations and you will be able to predict what is in this book.

This book does summarize the usual narratives from other critics’ books – the official Warren Commission story, the basic narrative of events that day, the political climate in Dallas, the various groups that are suspects because they had reason to hate Kennedy, and of course, all those dead witnesses who died “mysteriously” over a 25-year period. Apparently some of the latter were more of an immediate threat to the conspirators than others.

If you want to get a feel for the basic repeated arguments of the critic community in general – those things mentioned most – this book might be a good, quick way to get started. Don’t use it for factual proof, however. *DK*

**Sabato, Larry. *The Kennedy Half Century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy*. NY: Bloomsbury, 2013; 603 pp.**

***The Kennedy Half Century*** is a must-read for anyone looking for an unbiased look at JFK's presidency, assassination and legacy. Sabato, respected political commentator as well as founder and director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia, provides a definitive account of why Kennedy's life, death and legacy still matter 50 years after his death. Chapter One takes the reader back to November 22, 1963 in a riveting account of that terrible day. Chapters 7 – 12 are proof that a weighty tome defending the Warren Commission is both unnecessary and likely wrong. Sabato is no conspiracy nut, and yet humbly admits, “I do not presume to know for certain what happened on November 22, 1963, and we are long past the point when all the mysteries can be cleared up.” (p. 160) And yet Sabato does convincingly clear up one mystery: that of the Dictabelt tape. There was a stuck microphone, but it was not on a motorcycle that was part of the presidential motorcade at the time of the assassination (which doesn’t mean that it didn’t broadcast useful and informative information). For full details on the analysis of the Dictabelt tape go to **http://www.thekennedyhalfcentury.com/pdf/Kennedy-Half-Century-Audio-Research.pdf**. Sabato is highly critical of the CIA, finding no excuse for their outright lies, withheld documents, and misleading of both the Warren Commission and House Select Committee on Assassinations. The CIA continues to stonewall assassination researchers to this day. Neither does he have many good words for the sloppy work and lack of pursuit of valuable leads by the Warren Commission. The FBI is culpable was well, Hoover being most concerned that the reputation of the Bureau not be tarnished rather than with finding the truth. Though Oswald may have acted alone, and Sabato believes that he did, “the chance of some sort of conspiracy involving Oswald is not insubstantial. For all the attempts to close the case as ‘just Oswald,’ fair-minded observers continue to be troubled by many aspects of eyewitness testimony and paper trails. There remains the live possibility of a second gunman in the grassy knoll area.” (p. 250) Sabato posits that a small cell acting independently within the CIA with Mafia support could have carried out the assassination.

In the end, Kennedy’s tragic exit insured that his legacy would endure: he did not have to deal with the inevitable controversies that would have arisen in the traumatic years ahead. Maybe he would have been reelected, but it wouldn’t have been a landslide. Without the landslide, would critical Civil Rights legislation or Medicare have been enacted? I think not. We might have had a better nation with Kennedy, but it easily could have been much worse than it is now. What Sabato does illustrate is that no administration, Democratic or Republican, can safely ignore the legacy of John Kennedy. TP

**Weberman, Alan J. and Canfield, Michael, *Coup D’Etat in America: The CIA and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, Quick Trading Company, San Francisco, California, 1992 (revised edition); 382 pp.**

This book is one of several that takes the “scatter gun” approach, throwing out various topics and hoping that one sticks. To the writers’ credit, they admit they don’t have all the answers, but are basically asking questions, hoping that somewhere in there they help to arrive at the truth. At least there is some humility.

When I first purchased this book, I wrote to the authors as I am inclined to do, and gave feedback and asked my own questions. I was then surprised to receive in the mail an unsigned request that I translate a document that was typed in Spanish, and obviously a several-times copied piece. As it turned out, it was about the Bay of Pigs and discussed men who might be spies for the United States. I am convinced the letter was sent to me by Alan Weberman. Why all the mystery about it, I do not know. I got the feeling that he thought someone might come after him if they knew he sent that to me. This book is consistent with that.

The book starts out a bit mysterious as there is no section separate from the text that gives biographies of the authors, though there is some of that in the two publishers’ notes. It is always helpful to have the author(s)’ background so you know their strengths and limitations in tackling the subject at hand, and any built in biases they may have. And these two have plenty.

Weberman and Canfield admittedly start with the concept that there was no way that Lee Harvey Oswald could have done this act by himself, if at all. What follows is one micro-subject after another of mostly speculation and little to back it up. These are familiar whipping boys in the assassination saga that appear in most of the conspiracy books, only Weberman and Canfield fall for most of them.

There are the usual connections that are drawn that remind one of the six degrees of separation from Kevin Bacon, though in this case it is any figure in the assassination story connected to some group or other person that may have had a reason to kill the president. At various times in the book, the authors imply that the FBI, CIA, and the mob were all involved. I am wondering if the authors know that the FBI and CIA could rarely agree on anything, let alone collaborating to kill and/or cover up killing the president. One also wonders how all these people involved could keep this a secret for what is now 50 years.

Weberman and Canfield do clear Lyndon Johnson from involvement, though they say that he and his policies, so different (at least in foreign policy) from Kennedy’s, benefitted from the murder. As the title suggests, the authors allege a vast conspiracy to commit a coup d’état – an overthrow of the government. They tie it to the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the escalation of the Vietnam War, among other events.

There is considerable space devoted to placing Richard Nixon in Dallas the day of the murder, as if he would have to be, or it was even smart for him to be present in the city where the president was murdered if he were involved in the planning of it or otherwise knowledgeable of it. Unless he was pulling the trigger, it would make no sense at all for him to be in Dallas and be in any way behind this crime.

A main feature of this book is linking the three “tramps” that were rounded up and detained by the Dallas police following the assassination. Actually, they identify two as E. Howard Hunt, and Frank Sturgis, both of Watergate fame, and both tied to the Bay of Pigs fiasco. The third they are not quite so sure, but describe him as a “possible Oswald double.” Even if you look at their extensive collection of photos in the book of the tramps from every conceivable angle, it takes quite an imagination to see the “Frenchy” tramp as looking anything like Oswald. At least they don’t have the “Sturgis” tramp being federal judge-killer Charles Harrelson, as many of their fellow conspiracy theorists advocate. Actually, we know who all three tramps were and even Harold Weisberg, perhaps the most respected of the Warren Commission doubters discounts the tramps as in any way linked to Kennedy’s murder.

Any review of this book cannot ignore the absolute sloppiness with which it was written.

There are many examples one can site. Every book has a few typographical errors that the editors miss, but this one has set some kind of record. They would be humorous if this were not such a serious subject and if so many people didn’t believe every word these folks write. For example, in several places in the book, including the index, Warren Commission junior counsel Arlen Specter, who later became a U.S. Senator and was author of the “single bullet theory,” is referred to as Arlen Spector. Presumably the authors think he was related to Phil Spector, the creator of the musical “Wall of Sound.”

In discussing Jim Garrison’s crusade in New Orleans, the authors call Clay Bertrand Clay *Bertrand.* (p. 39) It gets sillier. Kennedy advisor McGeorge Bundy is several times referred to as “George McBundy.” (p. 190) Mobster Carlos Marcello is written Carlos “Marchello.” (p. 44, 152) Nixon’s book *Six Crises* is referred to as ***My*** *Six Crises.* All they had to do was look that up or get a copy of the book at the library. Laziness. And these are just the obvious ones. You would think that with two editions of this, they would get these right. It is a clear indicator of the absolute off-the-cuff sloppiness exhibited by these authors in this work.

On the other hand, it is clear they spent a good deal of time doing some research. For example, there is an extensive transcript of an interview with Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis, though he never admits being one of the tramps. Unfortunately the research they have done and reported here asks a lot of questions, but answers nothing.

And the silliness does not end with the authors. The 1992 edition editor Ed Rosenthal claims that the Nixon Administration with “key CIA operatives were to destroy the Democratic party, *call off the election,* and declare a state of emergency .” (my emphasis) (p. iii) This makes no sense at all. What Nixon’s henchmen did was illegal and reprehensible, but clearly not needed and an example of paranoid overkill, since Nixon won in a huge landslide and was never really seriously challenged by George McGovern as having a realistic chance of winning.

The most recent publisher writes about the (first) Bush presidency “dirty tricks” but never identify any of them. (p. iii) The authors write that a book was never written about Marina Oswald (What about Priscilla Johnson McMillan’s 1977 book *Marina and Lee*?).

You can see in this book the origin of many of the factual errors and stories within the story that are repeated without proof in so many other conspiracy books. The authors have more humility than most who have written conspiracy books, but are no more accurate in their allegations or conclusions. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold, *Bogus Revelation: More Official Lies About the Assassination of President Kennedy,* Unpublished, 1997; 254 pp.**

This unpublished book, like its sibling *Waketh the Watchman?* which is reviewed elsewhere in this bibliography, contains many side issues and a continuing history of the history of the assassination. If anything, it focuses primarily on the writing and other public utterances of one Dr. Kermit Hall, who wrote an article in the *Maryland Law Review* (Vol. 56 No. 1, 1997) titled *The Virulence of the National Appetite for Bogus Revelation,* from which Weisberg paraphrased the title of this manuscript.

Hall was at the time Dean of Humanities, executive dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and professor of history and law at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. He was appointed by the President of the United States to the Assassination Records Review Board, that was to decide which documents relating to the JFK assassination would be released to the public and when, mandated by Congressional action.

Weisberg criticizes Hall multiple times in the manuscript as “a subject matter ignoramus.” He refers just as many times to Hall’s various academic positions as reasons why someone with his credentials should not get things so wrong, nor be so fast and loose with the facts or research in general. If that language seems strong, consider that Weisberg reminds us he has called government officials liars and worse under oath and, that if it were not true, he surely would have been prosecuted for perjury. He also reminds us that the FBI itself has stated that Weisberg knew more about the assassination than they did.

The author is consistent with other of his earlier books in referring almost exclusively to the Warren Commission’s own gathered testimony and other evidence to make his points. In this unpublished work, as in others, he gives equal criticism to other authors who question the conclusions of the Warren Commission, such as New Orleans prosecutor Jim Garrison, alleged Kennedy mistress Judith Campbell Exner, and Max Holland, who wrote an article on the topic for American Heritage from which Hall drew liberally.

Like Weisberg’s other works, this is not to be read like a novel. He finds the smallest details to criticize and analyze. His attention to those details is withering. His unusual extended sentences with parenthetical remarks not in parentheses, or even set off by commas make it nearly impossible to read a page without having reread some sentences two and three times.

This work is not available to the general public. I was allowed to borrow a copy from the author to copy for my own use with his permission. The most likely place to access a copy would by the Hood College Library in Frederick, Maryland, where Weisberg donated all his JFK assassination records and correspondence, as well as his entire overstock of self-published titles. For the serious researcher, I would highly recommend reading this work. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold, *Waketh the Watchman?* Second Printing, Unpublished, 1996; 381 pp.**

This is one of three unpublished book-length manuscripts written by Harold Weisberg of which I am aware. I own copies of two: this one and *Bogus Revelation: More Official Lies About the Assassination of John F. Kennedy,* both loaned to me by Weisberg with permission to copy for my use; the latter is reviewed elsewhere in this document.

Harold Weisberg, aside from being one of the very first to write about the assassination and, according to Weisberg *the* first to write criticizing the Warren Commission using its own information, prided himself in accuracy of detail and in not assuming what he could prove with the facts. To that end, he always refused to say who he thought was behind Kennedy’s murder, even though he did have an opinion. He felt that “the trail is too cold” to find the real killers now, and anything put forth is purely speculation. However, toward the end of his life, he did tell me that if he had to put it somewhere, it would be the military. Though the author sets forth historical examples of abuses and overreaching for power by the military in general, and the U. S. military in particular, he still will not say in print that he thinks the military was actually behind it. The case he lays out here is that the military was *capable* and had *motive.* To a lesser degree he does the same with the CIA. The third emphasis of this work is that the press has thrown off its major role in a democracy and has dropped the ball by accepting almost without question the conclusions of the Warren Commission Report, especially that Oswald was the lone assassin. The central thread is that this is a calling out of the media, hence the question in the title *Waketh the Watchman?* Will the press finally wake up and do its duty?

Concerning the military, Weisberg did what he always did: he went right to the Constitution. He meticulously points out the powers of war granted in the Constitution and emphasizes that it rests solely with Congress, and any other military action than that granted there is unconstitutional. I do wonder, however, respecter of the Founding Fathers as Weisberg was, how he felt about Thomas Jefferson’s precedent of sending ships overseas to engage the Barbary Pirates in warfare in foreign waters in the early 19th century.

In regard to the CIA, Weisberg points out foreign assassinations by that agency prior to Kennedy’s presidency as evidence that they were capable of assassinations. He cites other involvements of the CIA in toppling legitimate foreign governments, such as the Mosadegh government in Iran in the early 1950’s and the intervention in Guatemala later in the same decade.

But Weisberg is as tough on writers of other conspiracy books as he is on government agencies, the mainstream press, and the Warren Commission. He states very clearly he does not consider himself a “conspiracy theorist,” as he repeats that he does not engage in speculation – only proven facts, mostly by the Warren Commission’s own work. He considers most of the writers of these books as distractions from the real truth.

This work has its problems. Though it was not typed on his old typewriter that he used for letters and everyday work, with faulty key strokes and wandering letters, it is more like a galley copy than a published book. There are numerous spelling and typographical errors involving one or two letters in words occasionally. But there are substantive errors as well, few, if any of which take away from his main message.

He calls the prohibition amendment the Volstead Act, when, in fact, the Volstead Act was just that – an act of Congress that was the enabling legislation to the prohibition amendment. He writes that *Alice in Wonderland* was written by Robert Louis Stevenson, when, in fact, it was written by Lewis Carroll.

Weisberg liberally cites other works for criticism in the finest points to make his case for sloppiness and just bad history. He has little sympathy for those who merely speculate or, as he uses as an example, *Third Decade*, a journal of JFK assassination theories and theorists, faulty thinking and sloppy research, if any.

I disagree with Weisberg on three specific points that he repeats through his works. First, the contention Weisberg made that Oswald could not have been the shooter because a photo of the front of Texas School Book Depository has Oswald standing there just before the assassination. Others claim the person in question was Oswald’s fellow warehouse worker Billy Lovelady, including Lovelady’s wife. Secondly, Weisberg has stated to me personally, if he had to guess where another shooter might have been, it would be on the fire escape stairs on the DalTex building. I find it improbably someone would hang right out there in the open where anyone could see them with a rifle and shoot at the motorcade. And lastly, Weisberg claimed that the military was pushing for the Bay of Pigs invasion as an example of their recklessness. My reading on this subject showed that there were many in the military leadership that were leery of this plan, that it was not well thought out and was based too much on overconfident optimism rather than hard facts and planning.

This book brings together ideas from all his previous books and ties them in with his central theme, and at once attacks the government’s position on who killed Kennedy and the positions of those who are known as “conspiracy theorists.” For those reasons, reading this book is an efficient use of time for the serious researcher on this topic. You will likely have to go to the Hood College archives to get a copy to read, though. *DK*

**DEFENDERS OF THE OFFICIAL STORY**

These works will defend the end result of the Warren Commission’s work, if not their methods and the timeline to which they were restricted, and that is that there was no conspiracy and the Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin.

**Bugliosi, Vincent, *Reclaiming History:*  *The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy,* F. F. Norton & Company, New York, 2007; 1612 pp.**

This book is a rarity in many ways. First, there are more than people think, but still, relatively speaking, not many books on the Kennedy assassination that basically defend the conclusions of the Warren Commission report. What first catches the reader’s attention is length of the work: 1612 pages, and that does not count the end notes that are on a CD placed in the back cover of the book. As my undergraduate American history professor at Ohio University, Dr. Alonzo Hamby, has commented about such efforts “Just about big enough to break your foot should you drop it.” At nearly $50.00 retail, plus the lengthy reading commitment needed to finish, most likely only serious researchers will purchase a copy.

There are many who will not like this book because it defends “the establishment position.” In that sense, it is not exciting. However, this book serves several important functions in this ongoing discussion, debate, and public fascination on the topic. The very exhaustive length leaves room for delving into virtually every key event related and previously written about on this subject. It allows the author to not only discuss the generally agreed-to events of that day and the days immediately thereafter, but also the “history of the history” of the event: meticulously and broadly commenting and responding to the work of other authors on all sides of this discussion.

Bugliosi, as most readers will know, was the prosecuting attorney in Los Angeles for the Charles Manson trial, about which he wrote the best-selling book *Helter Skelter.* He was also the prosecutor in the docu-trial of Oswald held posthumously with a real judge and actual witnesses, not actors, on the murder of the President. As such, he understandably and expectedly takes a prosecutor’s point of view in presenting events and evidence to support his belief that, essentially, the Warren Commission got it right.

And that is the crux of the thesis of this book: Lee Harvey Oswald, alone, fired three shots from a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository and, in flight, also murdered Officer J. D. Tippit of the Dallas Police Force and was subsequently captured and interrogated by that same police force. Further, that his murderer, Jack Ruby, also acted alone in killing Oswald while being transported to another jail facility two days later. Bugliosi writes very early in this book that all the physical and circumstantial evidence of note points to those conclusions, and that this evidence is *known* and not speculated. As a result, Bugliosi concludes, and supports with logic and other supporting evidence, that any other “evidence” to the contrary is not credible or has some other explanation because the evidence of Oswald’s guilt is “overwhelming.” To that end, Bugliosi unapologetically states that there was more credible evidence in this case that leads to the conclusion of guilt of the accused, in this case Oswald, than in most other cases he has seen or in which he has been involved.

In reviewing the arguments in works by other authors, Bugliosi is more even-handed than one might expect, and certainly more than you get from those same authors. Readers of this review, and others, who have done extensive reading on this subject know full well that there is animosity, not just between those of opposing conclusions on this crime, but between and among assassination “buffs” (a term they even use to describe each other when they disagree) who have been published. For example, Bugliosi, where he felt needed, criticized other authors, such as Gerald Posner (*Case Closed*), Jim Moore (*Conspiracy of One*) and even the Warren Commission report itself for misstatements, unsupported conclusions, and poor writing. On the other hand, he commends them, as well as those who do not agree with Bugliosi’s conclusions, such as Harold Weisberg (*Whitewash*) and Josiah Thompson (*Six Seconds in Dallas*) for responsible and credible research and honest reporting of findings. He gives credit where, in his view, credit is due, and not just to those who agree with him.

Bugliosi makes several points that other books ignore, some of which are original to Bugliosi, or are unique in the perspective in which a fact or event is viewed. For example, the is the first (though not only) book I have read on the subject that points out that when Oswald was observed in the second floor lunch room by the depository manager and a police officer, he was not standing next to the pop machine with a Coke bottle in his hand, as has been misstated and restated, accepted as fact, by so many other authors. Rather, he was in the room on his way to the machine, and was seen with the bottle of Coke later by others. He puts the last-minute conclusions by the House Committee on Assassinations, prompted by a late discover of the police dictabelt tapes, since discredited as recordings of the shots that killed the president, in the proper perspective, given the thorough description he gives of that process. Bugliosi does not hesitate to resort to common sense where warranted, and is as free with the word “silliness” to describe statements and conclusions by assassination buffs as those same buffs are in overusing the term “mysterious” to describe any event or person they want to use to push the reader to their conclusion of conspiracy. It is particularly valuable that Bugliosi describes and quotes large portions of Oswald’s interrogations by the Dallas police, something most other books only selectively quote to fit their conclusions, or ignore altogether. Many casual readers don’t even know that Oswald was extensively interrogated for hours on several occasions before his murder, and that he was caught in several known, provable lies, and changed his story in some instances when called on it.

In this exhaustive work, among other things, Bugliosi gives mini-histories or –biographies on Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby, the Mob, the various Congressional committee hearings, the Warren Commission, the CIA, the Cuban Missile Crisis and Castro, and others.

Bugliosi’s work is not without his own omissions and faulty or shaky information. He writes about Gerald Ford’s comments (p. 354) on the hiring of a staff member that had questionable left-wing ties, putting forth the idea that the Commission must be “completely above reproach,” without commenting that Ford himself was hardly that, unnecessarily writing a book (*Portrait of the Assassin*) about the Commission’s work, using confidential and inside information from his work on the Commission to make his points. Bugliosi admits that one assertion by Warren Commission critics about a meeting before the assassination with Sylvia Odio, the daughter of imprisoned Castro opponents in Cuba, and “Cuban-types” in her apartment where comments were made that could be interpreted as forewarning of the assassination, and at which was present a man identified as “*Leon* Oswald,” could be essentially correct, and that he cannot definitely rule out that Lee Oswald was that namesake and was present at that event.

This book is also very complete as a general resource for definitions and listings of other resources. For example, it contains in it a through bibliography, the aforementioned end notes on CD-ROM, a list of abbreviations, an *In Memorium* section citing quotes about Kennedy, an exhaustive list of 214 individuals and groups that are suggested as involved in the murder of the president by various other authors, and another list of 82 of those who were actually assassins. Obviously, as Bugliosi points out, they all cannot be right and, in his view, almost all of them are wrong. There is also a separate chapter about his conversation with the assassin’s widow, Marina Oswald, in which he is also candid about the limitations of the results. His chapters are logically ordered and in the end is a summary conclusion that restates his main conclusion and refers to the supporting evidence give previously in the book.

Perhaps the simplest, most profound observation in this book is stated near the beginning: that most people who have strong opinions about the conclusions of the Warren Commission being wrong have never read one word of the document that they criticize.

This book is not for the impatient or closed-minded. But it is clearly the most complete, well-written, ably argued, and well-supported work defending the official version of who murdered Kennedy, and is infinitely more honest, though flawed in places, than most books on this subject. It should be read by every serious student of this subject. *DK*

**Ford, Gerald, and Stiles, John R., *Portrait of the Assassin,* Ballantine Books, New York, 1965; 560 pp.**

This is one of several books that is written about the life of accused Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. The difference in this one is that it is co-written by Gerald Ford, a member of Congress and the Warren Commission, and future vice-president and president. It is a very thorough account of Oswald’s life and covers all the usual and known aspects of his troubled short time on this earth. It is highly readable, as most of the actual wording was likely done by Stiles, once Ford’s campaign manager and his assistant as a member of Congress for many years, as well as friend. The main problem with this book is that its very writing by this author, at least Ford, was highly inappropriate. Ford had access to documents that the rest of us did not, and wrote about these when they were confidential. There was a conflict of interest in that fact, and no other reason for writing this book should have overridden a sense of responsibility to show restraint in this case. Nevertheless, having been written, it does contain a decent narrative of Oswald’s life. Since that information is available in any number of other books by authors without a conflict of interest, I would not recommend buying this book. *DK*

**Manchester, William, *The Death of a President: November, 1963;* Perennial Library, Harper & Row, New York, 1988 (25th anniversary edition with new Introduction); 710 pp.**

This book is an excellent example of the value in this reader benefiting in his understanding of this event by reading some books for the first time, others for the second, in preparing his part of this bibliography. This book proved to be a real treasure, and, especially with the revised edition on the 25th anniversary of the assassination, it is just as relevant today as when it was published.

William Manchester, a professor of history at Wesleyan University, was formerly a news writer. This is evident in the style and engaging narrative that he displays in this large work. Manchester was asked personally to write this story by Mrs. Kennedy. Yet, he took great pains to be certain that his research and writing would not be influenced by who might be hurt by what he wrote or resent anything he might conclude and share.

Manchester virtually conducted a concurrent investigation into the facts of this story with the working of the Warren Commission. He had early contact with Chief Justice Earl Warren, and was often just behind the Commission staff in interviewing witnesses and players in the tragedy. The very fact that he was doing this independently makes this book a good companion to the Warren Commission Report, as it provides an independent set of eyes to the case, concurrent with it. The fact that he essentially agrees with the conclusions of the Warren Commission is a strong endorsement of those conclusions.

Don’t think that Manchester was not critical of the Warren Commission’s work, however. Since his book was published a considerable time after the Warren Commission, and he was not under pressure to deliver his manuscript in the short time that the Warren Commission operated, he could include the work of the Commission in his book and be critical where he felt it was warranted. For example, he cites places where the Commission could have interviewed other witnesses or players in the event. He criticizes the Secret Service for their training for such events, and for laxity in accounting for snipers, something Kennedy himself acknowledged was a real danger. He describes Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry as “bland and ineffective.” (p. 41)

On the other hand, Manchester gives excellent detailed narrative about the background of the political atmosphere in Dallas and give you a real feel for what kind of town that it was, and wasn’t. His telling of the details of the relationship of Ruth Paine to the Oswalds, and, in particular, her friendship with Marina Oswald, that included a very thorough narrative of the night before the assassination in Ruth Paine’s house, and the interaction between Oswald and Marina, gives insight into what may have pushed Oswald over the edge in deciding to kill Kennedy the next day. In short, Manchester, not unlike author Jim Bishop, makes you feel like you were really there, and have a thorough first-hand knowledge it was like to witness these events.

He clears up other potential controversies, brought up by other authors who were critical of the Warren Commission Report, that clearly were not read in his book by those authors before they wrote theirs. For example, he points out that Vice-President Lyndon Johnson, rather than being snubbed by Kennedy, was deliberately included in directly welcoming guests to the White House, and was sent to Vietnam, as reported by John Newman in *JFK and Vietnam*, to represent the president in gathering information to make decisions about the future course in that war. Further, Manchester, like many others, have negated the argument that somehow the Secret Service were in on a plot to kill Kennedy by removing his “protective” bubble top for the presidential convertible. Manchester confirmed that which was already common knowledge for those willing to believe it, that the decision was Kennedy’s. Further, the bubble top was not bullet proof.

This book reads like a novel. It is meticulously researched and just what you would expect from an professional historian. Contrary to what many may wish to believe, his research and conclusions are very relevant to this day, especially when taking into account that he stuck to those conclusions to his dying day. This is an excellent read and should be one of the first books read by anyone interested in the events of that day and what caused them. *DK*

**Moore, Jim, *Conspiracy of One: The Definitive Book on the Kennedy Assassination,* The Summit Group, Fort Worth, Texas, 1990; 217 pp.**

It doesn’t seem like twenty years since I first read this book, when I was in the middle of my second frenzy of JFK assassination research, discussion, and reading. At that time, I was deep into all the books I could find that had conspiracy theories that I found intriguing, or that I thought might be a solution to what the mystery of the assassination was to me, and presumably millions of others. My view of the author, what he has written, and the time and thought he put into this book have changed considerably over time.

Jim Moore was a director of Success Motivation Institute and a graduate in history and political science. Like many of us, he was a young person when Kennedy was assassinated and, like many of us growing up then, he became fascinated with assassinology as it applied to the Kennedy murder. He was involved in the 6th Floor exhibit of the Texas School Book Depository and has visited Dealey Plaza dozens, perhaps hundreds of times, interviewed witnesses and authors, and, at one time, was a Warren Commission “critic” himself. I can identify. In the end, as Moore states, he chose to look at the facts as we know them and go from there, rather than, as he accuses the “critics” of, trying to find facts to fit what we want to think.

At first I thought Moore rather condescending in his tone and a bit of a know-it-all. Now, having met and corresponded with many of the authors he writes of, I can see that he more is just certain of what he writes and his logic is not difficult to follow in each chapter. Moore dispenses with most of the minutiae of the Kennedy assassination, such as the three “tramps” rounded up after the assassination in the railroad yard, Oswald’s connection with the Russian-American community, Oswald’s travels to Russia, New Orleans, and Mexico, and alleged connections between Oswald and Ruby and secret meetings with anti-Castro Cubans and the like. He goes from the forensic evidence, the photographic evidence, and guardedly from eyewitness testimony. Mostly he goes with common sense.

In following the assassination, Moore systematically and clearly dissects key aspects in the controversy: the Warren Commission and House Assassination Committee inquiries and reports, the School Book Depository itself as a “lair,” the photographic evidence, coordinating all the relevant photos and films, including some ignored by most researchers and authors, the wounds of Kennedy and Governor Connally, and all the micro-issues involved with each.

In doing so, Moore comes up with at least three genuinely creative ideas. Probably the most significant and surprising idea he puts forth is regarding Kennedy’s “back and to the left” head-snap, which critics claim proves Kennedy was shot from the front. Josiah Thompson in *Six Seconds in Dallas* concedes Kennedy’s head goes forward first, then back, but claims this is due to two shots hitting almost simultaneously. Moore dismisses that when he asks the simple question: Where’s the other bullet, then? Moore adds his own theory: when Kennedy’s hands first are thrown upward, it is not in reaction to being hit, it is in reaction to the first, missed shot, covering his face in fear. It is only then, when he is hit, that his hands go to his throat. Moore is convincing is describing how this is the only way to reconcile one bullet going through both men with Governor Connally’s testimony about when he was hit.

Another simple observation Moore makes is that, when Oswald is confronted by a police officer and his boss in the break room of the Depository, he buys a Coke. So what? Moore writes that Oswald preferred Dr. Pepper, and buying a Coke signifies a nervousness on his part.

Regarding the “magic” “pristine” bullet that was supposed to have wounded both men, Moore answers the question about the missing fragments that were found weighing more than what was missing from the tip simply: they didn’t mostly come from the tip, they mostly came from the core of the bullet. And the bullet wasn’t pristine – it was flattened, not at the tip, but on the side, which cannot be seen from most pictures of it.

Moore also asks what I have asked for quite a few years: if Oswald brought curtain rods to work that day in the paper bag, where are the curtain rods? Since the bag was found on the sixth floor of the Depository – did he unwrap curtain rods there? And, Moore points out, his apartment had curtains and he was not permitted to change the décor of that apartment by contract.

Moore is merciless in his attacks on critic authors as being careless, selective in their choice of evidence, creative in other choices, and downright greedy and dishonest in some cases. But there is no question he did his homework, and anyone who reads any of the conspiracy books should balance that with this one. *DK*

**O’Reilly, Bill and Dugard, Martin, *Killing Kennedy: The End of Camelot,* Henry Holt and Company, New York, 2012; 325 pp.**

I did not read *Killing Lincoln* because, after reading and reviewing dozens of books about Abraham Lincoln and collateral topics by people who, for the most part, studied Lincoln and the issues he tackled for years with an academic eye, I did not want to read something less written by a partisan television host. Then my brother gave me this book as a gift for Christmas. I am glad he did.

This book is not a scholarly academic book such as might be written by historians William Manchester (*Death of a President*), Michael Burlingame (*Abraham Lincoln: A Life*), Alonzo Hamby (*Man of the People*) or John Lewis Gaddis (*George F. Kennan: An American Life*), and, as mentioned, I did not expect it to be. It is a narrative of events from John Kennedy’s election to his death, and includes a flashback to his World War II days when he was commander of PT109.

John Kennedy became president as part of a new, younger generation and there was great optimism about the country and its future under this new leadership when he took office. But it was a short-lived honeymoon in foreign policy as Kennedy inherited decisions made about supporting the government of South Vietnam against the communist North and following through with plans for a U. S.-sponsored group of trained Cuban refugees to attack Cuba in an attempt at counterrevolution against Fidel Castro. The latter was a miserable failure, and the Soviet dictator Nikita Khrushchev began at that point to take this young American president lightly. Eventually this led to near-nuclear war with Khrushchev’s bold attempt to place offensive missiles in Cuba aimed at the United States a year later.

There is a parallel history being told about a young man who was not born into the wealth and privilege of the Kennedys: Lee Harvey Oswald. He does not graduate from high school, enlists in the Marines, then, after discharge, defects to the Soviet Union, marries a Russian girl, and becomes disillusioned with how life turns out for him there. Still, he does not get discouraged with communism, just his Russian experience. In fact, he has thoughts of going back to Russia, even though his marriage is off-again, on-again and dysfunctional. Oswald never gets a long-term job and often lives away from his wife. He goes to New Orleans to run a one-man pro-Castro campaign, then returns to Texas where he almost immediately takes a trip to Mexico to try to contact the Cubans through the embassy in Mexico City. He is rejected there as well and does not get the visa he seeks.

In his own family, President Kennedy appears to be the model of happiness with his wife Jacqueline and their two children Caroline and John, Jr. A third child, Patrick, is born in 1962, but dies hours after it is born. Though Kennedy is on the one hand a devoted family man, he belies this on the other with his many affairs, including one, according to the authors, with starlet Marilyn Monroe. It is interesting that Secret Service agent Gerald Blaine, in his book *The Kennedy Detail* states that there is no evidence of Kennedy being intimate with Marilyn Monroe. Still, Kennedy has this reputation, and Mrs. Kennedy is away with the children when the alleged trysts take place.

She does not like political campaigning, but agrees to go with him to Texas in November of 1963 because of her own personal popularity and what that can continue to the campaign. Kennedy will get no help from Lyndon Johnson, his vice-president, who feels shoved aside and powerless in that role, even though Texas is his power base. The new boss in Texas, newly elected Governor John Connally, must be deferred to.

Before this, Oswald buys a rifle through mail order and takes his first try at notoriety through murder by shooting at right-wing retired General Edwin Walker in his home and just misses. Months later, when Oswald reads that Kennedy is visiting Dallas, and the parade route is published four days in advance, he practices with his rifle at a local range and plans his assassination plot to take place from his workplace at the Texas School Book Depository. Oswald doesn’t even dislike Kennedy, but this will bring him the attention he needs and deserves. And, using his shooting skills as a trained Marine, he carries out his murderous plot.

O’Reilly does not try to get into minute details of all the figures involved to determine if there was any kind of conspiracy. Indeed, the sources he lists for each chapter, which he is straightforward about, are generally those taking the official line with Oswald as the lone assassin. There are no Harold Weisbergs, Edward Jay Epsteins, or Jim Garrisons in his attributed sources. But O’Reilly does not pretend to be a Warren Commission critic. The true value in his book is the simple context that he creates and the blending of assassination events with the lives of Kennedy and Oswald before the assassination. Except as tied to the assassination and proving one theory or another, this is something almost ignored by the hundreds of authors of JFK assassination theory books. Sadly, the real history gets lost in those, that is, looking at Kennedy’s presidency as a whole and not the tragic end. *DK*

**Posner, Gerald. *Case Closed.* NY: Random House, 2003; 607 pp.**

In a sea of new books published and planned in this year (1993), Gerald Posner's ***Case Closed*** has come onto the scene as the only one with that kind of attention that defends the basic conclusion of the Warren Commission: that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in assassinating President Kennedy. Posner acknowledges the loneliness of such a position himself in the book. Yet this work, ballyhooed in unprecedented manner in ***U.S. News & World Report*** [1] on the front cover, and, to a lesser degree in ***Newsweek***, [2] with four pages of coverage, has caused more reaction among researchers and others than any work since the release of Oliver Stone's movie "JFK." All in time for the thirtieth anniversary of the event.

The reaction has been swift and pointed. Author Stephen Ambrose, biographer of Richard Nixon, says "Posner has done a great service..." [3] Researcher Joe Riley, of Silverdale, Washington, says, "I was silly enough to assume that it must be a good book. It isn't...my advice is to get it from the library--it just isn't good enough to pay for." [4] ***U.S. News***, in the aforementioned issue says, among other things "Posner achieves the unprecedented." [5] Researcher and author Harold Weisberg states "I've read some wretchedly dishonest books on the JFK assassination, but Posner's is in a class by itself." [6] Riley adds, "I'm glad to hear that the book didn't give Harold Weisberg a stroke." [7]

When I first read the book, I took notes, but also tried to get into the flow of the writing. My first impression was that it certainly was better written and organized than many assassi­nation books, such as ***High Treason*** and ***High Treason 2***, which have the appearance of being thrown together as writing, perhaps to meet a deadline. And it certainly reads more smoothly than Weisberg's ***Whitewash*** series. The artwork, dust jacket, and diagrams are certainly "slick" and help sell the book. But what does this book have to offer those who have read nothing else on the subject (always a danger) and those who are well versed in assassination and related literature? I will attempt to describe the content and organiza­tion of the book, and mix those descriptions with reactions of some of the key people mentioned in the work, as well as other assassination critics and researchers. In his second issue of "Executive Action," a new assassination newsletter, Joe Riley says, "I haven't seen any reviews in major publications..." [8] This review is, I am sure, one of many that will begin to put the book in perspective. It is intended to be useful to both the new reader on assassination history, as well as the well read. I will not attempt to cover every strong and weak aspect, as I see them, in this review, but rather point out a representative sample in a manner unique to my research and viewpoint.

It might be helpful to those who have not delved into Posner to first describe briefly the structure and organization of the book. It is a hard-bound volume published by Random House in New York, certainly a large publishing house with a solid reputation in general. The length benefits the topic at 607 pages, with a preface by the author, nineteen chapters, two appendices, one dealing with graphic analysis of the ballistics, Dealey Plaza, the wounds and related topics, and the other on the so called "mystery deaths" expounded on by so many other authors. Unlike some books that have only one or the other, ***Case Closed*** contains both notations at the bottom of the page, and also seventy—one pages of notes in the back of the book. There are seven pages of the usual bibliographical sources, and a 22—page index. It would be accurate to say that much of this book is a biography of Lee Harvey Oswald. This may represent somewhat of a trend, as Phillip Knightley, author of ***The Second Oldest Profession*** indicated to me in a note dated February 5, 1993, when he informed me that a New England author was planning an extensive work on Oswald, and also in a mailing I received from author Alan J. Weberman from New York, which contained what appears to be a preliminary draft of an Introduction of fourteen pages to a work entitled ***The Secret Life of Lee Harvey Oswald***. [10]

In Posner's book, every chapter before number eleven is about Oswald's life and events leading to Oswald's involvement in the assassination. Chapters eleven and twelve deal with the day of the assassination itself, and the murder of Officer J.D. Tippit. Chapter thirteen deals with the President's wounds and the autopsy. After spending chapter fourteen discussing the shots and their sequence, Posner comes back to Oswald in fifteen to discuss his interrogation. Chapter sixteen discusses Jack Ruby and his involvement in the case, seventeen de­scribes the formation and operation of the Warren Commis­sion, and the final chapters, eighteen and nineteen, discuss Jim Garrison's allegations and the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Throughout the early chapters on Oswald's background, Posner consistently describes what he calls "Oswald's early fascination with communism." (p. 18) It is here where Posner makes his third of twelve references in the text or footnotes to long-time researcher and author Harold Weisberg, consid­ered by most in the field to be the patriarch of conspiracy theorists. Posner says that Weisberg states that "his (Oswald's) attraction to Communism only makes sense when the possi­bility of Oswald's being somebody's agent is considered.'" (p. 18)

This is as good a place as any to discuss Posner's use of Weisberg's work as a source, something most researchers have done ranging from Garrison to Livingstone. Posner notes that Weisberg has published six books (p. 11) on the subject, yet only puts five in the bibliography. (p. 583) Weisberg, in a letter to the author of this review, says Posner "...omits O(swald) in N(ew) O(rleans), yet that uncredited, uniden­tified, rather (sic) book is the source of his gross misrepresen­tations about me and those addresses. Only in that book." [11] Weisberg refers to Posner's *reference* to addresses in New Orleans of Carlos Bringuier, delegate for the anti-Castro Cuban Student Directorate. (p. 150)

Posner is generally critical of Weisberg's conclusions, and some of his research, *as* indicated previously. In describing Weisberg's contributions to this issue, he says Weisberg "...was a former Senate investigator who had been dismissed for possibly leaking information to the press." (p. 414) This bit of negative disinformation is dropped on the reader, to hang in the air without support like an apparition. Not without response from Weisberg.

In a telephone conversation, Weisberg explained to me the circumstances regarding his dismissal from the Senate com­mittee in the 1930's on which he served. Weisberg stated there was "nothing to leak. I made them available to Virginia Foster Durr (wife of RFC lawyer Clifford Durr) and the press. I wrote an accurate account about a Senator that was truthful. I lobbied to continue the committee, and was fired for that reason." [12] Weisberg went on to point out in that conver­sation that the Senator who chaired the committee had gotten all the political hay there was to get out of it and wanted it ended. Weisberg wanted to continue investigation into migra­tory farm labor conditions. This information was readily available from Weisberg, had Posner bothered to ask. Instead, akin to Jim Moore's reference to Weisberg as a "poultry farmer," [1 31 as if he hasn't done anything else preparing him for this research, Posner has chosen to drop a negative reference and let it hang on the reader's mind as a not-so­-veiled cheap shot.

Posner does bring in some information about Oswald that few if any other researchers mention or delve into. Included are a possible motive for Oswald, unlike the Warren Commis­sion, possible dyslexia of Oswald, and extensive social and psychological description of Oswald's early years.

There are numerous examples of faulty logic, unsubstantially supported statements, and flat-out inaccuracies in this book. Most of what will follow were found easily by myself, without looking too hard, or my teaching colleague and fellow re­searcher Tim Rathburn, of Dublin Coffman High School.

In discussing Oswald's service in the Marines in Japan, he correctly mentions his frequenting of the Queen Bee night­club, and explains that it is very expensive. After a detailed explanation of Oswald's meager salary, and how he managed to save nearly all of it, some of which was later used to finance his trip to the Soviet Union, Posner fails to reconcile how Oswald got the money to be with "a striking and well dressed Japanese woman on several occasions." (p. 25)

In discussing Soviet defector Yuri Nosenko, Posner ex­plains why the CIA, and James Angleton in particular, would have wanted to discredit Nosenko, who was claiming that Oswald was not important and not taken seriously by the KGB. Acceptance of Nosenko would have discredited, in part, a previous defector, Anatoly Golitsyn, who had Angleton's trust. All of this is described in better detail in Tom Mangold's Cold Warrior. 113)

There are problems with Posner's discussion of Oswald's Italian carbine, the 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano allegedly pur­chased from Klein's Sporting Goods in Chicago in 1963. For example, Posner accurately describes how the rifle can be fired well within the eight seconds he claims it took Oswald to fire off three shots. In testing another copy of that weapon, without bullets, I was able to throw the bolt, aim, and squeeze the trigger consistently within 5.2- 6.0 seconds. However, this was without having to hit anything, without pressure, and without the "kick" of the butt of the rifle against my shoulder.

Posner says the Mannlicher "had a low kickback compared to other military rifles, which helped in rapid bolt-action firing." (p. 104) First, according to the owner of the almost identical, and better operating Mannlicher that I tested, Dan Fawcett, a teacher at Westerville (Ohio) North High School, his Mannlicher has a "kick like a mule." Second, what difference does it make what the kick is relative to other military weapons? The point is that the kick is significant enough to cause a problem with operating the bolt and re-aiming accu­rately under **Oswald's** conditions.

In the sixteen pages of photographs, there are the usual pictures, with the exception of some early photos of Oswald as a child, one showing Edwin Walker's window of his house, and the possible reason the shot fired on him missed, and a recent photo analysis designed to show that the pictures of Oswald with his rifle before the assassination were not com­posites or doctored in other ways. On the fourth to last page of the pictures, the caption under the picture of Jack Ruby at the Oswald press conference has Ruby "pretending to be a journalist." Why would he "pretend" to be a journalist if the police knew him well, and it certainly made no difference to the journalists who he was?

In describing the package that Oswald carried from Buell Wesley Frazier's house to the car *he* rode in on November 22, Posner says that he held it "under his armpit, and the other end did not quite touch the ground." (p. 224) I have done this myself, and, disassembled, even if Oswald were 5'9", the rifle would hardly "almost touch the ground."

There are a number of other equally ludicrous statements that reduce the accuracy and credibility of Posner's work. Some are minor, others are of significance. All indicate sloppiness. He calls convicted murderer Charles V. Harrelson "Buddy" Harrelson. (p. 223) Buddy Harrelson, was, of course, an infielder for the New York Mets. He says the motorcade turned from Houston to Main Street, when, of course, it was the opposite. (p. 232) He says that Oswald picked up the jacket he wore when *he* killed Tippit at his rooming house that he had worn the night before. (p. 278) If that is true, how did it get back to the rooming house if he spent the night before with his wife in Irving? Posner claims that the copper jacket on the bullet would separate on hitting a tree limb, but be barely damaged when nicking Kennedy's spine, breaking Connally's ribs and wrist, and causing seven wounds, and still retain its jacket. (p. 326) This defies common sense. Posner claims that Oswald purchased a Coca-Cola after officer Marion Baker and Roy Truly confronted him. (p. 265) This contention is ludicrous and appears nowhere else in the literature. How would anyone know if he purchased it afterward? No one else saw him in the building with a Coke after that time, and Baker's testimony indicates otherwise.

Posner makes several references to the work of Failure Analysis, an engineering research firm in Silicon Valley. It's what he doesn't say about it that is important. In a telephone conversation with Dr. Cyril Wecht, former member of the Forensics Panel for the House Select Committee on Assassina­tions, I was told that Roger McCarthy, president of Failure Analysis, was upset that Posner allegedly allowed the impres­sion to be assumed that the work was done for Posner by commission. (p. 115)

Wecht had other things to say as well. He criticized Posner's description of the wounds and the bullet trajectory in describ­ing the action by the "magic bullet." Wecht said that the neck wound "was 1.5 cm, not 1 1/4" as stated by Posner." 1161 He took exception to Posner's description of how Connally re­acted to being hit and the timing of it. Wecht claimed that "the lungs would deflate immediately," and that contrary to Posner's sources, "the radial nerve was severed." (emphasis Wecht's) Wecht also claimed that, according to him in a conversation with Roger McCarthy, that "Posner never consulted with them (Failure Analysis) or met with them. They sent courtesy mock trial information." Wecht concluded to me about Posner's book that "Posner is a writer and a lawyer; what he's done cannot be attributed to sloppiness."

As a follow-up on this conversation, I called Dr. Roger McCarthy, who returned my call on October 11. McCarthy said "We would have loved to have solved it," but "we gave it our best shot but could not close the case." In addition, he said, "We are terribly amused at this concept of 'case closed.' He explained, unlike Posner, that their research was "a project we took on- supplied experts for both sides" for the Ameri­can Bar Association Mock Trial of Oswald. The result was a 7-5 vote by the "jury"-by any account, according to McCarthy, a "hung jury." [17] In the same conversation, reacting to my question about my impression that Posner seemed to want people to think Failure Analysis did the work for him specifically, McCarthy said Posner has "consciously attempted to create that image" in his opinion. McCarthy offered that "there are bigger problems than the wounds," and this "won't be resolved until they find the JFK's brain." He said they could not duplicate Oswald's alleged marksmanship on that day of the assassination and, contrary to Posner's contention, that the Mannlicher had "a pretty fair kick."

It will have to be up to each reader whether, like historian William Manchester (and Posner), you believe "there is no validity whatever is tales of conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy," [18] or like Harold Weisberg, you believe this book "is, without question, the most professionally, intendedly, indecently dishonest (book) of them all." [19]

One thing for certain: this will not stop the surge of books on the subject, and it has enough flaws to keep knowledgeable readers from closing the case.

Notes

1. ***U.S. News & World Report***, August 30-September 6, 1993 issue.

2. ***Newsweek***, September 6, 1993 issue, pp. 14-17.

3. Gerald Posner, ***Case Closed*** (New York: Random House, 1993), back cover of dust jacket.

4. Letter from Joe Riley to David Keck, September 3, 1993.

5. ***U.S. News*** p. 62.

6. Letter from Harold Weisberg to David Keck, September 13, 1993.

7. Letter from Joe Riley to David Keck, September 22, 1993.

8. **Executive Action** published by Joe Riley, issue 2, Oct. 1993.

9. Philip Knightley, ***Second Oldest Profession*** (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986.

10. Letter from Alan J. Weberman to David Keck, May 6, 1993.

11. Letter from Harold Weisberg to David Keck, September 13, 1993.

12. Telephone conversation with Harold Weisberg, October 14, 1993. •

13. Jim Moore, ***Conspiracy of One***, Fort Worth: The Summit Group, 1990, p. 89.

14. Tom Mangold ***Cold Warrior*** (New York: Touchstone 1991).

15. Telephone conversation with Dr. Cyril Wecht, Septem­ber 18, 1993.

16. Wecht telephone conversation, Sept. 18, 1993.

17. Telephone conversation with Dr. Roger McCarthy, October 11, 1993.

18. Letter from William Manchester to David Keck, July 21, 1992.

19. Letter from Harold Weisberg to David Keck, September 13, 1993.

**THE USUAL SUSPECTS**

Included in this category are reviews of titles that adhere to the conspiracy theory and also identify and seek to prove that a particular group, individual, or interest was involved in the alleged conspiracy to murder the president.

**Douglass, James. *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters.* NY: Touchstone, 2010; 560 pp.**

***JFK and the Unspeakable*** is, quite simply, an outstanding book. It is an excellent companion to John Newman’s ***Oswald and the CIA***. Many of the themes of the two books overlap and complement each other. The Unspeakable refers to, "an evil whose depth and deceit seemed to go beyond the capacity of words to describe." This is especially true concerning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Douglass’s book is the only one that Ted Sorensen, JFK’s speechwriter and advisor, thought, “made an impression. Its thesis is that Kennedy was killed by those opposed to his switch toward peace regarding the Soviets, the Cubans, and the North Vietnamese. That has a credible ring to it but lacks the hard evidence including names that could stand up in a courtroom.” Eisenhower’s warning about the danger of a military/industrial complex is most pertinent in this context.

Many excellent books have argued that the assassination was the result of a conspiracy. Though Douglass is certain that there was a conspiracy, ***JFK and the Unspeakable*** is primarily concerned with a president who transformed from being a Cold Warrior into an altruistic leader willing to risk his life to ensure that the world would not become the victim of a nuclear catastrophe. Until reading this book I did not know that Kennedy had established a back channel of secret communication with Nikita Khrushchev. Was Kennedy’s turn towards peace and perhaps pulling out of Vietnam his undoing? As one reviewer noted, Douglass thinks so, contending that each step Kennedy made toward peace steadily increased the hatred of enemies who would eventually betray him. Enemies in our own country. Who can read Kennedy’s speech at the American University shortly before his death and not ask what might have been had he lived? Who can read Douglass’s book and not ask the same? TP

**Ernest, Barry. *The Girl on the Stairs: The Search for a Missing Witness to the JFK Assassination.* New Orleans, LA: Pelican Publishing, 2013; 336 pp.**

***The Girl on the Stairs*** is one researcher’s almost lifelong journey through the maze of the disinformation presented by the Warren Commission on the assassination of John Kennedy. Detail after detail from the Commission’s 26 supporting volumes is presented to demonstrate that members of the Commission knew what they were doing, and that the truth was a deliberate sacrificial victim. During that 35-year journey Ernest became acquainted with a number of prominent assassination researchers, including Harold Weisberg and Penn Jones, and frequently carried out research for them. With Weisberg, the crusty but scrupulously honest curmudgeon that I knew emerges, which gives the book credibility for me that others might not see in it. The goal of Ernest’s 35-year search was to find Victoria Adams, a worker for Scott, Foresman & Company on the fourth floor of the Texas Book Depository, who, with a coworker, ran down the same stairs Lee Harvey Oswald would have had to be on for the Commission’s assassination timetable to work. But Victoria Adams and her coworker did not see nor hear Oswald running down the stairs, so the Commission concluded that she had to be mistaken. So mistaken that her testimony was changed without her knowledge or approval to add people that she did not see so that her version of events would be compromised. So mistaken that her coworker was never interviewed. But a Commission memo, as well as the independent corroboration by her coworker, confirms Adams’s version, which meant Lee Harvey Oswald could not have been running down the stairs to the second floor when the Commission said he was, which calls into question whether or not Oswald was on the sixth floor at all during the assassination.

The devil is in the details, and there are details aplenty with extensive footnotes and references to original sources. If you can wade through the seemingly disjointed and sometimes exhausting detail of Ernest’s account, the reward is that you realize his thorough command of the relevant facts, and that questions of Oswald’s innocence remain after all these years. TP

**Groden, Robert J., and Livingstone, Harrison Edward, *High Treason: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy – What Really Happened;* The Conservatory Press, New York, 1989; 469 pp.**

This book was the one that re-interested me in the Kennedy assassination as a high school history teacher, almost 30 years after the event and 27 years after my first thoughts that the official version may not have been correct. Robert Groden has been noted as a “photographic expert,” and, in fact, was chosen to serve in that capacity in a Congressional investigation of the assassination. Harry Livingstone represents himself as a “graduate of Harvard,” a law student (not a lawyer), and “a serious writer of fiction, poetry, and plays.” Since the collaboration on this book, it has been reported that the two authors have had a falling out. Livingstone wrote several other books without Groden in the years following this work.

This book runs the gamut of the usual accusations without much proof. The main contention is that the CIA was involved, that Watergate and the Kennedy murder were connected, that it was significant (if true) that Richard Nixon *and* J. Edgar Hoover were both in Dallas the day of the assassination, and that the Warren Commission and others deliberately ignored evidence and covered up others. Does this sound familiar? In fact, it is a laundry list of all the usual suspects that one can read, though not all in one book, in dozens of other conspiracy books herein reviewed.

What was valuable to me in this book was the photograph section that, indeed, was shocking. For the first time, I saw photos taken from the Kennedy autopsy, in particular the “death stare” photograph that Livingstone and Groden claim was a fake. One needs to ask where the authors obtained these pictures, since they were not published before this book. The authors included sketches of Kennedy’s head showing a massive blowout of the back of the head that is not corroborated by any real evidence. Other photographs that show otherwise are simply described as “fakes.”

Harry Livingstone is one of those who spent many hours, in fact many days at the Harold and Lil Weisberg home in Frederick, Maryland, researching from his 60-odd file drawers of government documents, only to be very unkind to Weisberg in his book. I will share here some quotes from a letter he wrote to me on May 18, 1992, in response to an initial letter I sent commenting on various parts of his book and asking some questions. This sampling will give you some idea as to the mindset and preconceived ideas that this writer held before and while writing the book, from his own words.

 “[Dr. Charles] Crenshaw’s book came off the press a few days before mine. . .He

 has since tried to help me, as my book is the more important . . .”

 “As for Harold [Weisberg] (please do not repeat this) he is very frail and unwell.

 Not only studies, but my own experience with those who have had triple by-pass

 operations effects their reason [sic]. He has been colossally wrong on some

 points. . . Merely because you have had contact with Harold doesn’t make you

 an authority.”

 In regard to my a comment I wrote about Kennedy’s affairs (he writes effusively

 in his book about Kennedy virtues), he answered “A president is protected in his

 private affairs by those around him and there is simply no possibility that National

 Security (sic) is risked by any liaison. That is a prima fascia (sic) and the proof of

 It is that it never happened while any president, including Kennedy, was alive.”

 “If you didn’t love the man (Kennedy), get out of this investigation and leave

 Harold and the rest of us alone. We don’t need buffs and hobbyists in this.”

And so on. This is also how Livingstone typically writes in his books. Further, the misspellings, pure conjectures, poor sentence structure, and generally poor writing, as if this was cobbled together by night light as the ideas came to him, are evident.

The value of this book is primarily some of the photographs, but these are so commonly available that I saw a copy of the “death stare” picture this week on a tabloid cover. I would not waste any money on any of his books, even from a discount store. You can read the same things in any number of other books that are better written by authors less absorbed in themselves. *DK*

**Groden, Robert J., *The Killing of a President,* Viking Studio Books, New York, 1993; 223 pp.**

At first glance, this book appears to be an impressive coffee table-style book of mostly color photographs and illustrations about the assassination. The subtitle gives an indication that the book comes with a decided agenda that is not untypical of works on this topic. “The Complete Photographic Record of the JFK Assassination, The Conspiracy, and the Cover-Up” are the words used by the author to describe the direction of the text, and it is pretty accurate.

The primary purpose of these reviews is to provide resources for students, teachers, and the general reading public about the various books written on this popular and controversial topic. Within that purpose there are two subthemes: the history of the event and the issues raised because of the event, and the history of the history, that is, a look at the JFK assassination literature industry and how it evolved. This book presents some very clear examples of the typical patterns that Warren Commission “critics” have followed, and therefore, with specific examples given to support those observations, will be a longer review than most.

Robert Groden has been one of the names that comes up often in the JFK conspiracy circles, as he has authored or co-authored several books on the subject, such as *JFK: The Case For Conspiracy,* co-authored with F. Peter Model, and *High Treason,* co-authored with Harrison Livingston. This volume centers on Groden’s specialty, the photographic evidence. Groden describes his interest in this topic going back to 1964, and being a major critic dating to 1969. Through his various contacts and research, he managed to be appointed Staff Photographic Consultant for the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

In this book, Groden tries to cover all the bases in convincing the reader to believe there was a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. Many are the same allegations and questions raised by dozens of other authors who are in the “critics” category. From the narrative of events leading to the Dallas trip, to the accusation of partying the night before by Secret Service agents, to the Oswald look-alike standing in front of the book depository during the assassination, to the magic bullet and the autopsy, they are all in here. Like many of the other critics, Groden does not agree with the others on many points, and stakes out his own conclusions, pointing out that some of the conclusions of his fellow critics are not credible. Where most all the critics agree, however, is that this assassination was plotted, not from the left politically, but from the right.

Groden makes no secret about the direction from which this conspiracy came. He refers to Willie Somersett, an informer, as a “right-wing organizer” (p. 153), and on the previous page, in the caption for the copy of a letter allegedly written by Lee Harvey Oswald to a “Mr. Hunt,” he says “It is unknown whether the addressee was CIA man E. Howard Hunt or Dallas industrialist H. L. Hunt.” Of course, Groden doesn’t tell us why it has to be one of those two Hunts, both with right-wing histories or connections. It couldn’t be some other Mr. Hunt. He doesn’t know which it is, just that it has to be one of those two.

There are many other examples of Groden’s assumptions made from his biases. He describes a man at the corner of Houston and Elm Streets having a seizure before the assassination, distracting the on-lookers, and that he was taken to the hospital. “where he promptly disappeared.” How does Groden know he disappeared? Did he follow up on this to see who the man was or where he might of gone. How about home? But this is another of the “mysterious” happenings. This is a word that crops up often, a literary technique first overused on this topic by Penn Jones. In one sentence, just as one of the more obvious examples, Groden uses the words “strange,” “patchwork,” “supposedly,” “secretive,” “assumed,” “mysterious,” and “formed the opinion.” (p. 124) This is innuendo at its best. Unfortunately, all it does is feed people’s suspicion of government and apply it to this topic without providing any real proof. They raise a lot of questions that could be answered with hard-nosed unbiased research.

Examples of this are the diagrams on pages 126 and 128, showing the positioning of President Kennedy and Governor Connally in the car when the bullet that the Warren Commission concluded went through both of them struck. It shows them directly lined up, one squarely in front of the other. We know that they were not lined up this way. Kennedy’s right arm was hanging over the edge of the car, and Connally, positioned in the jump seat, was to Kennedy left considerably, enough to make the curved lines that critics draw to show the necessary bullet path laughable, if not such a serious subject. I have visited the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan and seen the car. That part of it has not been altered, and one can clearly see this alignment if one chooses to take the time to investigate. Of course, if one does not find that convenient it might be avoided.

There are other explanations that Groden ignores in accepting “facts” that first bring suspicion, then are assumed to all add up, though unproven, for a vague conspiracy. Groden claims there were not three, but 4-6 shots. He uses testimony of eyewitnesses to “prove” this – though we know from experience that eyewitnesses are many times the worst for accuracy, and we also observe that Groden uses the eyewitnesses that support his theories, and discounts those who support the official version. After all, some of those eyewitnesses have to be wrong. There could not have been a total of 3, 4, 5, 6, or as many as 12 shots, as some allege, all be true in this case. Someone has to be wrong.

Groden likes to accuse the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, and others in government in engaging in a massive cover-up, yet uses those same sources to support his viewpoint when it is convenient. Apparently they are only sometimes corrupt. He accuses the autopsy doctors at Bethesda Naval Hospital of sloppy work, and unqualified to do it, then treats their autopsy sketches as gospel when they support his theories.

Groden has a feature in this book taken from the feature introduced by Penn Jones years earlier, that of the “mysterious deaths” of witnesses, alleged acquaintances of Ruby and Oswald, and people who questioned the Warren Commission. These deaths numbered in the dozens and stretched out for over ten years. Apparently the conspirators were not in much of a hurry to get to them, or there were just too many to murder in a short time, and the victims would show some consideration in not telling too much before they were killed in mysterious ways, including people who had heart disease dying of heart disease.

In these “Mysterious Death Panel” boxes, Groden uses words like “supposedly” quite a bit to describe their deaths and is inconsistent in the information he gives, such as not giving the year of death in many cases, but mentioning it in others.

In regard to the Secret Service, again, Groden goes with his conclusion first and makes his suspicions, based on rumors, fit his conclusions. He repeats the slander that the Secret Services agents were partying the night before. Had he checked with them, he would find that, yes, several had drinks together, but no, none of them violated any Secret Service regulations in those actions (see Gerald Blaine, *The Kennedy Detail*). He questions why agent Clint Hill was on the bumper (which Kennedy did not like) earlier in the motorcade, but left it to ride on the car behind as they entered the approach to Dealey Plaza. Had he checked, or wanted to, he would find that it was because they all knew they were coming to the end of the motorcade – and the approach to the Stemmons Freeway. He was not going to be on the bumper on the freeway. Groden, and the other critics who like to beat up Clint Hill, a true hero, also never mention that Hill was not Kennedy’s bodyguard, but Mrs. Kennedy’s. This also explains why the Secret Service muscled Kennedy’s casket out of Parkland Hospital: Mrs. Kennedy was not leaving Dallas without it, and the president-to-be, Lyndon Johnson, was not leaving without Mrs. Kennedy. This is documented.

I have met Robert Groden, engaged him as a speaker on the subject, and spoke with him at some length that evening on these topics. I have seen the Lincoln convertible in which Kennedy was killed. At one time, I was eager to hear all these questions, but until I checked myself with a mind open to what I might find, rather than what I wanted to hear, I was left with what Groden leaves you – a lot of questions with few real answers and no real proof. No bullet fragments proven or even indicating they were from one other gun, let alone several. No names of people who can be linked to a conspiracy with anything but their political leanings. No consistency in arguments. Do Groden and critics like him really think the FBI, CIA, and the mob could cooperate on *anything*? Does the record show this?

Like most of these authors on either side of this topic, Groden offers some positive input to the debate. For Groden, he comes closer to giving a logical explanation for the dent in the shell casing found on the floor of the book depository. Author Jim Moore gives a plausible explanation that it was caused by someone putting the shell back in the rifle, as he demonstrated himself. Moore makes a convincing and logical argument that the casing could not have been dented by hitting the floor or anything else outside the gun. Groden ties it to action by the rifle bolt as well, to his credit.

The photographs are striking and, many in their grotesque way, interesting as a part of history. I am not sure we need to see the graphic photographs of Kennedy autopsy in color, especially since Groden and others claim they were altered. Of course. If they don’t tell us what we want to believe, they must have been altered. Others that do, of course, were not altered.

So what appears to be a professionally done book at first glance, comes up as another wild speculation at conspiracy with no real conspirators identified, no real proof, and no real consistency. Very disappointing. *DK*

**Haslan, Edward T., *Dr. Mary’s Monkey: How the unsolved murder of a doctor, a secret laboratory in New Orleans and cancer-causing monkey viruses are linked to Lee Harvey Oswald, the JFK assassination and emerging global epidemics,* TineDay, Walterville, Oregon, 2007; 374 pp.**

This would be an intriguing story if true, and makes linking what would otherwise be incredible links of people and events heretofore unrelated far superior to any links one can make to Kevin Bacon.

This book was suggested to me by a high school and since then, life-long friend, Charlie Stahr, who lives in Covington, Louisiana, where a significant part of this story takes place. Charlie is otherwise a very logical and responsible fellow, so I read the copy that he sent to me, now for the second time. It is written by an advertising executive whose father was a Navy Commander and surgeon. Haslan writes that it was from his father that he gained an interest in the use of monkeys in research and development of the polio vaccine, and where his story begins.

This story is basically about just a handful of key characters. They include, from the title, Dr. Mary Sherman, a research doctor, Dr. Alton Ochsner, a surgeon, right-wing promoter, anti-Castro partisan, and secret researcher according to the author, Judyth Vary Baker, a tireless promoter of Lee Harvey Oswald’s innocence, and to a lesser degree figures such as David Ferrie, the former airline-pilot-turned-medical researcher, and Lee Harvey Oswald, who, though he didn’t finish high school, is reported by this author as having been connected with high level secret research. Oswald is portrayed is really being anti-Castro, even though his every action that can be proven and verified says otherwise.

It is all very complicated, but an interesting collection of purported events. What the author does is keeps the reader just long enough on one subject to catch interest before going on another tack to make the reader forget that he has not proven any of his assumptions or allegations.

The story is about this author’s aforementioned interest in polio vaccine research, and the assertion that the original polio vaccine was tainted and actually killed many who received initial vaccinations, including a child of the inventor. From this he links researchers using monkeys through Tulane University involving ways that Fidel Castro could be murdered through poison or disease. The connecting recurring event is the mysterious (this word is used quite a bit when the author wants you to think something suspicious is going on) death of Dr. Sherman, whose burned and depleted body was found in her apartment, and whose murder has never been solved. The author contends that the parts of her body missing could not have possibly been burned by a normal fire, and suggests instead, that she was a victim of an accident with a linear particle accelerator that she was secretly using in government research, and that her colleagues ended her life with a mercy killing, then deposited her body back in her apartment. The author further offers that David Ferrie’s apartment was part of the research that was to lead to Castro’s death.

Through this journey of fantastic events the author is constantly brought back to his obsession by what seem to be random events in his life, running into individuals who have parts of the puzzle, like a student who happened to be in a college course he took, and a woman he dated in college who lived in an apartment that he eventually determined had been part of this secret government research. And Lee Harvey Oswald knew Ferrie and worked with him on these projects. He bases this on Oswald’s being in Ferrie’s Civil Air Patrol for a very brief time as a teenager. Never mind there is no proof offered, just assumption and innuendo, that Oswald had any kind of close relationship with Ferrie.

Even though the author writes that the book is not really about the Kennedy assassination, as the subtitle suggests, it really is, because that is how he hopes to bring readers to this work. The reader may want to look into the other titles touted at the back of the book by this publisher, for example *The True History of the Bilderburgers, America’s Secret Establishment,* and *The Octopus Conspiracy.*

The author brings in all the unfounded accusations of the trials brought by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, involvement by the mob, secret dealings of the CIA, and all the usual suspects in the hundreds of Kennedy conspiracy books. Haslan never gives last names to his “friends” like the classmate and girlfriend aforementioned, of course, to protect them, but has no problem slandering scores of people who are dead and cannot defend themselves. He gives no logical explanation why the Garrison cases

 miserably failed; he just laments the fact that they did.

There are so many obvious glaring errors in logic and fact, I can only point out some of the more obvious to make the point. For example, on page 299, he says that Oswald “transported” Judyth, which is interesting, since he didn’t drive. He has no sense of wonder at all that all these coincidences happened to him to keep him on the trail of this story. There are many allegations of events that are not corroborated or attributed, just stated as fact, and he moves on with the story.

The book is full of maps, diagrams, photographs, sketches, and medical documents infused right on the pages where they are described. This doesn’t make what he says any more accurate, just perhaps more interesting. If you want to read interesting fiction, this might be a good use of your time, but I think of better written fiction books by the dozen. The murder mystery of Dr. Sherman is an interesting story, but his solution isn’t the answer. This book just uses all the usual suspects in Kennedy assassination books and tries to link them together in his theoretical story. Not scholarly. Not well—written. Probably not worth your money. *DK*

**Hubbard-Burrell, Joan, *What Really Happened? JFK: Five Hundred & One Questions & Answers,* Ponderosa Press, Spring Branch, Texas, 1992; 320 pp.**

There were so many books written on the JFK assassination in the early 1990’s that authors were running out of unique titles for their books. At first quick glance, this title on the cover appears to be asking JFK himself what happened, when, in effect, it is written as if he is asking the question himself, in the manner of *Why me?* With titles like that of this book, and others like Oglesby’s *Who Killed JFK?* And Callahan’s *Who Shot JFK? –* both reviewed elsewhere in this document – one is tempted to skip to the back of the book, like a mystery novel, and secure the answer without reading further.

This book is yet another from that large stack that was written in the early 1990’s, and like those of Harold Weisberg and Penn Jones, Jr., it is self-published. The difference is, by 1992, the dozens of authors writing on this topic were finding it less difficult to find a publisher than those earlier works by Weisberg and Jones.

Joan Hubbard-Burrell at one time worked for the CIA, then was a Research Historian for the Admiral Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg. As such, one might expect a little more meat to this book than what is there. Indeed, there are 501 questions brought forward in this work, and they are answered immediately, citing references from a selection of 22 books on the assassination written predominantly, if not exclusively, by those who were not satisfied with the conclusions of the Warren Commission on this topic.

The questions offered are very uncreative, to the point of insulting the intelligence of the reader at times. Because of the choice of books from which to answer these questions, described above, has a definite slant to them, it is not surprising that many of the questions are answered definitively, as if we have that answer clearly available to us as the unblemished truth, while other questions inconsistently state “We don’t know” or something similar. Some of the questions are downright silly. For example, at the end of the book, for thirty-nine pages, covering two chapters and involving ninety-two individuals, who died from weeks to decades after the assassination (after all it would take some time for even clever assassins to get around to all those witnesses in a short time), the author asks Who was? – then proceeds to list these names by themselves, with explanations of various lengths mostly involving their “mysterious” or “unexplained” deaths.

The bias in this book is so clear that in many cases the questions themselves have the appearance of being rhetorical. One has to wonder on what basis the author selected the books to include in her answers for reference after each. After all, there were, by 1992, dozens, perhaps hundreds of books, written on this subject or collateral topics. Here are but a few of these kinds of answers: For the listing of the name of Roy Kellerman in the “who was” section earlier in the book (yes, there are two of them), the author writes that this Secret Service agent, who rode in the front passenger’s side of Kennedy’s car that day, “If President Kennedy had from all reports four wounds, Governor Connally three, there have got to be more than three shots, gentlemen.” (p. 89) Really? A bullet can’t go through someone and come out on the other side and create two wounds? In answering the question about what kind of person Lee Harvey Oswald was, Hubbard-Burrell offers that people were “led to believe [by whom? – my insertion]” that “Oswald was a lonely, left-wing nut and a school drop-out,” then proceed to offer that “he was very intelligent.” (p. 117) As a teacher of 43+ years, I am pretty certain I know that someone can be a school dropout and be pretty intelligent. It wouldn’t take me long to think of half a dozen individuals thus described. On page 17, there is a list of “miscellaneous ‘errors in judgment’” that contributed to the negative aspects of this event. Half of them describe events and have nothing to do with anyone’s judgment.

One could go on about the various obvious spelling errors of names and terms and other editing sloppiness. Given the clear bias of the author, the limited selection of books from which she gleans her answers, some of which contradict each other, and outright false information, is reading this book any value at all to the reader? I think, yes, in a limited way. There is an index, and the books referenced for answers are listed at the beginning of this book. The questions, such as they are, give an overview, though incomplete, of the various theories that are out there that are alternatives to the conclusions of the Warren Commission. So, in the “history of the history” of this event, this book can provide a limited view of what is out there in conspiracy books. If there is value in reading this book, it would be to read it before reading some of the more serious books on the subject, as it can set the stage for what you are about to experience and provide a scorecard for the reader. *DK*

**Hurt, Henry. *Reasonable Doubt: An Investigation into the Assassination of John F. Kennedy.* NY: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1986: 555 pp.**

The premise of Hurt’s book appealed to me immediately: it **is** reasonable to have doubts about the official version of JFK’s assassination. An investigative reporter, Hurt assembled an overview of evidence, circumstance, and theory about the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. In addition to reviewing the eight official inquiries and the various conspiracy theories, he minutely examined seemingly outlandish notions, such as the involvement of a Lee Harvey Oswald impostor in a Cuban conspiracy. Hurt builds a powerful case that Oswald did not kill the president or police officer J. D. Tippit, and that he was the "patsy" he called himself shortly before Jack Ruby shot him to death. After reading this book, few readers will doubt that the circumstances surrounding Kennedy's assassination remain among the great mysteries of modern times, or that the key questions of that mystery are laid out with notable clarity.

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Except for Chapter 12: "The Confession of Robert Easterling." In this chapter Hurt almost undoes all his credibility with the almost laughable premise that Robert Easterling was involved in a conspiracy to JFK and that to make their escape the real assassins repelled from the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository to the ground via grappling hooks and rope. My guess is that this would have been fairly obvious in a plaza increasingly filled with police and people milling about. Nonetheless, a good read. TP

**Kaiser, David. *The Road to Dallas: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy.* Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008; 509 pp.**

David Kaiser, a respected professional historian, was a professor in the Strategy and Policy Department at the Naval War College at the time he wrote this book. The book is based primarily upon previously classified documents released as a result of the JFK Records Act, which in turn was the consequence of the public outcry following Oliver Stone’s flawed movie ***JFK***. Kaiser concludes that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin, but he also believes that Oswald was part of a conspiracy orchestrated in part by two, maybe three, major Mafia figures (Marcello, Trafficante, and perhaps Giancana). Those men were part of a broad network consisting of mob bosses, anti-Castro refugees, American mercenaries who worked with the refugees, and American right-wing activists, some of whom were leading business figures. Not everyone in the network was involved in the assassination and Kaiser believes the actual group was very small. He does not believe that the CIA was involved with the assassination, though the CIA worked with key figures involved in the assassination all the time in plots to assassinate Fidel Castro. Ruby---who had been connected to mob figures all his life---did not act spontaneously or serendipitously (even though he did leave his dog Sheba in the car) in killing Oswald. Somehow, according to Kaiser, Oswald became involved with right-wing activists after his return from the Soviet Union, best illustrated by his Fair Play for Cuba activities. A central figure was John Martino, who had been imprisoned in Cuba, who had links to Trafficante, and who had orchestrated the failed Bayo-Pawley raid, yet another attempt on Castro’s life. Furthermore, the Sylvia Odio incident which she saw Oswald in the company of two other individuals claiming to be Cubans, cannot be brushed aside even though both the FBI and Warren Commission dropped the ball on her hints to check into Martino (11H, 367-389). The result was a perfect storm in Kaiser’s mind and a logical, though horrific, outcome of the Kennedy’s crusade against the mob. Not a new conspiracy theory, but interesting nonetheless and worth reading. TP

**Kantor, Seth, *Who Was Jack Ruby?* Everest House, New York, New York, 1978; 242 pp.**

This is one of the few, if not the only, book written specifically about Jack Ruby, the killer of alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. And it is written by a player in the assassination-day drama, Seth Kantor, at the time correspondent for Scripps-Howard papers, who claims he saw and verbally engaged Jack Ruby at Parkland Hospital, where Kennedy was taken after the shooting.

When I read this book previously for the first time, what caught my attention, and what I remembered from the book were all of Ruby’s alleged mob ties and all the phone calls that were made to alleged mob contacts in the weeks before the assassination of President Kennedy. In reading it this, the second time, I see much more in the book, but not to the author’s credit.

It should be said that, even with Kantor’s journalist training and experience, he, like so many of the assassination authors and researchers over the years, engages in speculation, assumption, and unsubstantiated conclusions. There are plenty of examples. In describing the makeup of the Warren Commission, he writes “(attorney Leon) Hubert was considered by some to be the least effectual of the staff lawyers.” (p. 82) This and the entire section is not footnoted. The entire book is filled with interpretive statements such as this that are unattributed. Kantor, in describing how Ruby got into the departure area for Oswald in his transfer to the county jail the morning Ruby shot him, accuses individual police personnel of withholding information about statements Ruby made, and that the reason for this was “the story had not been worked out yet for Ruby.” (p. 76) This infers that a story needed to be worked out, or somehow fashioned to meet the needs of the police. In describing phone calls Ruby was known to receive the morning he shot Oswald, he assumes the calls came from the police, though there is no proof or attribution for that accusation.

A continuing theme of Kantor is that the Dallas police, like the FBI, acted in a manner as they did so as to avoid being cast in a bad light. This view was put forth by others since his book as an unacceptable, but less sinister reason why various agencies acted as they did. The motivation was to not look bad, rather than cover up anything that led to a different conclusion that the official version that Oswald acted alone.

There are issues Kantor raises that are worthy of attention and resolution. Included among these, of course, are whether or not he actually saw and engaged Ruby at Parkland Hospital soon after the president was shot, and what implications that had on Ruby’s motivations to kill Oswald. He also questions the competency of Judge Joe B. Brown, who presided at Ruby’s murder trial, though that likely does not affect the facts about what happened with that event or Oswald’s guilt, certainly.

Kantor cannot resist what other of the earlier assassination researchers allege about Ruby in discussing his mannerisms relative to whether or not he was homosexual. This is a common theme, as if it had anything to do with Kennedy’s assassination, relating to Ruby, Ruby’s roommate George Senator, Oswald, and David Ferrie, another character involved in the New Orleans part of this story.

In spite of Kantor’s attempt, also like many other researchers, to please everyone in the conspiracy community by implicating the mob, the CIA, Cubans, Teamsters, Dallas police and rightwing paramilitary groups all at the same time, Kantor makes other statements that tend to disprove a conspiracy in the Oswald murder. (p. 210) For example, he states that there is no evidence that Oswald and Ruby knew each other. He suggests that Ruby went under his compulsion to go to Parkland Hospital after Kennedy was shot, not to plant any “magic bullet.” He offers that the assassins, if a conspiracy “would not have chosen him” to silence Oswald. (p. 192)

All in all, because it is an entire book about Ruby, it may be worth reading, but the reader needs to be aware of the inconsistencies in the theme and conclusions, and the unsubstantiated interpretive allegations. The problem with most readers of JFK assassination books is that they only read one or two, and read them like novels, rather than as investigative resources into a crime. *DK*

**Kurtz, Michael L., *Crime of the Century: The Kennedy Assassination From a Historian’s Perspective,* The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1982; 291 pp.**

It was refreshing to see a book on this topic by a genuine professor. Some of the better writing on this subject was done by folks not in the academic business, or much younger than you would suspect to produce such a result. Others, who claimed to graduate from Ivy League schools, or actually have doctorate degrees have put out books that were poorly edited and lacking substantially in logic and academic integrity. Although I his final conclusion seems to be just taking “what is left” from the choices, given that he does not agree with the conclusion by the Warren Commission, it at least is written with care and with above average editing.

Kurtz, in fact, gives good analysis of a number of subtopics about the Kennedy assassination, such as his narrative about the evolution of the single-bullet theory. Unlike some of his fellow conspiracy theorists, Kurtz actually concludes that there was a head shot from the rear, based on the evidence. On the other hand, he writes that Governor Connally could not have been hit with the same shot as Kennedy because he was lined up directly in front of him, and the angle would have been wrong. (p. 82) Of course, we know this was wrong. Anyone who has seen the Kennedy limousine, or studies the pictures and where the men are seated would see clearly that the jump seat Connally was sitting in was situated to Kennedy’s left, and Kennedy’s right arm was hanging over the side of the car, putting him to the extreme right of that side of the car, making the angle from right to left facing the front of the car perfect from Oswald’s nest in the Book Depository Building.

Kurtz also, in trying to negate eyewitnesses that saw a figure on the sixth floor of the Depository Building just before the shooting, cites testimony by Secret Service agent Forrest Sorrels that Sorrels did not see anyone in the sixth floor window. When one understands that Sorrels was in the lead car, it is quite understandable, and also irrelevant. If he means he looked when driving directly at the Depository Building before turning, it very well could be that when he looked no one was there. After that it does not matter, since Sorrels was in the lead car and would have had to turn around to his right and look up to see the window, and there is no reason at that point he would do that.

Kurtz contends that the attempt on General Edwin Walker’s life by Oswald had “no bearing” on the Kennedy murder. (p. 124) On the face of it, this makes no sense. That someone accused of murdering a president earlier the same year tried and almost succeeded in killing another public figure presents a good case that this person has a proclivity to violence. Conspiracy theorists consistently use the argument that Oswald had no such proclivity in claiming his innocence. Further, on page 143, Kurtz says that the Warren Commission “relied entirely on the FBI report” for its research. While it is common knowledge that the Warren Commission did, in fact, rely heavily on the FBI investigation, it is also true that the Warren Commission, mostly through staff lawyers, conducted hours and hours of interviews of witnesses and others that could have been related to the events that day, that took pages and pages in the Report as well as their 26 volumes of testimony. There were, in fact 552 witnesses interviewed by the Warren Commission staff, 94 by the commissioners themselves, as reported by Kurtz himself. (p. 155). How is this relying *entirely* on the FBI? Regarding the “three tramps” from the railroad yard that were detained, he incorrectly states that they are “unidentified.” This, of course, is not true. We know who they were. Many other conspiracy authors acknowledge that.

Kurtz, again like other conspiracy theory authors, complains about records not becoming public, yet this gives no consideration at all to the Freedom of Information Act law suits by researcher/author Harold Weisberg that eventually resulted in Weisberg receiving over 60 file drawers of government documents being delivered to his home that, on order of a judge, that he made available to any researcher that asked. It is incredible that Kurtz never mentioned Weisberg’s work in the text of his book, though he cites him in the bibliography with Weisberg’s book *Oswald in New Orleans.*

Kurtz does do a good job of explaining the Congressional investigations, including the House Select Committee on Assassinations, Church Committee, and Rockefeller Commission. He has a question-and-answer portion in the second half of the book, and a description of three “main” conspiracy theories in a later chapter. Kurtz selects the one involving the Cuban government, making him one of the few, if not the only major conspiracy theorist clearly implicating Castro in the crime. Most tend toward the anti-Castro Cubans when accusing Cubans. Yet, it appears to this reader that this was almost an afterthought of “what was left” when he eliminated everything else, much like what the House Select Committee was left with when they received the late dictabelt information. Now they had to come up with a conspiring group or individual and did it almost as an afterthought. When I wrote Kurtz to comment on his book and ask some questions, he took me to task for asking what his conclusion was as to “who did it.” He said, to paraphrase, if I read the book I would know that clearly. I can see that, having read it a second time, however, it is not all that clear, being put in with two other theories in the end, and he does not make the case very well at all for that theory over others.

This book can be recommended because it is readable and because it gives clear, complete, objective descriptions of some aspects of this case that have been mentioned here. As far as his solution to the murder, I have made it clear he wasn’t clear. *DK*

**Lifton, David S., *Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy;* Carrol & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1980; 755 pp.**

This book is the only one in the hundreds written about the Kennedy assassination that dedicates the entire work to the theory that the body of the slain president was altered physically before the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Other authors allude to it and speculate, but Lifton goes into great detail, includes interviews and reports by those who were present at the autopsy, and has written in a very readable style. There are two primary problems with his thesis. First, as Vincent Bugliosi has pointed out in *Reclaiming History,* Lifton, not a medical practitioner, has ignored a basic fact of forensic medicine: it is very easy to tell the difference between “surgery” or injuries to a body before death from those after death because of blood flow or lack thereof. Second, at no time was the president’s body not in the presence of either his wife, or his aides from Parkland Hospital to Bethesda, so, therefore, there was absolutely no opportunity for any body switch or “surgery” to the body post mortem. Lifton was one of the first, if not the first, to make copies of the Zapruder film for a reasonable price to the general public. Since the film was sold by Zapruder to *Life* magazine, I am not sure how he did this legally. Nevertheless, my copy is from him. To his credit, the book is at least well written technically and he clearly put hard work into his interviews and other research. In spite of this, I would not recommend purchasing or otherwise reading this book. The premise is false and he stretches to make his point; in fact he does not prove his point. *DK*

**McDonald, Hugh C., *Appointment in Dallas: the Final Solution to the Assassination of JFK,* The Hugh McDonald Publishing Corp., New York, New York, 1975; 211 pp.**

Here we have, in this book written as told to Geoffrey Bocca, at long last (though it was, relatively speaking, one of the earlier books, beating the 1990’s onslaught) a conspiracy theory that is simple, though hardly fulfilling the promise of the all-inclusive title.

The author of this book, who moves back and forth throughout the work as one narrating in quotes to one being narrated *about* by the “as told to” writer, on the face of it appears to be highly credible. As the reader is reminded throughout the book, and in particular from a chronological list in the beginning and tiny unreadable photographs of his various awards and certificates in the back, McDonald was a highly decorated and multi-experienced law enforcement officer and adventurer. He was a pilot, military veteran, presidential candidate bodyguard, and officer in the sheriff’s department, among other things. These experiences lend considerable credibility to his story, if not the vagueness of that story and the implausibility of parts of it.

The story begins with McDonald being asked to serve as bodyguard to presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election. He accepts this assignment and puts together a team that includes a former CIA colleague he names as Herman Kimsey. He recalls, during the Bay of Pigs events in 1961 an encounter with Kimsey in his office at the CIA, when a stranger stormed into Kimsey’s office and berates him for leaving him in a compromised situation on the beach in Cuba. That individual would be the focus of this book, and McDonald would call him “Saul,” though we never learn the real name of this man.

During the Goldwater work, after the assassination of President Kennedy, Kimsey shares with McDonald that this mysterious “Saul” confessed to Kimsey that he was Kennedy’s assassin. McDonald links that information with the famous photograph of the man in Mexico City whose picture was taken during Oswald’s reported visit there just prior to Kennedy’s murder, and who is said to have been mistaken for Oswald, even though he looks nothing like Oswald.

This started a years-long search by McDonald to locate this self-confessed hired assassin. McDonald used the opportunity of being in Europe on secret government work in the early 1970’s, through his Eastern European undercover contacts to put out a search for Saul. After several false alarms, Saul meets him in a hotel in London and, according to McDonald, tells his entire story to him.

This story involves being the second shooter, with Lee Harvey Oswald being the “perfect patsy,” by being told that he, Oswald, is actually helping the Secret Service help the president by firing off-target shots past the president as he moves through Dealey Plaza that day. Saul then would deliver the fatal shots to the president, and turn his rifle on Oswald high up in the school book depository building when Secret Service agents and police fire instinctively in Oswald’s direction. Of course, that did not happen, one of the mistakes, according to Saul, of that day.

This narrative, which amounts to not much more than a novella, and reads like one, admittedly leaves out one very important point that would naturally pique the readers’ curiosities. That is, who hired Saul in the first place? It is never answered. In various parts of the book, McDonald, or his co-author, go to pains to explain why Saul would even tell this story to McDonald, Kimsey, or anyone else, having gotten away with it. He uses the reasoning that life as a hired assassin can be a lonely business, and it would be difficult to hold that inside all that time without telling *someone,* and that he had reason to trust Kimsey, if not McDonald.

The authors include several of the controversial parts of this case very neatly and without much explanation, such as stating that the “magic bullet” was planted on the stretcher at Parkland Hospital (no surprise there), and the aforementioned explanation of the shooting that Oswald did and why he stated that he was a “patsy.”

Even though the writers attempt to convince the reader in those several places of the logic in Saul telling this story, and in the story itself, somehow it just rings hollow. The reader will find him- or herself not quite convinced if you are like me. There are other problems. On the cover of the book, it announces in capital letters “RARE PHOTOGRAPHS.” I didn’t see them. I saw three of “Saul,” ostensibly from the Mexico visit, which are readily available in a dozen or more assassination conspiracy books and have been for quite some time, and two more, perfectly identical to one another, that are composites from McDonald’s Identi-Kit reproduction done from memory of Saul from his two meetings with him. McDonald also claims to have invented the Identi-Kit used by police departments nationwide.

For being the “final solution” to the JFK assassination, this story is woefully short of details. If it weren’t for McDonald’s oft-mentioned impeccable credentials and resume, I would think this is just another person wanting to cash in on the assassination industry. *DK*

**McKnight, Gerrald. *Breach of Trust: How the Warren Commission Failed the Nation and Why.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005; 488pp.**

***Breach of Trust*** is a meticulous dissection of the Warren Commission’s Report. It is on my top ten list of “must read” books on the JFK assassination. Professor Emeritus of History at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, McKnight convincingly argues that the Warren Commission began with a predetermined outcome driven by the FBI’s leaked report and political necessity: Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin. Furthermore, McKnight contends that the Commission ignored crucial leads, discounted contradictory evidence, and didn’t interview critical witnesses. No real independent investigation was conducted. Nothing really new here. What McKnight does well is to present a well-researched indictment of a biased and sloppy Commission, an obstructionist FBI, and a lying CIA. It would be hard not to interpret the mountain of errors and irregularities as anything but a deliberate cover-up: a breach of trust. Too many problems exist: the Zapruder film, the position of Kennedy's neck wound, the single-bullet theory, the Edgewood Arsenal experiments, the nuclear activation tests, and the "false Oswald" reports. McKnight believes that Oswald may very well have been innocent and that "CIA hardliners" almost certainly were involved. TP

**Mellen, Joan. *A Farewell to Justice: Jim Garrison, JFK’s Assassination, and the Case That Should Have Changed History*. Sterling, VA: Potomac Books, 2005; 608 pp.**

Some of the information found in this book is interesting, but it is not well written or organized. At times the book seemed almost stream of consciousness writing. Mellen covers much of the same ground found in Garrison’s own book ***On the Trail of the Assassins,*** but her research asserts that key witnesses lied at the Clay Shaw trial under pressure from the CIA. In fact, Mellen asserts that though Mafia operatives participated in the assassination, it was primarily a mid and high level CIA operation.

Like many, Mellen believes that Oswald was a patsy but, somewhat in the manner of John Newman’s ***Oswald and the CIA,*** the CIA set him up over a long period of time, and that there were others as a backup plan. I don’t recommend this book. TP

# Newman, John. *Oswald and the CIA: The Documented Truth About the Unknown Relationship Between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK.* NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008; 696 pp.

# *Oswald and the CIA* should be near the very top of every JFK assassination reading list. This review refers to the paperback/Kindle copy and not the original hardcover edition, which had been published 13 years earlier. That copy remains completely intact within the new publication, however, a kind of snapshot of what Newman had concluded in 1995. There is a new afterword added by the author, which details his own theory of who was behind the assassination, but he is careful to point out that he could be wrong. Newman’s background is particularly useful in equipping him to wade through the mountains of government documents. He served in Vietnam as a major in Army intelligence and later became Executive assistant to the head of the NSA (yes, that NSA). He is currently a Professor of History at the University of Maryland and also the author of *JFK and Vietnam*.

***Oswald and the CIA*** did not begin life as a conspiracy book. It was a careful examination of the highly compartmentalized, multi-level, and multi departmental CIA information on Oswald, particularly the incident in Mexico, which is not only a focus of this book but of Jefferson Morley’s ***Our Man in Mexico*** as well. The CIA was clearly manipulating Oswald and impersonating him there, while at the same time denying any interest in him. As Newman noted in the introduction to the 1995 edition, “The thesis of this work holds that the CIA had a keen operational interest in Lee Harvey Oswald from the day he defected to the Soviet Union in 1959 until the day he was murdered in the basement of the Dallas city jail. From this thesis flow two conclusions: first, that the Agency used sensitive sources and methods to acquire intelligence on Oswald. Secondly, whether witting of not, Oswald became involved in CIA operations.” By 2008 the implications for Newman would be much darker, someone who knew about the assassination was handling Oswald in Mexico and Hoover had figured it out. Because of CIA manipulation, the FBI took Oswald off of the espionage watch list, which in turn meant he could be in the Texas Book Depository along the parade route when he shouldn’t have been. Hoover responded by “censuring, demoting, or transferring everyone in the FBI that had been touched by the Mexico City story.” Furthermore, when informed that the CIA had promised to keep the FBI informed of illegal operations in the United States Hoover scrawled on a memo, “OK, but I hope you are not being taken in. I can’t forget CIA withholding the French espionage activities in U.S.A. nor the false story re Oswald’s trip to Mexico City only to mention two or their instances of double dealing.”

The paper trail of CIA, FBI, DOD, Navy, Army, and American Embassy files was exceptionally difficult to follow, but that did not deter Newman. Interest in Oswald was extensive and went to the very top of the CIA’s organizational chart. Furthermore, there is a trail of circumstantial evidence that Oswald was on the CIA’s payroll as a double agent. The convoluted tale of his visit to Mexico is much too complicated even to summarize in this review. Suffice it to say that there is some validity to the notion that the alternative to concluding that Oswald was a lone assassin was an unthinkable World War III scenario, just as Lyndon Johnson suggested to Earl Warren while pressuring him to head up the commission. There is no doubt that the CIA blatantly lied about its relationship with Oswald, and it continues to lie even to this day. TP

**LEE HARVEY OSWALD**

Other than the president himself, Lee Harvey Oswald is the one figure most likely to appear in every book about the assassination, therefore has generated dozens of books just about him. This section contains those books where Oswald is the main subject, though it may be placed in the context of his relationship with a particular other person or group as a primary focus of that work.

**Krusch, Barry. *Impossible: The Case Against Lee Harvey Oswald: Volume 1*. Los Angeles, CA: ICI Press, 2012; 328 pp.**

**Krusch, Barry. *Impossible: The Case Against Lee Harvey Oswald: Volume 2*. Los Angeles, CA: ICI Press, 2012; 314 pp.**

**Krusch, Barry. *Impossible: The Case Against Lee Harvey Oswald: Volume 3*. Los Angeles, CA: ICI Press, 2012; 382 pp.**

Full disclosure: I only own these three volumes in electronic form as I could buy all three for only $9. It is the best $9 I’ve ever spent on books dealing with the JFK assassination, and I may eventually purchase the paperback editions. Furthermore, if you are looking for the definitive answer to the case Vincent Bugliosi makes for Lee Harvey Oswald’s guilt when defending the Warren Commission Report in ***Reclaiming History***, you need look no further. ***Impossible: The Case Against Lee Harvey Oswald*** is that definitive answer. Importantly, ***Impossible*** is not a series of conspiracy books. Krusch is not interested in identifying groups or individuals that might have been part of the assassination. His only goal was to examine every single piece of evidence put forth by the Warren Commission that could be used against Lee Oswald in a court of law to see whether or not there was a legal case that could stand up in court. Over half of Volume One, is, in fact, a tutorial on the rule of law, the burden of proof, reasonable doubt, case law, and the standard for admissibility of evidence.

When Krusch finally begins to build his case against the lone gunman theory, his attack is devastating. That attack continues through Volumes Two and Three. Nothing, and I mean **nothing**, escapes his critical examination as proposition by proposition, element by element, and reason by reason he demolishes the Warren Commission Report. Shell casings, bullets, CE 399, the number of shots, angles of shots, missed shots, Kennedy’s autopsy, Kennedy’s wounds, Connally’s wounds, the sniper’s nest, acoustic evidence, timing, whether or nor Oswald was the only person on the sixth floor, the single-bullet theory, whether or not all shots were fired by the Mannlicher-Carcano, and fingerprint evidence are methodically scrutinized, showing the Commission could not be right. It is clear that the Commission accepted evidence that was incongruent, models that were wrong, false testimony by government representatives and others, while ignoring testimony, medical reports, and physical evidence that led to a different conclusion.

Let me illustrate how thorough Krusch is with just one small point he makes, that of the problems associated with Oswald’s ownership of the Mannlicher-Carcano: “**Reason #1**: More than one 6.5 Mannlicher Carcano rifle existed with the serial number c2766. **Reason #2**: Klein’s sporting goods bought more than one 6.5 Italian Rifle with the serial number c2766. **Reason #3**: The February 1963 rifle shipment was for the 36” rifle, not the 40” rifle. **Reason #4**: The rifle “Hidell” ordered was the 36” rifle. **Reason #5**: The shipping manifest indicated that the rifle that was shipped to “Hidell” was the 36” rifle. **Reason #6**: The shipping manifest indicated that the cost for shipping was for the 36” rifle. **Reason #7**: Klein’s didn’t run out of the 36” rifle until November,
1963. **Reason #8**: Klein’s didn’t start selling the 40” rifle until April, 1963. **Reason #9**: Klein’s never mounted scopes on the 40” rifle. **Reason #10**: The sling mounts on the “backyard” rifle are not the same as the sling mounts on the depository Carcano.”

(Kindle Locations 489-495) And this is just the tip of the iceberg. A hyperlink (http://www.giljesus.com/jfk/rifle.htm) takes the reader immediately to the full, thoroughly documented article by Gil Jesus from which the summary was derived, which is a real advantage of the Kindle version of the book.

Vincent Bugliosi wrote in ***Reclaiming History*** that, “Indeed, the evidence against Oswald proves his guilt not just beyond a reasonable doubt, but beyond all doubt, or, as they say in the movies, beyond a shadow of a doubt. In other words, not just two or three pieces of evidence point towards Oswald’s guilt, but more than 50 pieces point irresistibly to his guilt. And not only does all of the physical, scientific evidence point solely and exclusively to Oswald’s guilt, but virtually everything he said and did points unerringly to his guilt. Under these circumstances, it is not possible for him to be innocent, at least, as I said, in the real world in which we live.” (p. 952) I guess that Bugliosi must live in an alternate universe, because Krusch has managed to do what Bugliosi believes to be impossible: he has proven that there is reasonable doubt in Oswald’s case. TP

**Roffman, Howard. *Presumed Guilty*. New Haven, CT: A.S. Barnes, 1976; 299 pp.**

What is most amazing about this book is that Roffman was only 22 when it was published. He began the research while a teenager in high school! If Roffman is correct, Lee Harvey Oswald could not have been the assassin of President John F. Kennedy and could not have been the gunman in the sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository building. Roffman’s command of Commission documentation, circumstantial evidence, and the ballistics is impressive. Like many subsequently and in a manner similar to Silvia Meagher in ***Accessories After The Fact***, Roffman demonstrates convincingly that the Commission prejudged Oswald and suppressed testimony that tended to contradict their conclusions. "When the Commissioners decided in advance that the wrong man was the lone assassin, whatever their intentions, they protected the real assassins. Through their staff, they misinformed the American public and falsified history." TP

**FORENSICS**

This section includes reviews of books that center on the scientific technical evidence in the case: ballistics, the autopsy, photography, and acoustics to name a few.

**Chambers, G. Paul. *Head Shot: The Science Behind the JFK Assassination.* NY: Prometheus Books, 2010; 260 pp.**

A career physicist, G. Paul Chambers has worked as a contractor for the NASA Goddard Optics Branch, a supervisory research physicist for the Energetic Materials and Detonation Sciences Department of the Naval Surface Warfare Center, a research physicist for the Condensed Matter and Radiation Sciences Division of the Naval Research Laboratory, and is currently working on the development of renewable energy with Bellatrix Energy, LLC. He has legitimate scientific credentials.

So, with such credentials, why waste six chapters getting to the heart of the issue? Chambers reviews the Warren Commission, Epstein’s ***Inquest***, witnesses, how science arrives at the truth (including a multi-page discussion of the Piltdown Man), medical evidence, and the House Committee on Assassinations. Much of this just rehashes basic JFK assassination information.

With Chapter 7, *Reclaiming History*, Chambers shifts gears and his argument becomes precise, logical, and devastating. This is by far the best chapter in the book. “The central thesis of ***Reclaiming History***, that Oswald killed Kennedy and acted alone, fails utterly unless the single-bullet theory is viable.” (p. 151) Bugliosi claims that, “the single-bullet theory is an obvious misnomer. Though in its incipient stages it was but a theory, the indisputable evidence is that it is now a proven fact, a wholly supported conclusion.” (RH 489-490) “It should hold up under all forms of analysis. All known facts should support it. All relevant tests should demonstrate its correctness. All lines of analysis should prove its accuracy.” (p.151) Correct? It should be indisputable, for example, as to the location of JFK’s back wound. And yet all the extant documentation points to the location of a back wound much lower than the location needed for a bullet to transit out of JFK’s throat to make possible the single-bullet theory.

Furthermore, the Zapruder film should support this contention. Even Bugliosi admits, “If indeed the film showed Kennedy and Connally being hit by separate bullets, then the film evidence would be powerful and persuasive. But since we *know* that Kennedy and Connally were not hit by separate bullets, we know, before we even look at the film that it *cannot* show otherwise.” (RH 458) That certainly seems open minded doesn’t it? But Chambers demonstrates precisely that: the Zapruder film does show that JFK and Connally *had* to be hit by separate bullets. The fastest the human body can react to an outside stimuli is about 200 milliseconds (or about 3 ½ Zapruder frames). (p.156) Kennedy is already reacting to a bullet wound a frame 224, which means he had to have been shot at frame 221, or earlier. Z224 also shows Connally’s lapel flopping out. But Connally doesn’t react until Z237 whereas Kennedy was reacting immediately? In addition to this, had JFK actually been hit at Z221 the bullet would have passed through Connally by the next frame. And Chambers isn’t finished. Connally thought he was struck at about Z231-Z234. A 200 millisecond delay takes the viewer precisely to Z237, where Connally begins to exhibit severe distress.

What about CE399, the “magic bullet?” CE399 weighs in at 158.6 grains; a whole Mannlicher-Carcano bullet weighs 160 to 161 grains prior to being fired, and about 159.1 grains after being fired. As Chambers notes, some of the missing weight in CE399 is because material was removed for testing. This does not square with Dr. Robert Shaw’s testimony before the Warren Commission. “Dr. Shaw. All right. As far as the wounds of the chest are concerned, I feel that this bullet could have inflicted those wounds. But the examination of the wrist both by X-ray and at the time of surgery showed some fragments of metal that make it difficult to believe that the same missile could have caused these two wounds. There seems to be more than three grains of metal missing as far as the---I mean in the wrist.” (4H113) And do not forget that the Army Edgewood Arsenal testing never replicated a nearly undamaged bullet that broke a wrist as McKnight observed in ***Breach of Trust***.

The backwards and left snap of JFK’s head after Z313? Chambers labels “bizarre and implausible explanations like supersonic jetting and freak instantaneous muscle spasms.” (p.163) First, as previously noted, a major muscle group in the body simply can’t react that fast. Second, the supersonic jetting theory, to work, would require the fatal bullet to come from precisely the opposite direction as the jetting. If that were true, the shooter could not have been in the Texas Book Depository, which would point directly to a conspiracy. “Blood spattering a patrolman to the rear of Mrs. Kennedy, who was sitting to the president’s left, and skull fragments sailing over the back of Kennedy’s limousine are not consistent with the scenario of blood and brain matter jetting to the right front of Kennedy’s head as a result of a round exiting in this direction.” (p.164) It is a fact that Mrs. Kennedy picked up a piece of her husband’s skull from the trunk of the car.

Was the fatal shot a military full-metal jacketed round? Chambers convincingly demonstrates that it was a frangible round whereas the bullets fired from the Book Depository were full metal jacketed and would not have exploded on impact. Different bullets or more than three shots add up to more than one assassin.

Richard Feynman, one of my very favorite physicists (read ***Surely You’re Joking, Mr. Feynman***!) once said in his Messenger Lectures, “If the theory doesn’t agree with experiment, it’s wrong. It doesn’t matter who thought it up, how smart they are, or how many degrees they have, if a theory doesn’t agree with experiment, it’s wrong.” (p.167) The single-bullet theory does not agree with experiment and, therefore, it’s wrong. And the whole house of cards argument built upon it collapses. TP

**Crenshaw, Charles A., *JFK: Conspiracy of Silence, Penguin Group, New York, 1992;* 205 pp.**

When I first purchased this book, very close to when it was first released, I thought “Finally, one of the doctors at Parkland has come out with a detailed story as he experienced it.” This book was written, at least in part, by Dr. Charles Crenshaw, who, at the time of the murder of President Kennedy, was serving his residency at Parkland Memorial Hospital. The book is co-authored by Jens Karl Hansen, a writer, and Gary Shaw, one-time director of the JFK Information Center in Dallas. The latter is no doubt the source of all the collateral information that is added to make this book length that was not witnessed by Crenshaw himself.

The book starts with a narrative about Crenshaw, how he came to be working at Parkland, and the trials and tribulations of working as a resident who is underpaid and overworked. Some of the information in this section is helpful in understanding the relationships between the doctors, how the hospital functioned normally, and the responsibilities of the various doctors who became involved in this event. Crenshaw points out clearly and often how the doctors, and surgeons in particular, see themselves and the quality of their work. His bottom line here is that Parkland offered surgical services as good as anywhere in the country. He also points out that he was knowledgeable of bullet wounds because of the kind of clientele that used Parkland when he was there.

Crenshaw’s major premise is that the Warren Commission got it wrong, and that Kennedy’s wounds were not as described by the autopsy doctors at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington, D. C., and that when he was assisting in the trauma room on November 23, 1963, the wound in Kennedy’s head continued around the back of his head. In addition, Crenshaw writes that he saw the bullet wound in the front of the neck before the tracheotomy was performed and, in his opinion, it was clear an entry wound.

The book is written in a journal-style, with events distant from Parkland wedged in between events at Parkland, extending to the shooting of accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, even though none of those other events were witnessed by Crenshaw. There is quite a bit of detail about how Kennedy was treated for his wounds after being brought into Parkland, and the thinking behind that treatment. In Crenshaw’s opinion, Kennedy was dead when they brought him in, but, after all *he was the president.*

There are many problems with “facts” that he presents in this work, and conclusions that he draws and repeats frequently. He suggests that the Secret Service was either negligent or intentionally involved in the president’s murder, first, by being drunk the night before, as other Warren Commission critics before and after Crenshaw have charged, because they were “up all night” drinking at a local establishment. He ties the owner of that club to Jack Ruby. This is a common device used by critics to, by suggestion and stages of connection, link Oswald and Ruby, Ruby and the mob. Oswald and the mob, Oswald and the CIA, Oswald and the FBI, ad infinitum, hoping something will stick. He writes that this behavior was against Secret Service policy. I guess on this point I will take the word of former Kennedy Detail Agent Gerald Blaine in *The Kennedy Detail,* reviewed here elsewhere in this bibliography, when he writes that none of his colleagues were drunk, and that they were officially off duty, and that what they did was not against Secret Service policy. Crenshaw failed to convince that, even if it were true, and he is only repeating rumor here, how it specifically materially changed what happened to the president that day. Does he honestly think Clint Hill, or anyone, could have gotten to the president any sooner?

Unlike other critics who claim that Oswald’s Mannlicher-Carcano was not high velocity, Crenshaw says he knew “right away” that the damage to the cranium could only have been caused by a “high velocity bullet.” (p 79) Crenshaw’s credibility on the extent of the head wound is strained, since even he concedes what Jim Moore tells us in *Conspiracy of One,* that Kennedy’s body was never turned over – so how would he, or anyone know?

Someone told Crenshaw to write, or wrote themselves, that teacher-witness Jean Hill, “The Lady in Red,” ran up the grassy knoll after the shooting. Simply not true. Photos of that time clearly show that she stayed on the other side of the street and did not run up the grassy knoll.

On page 116, Crenshaw has a police officer shouting “Kill the president, will you,” then on page 148, he gives complete credibility to Oswald’s statement in custody that he had not been charged with that, and “*In fact no one has said that to me yet.”* (Crenshaw’s emphasis) He needs to review his own writing, or that of his co-authors.

The whole book is full of these innuendos and unsubstantiated allegations, most of them repeated elsewhere before and after this book was written. Crenshaw identifies himself as a “Conservative Democrat,” yet very much uses the same arguments by critics, mostly of the Left, who indicate that there is no way this president, with all his charm and promise, could have been taken by such a loser as Oswald. In the end, it is clear that the attempt to make this book-length leads to worn out innuendo repeated from elsewhere, and, assuming Crenshaw knows something about medicine, he most certainly knows nothing about presidential protection.

For me, the clincher is Crenshaw’s explanation of why it took him nearly thirty years to say something about what he writes that he always thought was true: that this was a conspiracy, that a lot of people were lying and/or covering up, and that all the doctors in that trauma room knew the medical evidence coming out after the autopsy was false. His explanation? He didn’t want to damage his career with such an allegation. What a patriot. *DK*

**Fiester, Sherry. *Enemy of the Truth: Myths, Forensics, and the Kennedy Assassination.* Southlake, TX: JFK Lancer Publications, 2012; 402 pp.**

My belief has long been that there are aspects of the JFK assassination that science would be able to answer as technology progressed and analysis became much more sophisticated. The study of the Dallas police Dictabelt tape sponsored by Larry Sabato at the University of Virginia is a perfect example. It couldn’t have been done ten years ago. The firm that Sabato hired discovered that the tape did not record the assassination and that almost all analysis of it up to this point has been incorrect, which disappointed both sides of the argument, but particularly those who believed the tape proved that there was more than one assassin.

Enter Sherry Fiester with ***Enemy of the Truth***. Fiester is more than qualified to assess the JFK assassination. She is a retired Certified Senior Crime Scene Analyst with over 30 years of experience, a Law Enforcement Instructor, and is court certified as and expert in Crime Scene Investigation, Crime Scene Reconstruction, and Bloodstain Pattern Analysis in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida.

Chapter One examines the notion that the Dallas, TX police followed correct protocol in investigating the JFK’s assassination. The Dallas PD did not follow national standards common in 1963 required for a professional and legally valid crime scene investigation; they didn’t even adhere to their own rules. Basic protocols were flubbed or ignored, such as a complete photographic and drawn-to-scale survey of the Book Depository's sixth floor. The spent shells (not photographed or marked to preserve chain-of-evidence), the rifle, the paper bag, and even the boxes (not photographed or marked to preserve chain-of-evidence) were not documented in their original places before they were moved. And that is just the tip of the iceberg.

Chapter Two describes the science and research behind sound localization, which calls into question much of the “ear witness” testimony, no matter which side of the argument one might be on.

Chapter Three focuses on Zapruder frame 313, which depicts a red cloud or mist in front of JFK's forehead. Since the scarlet fog appears only in this one frame, some conspiracy advocates has argued that this crimson haze appears and then vanishes much too quickly to be an event caught by the camera and that the film has been altered. Fiester uses the same frame as evidence that the film is genuine and depicts a phenomenon, only documented well after 1982, called "backspatter." In fact, the slight forward movement of JFK’s head in frame 312 just prior to frame 313 is exactly what should be expected from a jacketed bullet that came from the front! As is the brief time period the backspatter is visible in the film. In addition to that, Fiester notes that there was plenty of evidence left on the back of the presidential limousine, including blood, brain matter, and the piece of JFK’s skull Jackie picked up to confirm that the fatal shot came from the front. Fiester effectively dismisses the “jet effect” as junk science.

Chapter Four discusses the idea that the President's limousine slowed to a crawl or stopped outright. Not so. Not one surviving film shows the car stopping or gives any indication of having a car stop edited out. End of story.

Chapter Five dismisses the myth that the ballistics prove one shooter; modern science dispels the possibility. Recent examinations of various recovered bullet fragments and casings don't show them to have been fired from the same rifle, or even the same KIND of rifle. Harold Weisberg sensed that the Nuclear Activation Analysis was the key, and he was right. Fragments cannot be matched with each other or with CE 399. The inconclusive test results were withheld from the Warren Commissioners at the time. Recent studies indicate that the extant fragments came from 3 to 5 bullets. (p. )

Chapter Six dismisses the possibility that the fatal headshot came from the Grassy Knoll. The more likely possibility is somewhere near the triple overpass or the parking lot near it. Maybe HSCA was correct after all and a shot from the Grassy Knoll did miss.

Chapter Seven rules out the possibility belief that there were two headshots using the same argument found in Chapter Three.

The final myth, the Single-Bullet Theory, is the subject of Chapter Eight and in it Fiester demolishes it. After dissecting every angle, she concludes that, “The Single Bullet Theory is a manufactured resolution of problems stemming from a biased investigation that obviously attempted to manipulate the findings supporting a single shooter. By its own admission, the Warren Commission did not demonstrate a trajectory that proves the Single Bullet Theory correct; yet, the Single Bullet Theory hinges on trajectory.” (p. 325) “That trajectory should be reproducible and supported by evidence, but it is not reproducible and is not supported by medical evidence. The possibility of aligning the muzzle of a weapon in the Texas School Book Depository sixth floor window with the two wounds in Kennedy and the back wound in Connally has not been proven because it is impossible.” (p. 327) I’m not so sure about that conclusion, and I’m sure that D.B. Thomas would not agree with it either. But this assertion is testable, and that, my friends, is the value of science. TP

**Thomas, Donald B. *Hear No Evil: Politics, Science, and the Forensic Evidence in the Kennedy Assassination.* NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013; 800 pp.**

It is far past the time to put emotion aside when looking at the JFK assassination. There are questions about this seminal event that science can answer, and some that science cannot at the present time and may never be able to answer. That’s exactly what Thomas attempts to do in this 800-page scientific evaluation of the conclusions of the various committees and panels that have investigated the assassination. His conclusions will please some and upset others, and not for the reasons you might think.

In ***Hear No Evil*** Thomas takes us on an exhaustive tour of the measurable data in the case: from speeds, angles, velocity, weights and muzzle blasts, to echo patterns and statistical probabilities by way of Neutron Analysis. In the process Thomas demonstrates that the lone gunman theory simply does not stand up under close scientific scrutiny.

Thomas goes into great detail on the acoustic evidence in favor of a shot from the grassy knoll. He carefully explains the methodology of the science being used, the full tables of results for the complete series of tests (including the margin of error), and finally how to interpret the data. This approach is particularly valuable in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the Neutron Activation Tests, the Oswald paraffin tests, and the Jack Ruby polygraph test. Given the recent findings on the Dictabelt tape by Larry Sabato, I would be most interested in learning how Thomas would respond to Sabato’s assertion that the Dictabelt didn’t record the assassination at all while Thomas insists that it did.

With Thomas's approach nothing is sacred. Thus he can support the single-bullet theory and yet declare that CE 399 couldn’t possibly be that bullet.

***Hear No Evil*** consists of 19 chapters, which consist of:

 Chapter 1 – The Crime Scene

 Chapter 2 – Fingerprint Evidence

 Chapter 3 – Gunshot Residues

 Chapter 4 – The Murder Weapon

 Chapter 5 – Photogrammetry

 Chapter 6 – The Zapruder Film

 Chapter 7 – The Autopsy, Part I: The Neck Wound

 Chapter 8 - The Autopsy, Part II: The Head Wound

 Chapter 9 – Terminal Ballistics

 Chapter 10 – The Rearward Head Snap

 Chapter 11 – The Magic Bullet

 Chapter 12 – Bullet Trajectory

 Chapter 13 – Comparative Bullet Lead Analysis

 Chapter 14 – The Tippit Case

 Chapter 15 – Lie Detection

 Chapter 16 – Ballistic Acoustics

 Chapter 17 – The Acoustics Challenged

 Chapter 18 – The Acoustics in Prime Time

 Chapter 19 - Reconstruction

Thomas writes well, so the book doesn’t take nearly as long to read as one might think. Each chapter includes a concise summary to help refresh your memory in case an important point had been overlooked. I often found myself reading the summary and then going back to the place in the chapter where Thomas had originally made the point to make sure I understood it. This book is not for the faint of heart but it is the most thorough overview of the JFK assassination from the standpoint of a science yet written. I highly recommend it. TP

**Wecht, Cyril. *Cause of Death.* NY: Penguin Books, 1993; 314 pp.**

No forensics section of a bibliography would be complete without a book from Cyril Wecht. Dr. Wecht is a forensic expert who has been one of the principal forensic critics of the JFK autopsy from almost the very beginning. In fact, he was amazed that the government didn’t turn to known forensic professionals to conduct the JFK autopsy. As Harold Weisberg used to say, “JFK received an autopsy fit for a bowery bum and Oswald got an autopsy appropriate of a president.” I think that Wecht would absolutely agree with that sentiment. Only Chapter One, “The Great American Murder Mystery: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy” will be included in this review. The other mysterious deaths or murders included in this book, such as Mary Jo Kopechne and Robert Kennedy, are not the focus of this bibliography and will not be covered.

Chapter One chronicles Dr. Wecht’s 30-year JFK journey, beginning with that terrible day in November 1963 when he was visiting his friend, Thomas Naguchi, in Los Angeles. Like many, Wecht accepted the findings of the Warren Commission. Only in 1965, when he was asked to present a paper to the American Academy of Forensic Science on the JFK murder, did Wecht proceed to read the testimony and look at the exhibits in the 26 supplemental volumes of the Warren Commission. Though he did not contest the findings of the Commission at that time, he was very dismayed by what he read. His first conclusion was, “that is was a botched autopsy, a terrible piece of medicolegal investigation.” (p. 23) “[T]he men chosen for the task were inexperienced military pathologists who knew nothing of homicide investigations.” (p. 24) “The pathologists never talked to the doctors at Parkland Memorial Hospital before beginning their examination. It is a cardinal rule when performing an autopsy on a body which has been shot or stabbed to talk with the surgeon who treated the victim initially before examining the body.” (p. 24) “The complete incompetence of the military doctors was magnified when navy commander James J. Humes, a military pathologist who did much of the physical examination of the president’s body, announced months later that he had burned his original autopsy notes in the fireplace at his home on Sunday, November 24. This violates every rule of forensic pathology and official medical-legal investigation.” (pp. 24-25)

As president of the AAFS, on August 24 and 25, 1972, Wecht would be the first independent forensic pathologist to examine the Kennedy physical evidence at the National Archives. He was able to measure the bullet hole in JFK’s suit coat (5 ¾ inches down from the collar), hold CE399, the X rays, autopsy photographs, and it was Wecht who first reported that JFK’s brain was missing, something none of the previous prestigious panels had thought important enough to reveal.

Wecht’s challenge to the House Committee on Assassinations has gone unanswered. “Go back to your respective cities and search through the thousands and thousands of bullets you have recovered from cadavers and show me one bullet that has done what you say this bullet has done and looks like this bullet looks.” (p. 43) The tests conducted for the Warren Commission by the Army at the Edgewood Arsenal underscore this observation. No bullet Carcano bullet that they ever fired which broke a wrist or rib ever looked like CE 399.

Wecht is at his very best when he sticks to the science of the assassination. Like many others he has speculated on who might have been the assassins, and this is generally a mistake. His ultimate conclusion is rock solid, however. “Based on the physical evidence I have personally reviewed, I know what did not happen---Lee Harvey Oswald did not shoot and kill President John F. Kennedy by himself.” (p. 70) TP

**Wrone, David. *The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK’s Assassination*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003; 380 pp.**

Wrone covers a lot of territory in ***The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK’s Assassination***. It is a history of the film and the chain of custody of the film, which severely undercuts charges that somehow the CIA obtained the film and altered it that weekend (for example, see Douglas Horne’s ***Inside the AARB, Vol. 4*** or James Fetzer’s ***Murder in Dealey Plaza***). Frankly, Wrone concludes, if their (the mysterious conspirators) desire was to cover up evidence of a conspiracy that attempt was badly botched. It is also a study of how the film has been misused to provide the foundation for wild, unsubstantiated charges of conspiracy, undermining the efforts of serious assassination scholars. “Viewers of the Zapruder film tend to fall into one of three fundamental types. The first category of viewers included the scholar-critics who, as just mentioned, objectively study the film. Another group of viewer treat the 486 frames as merely part of the kaleidoscope of events surrounding President Kennedy’s death and burial, a riveting and powerful cinematic icon rather than a crucial and incontrovertible piece of evidence in the murder of a head of state. In addition to the responsible critics and passive viewers of the film there are two sets of theorists---conspiracy advocates and Commission defenders---neither of which adheres to the accepted norms and standards of scholarship nor, for that matter, to the factual records of the case. They are notorious for seeing things in the film that are not there and for not seeing things that are.” (p. 98) For Wrone, such theorists make the proper study of the assassination and its investigation more difficult. For him, a careful analysis of the film proves that there was a conspiracy. The film, in his opinion, destroys both the single-bullet theory (the first shot likely came before frame 202 and Gov. Connally doesn’t react until frame 237) and well as the contention that the fatal shot came from the rear. Also debunked is the “Greer-did-it” scenario. While he may be correct that the Zapruder film doesn’t depict a severe wound in the back of JFK’s head, I wouldn’t have dismissed so easily what most of the doctors at Parkland Hospital claim to have seen. ***The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK’s Assassination*** is an honest and scholarly effort that every serious student of the JFK assassination should take the time to read. TP

 **COLLATERAL**

Books reviewed here will be about individuals or topics that do not center on the assassination per se, but include narrative that helps with an understanding of the context of the assassination, or individuals related to, or speculated to be related to the assassination.

**Blaine, Gerald, and McCubbin, Lisa, *The Kennedy Detail,* Gallery Books, New York, 2010; 427 pp.**

The author was one of the several Secret Service agents who served on the “Kennedy Detail” during the entire Kennedy presidency. He was not part of the motorcade that November day in 1963 that so many remember, but he was part of the planning of that series of political trips and knew all the agents involved. This work is the result of his relationship with the agents in the “Kennedy Detail” and his efforts in gathering information, after many decades, from surviving agents from the detail, or their wives.

The Secret Service was not nearly as large then ($4.1 million budget) as today ($1.6 billion, 2009), and their scope of responsibility was less, especially in terms of how many people they were officially responsible to protect. But one thing was the same: their primary responsibility was to protect the life of the President of the United States. Blaine takes the reader through the procedures and expectations for Secret Service agents, and gives a brief history of the Kennedy presidency that illustrates the Secret Service in action, with all the anxieties, joys, near-misses, and relationships. He describes how a handful of agents had to hold back adoring crowds in Ireland and Italy. He outlines all the plans that must be made in advance, and how those assignments are made by the Secret Service administration. The fraternal relationship between White House detail agents is explained throughout the narrative.

If there is one agent that this book centers on, it is Clint Hill. Those who lived through the Kennedy assassination remember him as the agent who ran up to the back of the President’s limousine to push Mrs. Kennedy back into the car and throw himself over the top of her and the fatally struck president. This book explains the emotional torment that Hill went through and the guilt he carried for years that led to alcoholism and mental health issues, until he was forced to confront his demons through a *60 Minutes* interview many years later.

Blaine carefully takes the reader through the normal, everyday lives of agents and the reasoning behind decisions they had to make. This book is valuable to the reader interested in the JFK assassination because it deals directly, from the agents’ direct experience and perspective, what really happened that day in Dallas. Were some of the agents drunk the night before (No. Drinking, yes. Drunk, no.)? Weren’t they responsible for checking every building along the parade route (No. An impossible task. They never thought they could check everything at any venue the president visited.)? Why weren’t agents on the running boards and/or the back of Kennedy’s car? (Kennedy explicitly asked the Secret Service NOT to ride his bumper after the previous Tampa trip just days before.) Do these agents think there was more than one shooter? (No.) Since the president ordered the bubble top off and requested agents not hang on the car, have the agents involved used this as an excuse? (No. They felt it was their responsibility to protect the president, not blame him for what happened.) Did they rush the president’s body out of Parkland Hospital to cover something up? (They did so because Johnson would not leave Dallas for Washington without Mrs. Kennedy, and she would not leave without her dead husband.)

Blaine emphasizes that JFK was an active president who liked to physically engage the people, so in many respects was a protection nightmare, especially when he plunged into crowds to shake hands and talk. Throughout the book he makes comparisons with other presidents, such as Eisenhower, who was much easier to protect, and Johnson, who also took foolish risks.

Written in the *Epilogue*, so as to almost seem out of place, is a brief explanation of how agents’ job is to protect the president, but also respect his privacy. It is there that Blaine felt compelled to write that, to his knowledge, Kennedy only met Marilyn Monroe twice – once at the famous birthday party - and once at his sister and brother-in-law’s house in California, and on both occasions only briefly. Unlike Bill O’Reilly’s book (*Killing Kennedy*), Blaine does not go into all the other extramarital relationships Kennedy is generally believed to have had, but they both agree that Kennedy loved his family above all else.

This is a very well-told story that places the actions of the Secret Service agents in the context of their mission, the history of the agency, and the individual lives of those agents involved. An interesting and engaging work that is credible in its conclusions. *DK*

**Mangold, Tom, *Cold Warrior, James Jesus Angleton: The CIA’s Master Spy Hunter*, Touchstone, New York, 1991; 462 pp.**

In the dozens, even hundreds of books on the John Kennedy assassination, those that finger the CIA as the main culprit, when they name names, two that come up most frequently are David Atlee Phillips and James J. Angleton. If we are serious about knowing who committed this crime and why, it requires us to look deeper than the mention of a name or putting forth innuendo about a particular suspect. Books like Mangold’s, as collateral reading to the main topic, can do exactly that.

This book helps us with the Kennedy assassination puzzle in several ways. First, it gives us an excellent description and analysis of how the CIA operated before, during, and after the death of President Kennedy. This helps the reader decide if the CIA as an institution was capable of being involved in the crime, or institutionally had any reason to do so. Next, by focusing on the career of Angleton, who served as Counterintelligence Chief of the CIA for twenty years, and was considered a legend by his counterparts in Europe and elsewhere, it allows the reader to decide the same about Angleton: was he inclined to or capable of being involved in such a thing as the murder of a president? Finally, in determining the bona fides of various defectors after 1963, inevitably information that the KGB and other branches of the Soviet government had about Lee Harvey Oswald would come into play. These are good sources for helping the researcher decide what he or she thinks about the assassination.

James Jesus Angleton was a mixture of American, Mexican, and European cultures, with a Mexican-born mother, and a father, Hugh, who was a veteran who went to work out west, the later in Dayton, Ohio, for NCR. Angleton went to school in England when his father took work in Europe, and was greatly cultured by that experience.

James Angleton came to his CIA, like many famous CIA figures, through his previous experience in the OSS during World War II. It was as head of Counterintelligence that he came to known as a legend to those in intelligence services of other countries. That he would ruin our trust and general relationship in that role with several countries, including France, Norway, and Canada, is one of the ironies and contradictions of Angleton’s career.

The tragic errors and counter productivity of Angleton’s work in the CIA over his career can largely be traced to the defection of KGB Major Anatoly Golitsyn in 1961. Angleton bought Golitsyn’s story completely and from that time on believed almost everything he reported. It was not uncommon for defectors to exaggerate some in their *bona fides* to increase their value to the country to which they were defecting and to assure their acceptance. Golitsyn stretched this out over decades. The damaging conclusion of Golitsyn’s story that Angleton accepted was that any defectors after him would be Soviet fakes meant to discredit him. This assumption by Angleton led to tragic personal

outcomes for real defectors in the future from the Soviet Union, and the destruction of the careers of many others in the United States’ CIA and in the intelligence service of many in allied countries.

Specifically it led to handing over true defector Yuri Loginov to the East Germans in a spy swap, that might have led to his death, though his outcome was not certain, and it definitely led to the betrayal and execution of others in the Soviet Union who gave the United States valuable information that was often ignored or buried in Angleton’s safes until after his forced retirement. Perhaps the worst of all was the treatment of true defector Yuri Nosenko at the hands of the CIA, being put in isolation and essentially tortured for years before being vindicated. It was to Nosenko’s great credit that he applied for U. S. citizenship afterward, and insisted on passing all the tests that everyone else did to become a citizen. Despite his torture and isolation, he never changed his story.

In this book we learn much about the operation of the CIA and individuals within the organization, such as all the Directors of Central Intelligence that Angleton worked under, as well as international characters such as Kim Philby. It is interesting that in spite of Angelton’s near or actual paranoia about Soviet infiltration into the CIA, he essentially did not turn up any true moles during his tenure. But he did cause the CIA to ignore cartons of documents that gave valid valuable intelligence information to the agency merely because it came from defectors that he wrongly accused of being fake.

We also learn in this book of the human toll that intelligence works brings on the practitioners in the form of alcoholism and effect on family life. Among Angleton’s last words to his wife as he lay dying of cancer included a confession that he had made many mistakes.

This book is very well researched, reads like a mystery and action novel at the same time, and gives a detailed look into the Cold War CIA. For those wishing to be adequately informed on the Kennedy assassination, especially if books on possible CIA involvement are considered, this book is a must-read. *DK*

**Newman, John M., *JFK and Vietnam: Deception, Intrigue, and the Struggle for Power,* Warner Books, New York, 1992; 506 pp.**

This is a book that gives scholarly assistance to understanding how decisions were made that involved the United States, not initially, but deeper in the Vietnam quagmire that led to so much of the social and political angst of the United States in the 1960’s and ever after. In the context of review of the John F. Kennedy assassination and literature about that event, this is an important work that studies more in detail one of the several alleged sources of alleged conspiracy in Kennedy’s murder by Warren Commission critics and others. It fits, then, with other works reviewed here, not about the Kennedy assassination per se, but about those other entities such as the FBI, CIA, anti-Castro Cubans, pro-Castro Cubans, Lyndon Johnson, right-wing individuals and groups, the Mob, big oil interests, and the Secret Service that have been mentioned individually or with others in the hundreds of assassination books as the real culprit(s) behind the president’s murder.

It has to be mentioned that Newman, who has been identified in other books as a critic of the conclusions of the Warren Commission, unlike many, perhaps most, of the conspiracy buffs who have been published, has academic credentials in the subject on which he writes. Newman is on the faculty of the University of Maryland and has taught courses in U.S.-Soviet relations, Asia, and Vietnam. By itself, it does not assure a scholarly or well-researched work, as can be attested by the several books by history professors that are not examples of good scholarly work. But this is a carefully and thoroughly researched work, so much so that it lends itself to equally careful and deliberate reading, rather than as one would read a novel.

Newman starts out by documenting the early confusion in the fledgling Kennedy administration in the area of foreign policy. His key advisors, including eventually his brother Robert, who served as Attorney General, were spread throughout the State Department, led by Dean Rusk, and went into the Department of Defense (including the military) and special advisors. This confusion was evident in the Bay of Pigs fiasco early in the Kennedy tenure, and continued through the Cuban Missile Crisis, where, in the latter, Robert Kennedy concedes in his book *Thirteen Days*, the vote among the elite group of advisors in that crisis was 7-5 whether to take direct military action or not, without revealing which opinion was in the majority. Certainly this confusion was evident in events surrounding our involvement in Vietnam during the Kennedy administration. Kennedy’s actions, Newman suggests, reflect this tension that the president lived with in trying to determine which information he was getting was accurate and which was fed to him to gain a specific result. Specifically, but not only there, this comes up in the assassination of South Vietnam’s leader Ngo Dinh Diem and the overthrow of his government in the same month as Kennedy’s own assassination.

Newman posits that Kennedy’s vice-president, Lyndon Johnson, who was sent to South Vietnam very early in the administration to gather information, was not of the same mind as Kennedy in regard to escalating military involvement in Vietnam. Newman develops a consistent theme throughout the book that Kennedy had decided this war was not winnable and not one for which we should make a long term commitment. Newman cites the decision to reduce our military strength there by 10,000, but also points out that though this was technically carried out, in the end, with manipulation of rotation of troops and other technicalities, the 10,000 was actually not realized.

One of the most troubling aspects of this study is Newman’s own recognition that Kennedy decided to appear to support South Vietnam military with strong words and continued, even increased presence from 1961-63, while all the time planning, and telling others privately, that he would withdraw from Vietnam once the 1964 elections were over. In other words, for political reasons (his own re-election), he calculated that withdrawing from Vietnam before the elections would be untenable for re-election, and it would need to wait until after he was re-elected. While Newman acknowledges that this troubles him ethically and morally, once done, it is shoved aside. What one needs to consider is that, in that year or so of time, dozens of Americans were killed so that the president could be re-elected. Cynical conclusion, yes, but inescapable.

In Newman’s narrative, the Vietnam quagmire began with communist insurgency in Laos that spilled over. From the start of the Kennedy administration, some military advice was to immediately shore up Vietnam to prevent this from carrying over to Vietnam with negative results for the United States. Kennedy attempted to resolve the Laotian situation with a neutral coalition government, but this was seen by our adversaries as a weak response.

Clearly one individual most unhappy with Kennedy’s policies on Vietnam was his vice-president, Lyndon Johnson. This is for three reasons: Kennedy’s indecision; Johnson felt himself “out of the loop” on most decisions; and Kennedy was clearly not committed to “saving” Vietnam. It was also evident that many in Kennedy’s military leadership favored stronger response to communist actions in southeast Asia, including the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Through this discussion, other individuals are brought forward as getting and giving contradictory information, including Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Kennedy’s ambassadors in South Vietnam, including Frederick Nolting and Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Another interesting figure was Col. John Paul Vann, who believed the war was winnable, but that we were going about it in the wrong way. Ironically, Vann became much more powerful and effective as a civilian advisor, a role in which he was tragically killed in a helicopter crash in Vietnam. Vann’s tragic story can be followed in the excellent work *A Bright Shining Lie,* by Neil Sheehan, one of the Vietnam-era news correspondents in southeast Asia, like David Halberstam, who so graphically described the individual stories of that war.

So in the end, according to Newman, Kennedy, though he appeared more the militarist during the 1960 campaign with his charge that the Eisenhower administration had created a “missile gap” with the Soviet Union, was very much a leader who wanted to achieve piece through restraint and negotiation, and that his plans for Vietnam were consistent with that theme. That he received contradictory information from his agencies and advisors only complicated his decision-making and tested his political skills in foreign policy, and on Vietnam in particular.

Though the reading can be tedious at times because of the meticulous and timely inclusion of executive orders and memos, it is logically organized so that the reader can see the connectedness of the information presented to the author’s conclusions. This work is well documented, and includes a concise and readable conclusion, along with a list of acronyms helpful to the reader, and a list of persons mentioned in the book with a brief description of their role. This is a very thoughtful and well-written work. *DK*

**Wyden, Peter, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story,* Simon and Schuster, New York, 1979; 352 pp.**

Even taking into account the publication date of this book, it is still one of the better books on the subject. The author, a journalist, has done a magnificent job of meticulous research, cross-referencing stories from interviews with CIA operatives, government officials, Cuban Brigade members, and players in this drama from Castro’s Cuba. It gives yet another view of the CIA and how it operated during the early 1960’s, one different than the perspective of Mangold’s *James Jesus Angleton*, reviewed in this document elsewhere, yet, together, they give the JFK assassination researcher the needed background into the CIA structure, operations, and personnel to make judgments about their capabilities relative to accusations by critics of the Warren Commission that they were involved in Kennedy’s death.

The key figure in this drama was Richard Bissell, director of all CIA covert operations, and, not unlike James Angleton with counterintelligence, he operated almost without supervision and made decisions that greatly affected the agency and the country.

The author carefully follows the origins of the concept of “unleashing” Cuban expatriates on Castro and retaking the island and the subsequent events that led to the decision to go ahead with the plan, flawed as it was, and, as it turned out, limited by the new president, John Kennedy. The actual battle for a beachhead once the go-ahead was given, and the subsequent acceptance of failure of the mission is brilliantly described by Wyden, using first-hand accounts from both sides of the conflict. That is followed by a description of the aftermath and, in particular, the reactions of those around the president and the president himself.

Finally, an analysis of what went wrong is detailed in a thoughtful and logical manner by the author. One can divide that into two parts: Why was the plan flawed to begin with? and What went wrong with the decision-making process to go ahead and run with a plan that was so flawed. Essentially the answer given to former is that there was bad or lacking information necessary for a successful mission, including knowledge that there were coral reefs in the landing area, and a gross overestimation of the amount of support they expected from the populace in Cuba for the invaders once the landing was underway. In regard to decision-making, the author places it firmly, but not exclusively in the president’s corner, citing arrogance, lack of executive experience, reluctance to change a plan that he didn’t understand that was started by his predecessor, and taking away vital air support at the last minute.

This is exactly the kind of collateral book that should be read by serious researchers of the JFK assassination, as, in this case with the CIA, it gives a look at the institution itself and how it generally operated, as well as another context for the individuals involved with the CIA at that time. A similar point could be made for other subtopics involving potential perpetrators such as Lyndon Johnson, the FBI, the military, Vietnam policy, pro-Castro Cubans, and the Mob. In regard to the Bay of Pigs fiasco, readers of conspiracy theorists on the assassination will see frequently reference to ships used by exile forces named the *Houston* and the *Barbara J,* as well the name of the plan, *Zapata* as “proof” that George Bush, Sr. was involved in this (ostensibly also damning was his later stint as CIA Director) as, and as well, by implication, the Kennedy assassination. Never mind that minimal research into Barbara Bush’s records would show she does not have a middle name, and Zapata was logical for a name because of the proximity to the landing site to the Zapata swamps. As much as one might dislike the Bushes, it is a bit of a stretch to believe he would be stupid enough, even if he were in a position to do so, to name one ship after his wife, one after a town he does business in, and the whole plan after his oil company. But this is what some of these authors would have you believe. I was able to find these things out reading this book and doing a short check with the birth records in Marysville, Ohio. Some of these “researchers” are conveniently lazy in doing minimal research to back up their innuendos.

This is an excellent book, well researched, and brilliantly written, that deserves to be read in its own right for the topic in the title, in addition to any value in analyzing the Kennedy assassination. Highly recommended. *DK*

**MISCELLANEOUS**

All titles being reviewed here that do not belong in one of the other categories will be found in this section.

**Curry, Jesse, *JFK Assassination File,* self-published, 1969; 133 pp.**

Jesse Curry was the Dallas Chief of Police when John Kennedy was killed in the motorcade going through that city on November 22, 1963. He was riding in the lead car and was one of dozens of eyewitnesses to the murder and wounding of Texas Governor John Connally. One might suspect that a work such as this would be self-serving to the author and take the official line on the assassination. While there are clearly parts that demonstrate the chief’s loyalty to the city and his subordinates in the department, there are unique bits of information in this book that you are not likely to get in most of the other books about this crime.

Curry covers all the major aspects of the assassination, including the reason Kennedy went to Dallas at this particular time, the preparation for his visit including security arrangements, the motorcade and the assassination itself, and the aftermath at Parkland Hospital, the murder of Officer J. D. Tippit and Oswald’s arrest, and, finally Oswald’s murder by Jack Ruby. Curry contends that, while Dallas had its share of radical political operatives and viewpoints, he did not consider it an unsafe city. In planning the parade route security, he explains the extent to which his officers and department heads cooperated with the Secret Service, but that every floor of every building on the parade route could not be secured, and that the major effort was security on the ground. At Parkland Hospital, Curry explains, even though the hospital was immediately notified to be ready, there was virtually no one there waiting to assist when the motorcade arrived at the emergency room. In describing the chaos that followed in the hospital, and the many people who were in the hospital and outside that were not officials, Curry seems to think this was totally understandable and unavoidable. Like in other events in this tragedy later, like Oswald’s murder in the police station by Jack Ruby, Curry seems to believe that none of the negative results could have been avoided by his department, or at least not foreseen. In the latter, for example, he admits two “lapses” in security – Ruby getting into the garage, and the newsmen spilling out from the area they were supposed to be restricted to, thus allowing Ruby to come closer to Oswald, from among the media representatives. Curry writes off the entire debacle of the removal of Kennedy’s body against the protests of local Dallas officials as not being a part of it, and quotes an article from *The Saturday Evening Post* to report those events.

Curry hints that the Secret Service may have slighted Connally by describing them as “unconcerned” with him and preoccupied only with the president at Parkland. Of course, he did not mention that that is precisely what their job is – to protect the president. This also explains why Clint Hill was preoccupied with Mrs. Kennedy – that was his job – to specifically protect Mrs. Kennedy. A reading of agent Gerald Blaine’s book, *The Kennedy Detail*, would help put this is proper perspective.

It is interesting to note that in more than one place in the book, Curry suggests that there was evidence in his view to suspect a shooter from the front and to the right, much to the approval of dozens of assassination authors and “buffs.” He cites the doctor’s first statement about Kennedy’s neck wound being an entrance wound as significant.

This book is valuable in the transcribing of the police radio messages before and after the assassination, the various photographs, letters, and other correspondence between local, state, and national officials, the maps and drawings, and the unique perspective that Curry had as an eyewitness, and as someone who was involved in the timeline of these events from the planning stages to the long aftermath. There is a surprising amount of information put in a short number of pages, and the book proves to be very readable. *DK*

**Ginocchio, Gerald, and MacDonald, Dennis W., *The JFK Assassination and the Failure of Institutions: The Sociological Significance of a Major Historical Event,* presented at Society for the Study of Social Problems, Washington, D. C., August 18, 1995; 28 pp.**

The week that researcher Harold Weisberg died at 89 in Frederick, Maryland, my friend and colleague Tom Peet and I traveled the 402 miles from Columbus, Ohio to pay our last respects. That evening, walking up the steps to the funeral home, simultaneously walking behind us were the three academics that Harold mentioned most often as those he most respected: Dr. David Wrone of Wisconsin, Stevens’ Point, Dr. Gerald McKnight of Hood College, and Dr. Gerald Ginocchio, chair of the Sociology Department of Wofford College, and co-author of this paper. We finally got to meet the three professors that Harold had spoken so highly of over the years. Dr. Ginocchio was the only one of the three that we had not corresponded with in some manner before that brief encounter.

It is easy to understand why Harold respected Ginocchio. In the introduction, at the outset, Ginocchio states in a footnote “The work of Harold Weisberg constitutes the major source of data used in this paper.” (p. 1) To his credit, the paper is footnoted heavily and has a bibliography of, among others, listings from authors well known to the JFK assassination research community; names such as Sylvia Meagher, Gerald Posner, John Newman, Howard Roffman, David Wrone, and, of course, Weisberg. Those familiar with the works of these authors and researchers would accurately guess that Ginocchio is among those highly critical of the conclusions and work of the Warren Commission, if you could not tell from the title of this work. There are also several pages of appendices that I would assume were gleaned from Weisberg’s substantial cache of sixty-plus file drawers in his basement of government documents that many, if not most JFK assassination researchers have utilized. They are now housed at the Weisberg Archive at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland.

Ginocchio’s prime contention is that America’s institutions failed her. He uses the terms “deceit and coverup” to describe these failures, rather than just incompetence or other unintentional failings. (p. 3) Ginocchio further writes that this failure has broad societal implications beyond just the effect of the assassination itself and during that time. He asks in the conclusion whether these implications may effect other areas of American society now and in the future. He suggests that the examples of institutional failure could go beyond the JFK assassination and be subjects of future research. (p. 26)

In this paper, Ginocchio points out examples of this institutional failure in a variety of the usual objects of criticism in the JFK assassination research community: the FBI, the Warren Commission, the autopsy doctors, and the Dallas police, among others. All of this, however unconnected, or, at the other extreme, connected and sinister, leads to the conclusion that the Warren Commission was most probably wrong in *its* conclusions and that we should not stop looking for alternate solutions to this crime.

This paper does not break much new ground. It is well written technically, and, as mentioned, very well documented. But if you are looking for answers, or any new revelations about the Kennedy assassination, you will have to go elsewhere. For this writer, the real value is the story that it tells of Weisberg’s research, and how it fits with that of others in the research community. It gives the reader a peek into the vast storehouse of documents that Weisberg collected and unselfishly shared, even with those who attacked or ignored him in their books. For the beginning reader on this subject, it would not be a bad place to start, without reading a whole book. You can, however, find most of the factual material here in any number of JFK assassination books, just not that well written. This paper can be accessed through Wofford College, or by Googling the title and author and locating it on line. *DK*

**Fuller, Keth, Supervising Editor, *The Torch is Passed: The Associated Press Story of the Death of a President;* Associated Press, New York, 1964; 99 pp.**

It is tempting to place this very early work in the “Defenders of the Official Story” portion of these reviews. I thought better of it, however, when I considered that this book was published very soon after the assassination itself in an attempt to gather our collective thoughts and make some sense of the assassination, and at the same time mourn the loss of the leader of the free world. It was published before there were any real thoughts to the contrary of the official version.

One might think that a book written by a news agency, just weeks after an event would be very dated and not of much value in light of the hundreds of books that have been written about the assassination in the time since. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even though there have been government documents made public and at least three official government investigations of the murder since 1963, this report has a surprising amount of detail about the events that day and the people that were involved.

The editor uses dozens of AP correspondents in various cities throughout the world to put together an engaging narrative that is an excellent start for anyone who wants to seriously study this topic. The narrative is outstanding: informative, interesting, logically organized and very readable. Writers in the modern mainstream media could take a lesson from those who wrote this script, namely Saul Pett, Sid Moody, Hugh Mulligan, and Tom Henshaw.

The story, which includes color and black-and-white photographs mostly from a period of four days in 1963, weaves the activities of the president and his entourage with those of accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald and *his* killer Jack Ruby. Like Abigail Van Buren’s *Where Were You When President Kennedy Was Shot?* this book gives a snapshot in time of the reactions of people at the time of the tragedy. In a matter-of-fact reportorial style, it pieces together what is known to have happen, with a surprisingly few details that have since been proven to be different than what was reported.

For example, the writers state that President Kennedy was hit by the first shot, Texas Governor John Connally by the second shot, and the third shot was the fatal shot to the president’s head. All the confusing theories and allegations since that time about tramps, mystery shooters, and ballistics are generally omitted, mostly because they had not been put forward yet.

This hard bound book that could at first glance pass for a coffee table book, but is not, is understandably out of print. However, you can most likely obtain copies at internet sources, or at stores such as Half Price Books, where recently I saw two copies in excellent condition for sale at a very reasonable price.

For all the reasons previously stated, this is a valuable historical record, even if subsequent inquiry gives us more information and different answers. It tells what we were thinking at the time. The serious researcher on this topic could do worse than starting with this book. *DK*

**Van Buren, Abigail, *Where Were You When President Kennedy Was Shot? Memories and Tributes to a Slain President as Told to Dear Abby,* Andrews and McNeel, Kansas City, Missouri, 1993; 146 pp.**

This little nearly-square book, written during that flurry of early-1990’s JFK assassination books, is clearly not those. This book is a sampling of the more than 300,000 responses that “Dear Abby” got to her call for remembrances of what we were doing when Kennedy died. By the sheer numbers alone it demonstrates how many of us that remember it cling to that moment, as if something very important was stolen from us and has lasting effect on us.

There is hardly one of us that cannot readily come up with an answer to the question “What one event can you remember where you were, or what you were doing, when you found out about it?” For the rapidly-declining numbers of those who fought in or otherwise contributed to our efforts in World War II, it is Pearl Harbor. In between there is perhaps the *Challenger* disaster, and for the younger of our adults, the events the day of 9/11. What purpose does this book serve for teachers and those others of us reading these reviews in regard to the assassination of this president? Creatively used, it can inform the reader and be a resource for student assignments that will promote empathy and an awareness of the world that was the context of Kennedy’s death.

The book is divided into a forward (written by Kennedy Press Secretary Pierre Salinger), a preface, and twelve chapters. The chapters are divided roughly into categories of the nature of the responses that were written to this columnist-author. Examples are *I’ll Never Forget, I Was Just a Child, I Was at Work, and I Was at School.* The reader will see that practically every chapter has at least one story that he or she can identify with, and, for that reason, the categories almost are not needed. There is considerable overlap between chapters of stories that are similar in content, even if they are in a different chapter.

As one might expect, this book is an easy read. But more than that, it will give the reader a clear idea of why, not only Warren Commission “critics,” but also most of the rest of us, aside from the unresolved facts in the case, are unwilling to let this event go, and therefore give those critics an audience willing to buy and read their most recent efforts. Before re-reading it for this review, I would not have thought this, but this book is worth your time if for no other reason than to begin your JFK assassination reading and research with it to understand the context of the assassination for yourself, rather than counting on limited narratives by the other authors. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold, *Case Open: The Omissions, Distortions, and Falsifications of Case Closed;* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 178 pp.**

This book was written in response to Gerald Posner’s book defending the conclusions of the Warren Commission. It is one of Weisberg’s most readable and interesting works. It gets right to the point of disproving many of Posner’s points, and identifying for the reader examples of shoddy research and writing, including, for example, that throughout Posner’s book, elsewhere reviewed in this bibliography, Posner refers to research by Failure Analysis as if it were done for him, which it was not, as determined in a conversation I had by phone with Roger McCarthy, CEO of Failure Analysis. In fact, the organization’s research was done for a mock ABA trial, and Posner, in a later edition of his book, acknowledged that in a footnote, rather than the regular text of that edition. I would highly recommend this book because Weisberg, in his typical fashion, rebuts Posner point-for-point citing the Warren Commission itself, and clear errors in factual statement by Posner. This short book is a good read for anyone wanting to see arguments from two sides of this issue. *DK*

**Wrone, David R., Editor, *The Freedom of Information Act and Political Assassinations, Vol. I: The Legal Proceedings of Harold Weisberg v. General Services Administration together with the January 22 and 27 Warren Commission Transcripts;* Foundation Press, Inc., University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, 1978; 249 pp.**

Normally someone might think that an entire book about a court case involving requests for government records from a government commission hearing would be a bit dry and not likely to be at the top of one’s reading list. Such was the case with this book that sat on my shelf for a couple decades before getting it out for this bibliography. Once I got into it, I found some interesting information, mostly about how the Warren Commission actually operated. This provides a genuine, honest look at the thinking of the commission members early in its existence, rather than depending on the many critics’ drumbeat of innuendo about deliberate cover-up by the commission members.

The editor, David Wrone, was a history professor at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, and is now retired. At the time that this was written, according to Wrone, the plan was for at least two volumes, hence the Volume I reference in the title, but that there were not the funds available for a second volume, and so we are left with just this one.

While Wrone has had an interest in research and charitable work concerned with native Americans from the Wisconsin area (hence the request for donations to be so directed as memorials on the death of Lillian Weisberg, widow of researcher Harold Weisberg), through his professional and personal friendship with the Weisbergs, he has written, in addition to this work, one on the Zapruder film, reviewed elsewhere in this bibliography.

This book is about the attempt of long-time assassination researcher Harold Weisberg to secure key government documents regarding the Kennedy assassination through the Freedom of Information Act. Weisberg claimed to be the first person to successfully use the law to obtain such documents. He proudly displayed in his home a framed memo from the FBI that has handwritten on a request “Harold, again!” and a testimony that Weisberg knew more about the Kennedy assassination than anyone, even anyone in government.

Specifically, Weisberg, in 1973 (Civil Action 2052 – 73) sought release to him of January 22 and 27, 1964 transcripts of meetings of the Warren Commission under the Freedom of Information Act. This volume includes all the relevant court documents, memos, interrogatories, and responses to this case. It also includes copies of the actual documents sought by Weisberg, once they were released, which ultimately occurred as a result of his action, though the court technically ruled against him. Weisberg claimed that the documents were never properly classified in the first place, and the claim of the government that they were was based on faulty assumptions. Weisberg offered that there was no national defense or other compelling reason to classify these documents. In particular, Weisberg also argued that Gerald Ford, then U. S. Representative from Michigan and one of the members of the Warren Commission, directly used material from these very documents in his book (co-written by his staffer John Stiles) *Portrait of the Assassin*, which effectively was intended to defend the conclusions of the commission.

It can be argued that Weisberg exposed the commission’s staff at automatically classifying some things and taking some things for granted in doing so. The Warren Commission had employed Ward & Paul, Inc. to do their transcribing, and, apparently, it was they who automatically classified these transcripts, and others. The January 22 document laid the groundwork for the commission’s concern about alleged connection between Oswald and the FBI before Kennedy’s assassination, and whether or not he was a paid informant. In the testimony, commission members are clearly concerned about the image of the FBI if this were true, but it also shows a genuine concern on their part for finding out if these rumors were true or not.

This book has an annoyingly high amount of typographical errors, some of which are at the point of origin of the transcripts clearly, but many are from the publisher and get in the way of a smooth reading of the documents and commentary at times. This book is not for the causal reader, but can provide a unique insight into the real workings of the commission, rather than relying on various conspiracy theorists, as well as defenders of the Warren Commission. *DK*

**ABBREVIATED ANNOTATIONS OF OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST**

**Blakey, G. Robert, and Billings, Richard N., *Fatal Hour,* Berkley Books, 1992; 465 pp.**

Remake of an earlier book by chief counsel of the House Subcommittee on Assassinations. Claims Kennedy was killed as a result of an organized crime contract.

**Brown, Walt, *The People V. Lee Harvey Oswald,* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1992, 651 pp.**

Another in the long list of Carroll & Graf publications on this subject and 1992 publishing dates. The author has created a mock trial of Oswald in writing, something attempted in the London trial with real witnesses, participated in by Gerry Spence and Vincent Bugliosi, and the ABA mock trial. It speculates on what witnesses would have said, rather than actually presented them. This makes for good “what if” speculation, but not much else in light of all the other books that there are to read on this subject. *DK*

**Brown, Walt, *Treachery in Dallas,* Carrol & Graf Publishers, New York, 1995; 435 pp.**

This author has as his credits being a former special agent with the FBI and having earned a PhD in American history from Notre Dame. He alleges, like many other authors, that Oswald was indeed a “patsy” as he claimed, and he blames the FBI for deceiving Warren Commission members from the truth. Unlike other conspiracy theorists, Brown considers the commission members to have been honorable, but duped. Like Sylvia Meagher, Brown indexes Warren Commission content and has substantial charts that help the reader to sort out previous research and allegations, and this is its main contribution to the literature. *DK*

**Caro, Robert. *Dallas: November 22, 1963.*  NY: Vintage Books, 2013; 98 pp.**

This account of the JFK assassination is taken from Robert Caro’s best selling ***The Passage of Power****. The New York Times* says that, “It is the most riveting ever.”

**Davis, John H., *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy,* Signet, New York, 1989; 674 pp.**

This is another in a long line of books alleging a mafia tie to Kennedy’s assassination, though this author has the unique perspective of having written other serious books about the Kennedys not relating to the assassination. This one, as the title suggests, centers on Louisiana boss Carlos Marcello and accordingly gives considerable detail about his operations in the mob in that part of the country. *DK*

**Davis, John H., *The Kennedy Contract,* Harper Paperbacks, New York, August 1993; 312 pp.**

A follow-up on his *Mafia Kingfish* about Carlos Marcello, New Orleans Mafia leader, this book uses recent revelations by Mafia lawyer Frank Ragano to bolster his theory of the Mafia origins of the President's assassination.

**Delillo, Don, *Libra,* Viking Penguin, Inc., New York, 1988; 456 pp.**

This is a work of fiction, as the author freely admits. Its main value to the assassination researcher would be to simulate creative thought, not confirm documented fact. *DK*

**Duffy, James P. and Ricci, Vincent L., *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy: Dates, Places, People,* Thunder’s Mouth Press, New York, 1992; 538 pp.**

Between Carroll & Graf and Thunder’s Mouth Press, one might get the idea there is a cottage industry out there especially between these publishers of JFK assassination books. This one, another from the “Class of ’92,” is actually quite different than most of the rest, and could be valuable for the student of this topic. It is an encyclopedic listing of the various figures involved in this topic, including witnesses, researchers, accused assassins, and other authors. To that extent, it is valuable in providing a “who’s who” for the reader to reference. *DK*

**Eddowes, Michael, *The Oswald File,* Charles N. Potter, Inc., New York, 1977; 240 pp.**

Eddowes’ conclusions are largely dependent on his assertion that the person buried in Lee Harvey Oswald’s grave was not Lee Harvey Oswald. The main thing Eddowes accomplished was to get Oswald’s body exhumed and determine, in fact, that it was Oswald’s body, making his whole premise, and, theoretically, “fourteen years of research” worthless. Therefore, except for some pictures that are not published many if any places elsewhere, this book is not worth the reader’s time. *DK*

**Epstein, Edward Jay, *The Assassination Chronicles: Inquest, Counterplot, and Legend,* Carrol & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1992; 702 pp.**

Edward Jay Epstein has been one of the assassination authors who has been very responsible and thorough in his research, and has stuck to one topic at a time. He is also a capable writer. This work conveniently combines all three of his books, which are about, in no particular order, the Warren Commission, Jim Garrison’s campaign in New Orleans, and Lee Harvey Oswald. Another in a huge list of books on the subject from the “class of ’92,” this one is a must-read. *DK*

**Fetzer, James H. *Murder in Dealey Plaza: What We Know Now That We Didn’t Know Then.* Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2000; 496 pp.**

This remarkable collection sheds further light on a subject of unending fascination and enduring controversy. Taking as its primary focus the falsity of the Warren Commission report, the book includes critical analyses of the Zapruder film. **1**

**Fonzi, Gaeton, *The Last Investigation,* Thunder’s Mouth Press, New York, 1993; 448 pp.**

This book is unique because it documents the workings of the House Select Committee on Assassinations by one who was an investigator for that committee. It does not attempt to name an assassin, but goes inside the workings of Congress and the committee to expose causes of what the author feels were the failings of this, the last full-blown national investigation of the assassination. This is an interesting read for those wanting to know more about the origins, work, and conclusions of that effort. *DK*

**Garrison, Jim, *On the Trail of the Assassins,* Warner Books, New York, 1988; 342 pp.**

One of two books (the other being Jim Marrs' ***Crossfire***) used for Oliver Stone's movie "**JFK**". Garrison, recently deceased, was first a New Orleans district attorney, later a state judge in Louisiana, who claims the CIA and FBI operatives working out of New Orleans, along with elements of the "military-industrial complex" helped plan and execute Kennedy's death.

**Giancana, Sam and Chuck, *Double Cross,* Warner Books, 1992; 366 pp.**

Primarily a story about Chicago underworld boss Sam Giancana, the uncle and brother, respectively, of the authors. Concentrates on his life story, and, in the end, his possible involvement in the planning in the murder of John Kennedy. Not much documentation.

**Hepburn, James, *Farewell America,* Frontiers, Belgium, 1968; 418 pp.**

This very early book was originally published in Europe and this is a more recent English translation. As such, it is missing quite a bit of the subsequent work done by other researchers, Congressional committees, and the release of most of the documents relative to the Kennedy assassination, that he documents at the end of the book. Except for gaining an insight into how some Europeans viewed American in 1968, this book, for the time spent reading it, should not be a priority for those interested in this topic. *DK*

**Hinckle, Warren, and Turner, William, *Deadly Secrets: the CIA-Mafia War Against Castro and the Assassination of JFK,* Thunder’s Mouth Press, New York, 1992; 464 pp.**

Another in the “Class of ‘92” books on the assassination, this one was first introduced in 1981. A good homework assignment for high school students would be to speculate and support why there were so many JFK assassination books published in 1992. There are logical reasons. This book, originally titled *The Fish is Red,* centers of the mob-CIA connection by way of Cuba. In this work is one of the more direct accusations of alleged complicity of George Herbert Walker Bush. *DK*

**Kirkwood, James, *American Grotesque: An Account of the Clay Shaw-Jim Garrison Kennedy Assassination Trial in New Orleans,* Harper Perennial, New York, 1992 (originally published 1968); 669 pp.**

The author of this book has won a Pulitzer Prize for other work, so expect a well-written work here as far as readability. The primary value of this book is that it gives a different account and perspective to the Garrison-initiated trial than Garrison’s book *On the Trail of the Assassins*, and the chapters or sections devoted to it by other assassination authors.

*DK*

**LaFontaine, Ray and Mary, *Oswald Talked: the New Evidence in the JFK Assassination,* Pelican Publishing Company, 1996; 454 pp.**

This book, written by producers of documentaries in Dallas, at least, as they claim, provides a new “spin.” There is a review of Oswald’s background, an identification of the “three tramps” detained from the railroad yards the day of the assassination, and a concession in the summary latter parts of the book that evidence against Oswald is “strong”. They also contend that Oswald knew Jack Ruby, his murderer, and that neither acted alone. This is at least different in some respects from other conspiracy books. *DK*

**Lane, Mark, *Plausible Denial.* Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991; 393 pp.**

By one of the earliest critics of the Warren Commission Report (Rush to Judgment), this book centers on the alleged involvement of Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt and a civil trial that Lane claims proves that Hunt lied about his whereabouts on November 22, 1963.

**Lane, Mark. *Last Word: My Indictment of the CIA in the Murder of JFK.*  NY: Skyhorse Publishing, 2011; 304 pp.**

Last Word argues that the CIA, operating through a secret small group, prepared all credentials for Secret Service agents in Dallas for the two days that Kennedy was going to be there—conclusive evidence of the CIA’s involvement in the assassination. **1**

**Lewis, Ron, *Flashback: The Untold Story of Lee Harvey Oswald,* Lewcom Productions, Roseburg, Oregon, 1993; 272 pp.**

The author claims to have been a friend of Lee Harvey Oswald, that Oswald was framed, and that the author knew about the assassination in advance and has “lived with this” for all the years since. Interesting, but not the first several waves of books that I would read about the subject. *DK*

**Livingstone, Harrison Edward, *High Treason 2: the Great Cover-up – the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy;* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1992; 656 pp.**

This, like Livingstone’s other books on this subject, gives all the appearances of being a continuation of the one preceding it, like one long, rambling conversation. Like the others, it is written in a conversational, informal style that is almost like an oral history written down word-for-word. The subjects covered continue to be about Kennedy’s wounds, links to Nixon and Watergate, autopsy photographs, and, what is new, a review of Oliver Stone’s movie *JFK.* Color photographs, as well as black-and-white, of the autopsy, as well as other subjects, are included. *DK*

**Livingstone, Harrison Edward, *Killing Kennedy and the Hoax of the Century,* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1995; 458 pp.**

This, Livingstone’s fourth in a continuing conversation about the Kennedy assassination and all aspects of what Livingstone thinks is wrong about the subsequent investigation into it, responds in part to the Gerald Posner book, *Case Closed*, as well as continuing themes from his previous books. The writing style has not changed, nor Livingstone’s continued expression of adoration for the murdered president. Again, plenty of pictures, diagrams, copies of letters and other documents to illustrate his point. For the sake of time, I would recommend that if you are reading Livingstone, just read the last one and you will get the gist of all of them. The reader will not miss the self-righteous tone in the other three. *DK*

**Livingstone, Harrison Edward, *Killing the Truth: Deceit and Deception in the JFK Case,* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1993; 752 pp.**

In this, Livingstone’s third book on this subject, there is again repetition of previous themes, but the emphasis this time Livingstone takes off even more on his fellow Warren Commission critics. As a result of his books, and what he has written in them, he managed to alienate Harold Weisberg, who was most generous with his time and resources, as he was with all researchers and other interested parties who contacted him. Here also Livingstone asserts that Kennedy was shot from the front, autopsy doctors faked their report, and attacks the article by the *Journal of the American Medical Association.* One unique feature is that Livingstone has a possible shot from behind coming from “the cave,” a space between two buildings considerably distant from others that are alleged to have been sources of bullets other than Oswald’s. Again, this is full of photographs, diagrams, and other supporting documents. *DK*

**Mailer, Norman, *Oswald’s Tale: An American Mystery,* Random House, New York, 1995; 791 pp.**

Of all the biographies of Lee Harvey Oswald, this one may be the best-researched, most thorough of them all. Written by an accomplished author for his many other works, it is published by a well-established, well-respected publishing house not particularly known for publications on the subject of the Kennedy assassination. Mailer draws from his extensive personal research, and a surprisingly short list of other books (in the bibliography) to provide a direct and honest, but, in the end, sympathetic portrait of Oswald and his mother. He regards both as American tragedies. This is a very interesting read. *DK*

**Marrs, Jim, *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy,* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1989; 625 pp.**

This large work is another from publisher Carroll & Graf, who seem to have made an industry of these books, even though they contradict each other. This one is helpful in that it summarizes the various theories about the reason for Kennedy’s assassination and the Warren Commission vs. the conspiracy theorist conclusions debate. Along with Fletcher Prouty, herein reviewed elsewhere, this is yet another author that claims, not to his credit, to being the “basis for the movie *JFK.” DK*

**McMillan, Priscilla Johnson, *Marina and Lee,* Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1977; 659 pp.**

Though there are many books primarily about Lee Harvey Oswald, this remains the only one about the relationship of Oswald and his Russian wife, Marina. This author knew the couple collectively perhaps better than anyone and has an excellent background in the Soviet Union, writing, and research to commend her work on this book. This is on my “must-read” list. *DK*

**Menninger, Bonar, *Mortal Error*, St. Martin's Press, 1992; 396 pp.**

A report by a ballistics expert that indicates that the President was shot in the head by accident by a shot from a Secret Service agent's weapon.

**Morley, Jefferson. *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011; 371 pp.**

Interweaving Win Scott's personal and professional lives, Morley has crafted a real-life thriller of Cold War intrigue--a compelling saga of espionage that uncovers another chapter in the CIA's history. Morley reveals the previously unknown scope of the agency's interest in Oswald in late 1963, identifying for the first time the code names of Scott's surveillance programs that monitored Oswald's movements. **1**

**Morrow, Robert D., *First Hand Knowledge: How I Participated in the CIA-Mafia Murder of President Kennedy,* S. P. I. Books, New York, 1992; 384 pp.**

Yet another in the ample “Class of ‘92” books on the assassination, this one is as the title suggests: implicating a mob-CIA connection in planning and carrying out Kennedy’s murder. All the usual suspects are here from CIA agent David Atlee Philips to David Ferrie and the usual mob and Cuban connections. Morrow reports that he was a contact agent for the CIA during the Kennedy presidency and before, and was involved himself in the planning of the president’s murder. I don’t believe there is a statute of limitations on murder. Would he plead innocent? *DK*

**Nechiporenko, Oleg Maximovich, *Passport to Assassination,* Birch Lane Press, New York, 1993; 338 pp.**

This author, a former KGB agent, offers a unique perspective on Oswald and Oswald’s actions both during and after his stay in the Soviet Union. The author claims to have had access to files in Russia that before this book were not public, from which he drew his information and conclusions. Interwoven into this story are other characters that appear in other books about U. S. – Soviet espionage during the Cold War. For other references to those one might want to refer to *Cold Warrior*, about James Jesus Angleton’s career, reviewed in the collateral section of this bibliography. *DK*

**North, Mark, *Act of Treason: the Role of J. Edgar Hoover in the Assassination of President Kennedy,* Carrol & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York, 1993; 671 pp.**

The author is a lawyer who has a degree in history. His main contention, as the title indicates, is that J. Edgar Hoover knew in 1962 of plots to kill the president and did nothing to stop them, in fact, laid plans to benefit from Kennedy’s demise. So, for readers interested in theories that involve Hoover in more than covering up facts about the assassination, this is the book. *DK*

**Oglesby, Carl, *The JFK Assassination: The Facts and the Theories,* Signet, Penguin Group, New York, 1992; 319 pp.**

This is another work from the “class of ‘92” JFK assassination books, one that, like others that preceded it, attempts to summarize, with commentary, the other authors’ theories and evidence. Because it is written after some of the key investigatory events, such as the House Committee on Assassinations, if one was going to read one of the books that so summarizes, this one might be preferred to earlier ones. Oglesby had previous written his own theory in a book creatively titled *Who Killed JFK? DK*

**Prouty, L. Fletcher, *JFK: the CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy,* A Birch Lane Press Book published by Carol Publishing Group, New York, 1992; 366 pp.**

Yet another in the “Class of ‘92” books, this one centers on “the military-industrial complex,” with help from the CIA as the perpetrators of Kennedy’s murder. Like many other authors, Prouty contends that this has implications politically in this country even to this day, with the same general players involved. Prouty was an air force officer who worked with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, often in conjunction with the CIA. It is interesting to note that when I asked researcher/author Harold Weisberg which of the other conspiracy authors he respected, one of those mentioned was Prouty – “. . .at least he didn’t say anything wrong.” This may be because, after several years of trying to get Weisberg to share who he thought was behind the assassination, he reluctantly stated that he thought it was the military. *DK*

**Ragano, Frank, and Raab, Selwyn, *Mob Lawyer,* Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1994; 372 pp.**

This book by, as the title indicates, a lawyer for mob bosses, is a tell-all about his former employers and how the mob operated. There is particular emphasis on the workings and death of Jimmy Hoffa and Santo Trafficante, and commentary on his views on the involvement of the mob in President Kennedy’s death. For a history of the mob in America during this time, it might be worth a read, keeping in mind the author’s self-serving goals. *DK*

**Russell, Dick, *The Man Who Knew Too Much,* Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc./Richard Gallen, New York, 1992; 824 pp.**

Yet another Carroll & Graf, 1992 work, this one again beating the drum of the Mafia, Cuban exile, oil baron, Pentagon, CIA and FBI connections through one Richard Case Nagell. In that sense, it is like so many of the other books that centers on one individual, his connections with Lee Harvey Oswald, if true, and how this is “new” information meant to give us actual names of perpetrators involved in the assassination. The different twist to this one is that Nagell was allegedly assigned by the Soviet Union to prevent Kennedy’s assassination by killing Oswald. As a former CIA agent and, reported here, also working for the Soviets, Nagel fits into that CIA model for the assassination. *DK*

**Scheim, David, *Contract on America,* Zebra Books, 1988; 480 pp.**

Claims major responsibility for Kennedy's murder was Mafia bosses, led by Carlos Marcello (who died in 1993) out of New Orleans, Santos Trafficante from Florida, Sam Giancana of Chicago, and Johnny Roselli.

**Scott, Peter Dale, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK,* University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1993; 413 pp.**

This is another book that alleges that the Kennedy assassination was an “inside job.” The author mixes in issues such as Vietnam and collaboration between the Dallas police and army intelligence to the question of who was responsible for the president’s death. In reading books like this, and there are others, one can’t help but think that it is more of a philosophical treatise than a murder mystery; that Kennedy’s death was almost secondary to the underlying political machinations going on in the early 1960’s. Because of that, this book makes a not-so-veiled political statement. *DK*

**Summers, Anthony*, Conspiracy,* Paragon House, 1989; 657 pp.**

Well written as literature, explores all the various theories and includes some original research including interviews.

**Summers, Anthony, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover,* G. P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1993; 528 pp.**

I offer this selection as a collateral book about one of the major players in the Kennedy assassination investigation, one who is accused of everything from covering up evidence in the investigation to prevent embarrassment to his agency, which is certainly true, to actually knowing about or otherwise being involved in the assassination itself. Summers’ book is quite different, and less objective than Richard Gid Powers’ *Secrecy and Power*, but does go more into the Kennedy assassination issues than Powers’ book does. Summers is more interested in painting a negative picture of Hoover, centering on his alleged closet homosexuality. Both books can shed some light onto this controversial figure and help the student of the Kennedy assassination draw some conclusions about Hoover’s actions and motivations concerning that event. *DK*

**Waldron, Lamar, *Legacy of Secrecy: the Long Shadow of the JFK Assassination,* Counterpoint, Berkeley, California, 2008; 848 pp.**

This fairly recent work definitely has a new twist. It alleges that Robert F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, CIA Director Richard Helms, and others conspired to hide the fact that President Kennedy had planned an imminent invasion of Cuba (in spite of his promises not to do so during the Cuban missile crisis), and those actions later hindered investigation into Kennedy’s assassination. Waldron’s main suspects in the assassination were the mob, assisted in the cover-up by the CIA. The author offers that all of this has had dramatic effect on the country since, including the Martin Luther King assassination, two presidents being driven from office, and a number of other murders. There is a photographs and documents section at the end of the book. *DK*

**Waldron, Lamar. *The Hidden History of the JFK Assassination: The Definitive Account of the Most Controversial Crime of the Twentieth Century.* Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2013: 400 pp.**

*The Hidden History of JFK’s Assassination* draws on exclusive interviews with more than two dozen associates of John and Robert Kennedy, in addition to former FBI, Secret Service, military intelligence, and Congressional personnel, who provided critical first-hand information. The book also uses government files—including the detailed FBI confession of notorious Mafia godfather Carlos Marcello—to simply and clearly reveal exactly who killed JFK. Using information never published before, the book uses Marcello’s own words to his closest associates to describe the plot. His confession is also backed up by a wealth of independent documentation. **1**

# Walron, Lamar and Hartmann, Thom. *Ultimate Sacrifice: John and Robert Kennedy, the Plan for a Coup in Cuba, and the Murder of JFK.* NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005; 912 pp.

# The assassination, say the authors, was carried out by hired gunmen on the orders of three noted Mafia dons whose lives were being made miserable by RFK's ruthless pursuit—and these Mafia men knew about the planned invasion because they had worked with the CIA on previous efforts to topple Castro. Oswald, long a hidden CIA agent, was set up as the patsy, and it had always been Jack Ruby's job to eliminate him if he wasn't killed at the scene of Kennedy's shooting. 1

**Weisberg, Harold, *Never Again!* Carroll & Graf Publisher/Richard Gallen, New York, 1995; 498 pp.**

In this, the eighth and final published work on the Kennedy assassination by Weisberg, given that he has always said the “trail is too cold” to find who was actually behind the assassination, Weisberg reviews and puts together points made in earlier works, to exhort the reader to use that knowledge to prevent such a breakdown from occurring again. In this work, Weisberg continues his assault on the credibility and professionalism of the 1992 *Journal of American Medical Association* article basically supporting the way the president’s autopsy was conducted. He again takes on the “single-bullet theory” and discusses a cover-up of the facts following the autopsy. Though, like many of his other books, there is no index, it is richly supported with excerpts from the Warren Commission and his own research and correspondence. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold, *Post Mortem: JFK Assassination Cover-up Smashed!* Harold Weisberg, Publisher (self published), Frederick, Maryland, 1969; 650 pp.**

This work, one of Weisberg’s longest, discusses a variety of subjects including what he refers to as a “deliberate cover-up” by the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover concerning the events of the Kennedy assassination, scientific “proof” that Oswald could not have been the killer (something Weisberg believed to his death), and other proofs of conspiracy. As with all his books, it is not an easy read given his tendency to run-on sentences and the massive documentation using Warren Commission testimony itself and other documents, printed in the book. This, like most other of Weisberg’s books, perhaps should be read by the serious researcher after reading a book or two of general description, such as Manchester’s *Death of a President* or the Warren Commission Report itself. *DK*

**Weisberg, Harold, *Selections From Whitewash,* Carroll & Graf Publshers, Inc., New York, 1994; 554 pp.**

This book is a condensation of Weisberg’s *Whitewash* series and, other than the obvious that it reduces several volumes to one, is much more readable than the others because it does not have the self-published typewriter type of his other books, and it is organized and edited to be reader-friendly, given Weisberg’s unique writing style. Bonuses are the Preface, by author Howard Roffman, who researched as a teenager and had Weisberg’s respect, and a Postscript and Epilogue that do much to place this work in context. A suggested read. *DK*

**Zirbel, Craig I., *The Texas Connection,* Wright and Company, 1991; 320 pp.**

Claims by using mostly common sense and logic that Lyndon Johnson, who had the most to gain by Kennedy's death, at least knew of the conspiracy ahead of time and may have helped plan it.

**1** Summary is from Amazon.com