

“Lost in the Master’s Mansion”: How the Mainstream Media Have Marginalized  
Alternative Theories of the JFK Assassination

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## **Abstract**

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Alternative Theories of the JFK Assassination

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Despite growing evidence to the contrary over the last fifty years, the mainstream media in America have stubbornly clung to the Warren Commission’s conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, assassinated President John F. Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, 1963, and was himself murdered there two days later by Jack Ruby, who also was acting alone. This dissertation examines the patchwork of misleading, suspect and narrowly selected evidence that supports the Warren Report’s theory and then documents via content and textual analyses and in-depth telephone interviews how the mainstream media have marginalized and at times ridiculed critics of the lone gunman theory in book reviews, newspaper columns, magazine articles, TV news broadcasts, and the selection of books for publication. Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model of the Mass Media helps explain why the mainstream media, especially its elite newspapers and news magazines, have failed for a half century to delve more deeply into the full range of evidence and connections that appear to underlie a conspiracy in what has been called The Crime of the Century. But the model falls short of explaining why both the media and nearly everyone in the JFK research community have failed to examine the broadest possible set of connections that may include the complicity of the French secret army (OAS), Israeli leaders and the Mossad. To understand “the firewall” that has been built

around a full investigation into the Kennedy assassination, one must turn to the theories of Political Correctness and Spiral of Silence.

## Dedication

*To the memory of my loving parents, Ira J. and Charline M. DeBrosse, whose thirst for knowledge was limited only by their opportunities.*

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Foremost among those to whom I owe a debt of gratitude is Mike Sweeney, my graduate school advisor and chair of my doctoral committee, whose unfailing guidance and unflinching open-mindedness made this dissertation possible.

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I also thank the members of my committee: Aimee Edmondson, Katherine Jellison and Roger Cooper.

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## **Introduction: "Something Stinks about the Whole Affair"**

I was eleven years that fall and sitting at home around our black-and-white Magnavox TV with some (I cannot recall exactly how many) of my five older siblings. Still grieving over the assassination of President John F. Kennedy two days before, we were watching a memorial service to the slain president when NBC News broke into the broadcast to play a videotape taken just minutes before of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald. It was close to 12:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 24, 1963. While I was still trying to make sense of what I had just seen on our small, box-like console, my brother Dick ran out of the house and up the street to deliver the news to my parents, who were walking home from Mass at St. Mary Church in Dayton, Ohio.

It is hard now to separate what I first saw on our living room TV from the now-iconic Pulitzer Prize-winning photo—Oswald's contorted face and hunched body a fraction of a second after Ruby had thrust his revolver toward Oswald's gut and fired. What I mostly remember was the sound of the gunshot (more of a firecracker pop than the echoey sounds of my favorite Westerns) and then sheer chaos—men shouting, forms grappling, the camera view jiggling—until Ruby was pinned to the floor and the newscaster could report what had, incredibly, just happened.

Even at so young an age I realized I had witnessed a terrible moment in history and I wished my older brother had stayed to make it both real and understandable to me. I knew at a primal level this was unlike the countless staged shootings I had watched on TV and in the movies, and I wondered with an aching wince what it must feel like to be shot in the stomach at such close range.



Eleven-year-olds typically do not think in terms of conspiracies, but my father—an intelligent, working-class man with a deep cynicism born of life's disappointments—certainly did. He saw in the execution-style murder all the signs of a cover-up and would continue to insist it was so long after the Warren Commission issued its report nine months later that both Oswald and Ruby had acted as lone psychotic killers. Did my father's views influence my own? Certainly, they must have at some level. But within weeks after the televised murder—and the far more traumatic shock of the assassination and burial of a president our Catholic community had nearly canonized—my adolescent life returned to the normalcy of school, sports, television, and comic books. I had no inkling until decades later that Ruby had been convicted and sentenced to death for Oswald's murder and that the decision had been reversed on appeal. Ruby died of cancer before going to trial a second time.

Likewise, for the country as a whole, it did not take long for the memory of JFK's assassination to be lost in the maelstrom of racial strife, a deeply divisive war in Vietnam, and the murder of two more of the nation's heroes—Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Two years after the assassination of RFK, I entered college in 1970, soon to be caught up in the sexual revolution, the trappings of the counterculture and the growing antiwar movement. With each passing month, the loss of all three charismatic leaders seemed to recede into the irrelevant past as we, members of the "now" generation, sped forward into the promise of a just and harmonious future that we felt certain we could achieve if only the older generations would step aside and let us take control.

Then came the end of the war, and Watergate, and the demise of the Nixon presidency just as I was launching my career in journalism. I was determined to make a

difference, as Woodward and Bernstein had, in helping shape the discourse and polity of American life, one story at a time. Like most Americans during the decades that followed, I never gave much thought to JFK's assassination—or to Oswald and Ruby—until the release, in 1992, of Oliver Stone's *JFK*.

The film struck me, as it did many of its critics, as too broad and unfocused in its finger pointing. It seemed that nearly everyone, with the exception of an embattled Jim Garrison and his dwindling allies, were somehow involved in the assassination and its cover-up. Even so, I thought the film was courageous and thought-provoking, having brought into public view many of the flaws, inconsistencies, and outright deceptions of the Warren Report that JFK researchers had known about for decades.

I started reading in earnest on the topic and I noticed something else—none of the dozens of researchers in the field were working reporters for news organizations. How had my profession failed to investigate what many have called the Crime of the Century? Adding hypocrisy to the industry's shame, journalists of every mainstream medium — TV, newspapers, and magazines—had ripped into Stone and his film for daring to question the very assumptions that the news industry had left unexamined for thirty years.

(An important distinction needs to be made here between journalists employed by the mainstream media and those who work for themselves or alternative outlets. Several well-known researchers critical of the Warren Report are former employees of mainstream news organizations who later chose to conduct their investigations free of corporate constraints. Jefferson Morley left *The Washington Post* and became editor of the JFKFacts.org, a website dedicated to finding concrete answers to JFK assassination mysteries. Jim Marrs, an investigative reporter for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, turned

freelance writer in 1980 and nine years later published *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*, the principal basis for Stone's *JFK*. Carl Bernstein, who won a Pulitzer Prize for exposing the Watergate scandal in 1974, left *The Washington Post* in 1976 before investigating the close ties between the CIA and the elite media for *Rolling Stone*. Other notable Warren Report critics came up through the ranks of non-mainstream media, including David Talbot, a former senior editor of *Mother Jones*; Robert Hennelly, an investigative reporter for public radio; Jerry Policoff, a senior editor at the non-profit OpEdNews.com; and Anthony Summers, an Irishman who had been a producer for British public TV before publishing *Conspiracy* in 1980.)

Nearly two decades after the release of Stone's film, I retired as an enterprise reporter from *The Dayton Daily News* to pursue a doctoral degree in journalism. As I started my third year of graduate school, I still had not arrived at a dissertation topic that excited me—something I confessed to Mary McCarty, my longtime friend and colleague at the *Dayton Daily News*. In her gentle style of scolding, Mary told me that someone—me!—should look into why the media had been so unmerciful in its criticism of Stone. Several days later, she emailed me an article by investigative reporters Robert Hennelly and Jerry Policoff, "JFK: How the Media Assassinated the Real Story," that had appeared originally in *The Village Voice*.

The 2002 article clearly showed that the industry had not only failed to investigate the JFK assassination but also that many of its most respected news organizations had been complicit from the beginning in advancing the Warren Commission's lone gunman

theory.<sup>1</sup> After reviewing hundreds of documents related to coverage of the assassination, Hennelly and Policoff found an undeniable pattern of media collusion in a cover-up, including these details:

- Only four hours after the assassination, *Time-Life* purchased exclusive rights to a key piece of evidence, the 8-millimeter home movie of the JFK assassination sequence shot by Dallas clothing manufacturer Abraham Zapruder. *Life* withheld the film from public view for twelve years while misrepresenting its contents by reproducing selected frames in its magazine to eliminate speculation that Oswald's shots from the rear of the motorcade may not have been the only shots fired at the president.<sup>2</sup> *Time-Life* executives maintained that they withheld the complete film, and in particular infamous frame 313 showing the president's head exploding and jerking backwards, because of its graphic and disturbing content.<sup>3</sup>
- Within days of the assassination, the Department of Justice used its influence at the paper's highest levels to kill a *Washington Post*

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1. Robert Hennelly and Jerry Policoff, "JFK: How the Media Assassinated the Real Story," *The Village Voice* 37, no. 13 (1992): 33. Academic Search Complete.

2. Ibid.

3. "JFK's Assassination, Frame by Frame: Key Stills From the Zapruder Film," *Life.com*, <http://life.time.com/history/jfk-assassination-1963-key-stills-from-the-zapruder-film/#1>.

editorial calling for an independent investigation free of FBI, CIA, and other governmental influence.<sup>4</sup>

- *The New York Times* edited a book based on the Warren Commission hearings, *The Witnesses*, that omitted any testimony deviating from the official account of a lone assassin, including a witness who told the commission he had seen two men on the sixth floor of Texas Book Depository where Oswald allegedly shot at JFK and had heard shots coming from the railroad yard in front of the president. Missing, too, were statements from three Secret Service agents present at the autopsy who contradicted the official finding of a rear-only entrance wound to the head.<sup>5</sup>
- *Life's* October 2, 1964, cover story on the Warren Report was written by former commission member Gerald Ford and, even after the magazine hit the newsstands, underwent two revisions and expensive replating to remove evidence that appeared to contradict the report. The first revision eliminated a photo of the stricken president slumping back against the seat and leaning to the left, an indication of someone shooting from the front of the motorcade. The second changed the caption on a photo to support the Warren Commission's findings of rear shots only.<sup>6</sup>

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4. Hennelly and Policoff, "How the Media Assassinated," *The Village Voice*.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

- In 1964, *Time* blamed the wave of conspiracy rumors in Europe on "leftist" writers and publications trying to blame a "rightist conspiracy." Later that year, the magazine dismissed the first book criticizing the Warren Report, *Who Killed Kennedy*, because its author, Thomas Buchanan, had allegedly been "fired by the *Washington Star* in 1948 after he admitted membership in the Communist Party."<sup>7</sup>
- In 1966, under pressure from critics of the Warren Report, *The New York Times* and *Life* launched their own investigations. The *Times* probe lasted only a month although the team of reporters and editors found "a lot of unanswered questions" that were never pursued, according to team member Martin O. Waldron. *Life's* November 25, 1966 cover story, "Did Oswald Act Alone? A Matter of Reasonable Doubt," was accompanied by an editorial calling for a new investigation, both of which were then attacked by its sister publication, *Time*, as pursuing a "phantasmagoria." The investigative team's first article was its last. *Life* later sued its former investigative consultant, Josiah Thompson, for using sketches of the Zapruder film in his book *Six Seconds in Dallas* that challenged the Warren Commission findings. The magazine lost the copyright suit because it failed to prove damages. Thompson had offered all the book's proceeds to *Life*.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

- In 1967, a CBS documentary series on the assassination was secretly reviewed and perhaps altered by former Warren Commission member John Jay McCloy, whose daughter, Ellen McCloy, was then administrative assistant to CBS News President Richard Salant. The documentary included eleven CBS marksmen who tried to re-create Oswald's alleged feat of firing three shots with two hits on a moving target in 5.6 seconds. Incredibly, seventeen of the thirty-seven test runs were disqualified "because of trouble with the rifle." By eliminating those "malfunctions," the marksmen, on average, were able to match Oswald's three shots in 5.6 seconds. What CBS did not tell its viewers, however, was that the marksmen were using a rifle that could fire faster than the one used by Oswald, who was reportedly a poor shot, and that their average number of hits was only 1.2 compared with Oswald's two. Cronkite summed up for audiences: "It seems equally reasonable to say that Oswald, under normal circumstances, would take longer. But these were not normal circumstances. Oswald was shooting at a president. So our answer is: [he was] probably fast enough." In other words, shooting at a president, by some contorted logic, gives an assassin hyper-natural powers. One of the eyewitnesses interviewed for the CBS documentary, Orville Nix, later told his granddaughter that his interview was repeatedly cut short until he eliminated any reference, as instructed by the producers, to having

heard shots from the infamous grassy knoll in front of the president's motorcade.<sup>9</sup>

- In 1970, someone at *The New York Times* who has never been identified changed the headline to, and deleted two paragraphs from, John Leonard's book review of Jim Garrison's *A Heritage of Stone* and James Kirkwood's *American Grotesque*. The headline was changed from "Who Killed John F. Kennedy? Mysteries Persist" to "The Shaw-Garrison Affair." The deleted paragraphs included these words: "But until someone explains . . . why a 'loner' like Oswald always had friends and could always get a passport—who can blame the Garrison guerrillas for fantasizing? Something stinks about the whole affair."<sup>10</sup>

Many in the leading leftist media, whom one would expect to question a government report that many critics say had been rushed to its conclusions, also fell into line behind the Warren Report, as E. Martin Schotz details in his book, *History Will Not Absolve Us*. Notable Warren supporters among the left include Alexander Cockburn, the editors of *The Nation* and even the skeptic's skeptic, I.F. Stone.<sup>11</sup> Before the release of the Warren Report, *The Nation* had raised the possibility of Oswald's ties to the CIA and FBI and also doubted whether he had possessed the financial means and marksmanship to have assassinated JFK on his own. But with the release of the commission's report in

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9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. E. Martin Schotz, *History Will Not Absolve Us* (Brookline, MA: Kurtz, Ulmer and DeLucia Book Publishers, 1996), 15.



September 1964, the editors did a complete turnabout, enthusiastically endorsing the commission's findings and calling it "conclusive."<sup>12</sup> Under growing pressure from critics, however, *The Nation* ran an article in June of 1965 in two installments by investigative journalist Fred J. Cooke that questioned many of the conclusions of the report, but with a disclaimer from the editors that the article represented only the views of Cooke. A month later, *The Nation* ran a follow-up piece ridiculing critics of the Warren Report, including Cooke. Cooke complained vehemently to then-editor Carey McWilliams and asked *The Nation* to print his rebuttal. Cooke said he was refused.<sup>13</sup>

Some researchers might dismiss this shameless journalistic behavior as the workings of a post-World War II and pre-Watergate media that were far more subservient than the media today to the wishes of government leaders and far more intent on maintaining public confidence in the stability and incorruptibility of the nation's leadership.<sup>14</sup> The problem, though, as this dissertation will show, is that the mainstream media—in particular the top newspapers, book publishers, and traditional TV networks—have continued beyond the Watergate era and into the present day to promote the findings of the Warren Commission and to marginalize those who question it. Perhaps most disappointing is that Ben Bradlee, who was a close friend of JFK and the editor whose paper fearlessly exposed the Watergate conspiracy, never used the resources of either *Newsweek*, where he was Washington bureau chief during the Kennedy years, or *The*

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12. Ibid., 230.

13. Ibid., 228.

14. Larry J. Sabato, *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics* (New York: Free Press), 1991.

*Washington Post*, where he took over as managing editor in 1965, to investigate the assassination. In 1975, when *Rolling Stone* reporter Robert B. Kaiser asked Bradlee why he had never pursued the case, Bradlee fired back, "I've been up to my ass in lunatics," and then added, "Unless you can find someone who is willing to devote his life to [the case], forget it."<sup>15</sup>

TV networks have used the power of their medium primarily to conduct simulations—both computerized and "real-life"—supporting technical aspects of the Warren Commission while ignoring the broader body of evidence that would indicate a conspiracy.<sup>16</sup> TV journalists have unabashedly endorsed the Warren Report even while reporting on-air about the controversy and doubts it has generated. "Twenty-First Century technology concludes Oswald was the only shooter," Bob Schieffer says near the end of a *48 Hours* special in 2013 on the JFK assassination. "And despite all the theories and all the investigations over the last fifty years, no one has yet produced credible evidence of a conspiracy behind Oswald."<sup>17</sup> At the end of a *Today* show marking the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination, TV news heavyweights Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw both tell viewers where they stand on the Warren Report, despite their "open-

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15. David Talbot, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 391.

16. See "Re-Enactment of Shooting of President Kennedy," *NBC Nightly News*, November 13, 2008, LexisNexis Academic; "Kennedy Assassination: New Techniques for Analyzing Evidence," *Good Morning America*, ABC, November 20, 2003, LexisNexis Academic; "The Kennedy Assassination—Thirty Years Later," *Larry King Live*, CNN, November 22, 1994, LexisNexis Academic; and "For November 11, 2013," *CBS This Morning*, November 11, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

17. "Examining the Assassination of President Kennedy, 50 Years Later," *48 Hours*, CBS, November 16, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

mindedness" as veteran journalists. "I love to doubt as well as to know," Rather says, "but I do believe one gun, one shooter. I think it was Lee Harvey Oswald, the shooter. I don't believe that he was part of a conspiracy, but I'm open if somebody comes forward with convincing evidence or testimony. . . ." To which Brokaw adds his amen: "That's where I am as well."<sup>18</sup>

The deeper question, of course, is why do JFK conspiracy theories still threaten the powers that be a half century after the assassination? Nearly everyone who might have been involved in a conspiracy is dead and gone. Who, or what, is being protected?

As a longtime journalist and aspiring academician, I understand the importance of fairness, thoroughness of research and keeping an open mind to differing points of view. But as a confessed conspiracy theorist, I make no apologies. To make clear what I mean by a "conspiracy theorist," I rely on a definition from Washington-D.C.-based journalist and blogger Sheila Casey: "Someone who has a theory about a very specific kind of conspiracy: one operating at the highest levels of our government, or above or outside our government."<sup>19</sup>

As Casey argues, there is nothing wrong about having theories or being a theorist. "It doesn't mean [theorists] are flying blind, untethered by facts. They use the facts they already know to create theories about things that are still unknown."<sup>20</sup> Certainly, in the

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18. "Remembering the Kennedy Assassination," *Today*, NBC, November 22, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

19. Sheila Casey, "Confessions of a Conspiracy Theorist," *Dissident Voice*, October 24, 2008, <http://dissidentvoice.org/2008/10/confessions-of-a-conspiracy-theorist>.

20. *Ibid.*

case of JFK's assassination, much is still unknown, despite "six official inquiries over the past fifty years, hundreds of books and dozens of documentaries [as well as] the release of four million pages of long-secret documents" shaken loose by Stone's *JFK* in 1992, says former *Washington Post* reporter and JFK researcher Jefferson Morley.<sup>21</sup> Morley, who edits the JFKFacts.org website, lists among the chief unknowns some 1,100 records related to the assassination still sealed by the CIA, nearly all of them linked to legendary spymaster and CIA chief of counterintelligence James J. Angleton or operatives who reported to him. The agency has claimed that it doesn't have the time or resources to locate and declassify the documents.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps most tantalizing of all are 295 documents related to George Joannides, the CIA's chief of psychological warfare operations in Miami in 1963. Joannides supervised a group of Cuban exiles in New Orleans who publicized Oswald's pro-Castro activities before and after the assassination. In 1978, he deceived congressional investigators about his role with the exile group and, two years later, received a CIA medal for his service.<sup>23</sup> Besides the sealed CIA files, only eighty-eight minutes of taped communications to and from Air Force One during the four-hour flight that transported JFK's body from Dallas to Washington, D.C., have been released to the public.<sup>24</sup>

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21. Jefferson Morley, "Jefferson Morley: What We Still Don't Know about JFK's Assassination," *Dallas Morning News*, October, 25, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

22. Jefferson Morley, "1,100 JFK Documents Ignored in Obama's Push to Open Records," *JFKFacts.org*, May 14, 2013, <http://jfkfacts.org/assassination/news/key-jfk-files-ignored-in-obama-declassification-drive/>.

23 Ibid.

24. Morley, "What We Still Don't Know," *Dallas Morning News*.

Casey has used a layman's logic to arrive at the gist of a more conceptual argument that historian John Lewis Gaddis developed in *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*. Gaddis tells us that historians (and I would argue the same for journalists) move naturally between evidence and theory in reconstructing, or what he calls "retrocasting," history.

We have no way of knowing, until we begin looking for evidence with the purposes of our narrative in mind, how much of it is going to be relevant: that's a deductive calculation. Composing the narrative will then produce places where more research is needed, and we're back to induction again. But that new evidence will still have to fit within the modified narrative, so we're back to deduction. And so on. . . . That's why the distinction between induction and deduction is largely meaningless for the historian seeking to establish causation.<sup>25</sup>

Some respected JFK researchers, including Morley, have fallen into the trap of thinking that “facts” and “evidence” alone can somehow lead us to the truth in the JFK mystery without theories and plausible causes to guide us. Morley, who claims he is neither for nor against the Warren Report, or any theory in the case, argues that conspiracy theories are “a no-win game” and “a dead-end for everyone.”<sup>26</sup>

“I don’t even want to go there,” he said in an interview for this dissertation. “You spend all your time arguing about this theory or that theory. But to me, what happened in

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25. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 107.

26. Jefferson Morley, interview by author, April 1, 2014.

1963 is much more interesting, and there is only so much time [left] to focus on that” before all the evidence and witnesses disappear.<sup>27</sup>

But, as Gaddis would counter, what focus are we talking about? On whom or what or where or even when? How do we know that 1963 is the only “interesting” year leading up to the Kennedy assassination? Again, it takes theories and well-founded speculation about causes and linkages not only to help investigators know where best to look for evidence but also to make sense of what they find. Induction without deduction, and vice versa, is a non-starter for JFK research.

As for the disappearing evidence in the Kennedy assassination, Gaddis writes that historians "can never expect to get the full story of what happened."<sup>28</sup> He backs his argument with a quote from another noted historian, David Hackett Fischer: "The historian's evidence is always incomplete, his perspective is always limited, and the thing itself is a vast expanding universe of particular events, about which an infinite number of facts or true statements can be discovered."<sup>29</sup> To fill in the inevitable gaps, historians must rely on a combination of imagination, theory, carefully researched historical context and "a preference for parsimony in consequences, but not causes" in order to understand how past processes have produced present structures.<sup>30</sup> "Causes always have

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27. Morley interview.

28. Gaddis, *Landscape of History*, 107.

29. Isaiah Berlin, "The Concept of Scientific History," in Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, eds. Henry Hardy and Robert Hausheer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 34-35.

30. Gaddis, *Landscape of History*, 62, 65, 105.

antecedents," Gaddis writes. "We may rank their relative significance, but we'd think it irresponsible to seek to isolate—or 'tease out'—single causes for complex events. We see history as proceeding instead from multiple causes and their intersections."<sup>31</sup>

Gaddis's approach is instructive to both journalists and historians grappling with the seemingly endless complexities and mysteries of the JFK assassination. Indeed, some JFK researchers, including author and historian Michael L. Kurtz, have already run up the white flag.<sup>32</sup> In the space of fifty years, they argue, too many witnesses have died and too much evidence has been lost, distorted and destroyed to ever solve the riddle. But for some journalists, that means accepting the Warren Commission as the final word. "Our best guess: Official history (Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone) is based on what we do know, while unofficial history (Kennedy was killed in a conspiracy) is based on what we don't know—on contradictions, ambiguities, mysteries," *Washington Post* staff writer Joel Aschenbach wrote in a scathing review of Stone's *JFK*.<sup>33</sup>

But what we do not know about the Kennedy assassination—"its contradictions, ambiguities and mysteries"—is the continuing challenge for responsible historians and journalists. That challenge should not be an excuse to accept a narrowly focused narrative that fails to capture both key evidence and compelling context for one of the pivotal events of the twentieth century. Among its many findings that require a leap of faith, the

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31. *Ibid.*, 65

32. Michael L. Kurtz, *The JFK Assassination Debates: Lone Gunman versus Conspiracy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 222-25.

33. Joel Aschenbach, "JFK Conspiracy: Myth vs. the Facts," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1992, LexisNexis Academic.

Warren Report expects Americans to believe that Jack Ruby, a strip-joint owner and former gun-runner to Cuba with deep ties to organized crime, murdered Oswald to spare the wife of his beloved president the ordeal of having to testify at trial. Really? The same Jack Ruby who, in the three months leading up to the assassination, made more than seventy long-distance calls to organized crime figures?<sup>34</sup> Who never bothered to watch the motorcade of his beloved president on that fateful day and instead was hanging out in the advertising department of *The Dallas Morning News* just five blocks away?<sup>35</sup> The same man who stalked Oswald for nearly two days before finding the right opportunity to kill him? Who begged the Warren Commission members to remove him from Dallas to the safe haven of Washington, D.C., so he could tell them the truth?<sup>36</sup>

The majority of Americans still do not buy the Warren Commission's narrative—61 percent, according to a Gallup poll taken less than a week before the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination.<sup>37</sup> Pro-Warren researchers such as historian Max Holland

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34. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 199.

35. Seth Kantor, *Who Was Jack Ruby?* (New York: Everest House, 1978), 38-9. Kantor writes that Ruby was at the desk of ad salesman Jack Newnam, where Ruby had gone to deliver weekend copy for his nightclubs and to make good on an overdue bill for a previous ad. Ruby was complaining to Newnam about the “lousy taste” of the full-page ad in that day’s paper criticizing Kennedy for being soft on communism when news of the gunshots reached the newspaper. Ruby had been especially troubled that the ad had been signed by someone with a Jewish name, Bernard Weissman.

36. See Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 184; and G. Robert Blakey and Richard N. Billings, *Fatal Hour: The Assassination of President Kennedy by Organized Crime* (New York: Berkley Books, 1992), 361, 365.

37. David Jackson, "Most Still Believe in JFK Assassination Conspiracy," *USA Today*, November 20, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/theoval/2013/11/17/john-kennedy-assassination-conspiracy-theories-gallup/3618431/>.



and Wall Street lawyer-turned-author Gerald Posner dismiss the public's skepticism as either part of America's cultural vein of paranoia or an emotional inability to accept that a lone loser with a twelve-dollar, mail-order rifle could have so easily brought down what Americans would remember as their brief and shining Camelot.<sup>38</sup> But a more plausible explanation might be found in the words mysteriously deleted from John Leonard's *New York Times* book review: "Something stinks about the whole affair."

There are journalists and academics who say it is time to put the assassination behind us. Fifty years of digging and debate, they say, have produced no clear answers, just more bitterness and divisiveness. Among them, surprisingly, is America's leading dissident intellectual, Noam Chomsky, who told a gathering of his faithful in Hungary in 2004 that 9/11 conspiracy theories are akin to "the huge energy that's put out on trying to figure out who killed John F. Kennedy. Who knows? And who cares? . . . It's just taking energy away from serious issues onto ones that don't matter."<sup>39</sup>

Chomsky believes strongly that Kennedy would have continued the same policies as his successor, Lyndon Baines Johnson.<sup>40</sup> In a July 15, 2014, email to the author, he wrote:

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38. Gerald Posner, *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK* (New York: Random House, 1993), x; and Max Holland, "Paranoia Unbound," *Wilson Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 88.

39. Douglas Herman, "Does Noam Chomsky Matter Any More?" *Rense.com*, May 28, 2008, <http://www.rense.com/general82/chom.htm>.

40. "What Does Noam Chomsky Say About the JFK Assassination?" *22November1963.org.uk*, <http://22november1963.org.uk/noam-chomsky-jfk-assassination>.

There is a significant question about the JFK assassination: was it a high-level plot with policy implications? That's quite important, and very much worth investigating. I've written about it extensively, reviewing all of the relevant documentation. The conclusion is clear, unusually clear for a historical event: no.

That leaves the question open as to [who] killed him: Oswald, Mafia, Cubans, jealous husbands,...? Personally, that question doesn't interest me any more than the latest killing in the black ghetto in Boston. But if others are interested, that's not my business.<sup>41</sup>

But it should be. On the most obvious level, accepting the assassination of a U.S. president without trying to clarify who was culpable and for what reasons may encourage further assassinations by those who feel they have a right to subvert our nation's democratic processes. On a deeper, psychic level, acceptance without persistence or resolution denies Americans the right to understand fully their history, their heritage, and their national identity. "Who we are is where we have been," Gaddis writes, and "past processes are responsible for present structures."<sup>42</sup> As this dissertation will explore in later chapters, there was at least one clear policy implication in the transition from the Kennedy to the Johnson administrations: U.S. willingness to supply offensive weapons to Israel and to look the other way as Israel secretly developed a nuclear arsenal in the tinder box of the Middle East.

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41. Noam Chomsky, email interview, July 15, 2014.

42. Gaddis, *Landscape of History*, 35-52, 62.

Since the assassination of JFK, our history has repeatedly taken us to places involving deception and crime at the highest levels of government—The Gulf of Tonkin, Vietnam, Watergate, Iran-Contra, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay and, most recently, the National Security Agency's massive surveillance of U.S. citizens. Americans' trust in government has continued to tumble with each new disturbing revelation. As a first step to restoring that trust, the media—the guardians of the public trust—must search widely and delve deeply into the events surrounding November 22, 1963, for that is when the honesty and transparency of the nation's leadership seemed first to go askew.

This dissertation will examine the last twenty-five years of new books, new theories, and newly released information about the assassination of JFK, as well as the reactions to those developments in the nation's TV networks, news magazines, and top newspapers—specifically, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. As the dissertation title indicates, the examination will encompass more than just media "coverage" of JFK assassination theories—a word that implies that the media have been merely passive observers to the debate. Instead, the focus here will be on media "treatment" of those theories, a word that recognizes the media have been an active force in shaping the controversy from its very beginnings. In that broader sense, this dissertation will attempt to show how America's mainstream media have choked the parameters of the debate and stifled the search for answers in the Crime of the Century.

## Chapter 1: A Nation Still Divided

Fifty years after President John F. Kennedy was slain in broad daylight among hundreds of witnesses, the nation's mainstream media still insist on dividing JFK researchers into two camps—those who rely on conspiracy "theories" and "circumstantial evidence" to solve the continuing mystery of who was behind the murder and why, and those who rely on "facts" and "hard evidence" to arrive at the same conclusions that the Warren Commission did nine months after the assassination. But anyone who has delved deeply and with an open mind into the "hard evidence" of the case is forced to acknowledge that the line between theory and evidence grows increasingly blurred the closer one looks at both the circumstances and the "facts" surrounding the assassination. Writing in *Time* magazine for the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination, reporter David Von Drehle concludes that "the search for meaning in the hideous brutality of Dealey Plaza long ago became as much about faith as forensics. Not religious faith, necessarily, but that set of beliefs that frames our approach to data and mystery. Each of us must have some sort of faith because we can never have perfect knowledge, no matter how much information we accumulate. Faith fills in the gaps."<sup>1</sup>

Von Drehle's finely spun prose, however, blurs another distinction—between what he calls "faith" and what this dissertation will call an "investigative lens." A lens, unlike faith, does not demand that we leave logic behind when trying to determine which

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1. David Von Drehle, "Broken Trust," *Time*, November 25, 2013, Academic Search Complete.

set of "facts" best explains a mystery. Depending on one's logic, theory, or even intuition in trying to solve a mystery, a lens can be adjusted to focus more tightly or more widely to discover and scrutinize the evidence. A lens can also be filtered or unfiltered to isolate or expand the connections among evidence in its view. In trying to solve a mystery from the past, some investigative lenses are clearly superior to others in making sense of situations in which there is imperfect knowledge—an argument that has perhaps been advanced best by historian John Lewis Gaddis. But before we can begin comparing investigative lenses in the JFK assassination, we will examine in this chapter why and how so many differing ones have been used over the last fifty years, including those that have resulted in the nation's two official and conflicting versions of what happened on November 22, 1963.

In September of 1964, after deliberating nine months, the Warren Commission concluded that a lone marksman, Lee Harvey Oswald, armed with a bolt-action rifle on the sixth story of the Texas School Book Depository, shot the president as his limousine passed below. The commission claimed to have found no evidence of a conspiracy, but sealed most of the documents related to the assassination until 2039. The commission's stated aim, General Counsel Lee Rankin told *The New York Times* in January 1964, was to “reassure this country and the world not only that we can protect our President but that accused criminals can be treated fairly.”<sup>2</sup>

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2. Mark Lane, *Rush to Judgment: Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991), Kindle edition, Kindle Locations 7117-7118.

Twenty-five years later, in 1979, the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) released its own report criticizing the commission for a slap-dash investigation and determining that there probably was a conspiracy in the assassination. The HSCA found that 1) organized crime as a whole was not involved in the conspiracy but that individual members may have been, 2) that the Soviet Union and Cuba were not involved, 3) that the CIA and FBI were not involved, and 4) that a second gunman had fired from a direction in front of the motorcade.<sup>3</sup> The committee's finding of a second gunman was based on a recording of police radio transmissions during the assassination that has since been discounted. Experts at the time concluded that the recording contained evidence of four shots, including one from the front of the president on the infamous grassy knoll. However, recent research has shown that the police radio that had picked up the alleged shots was two miles from Dealey Plaza where the assassination occurred.<sup>4</sup> The committee declined to speculate on exactly who might have been involved in the conspiracy or why, citing a lack of funds to continue the probe.

In the last half century, the Warren Report, named after commission chair Chief Justice Earl Warren, has been discredited by both independent and government researchers for having distorted, overlooked, and suppressed evidence in the case.<sup>5</sup> Even

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3. House Select Committee on Assassinations, *Final Report*, H.R. REP. NO. 95-1828 (1979), [http://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/hasca/report/html/HSCA\\_Report\\_0005a.htm](http://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/hasca/report/html/HSCA_Report_0005a.htm).

4. Larry J. Sabato, *The Kennedy Half Century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 243.

5. See *HSCA Final Report*; Mark Lane, *Plausible Denial: Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992); Sylvia Meagher, *Accessories after the Fact: The Warren Commission, the Authorities, and the Report* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA: The*

researchers who support the essential conclusions of the commission—that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated the president entirely on his own—concede that its work was a rush job aimed at quelling rumors of a Castro- and/or Soviet-backed conspiracy and heading off a possible nuclear war.<sup>6</sup> President Lyndon Johnson himself feared that America's Cold War enemies were behind the assassination. He later revealed to former aide and distinguished journalist Bill Moyers his thoughts soon after that horrific day in Dallas: "What raced through my mind was that, if they had shot our president driving down there, who would they shoot next and what would they—what was going on in Washington and when would the missiles be coming?"<sup>7</sup>

A memo by Walter Jenkins, an aide to Johnson, quoted FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover as telling the new president just hours after Ruby had killed Oswald, "The thing I am most concerned about, and [Deputy Attorney General] Mr. [Nicholas] Katzenbach, is having something issued so that they can convince the public that Oswald is the real

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*Documented Truth about the Unknown Relationship between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008); and Harold Weisberg. *Never Again!: The Government Conspiracy in the JFK Assassination* (Ipswich, MA: Mary Ferrell Foundation Press, 2007).

6. See "The Assassination of John Kennedy," *CNN Live Event/Special*, November 23, 2013, LexisNexis Academic; and "Examining the Assassination of President Kennedy, Fifty Years Later," *48 Hours*, CBS, November 16, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

7. "Lyndon Johnson Expresses Alarm and Disgruntlement Following Kennedy Assassination," *CBS Evening News*, April 15, 1994, LexisNexis Academic.

assassin.”<sup>8</sup> The next day, just three days after the president’s assassination, Katzenbach issued a memo on behalf of Johnson and Hoover to press secretary Bill Moyers:

It is important that all of the facts surrounding President Kennedy’s assassination be made public in a way which will satisfy people in the United States and abroad that all the facts have been told and that a statement to this effect be made now. The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial. Speculation about Oswald’s motivation ought to be cut off, and we should have some basis for rebutting thought that this was a Communist conspiracy or (as the Iron Curtain press is saying) a right-wing conspiracy to blame it on the Communists.<sup>9</sup>

“Unfortunately,” Katzenbach added, “the facts on Oswald seem too pat—too obvious (Marxist, Cuba, Russian wife, etc.).”<sup>10</sup>

The very makeup of the commission fails to inspire confidence in its conclusions. Among LBJ’s seven appointees was Allen Dulles, the former CIA chief fired by JFK for the Bay of Pigs fiasco. The CIA’s liaison to the commission was the longtime head of the agency’s counterintelligence division, James J.

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8. *HSCA Final Report*, “Testimony of James R. Malley,” 471, <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?absPageId=75237>.

9. “Memorandum for Mr. Moyers,” November 25, 1963, *FBI 62-109060 JFK HQ File, Section 18*, <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?absPageId=756877>.

10. *Ibid.*



Angleton, whom many JFK researchers believe was at the center of the conspiracy and its cover-up.<sup>11</sup> Another appointee, Republican Congressman and later President Gerald R. Ford, was so close to the FBI that he secretly, and illegally, fed the FBI classified information while he served on the committee.<sup>12</sup>

The work of the commission has been criticized by both lone gunman and conspiracy theorists over the years for a wide range of issues: 1) deferring to the investigations of the FBI and CIA rather than launching its own, 2) failing to pursue Lee Harvey Oswald's and Jack Ruby's possible ties to organized crime, the anti-Castro community, the FBI, and the CIA, 3) discounting the testimony of scores of credible witnesses and 4) being deceived by the CIA on at least one subject known to be relevant to the probe—U.S. attempts to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro.<sup>13</sup>

The litany of doubts raised by critics of the report has become part of the nation's cultural iconography. Among them are the oft-ridiculed Single Bullet Theory that accounts for seven wounds in two men while remaining essentially intact, the backward snap of Kennedy's head during the fatal shot captured in the Zapruder film that allegedly was fired from behind, and the numerous eyewitness accounts of shots from the grassy knoll in front of the advancing motorcade. Further muddying the commission's findings

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11. See John Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (Spartacus Educational, 2010), Kindle Edition, Kindle Locations 92435-92437; John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), 636-7; and Michael Holzman, *James Jesus Angleton, the CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 193.

12. Lane, *Plausible Denial*, 43.

13. Larry J. Sabato, *The Kennedy Half Century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 253.

were Oswald's insistence that he was a "patsy"—an innocent man set up to take the blame for others—and, of course, his subsequent execution-style murder by Ruby. Top government officials, past and present, have privately and publicly expressed their doubts about the Warren Report, including Texas Governor John Connally, who was wounded while riding in the limousine with the president; President Johnson, who organized the commission; and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who secretly conducted his own investigation into his brother's murder until he, too, was assassinated in 1968.<sup>14</sup> More recently, Secretary of State John Kerry and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. have come forward publicly to add their voices to the litany now questioning the lone gunman theory.<sup>15</sup>

Legal experts doubt that Oswald, if he had lived, could have been convicted at trial. JFK researchers point out that little of the crime scene evidence from the murders of both the president and Oswald would have been admissible in court. Secret Service agents cleaned the president's limousine before bullet fragments and tissue could be photographed and collected as evidence.<sup>16</sup> No photographs of Kennedy's clothing were taken in their original condition, discounting them as evidence for entry and exit wounds.<sup>17</sup> An unfired bullet in the chamber of the rifle allegedly used by Oswald was

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14. *Ibid.*, 252; and Michael Benson, *Encyclopedia of the JFK Assassination* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 47.

15. "Secretary John Kerry Doubts Kennedy's Assassination Is Solved," *Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees*, CNN, November 8, 2013, LexisNexis Academic; and "Conspiracy Theory; Speaking Out," *World News Saturday*, ABC, January 12, 2013. LexisNexis Academic.

16. Michael L. Kurtz, *The JFK Assassination Debates: Lone Gunman versus Conspiracy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 47.

17. *Ibid.*, 27.

never photographed or checked for fingerprints.<sup>18</sup> While Dallas police could find only smudges on the outside of the rifle, they did claim to find Oswald's palm print on the barrel inside the rifle's stock. The FBI later found no trace of the palm print or of it having been lifted from the rifle barrel.<sup>19</sup> Not a single witness can identify Bullet 399, the so-called Magic Bullet that had allegedly wounded both Kennedy and Connally, as the one that was found on a stretcher in the basement of Dallas's Parkland Hospital and assumed to have fallen from Connally's body.<sup>20</sup> The possibility that the bullet was planted on the stretcher cannot be discounted. It is little surprise then that both U.S. Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas and former Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski have said nearly all the evidence gathered in the assassination would have been disallowed in court because of its mishandling.<sup>21</sup>

The Warren Commission ignored or discounted scores of well-placed witnesses whose testimony did not fit its lone gunman thesis. Of the 126 witnesses questioned by the commission, fifty-one placed the shots as coming from the grassy knoll, thirty-two said they came from the Texas School Book Depository and five cited more than one location. Thirty-eight witnesses had no opinion, but most were not asked.<sup>22</sup>

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18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., 26-27

20. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 30.

21. Ibid., 50.

22. Benson, *Encyclopedia*, 280.

Discounted testimony included that of journalists and law enforcement officers.<sup>23</sup> Four employees of *The Dallas Morning News*, all of whom were standing north of Elm Street as the president's limousine approached them as it traveled west, told the press that they had heard shots behind them and to their right in the area of the grassy knoll. None was called as a witness by the commission.<sup>24</sup> Seth Kantor, a Scripps-Howard reporter who knew Ruby personally and later wrote a book profiling Ruby and his extensive links to organized crime, told the commission that he had seen and talked to Ruby at Parkland Hospital just hours after the assassination. But when Ruby denied being there that day, the commission ruled that Kantor must have been mistaken.<sup>25</sup> However, after reading Kantor's book on Ruby, the Warren Commission attorney, Burt W. Griffin, changed his mind. Now a retired Cuyahoga County, Ohio, judge, Griffin conceded that "the greater weight of the evidence" indicates that Kantor did see Ruby at Parkland.<sup>26</sup>

Dallas County Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig claimed that when he arrived in Dealey Plaza after hearing shots, he saw a white male he later identified as Oswald run from the direction of the Texas School Depository and hop into a light green Rambler station wagon being driven by a dark, Latino-looking man. Craig said heavy traffic prevented him from stopping the vehicle before it sped away but that he related his story

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23. Sabato, *Kennedy Half Century*, 143.

24. *Ibid.*, 145.

25. Seth Kantor, *Who Was Jack Ruby?* (New York: Everest House, 1978), 41.

26. Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, Kindle Locations 94801-94802.

to a man at the scene who said he was with the Secret Service.<sup>27</sup> Craig and other reliable witnesses said they had talked to or encountered several Secret Service agents in Dealey Plaza immediately after the assassination. The Secret Service, however, denies that any of its agents had remained in the area after the shooting.<sup>28</sup>

To a lesser extent, the credibility of the HSCA report has also been questioned by JFK researchers, including most recently the committee's former chief investigator, G. Robert Blakey, an expert on organized crime who says he learned decades later that the CIA had withheld information from the committee. Documents released through the JFK Assassination Records Act of 1992 revealed that CIA officer George Joannides had been involved in a disinformation campaign to link Oswald to Castro—a CIA ruse that was withheld from both Warren Commission and HSCA investigators.<sup>29</sup>

The medical evidence in the JFK assassination is perhaps the least reliable of all. The findings of the HSCA in 1979, followed by the release of documents and witness interviews by the Assassination Records Review Board almost two decades later, “clearly demonstrate a systematic campaign of deceit, deception, and cover-up in the medical evidence,” historian Michael Kurtz writes in *The JFK Assassination Debate*.<sup>30</sup> Doctors at Parkland who first saw Kennedy's body all agreed that there was an entrance wound in his throat and a large exit wound in the back of his head, indicating passage of a bullet

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27. Sabato, *Kennedy Half Century*, 149

28. *Ibid.*

29. David Talbot, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 387.

30. *Ibid.*, 32.

from front to back.<sup>31</sup> However, navy physicians who later performed the official autopsy at Bethesda Naval Medical Center—none of whom had experience with gunshot wounds—found only rear-entry wounds, one whose location in the report was moved upward four inches from the shoulder to the base of the neck by Warren Commission member Gerald Ford so that it would conform with the Single Bullet Theory. Several photographers at the autopsy say the photos in the National Archives do not match those they took during the proceedings.<sup>32</sup> Nor has a single witness in the emergency room at Parkland Hospital or at the autopsy in Bethesda been able to authenticate all the photos in the National Archives “as consistent with what he or she observed.”<sup>33</sup> Several critical items from the medical inventory have disappeared from the archives, including the president’s brain, photos of the interior of his chest and slides of the tissue around the margins of his wounds that would have indicated whether they were inflicted upon entry or exit.<sup>34</sup>

Skeptics of JFK conspiracy theories often argue that “if there had been a conspiracy, someone would have talked.” In *Brothers: The Hidden History of The Kennedy Years*, JFK researcher and *Salon.com* founder David Talbot is the most recent to note that key suspects tied to the assassination have indeed talked, including Lee Harvey Oswald, who insisted he was “a patsy” up to the moment of his death. The list also

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31. Ibid., 33.

32. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 43-44

33. Ibid., 43-44.

34. Ibid., 45.

includes CIA agents David Atlee Phillips and David Morales, both of whom were involved in covert anti-Castro operations in the early 1960s; organized crime lieutenant Johnny Roselli, who was murdered after talking to investigative journalist Jack Anderson for a column that relayed the claim that Robert Kennedy approved an assassination plot [against Castro] which then backfired against his brother<sup>35</sup>; and CIA master spy and Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt, who left behind an audiotape after his death in 2007 in which he confesses to being loosely involved in the assassination plot and names a host of familiar suspects in the “big event” in 1963, including CIA operatives Phillips and Morales, several Cuban exiles, a French assassin and even LBJ.<sup>3637</sup>

JFK researchers point out that many other key witnesses and suspects never had the chance to make their case. Deputy Sheriff Craig was among dozens of witnesses and persons of interest in the assassination to die under what many JFK researchers have called “suspicious” circumstances.<sup>38</sup> Craig, who testified for the prosecution in Jim

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35. “Columnist Jack Anderson Dies,” *Mary Ferrell Foundation* website, December 2005, [https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/News\\_Archive\\_-\\_Dec\\_2005](https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/News_Archive_-_Dec_2005); and Church Committee, *Final Report: Book V - The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies*, S. REP. NO. 94-755, at 80 (1976), <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?absPageId=150540>.

36. “Confession of Howard Hunt,” *Mary Ferrell Foundation* website, accessed July 17, 2014, [https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Confession\\_of\\_Howard\\_Hunt](https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Confession_of_Howard_Hunt).

37. Talbot, *Brothers*, 402-404.

38. Richard Belzer and David Wayne, *Hit List: An In-Depth Investigation into the Mysterious Deaths of Witnesses to the JFK Assassination* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013).

Garrison's unsuccessful attempt to convict New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw for conspiracy in the assassination, twice had his car driven off the road, was twice shot at, and was seriously injured in a car explosion shortly before his death. He died May 17, 1975 of what was ruled a self-inflicted gunshot wound after appearing in a series of radio talk shows in which he had discussed the assassination.<sup>39</sup>

JFK researchers, however, have long debated what constitutes "suspicion" in the deaths of individual witnesses as well as in the broader sense of statistical probabilities. Citing actuarial data compiled by the *London Times*, Jim Marrs noted in *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy* that the eighteen material witnesses who died within three years of the assassination—all but four of them from murder, suicide, or car accidents—represent a 1 in 100,000 trillion chance even if they had all died of natural causes. This number was later revised by applied mathematician and software consultant Richard Charnin to reflect the smaller universe of JFK witnesses. Charnin calculated the chances that 33 of the 1,400 witnesses would die of unnatural causes within three years of the assassination at one in 137 trillion. Normally, one would expect only two or three such deaths during the same period.<sup>40</sup>

John McAdams, a political science professor and staunch lone gunman theorist, concedes in his book *Assassination Logic* that the five murders of organized crime

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39. Michael Benson, *Who's Who in the JFK Assassination: An A-to-Z Encyclopedia* (New York: Citadel Press, 1993), 92.

40. Jim Marrs, *Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), Kindle edition, Kindle location 13811.



witnesses are toughest to explain,<sup>41</sup> especially those of Sam Giancana, who was under a Senate Intelligence Committee's witness protection program at the time he was shot once in the back of the head and six times around his mouth, and of Roselli, who was garroted and dismembered after talking to Anderson and also agreeing to testify before the Senate.<sup>42</sup> Other notable persons who died suspicious deaths include George de Mohrenschildt, Oswald's closest friend and some researchers say his CIA handler, who was found dead of a gunshot wound to the mouth on the day he agreed to talk to the HSCA, and of New York newspaper columnist Dorothy Kilgallen, who died of a drug and alcohol overdose just days after interviewing Jack Ruby in prison and telling friends she was going to "break open the Kennedy case."<sup>43</sup>

Anti-Warren researchers argue that many witnesses were intimidated into conforming their testimony to the commission's official theory. An extreme example is Warren Reynolds, who had worked at a car lot a block from where Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly shot Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit several hours after the assassination. Reynolds chased a gunman from the scene for a block and a half and claimed to have gotten a good look at him. Reynolds told the FBI that the man was not Oswald. Two days later, Reynolds was shot in the head while sitting in his basement office. Reynolds

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41. John McAdams, *JFK Assassination Logic: How to Think about Claims of Conspiracy* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011), 105.

42. Benson, *Who's Who in the JFK Assassination*, 151, 388.

43. *Ibid.*, 111, 236.

miraculously survived, only to receive telephone death threats to himself and his family. He changed his mind and identified Oswald as the gunman.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the best-known criticism of the Warren Report centers on The Single Bullet Theory, or as critics call it, The Magic Bullet—a theory developed by commission members Senator Arlen Specter and U.S. Representative Gerald Ford to explain how a lone gunman, using a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle like the one discovered at the scene, could have fired just three shots that accounted for all of the fatal and nonfatal wounds in Kennedy and Connally.<sup>45</sup> In order to fit into the filmed sequence of the assassination captured by Dallas clothing manufacturer Abraham Zapruder, now known as the Zapruder film, a single shot had to account for the 1.6 second difference in the reactions of Kennedy and Connally since Oswald could not possibly have fired two separate shots in that time from his bolt-action rifle.<sup>46</sup>

One of the three bullets has never been found. A fragment found in the presidential limousine apparently was part of a second bullet that struck the fatal blow to Kennedy's head. Therefore, the third bullet, discovered on an empty stretcher in the basement of Parkland Hospital in nearly pristine condition, had to account for all seven of the other nonfatal wounds in Kennedy and Connally, including Connally's blown-out fifth rib and shattered wrist. Much debate has focused on the location of the entry wound in Kennedy's back and whether it was high enough to have exited his throat and then

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44. Belzer, *Hit List*, 94-95.

45. Benson, *Encyclopedia of the JFK Assassination*, xi.

46. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 56.

struck Connally in the torso, wrist, and thigh. But perhaps the strongest case against the Single Bullet Theory is that X-rays showed more fragments were left in Connally's body than were missing from the almost immaculate bullet. (The fragments were never removed and weighed, however, even after Connally's death in 1993, per the wishes of his family.)<sup>47</sup>

While books questioning the Warren Report appeared within months of its release, including Mark Lane's groundbreaking *Rush to Judgment* (1966), the public's attention was not drawn to the assassination debate until 1967, when word leaked to the press that New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison was building a conspiracy case against two men seen by credible witnesses in the company of Oswald in Louisiana just months prior to the assassination.<sup>48</sup> One of the men, David Ferrie, a middle-aged, gay pedophile, was a CIA pilot, a private investigator for Carlos Marcello of the New Orleans mob and Oswald's former flight instructor in the Civil Air Patrol. When Ferrie died just hours before his scheduled arrest (the death was ruled a suicide), Garrison was forced to turn his attention to Clay Shaw, a wealthy importer-exporter who had been seen in the company of both Ferrie and Oswald in Clinton, Louisiana less than three months before the assassination. The six witnesses included a deputy sheriff and a voting registrar.<sup>49</sup>

Garrison's prosecution of Shaw, uniformly condemned by the media as a witch hunt, was hampered by government officials who refused to extradite key witnesses to

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47. Benson, *Encyclopedia of the JFK Assassination*, xi, 47.

48. *HSCA Final Report*, 142-145, [http://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/hasca/report/html/HSCA\\_Report\\_0086b.htm](http://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/hasca/report/html/HSCA_Report_0086b.htm).

49. *Ibid*, 142.

New Orleans and by the untimely deaths of several other witnesses. Shaw was acquitted after a brief jury deliberation, but was later revealed in CIA documents released in 1998 to be a long-time CIA informant.<sup>50</sup> Shaw was also a board member of Centro Mondiale Commerciale (CMC), a Rome-based organization publicly linked to assassination attempts on French President Charles de Gaulle by DeGaulle himself and reportedly to operatives at the CIA as well, according to the Italian press.<sup>51</sup> CMC and its Swiss-based parent corporation, Permindex, were ostensibly world trade promotion groups, but both organizations were expelled from their respective countries for failing to account for millions of dollars in funds and for suspicions of financing subversive tactics against communist parties in Europe.<sup>52</sup>

After the ill-fated Shaw trial, the JFK assassination disappeared from the news agenda for nearly eight years until, in March 1975, Americans saw the Zapruder film uncensored for the first time in a broadcast of ABC's *Good Night America*, hosted by Geraldo Rivera. The film's footage, which showed Kennedy's head and body jerking backward from the fatal shot, contradicted earlier reports by Dan Rather of CBS and *Life*

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50. Central Intelligence Agency, "Memo: Clay Shaw's Connection with CIA," February 1978, <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=4902andreIPageId=2>.

51. Marrs, *Crossfire*, Kindle locations, 12295-12330.

52. Paris Flammonde, *The Kennedy Conspiracy: An Uncommissioned Report on the Jim Garrison Investigation* (New York: Meredith Press, 1969), 219-21; Marrs, *Crossfire*, 500; and Alan J. Weberman and Michael Canfield, *Coup d'État in America: The CIA and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (San Francisco: Quick American Archives, 1992), 40.

magazine that the president's head had snapped forward from a rear shot by Oswald.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, official attitudes toward the Warren Report were beginning to change with the Church Committee's finding that the CIA had withheld information from the Warren Commission about its plots to kill Fidel Castro and that both the CIA and FBI had lied to the commission about their monitoring of Oswald in the months prior to the assassination.<sup>54</sup>

The ensuing public outcry from the committee's findings as well as the broadcast of the Zapruder film led to the formation of the HSCA in 1976 and the reopening of government investigations into both JFK's assassination and that of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968.<sup>55</sup> The HSCA probe, however, was hampered from the beginning by internal squabbling and the deaths of more witnesses and, eventually, by a lack of funding.<sup>56</sup> The primary impact of the HSCA investigation was to suggest that organized crime was complicit in the JFK assassination, pointing a finger primarily at Carlos Marcello in Louisiana and Santos Trafficante in Florida, as well as at certain anti-Castro activists, all of whom had "the motive, means and opportunity" to kill the

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53. "How Geraldo Rivera Changed America (And Why That Is So Hard to Admit)," *JFKFacts.org*, <http://jfkfacts.org/assassination/review/how-geraldo-rivera-changed-america-and-why-that-is-so-hard-to-admit/Ibid>.

54. *Church Committee Final Report*, 6, 95, <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/docset/getList.do?docSetId=1014> and <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?absPageId=150555>.

55. David E. Scheim, *Contract on America: The Mafia Murder of President John F. Kennedy* (New York: Zebra Books, 1991), 10.

56. *Ibid.*, 11.

president.<sup>57</sup> The motive cited for Marcello and Trafficante was the Kennedy brothers' crackdown on organized crime and, for anti-Castro activists, the perception that JFK had doomed the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 by withholding air support from anti-Castro forces.<sup>58</sup> The committee, however, absolved the CIA and the FBI of any connection, even among possible rogue elements, a move that HSCA chief investigator G. Robert Blakey later regretted after learning that the CIA had withheld information from the committee about its involvement with the anti-Castro community and its possible ties to Oswald.<sup>59</sup>

Both the Warren Commission and the HSCA have been criticized by JFK researchers for their handling and interpretation of medical evidence in the assassination. Despite Blakey's outrage over the CIA's deception, critics accuse him and the HSCA of either ignoring or suppressing key evidence that casts doubts on JFK's official autopsy report. Questions about the chain of custody in handling the medical evidence began in earnest in 1980 with the publication of David Lifton's best-selling book, *Best Evidence*.<sup>60</sup> Lifton, a former NASA engineer and private researcher, was the first to note the

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57. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 51.

58 Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, Kindle Locations 92115-92116.

59. G. Robert Blakey and Richard N. Billings, *Fatal Hour: The Assassination of President Kennedy by Organized Crime* (New York: Berkley Books, 1992), xliii; *HSCA Final Report*, 9-11; and "Interview: G. Robert Blakey," *Frontline*, PBS, November 19, 2019, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/biographies/oswald/interview-g-robert-blakey/#addendum>.

60. David S. Lifton, *Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (New York: McMillan, 1980).

contradiction between the crater-like blow-out of the president's right temple in the Zapruder film with the eyewitness testimony of doctors and law enforcement officials who saw Kennedy's body at Parkland Hospital.<sup>61</sup> Dr. Charles Crenshaw, then a resident physician at Parkland and the author of several books on the assassination, has been the most outspoken of the witnesses, insisting that JFK arrived at the hospital with a small entrance wound to his throat and a large exit wound in the right rear of his skull about the size of a baseball. Both are indications that he had been shot from the front.<sup>62</sup> Eight witnesses to the autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital testified to seeing a large exit wound at the back of the president's head—a wound that did not appear on the official photos released from the autopsy. Despite the conflicting testimony, Blakey's report said that all witnesses to the autopsy supported the official autopsy photos.<sup>63</sup> The HSCA then sealed the medical evidence in the case for the next fifty years.<sup>64</sup>

In his 700-page bestseller, Lifton meticulously documented the transit of the president's body from Parkland Hospital to its arrival at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where an empty bronze casket was wheeled into the front of the hospital in view of TV camera crews. Unknown to the media and nearly everyone watching the solemn spectacle, Kennedy's body had been removed to another casket, a simple gray aluminum one, and secretly delivered to the back entrance of the hospital. In a bizarre shell game worthy of a

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61. Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, Kindle location 55443.

62. *Ibid.*, Kindle locations 40164-40170.

63. Douglas P. Horne, interview by author, April 6, 2014.

64. "Freeing the JFK Files," *Mary Ferrell Foundation* website, accessed July 17, 2014, [https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Freeing\\_the\\_JFK\\_Files](https://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Freeing_the_JFK_Files).

dark comedy, the military honor guard assigned to meet the coffin at the front entrance of the hospital was led on a wild goose chase when the navy ambulance that had transported the bronze casket suddenly shot off at high speed. The honor guard tried to follow in a pick-up truck but lost the ambulance. Five minutes later, two FBI agents witnessed the arrival of a navy ambulance and the bronze casket at the back of the hospital, where they were blocked from following the casket into the hospital.<sup>65</sup>

Lifton argues that the agents were detained to keep them from discovering that Kennedy's body was already in the morgue, where it was transferred back to its original bronze casket before being delivered, a second time, to the autopsy room. Morgue witnesses testified that when the president's corpse was removed from the cheap aluminum shipping casket in which it was originally delivered, it was encased in a rubber body bag even though it had been originally wrapped in a white sheet when it left Parkland Hospital. Lifton theorizes that all of these machinations were necessary to disguise the fact that Kennedy's wounds had been secretly altered prior to the autopsy to make it appear as though the fatal shot had been fired from the rear rather than from the front of the motorcade. However, his research could not confirm where or when this might have happened, although he documents a 14-minute period when the body was left unattended on Air Force One while the plane was delayed for takeoff.<sup>66</sup>

Lifton's theory has been given further credence and several additional twists in more recent years through the research of Douglas P. Horne, who was initially a senior

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65. Ed Magnuson, "Now, a 'Two-Casket' Argument," *Time*, January 19, 1981.

66. *Ibid.*



analyst and later became the chief analyst for military records on the staff of the Assassination Records Review Board. The ARRB was created by the JFK Records Act in 1992 to oversee the release of some 400,000 pages of internal documents in the case and to account for any missing or conflicting evidence. A Navy veteran and long-time Navy civil servant, Horne was charged with taking both unsworn testimony and assisting the ARRB General Counsel in obtaining depositions from witnesses to the JFK autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital.<sup>67</sup> Horne procured a copy of a report from the Marine sergeant-in-charge of the morgue security detail at the autopsy, which stated that the aluminum casket arrived at 6:35 p.m., twenty minutes prior to the motorcade from Andrews Air Force Base that delivered the original bronze casket. Three witnesses who saw the body at Bethesda prior to the commencement of the autopsy saw the same egg-sized right-rear exit wound in Kennedy's skull reported by all of the other witnesses at Parkland. Yet ninety minutes later, when the body was wheeled into the morgue a second time at 8:00 p.m. for the start of the autopsy, most witnesses told the HSCA that they saw a large opening in the top-front of the skull, five times larger than the exit wound seen in Dallas. One FBI agent reported to the ARRB that nearly half the president's brain was missing, and that most of the missing mass was in the right rear of the brain.<sup>68</sup>

Horne argues that, during a ninety-minute period when JFK's body is unaccounted for inside the naval hospital, his head wounds were altered to remove all

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67. Horne interview.

68. Assassination Records Review Board, "ARRB Testimony of Francis X. O'Neill, Jr., 12 Sep 1997," 3, <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=792>.

evidence of bullet entries from the front—entrance wounds, bullet fragments, and brain tissue—and to roughly conform with a rear entry shot. One witness, embalming technician Tom Robinson, testified to the ARRB staff that he saw doctors remove most of Kennedy's upper skull, and more than ten bullet fragments from his brain, inside the morgue shortly after the body arrived.<sup>69</sup> A corroborating witness, navy X-ray technician Ed Reed, testified to the ARRB that he witnessed the chief pathologist, Dr. James J. Humes, commencing the surgery to the top of JFK's skull, but was then summarily dismissed from the morgue.<sup>70</sup> Only two small fragments were reported in the autopsy findings and given to the FBI, and their remains are still in the National Archives today. Missing are four larger bullet fragments seen by a navy corpsman, Dennis David, who typed a receipt for them, as well as the ten smaller fragments seen by Tom Robinson.<sup>71</sup> After studying all the applicable Warren Commission, HSCA, and ARRB testimony and interviews, as well as noteworthy researcher interviews, and comparing them with what is in the National Archives, Horne concluded that at least eighteen autopsy photos, and two

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69. ARRB, "ARRB Meeting Report Summarizing 6/21/96 In-Person Interview of Tom Robinson," 3, <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=711&andrelPageId=3>.

70. ARRB, "Testimony of Edward F. Reed, 21 Oct 1997," 7-8, <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=794&andrelPageId=8>.

71. ARRB, "ARRB Call Report Summarizing 2/14/97, Telephonic Interview of Dennis David," [http://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/arrb/master\\_med\\_set/md177/html/md177\\_0001a.htm](http://www.history-matters.com/archive/jfk/arrb/master_med_set/md177/html/md177_0001a.htm)

skull x-rays from angles that would have shown the blow-out at the back of JFK's head, are missing.<sup>72</sup>

In most of the autopsy photos, the back of the head is conveniently obscured by a metal rest support that several technicians and photographers present at the photo shoot said were not present at the time.<sup>73</sup> The few autopsy photos that do show the back of JFK's head show it to be apparently intact, contradicting the testimony of witnesses at both Parkland and Bethesda who instead saw the egg-sized exit wound in the right rear of the skull. The much larger dimensions of the damage seen at Bethesda to the top-front of the skull were recorded by the autopsy pathologists in their report and in a sketch made at the autopsy, which survives today.

In 1993, physicist and radiologist David W. Mantik examined the three remaining X-rays of the skull in the National Archives, and concluded that they had been altered, including the use of “light blasting” at the back of the head to obscure evidence of missing brain tissue and bone.<sup>74</sup> While Lifton's theory was that JFK's wounds had been altered prior to the body's arrival at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Horne is convinced that

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72. Douglas P. Horne, *Inside the Assassination Records Review Board: The U.S. Government's Final Attempt to Reconcile the Conflicting Medical Evidence in the Assassination of JFK* (Falls Church, VA.: D.P. Horne, 2009), Chapters 4 and 5.

73. Allan Eaglesham, “Where Were the JFK Autopsy Photos Taken?” *JFK/Deep Politics Quarterly* XI no. 2 (2006): 30-36, <http://www.manuscriptservice.com/AutopsyRoom/>

74. David W. Mantik, “Optical Density Measurements of the JFK Autopsy X-Rays,” in *Assassination Science: Experts Speak Out on the Death of JFK*, ed. James H. Fetzer (Chicago: CatFeet Press, 1998), 153-8.

alterations occurred at Bethesda during the mysterious ninety-minute delay before the start of the official autopsy.

Further supporting his argument was Horne's discovery of two separate brain examinations at Bethesda, one three days after the autopsy on November 25 and a second one a week later. The three pathologists present at the second exam, and the Navy photographer present at the first exam, have given conflicting testimony about the timing of the second exam, who was present and how the brain was dissected.<sup>75</sup> Former FBI agent Francis X. O'Neill, who was present at the Bethesda autopsy prior to the first brain examination, testified that when he saw doctors remove Kennedy's brain and place it in a jar, more than half of it was missing. But when asked during his ARRB deposition in 1997 to examine photographs of the brain in the official record at the National Archives, O'Neill said the specimen looked "almost like a complete brain."<sup>76</sup> John Stringer, the navy photographer at the first brain exam on November 25, testified to the ARRB that the many photos he took of cross-sections of the brain are not in the National Archives, and that the brain photos in the archives are definitely recorded on a different kind of film.<sup>77</sup>

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75. George Lardner Jr., "Archive Photos Not of JFK's Brain, Concludes Aide to Review Board; Staff Member Contends 2 Different Specimens Were Examined," *The Washington Post*, November 10, 1998, LexisNexis Academic; and ARRB, "Questions Regarding Supplemental Brain Examination(s) Following the Autopsy on President John F. Kennedy," by Doug Horne, [http://history-matters.com/archive/jfk/arrb/staff\\_memos/DH\\_BrainExams/html/d130\\_0001a.htm](http://history-matters.com/archive/jfk/arrb/staff_memos/DH_BrainExams/html/d130_0001a.htm).

76. Lardner, "Archive Photos," *The Washington Post*; and ARRB, "ARRB Testimony of Francis X. O'Neill."

77. Ibid; and ARRB, "Testimony of John T. Stringer, 16 Jul 1996," <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=798>

In a 32-page report completed by Horne in 1998 and released to the public by the National Archives that November, Horne argued that the brain removed from Kennedy at the autopsy could not have been the same brain photographed during the second brain examination on December 2, a redundant procedure that was highly unorthodox to begin with.<sup>78</sup> In his self-published,<sup>79</sup> five-volume set of books on the medical and forensics evidence in the JFK assassination, Horne devotes an entire chapter to evidence that he says supports his theory that another brain was substituted for Kennedy's during the second brain examination to eliminate evidence of having been shot from the front and massively altered just prior to the start of the autopsy.<sup>80</sup>

Horne's ARRB report in 1998 garnered only two stories in the media<sup>81</sup> and failed to stir the intense public and media attention that attended the 1991 release of Oliver Stone's film *JFK*. The three-hour epic was based liberally on Jim Garrison's *On the Trail of the Assassins* and Jim Marrs' *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*, plus a good deal of Stone's own artistic and theoretical license. Stone, whose previous acclaimed films had dealt with the tragedy of the Vietnam War (*Platoon*, *Born on the Fourth of July*), pinned the blame for the murder on a military-industrial complex that had feared

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78. ARRB, "Questions Regarding Supplemental Brain Examination(s) Following the Autopsy on President John F. Kennedy," by Doug Horne, [http://history-matters.com/archive/jfk/arrb/staff\\_memos/DH\\_BrainExams/html/d130\\_0001a.htm](http://history-matters.com/archive/jfk/arrb/staff_memos/DH_BrainExams/html/d130_0001a.htm).

79. Horne said several publishers turned him down because he insisted on publishing all five volumes of his work.

80. Horne, *Inside the AARB*, Vol. 3, 777-844.

81. See Lardner, "Archive Photos Not of JFK's Brain"; and Deb Riechmann, "Newly Released JFK Documents Raise Questions about Medical Evidence," *Associated Press*, November 9, 1998, LexisNexis Academic.

Kennedy would withdraw from Vietnam just as he had pulled away from an invasion of Castro's Cuba.<sup>82</sup>

As district attorney for New Orleans, Garrison had tried unsuccessfully in 1967 to convict New Orleans businessman and CIA asset Clay Shaw of conspiracy in the JFK assassination. Garrison was one of the first JFK researchers to suspect CIA involvement in the assassination, but had turned a blind eye to organized crime, some critics say, because he was too closely tied to Louisiana's mob operation himself. He was later charged with but not convicted of taking bribes from pinball operators linked to Carlos Marcello's organization.<sup>83</sup> Marris' book, released in 1989, was one of the first to explore the ties among organized crime, the CIA, the U.S. military and anti-Castro activists in the slaying of Kennedy—the very same alliance involved in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion.<sup>84</sup> Marris pointed out in his book that the HSCA had refused to investigate the Dallas police, elements of which may also have been involved in the conspiracy.<sup>85</sup>

Stone's film was pummeled by the mainstream media and, in particular, by *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, both of which printed critical previews of the film in 1991 even before its release.<sup>86</sup> Not content to confine their criticism to reviews

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82. Oliver Stone, "Who Is Rewriting History?" *The New York Times*, December 20, 1991, LexisNexis Academic.

83. Blakey and Billings, *Fatal Hour*, 54.

84. Marris, *Crossfire*, 169.

85. *Ibid.*, 536.

86. Bernard Weinraub, "Substance and Style Criticized in 'JFK'," *The New York Times*, November 7, 1991, LexisNexis Academic; and George Lardner Jr., "Oliver

and columns, *The Washington Post* printed two parodies of the film and *The New York Times* ran an interview with Jack Valenti, chief executive of the Motion Picture Association of America and a former aide to LBJ, calling the film a “hoax” and “a fraud.”<sup>87</sup>

Despite the universal contempt of the media, *JFK* was a box office hit that set off a new wave of public debate over the assassination and led to demands for an earlier release of government documents to settle the issue once and for all.<sup>88</sup> Within a year of the film’s release, Congress passed the JFK Records Act and handed over the government’s archive to a five-member commission, the ARRB, to begin releasing top-secret intelligence documents related to the assassination. The president, however, would have the final say in any dispute between the ARRB and intelligence agencies. So far, about 1,100 of the 5 million related records are still sealed, most of them belonging to the CIA, and thousands of other pages have been released only after being heavily

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Stone’s Version of the Kennedy Assassination Exploits the Edge of Paranoia,” *The Washington Post*, May 19, 1991, LexisNexis Academic.

87. See Art Buchwald, “Bugged: The Flu Conspiracy,” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1992, LexisNexis Academic; Michael Isikoff, “H-e-e-e-r-e’s Conspiracy!; Why Did Oliver Stone Omit (or Suppress!) the Role of Johnny Carson?” *The New York Times*, December 29, 1991, LexisNexis Academic; and Bernard Weinraub, “Valenti Calls ‘J.F.K.’ ‘Hoax’ and ‘Smear,’” *The New York Times*, April 2, 1992, LexisNexis Academic.

88. Robert O’Harrow Jr., “Conspiracy Theory Wins Converts; Moviegoers Say ‘JFK’ Nourishes Doubts That Oswald Acted Alone,” *The Washington Post*, January 2, 1992; and Esther B. Fein, “Book Notes,” *The New York Times*, January 8, 1992.

redacted.<sup>89</sup> By law, the last of the records must become automatically public in 2017, but researchers say it is likely the CIA will fight the order for reasons of national security.<sup>90</sup>

As new information has come to light since the records' release, researchers have touched on a variety of possible motivations and potential conspiracy theories for the killing of the thirty-sixth president, and yet definitive answers have been hard to come by on all sides of the debate. Much of the original evidence was damaged, destroyed, or suppressed.<sup>91</sup> Many of the witnesses and potential conspirators are long dead.<sup>92</sup> And even if all information from government files is released by 2017, many researchers say it is unlikely that these last thousand pages or so will resolve the half-century dispute over lone gunman versus conspiracy. As Lindsay Porter, author of *Assassination: A History of Political Murder*, told *USA Today* in September 2010: "The more alleged data that's

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89. Jefferson Morley, "Jefferson Morley: What We Still Don't Know about the JFK Assassination," *dallasnews.com*, October 26, 2013, <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/sunday-commentary/20131025-what-we-still-dont-know-about-jfks-assassination.ece>.

90. Jefferson Morley, "The Kennedy Assassination: 47 Years Later, What Do We Really Know?" *The Atlantic Monthly*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2010/11/the-kennedy-assassination-47-years-later-what-do-we-really-know/66722/>

91. See Ross Frank Ralston, "The Media and the Kennedy Assassination: The Social Construction of Reality," (PhD diss., Iowa State University, 1999); and "Destruction of Records," *Mary Ferrell Foundation* website, accessed July 17, 2014, [http://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Destruction\\_of\\_Records](http://www.maryferrell.org/wiki/index.php/Destruction_of_Records)

92. Belzer and Wayne, *Hit List*, *passim*.



accumulated, the more muddled things become. It is now become a dialogue separate to the event itself.”<sup>93</sup>

Theories and heated debates have surged across the Internet and in non-mainstream publications with varying degrees of evidence and logic to support them.<sup>94</sup> Some of the more outlandish theories posited in the last fifty years include a gunman hiding in a sewer and a bystander with a poison-dart-shooting umbrella. The more plausible conspiracy theories do not deny Oswald’s involvement in the assassination but question whether he may have been used, wittingly or unwittingly, as part of a larger conspiracy. Many researchers have zeroed in on the potential involvement of the CIA, military intelligence and/or FBI in the assassination and its cover-up,<sup>95</sup> or of renegades from any of those agencies.<sup>96</sup> Many others also have cited the participation of organized crime figures and/or anti-Castro Cuban exiles, usually in tandem with the CIA.<sup>97</sup> A few

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93. Gregory Korte, “Conspiracy Theories over JFK’s Assassination Thrive,” *USA Today*, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-09-26-jfk-assassination-conspiracy-theories\\_N.htm?csp=34](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/washington/2010-09-26-jfk-assassination-conspiracy-theories_N.htm?csp=34)

94. James F. Broderick and Darren Miller, *Web of Conspiracy: A Guide to Conspiracy Theory Sites on the Internet* (Medford, N.J.: CyberAge Books, 2008); and Jack Zeljko Bratich, “Grassy Knoll-Edges: Conspiracy Theories and Political Rationality in the 1990s,” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2001).

95. See Lane, *Plausible Denial*; John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA: The Documented Truth about the Unknown Relationship between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008); and Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

96. Anthony Summers, *Conspiracy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992).

97. See Blakey and Billings, *The Plot to Kill the President*; John H. Davis, *Kennedy Contract: The Mafia Plot to Assassinate the President* (New York: HarperPaperbacks, 1993); David E. Scheim, *Contract on America: The Mafia Murder of President John F. Kennedy* (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1988); John H. Davis, *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (New York:

have implicated rightwing Texas oil men and, with increasing frequency in recent years, JFK's successor, LBJ.<sup>98</sup> Still others have claimed a French connection via rightwing elements of France's military, again in tandem with the CIA and organized crime.<sup>99</sup> One highly contentious theory has been ignored by the mainstream media altogether—that the Mossad, Israel's equivalent of the CIA, may have been complicit in the conspiracy because of JFK's active opposition to Israel's development of nuclear weapons and his outreach toward Israel's nemesis, Egyptian President Gamal Nasser.<sup>100</sup> LBJ, long a friend of Israel, was far less aggressive than Kennedy in pursuing a policy of nuclear nonproliferation and became the first U.S. president to supply Israel with offensive weapons.<sup>101</sup>

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McGraw-Hill, 1989); and Frank Ragano, *Mob Lawyer* (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994).

98. See Barr McClellan, *Blood, Money and Power: How LBJ Killed JFK* (New York: Hannover House, 2003); Phillip F. Nelson, *LBJ: The Mastermind of the JFK Assassination* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2011); and Roger Stone and Mike Colapietro, *The Man Who Killed Kennedy: The Case Against LBJ* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013).

99. See Peter Kross, *JFK: The French Connection* (Kempton, Ill.: Adventures Unlimited Press, 2012); and Bradley S. O'Leary and L.E. Seymour, *Triangle of Death: The Shocking Truth about the Role of South Vietnam and the French Mafia in the Assassination of JFK* (Nashville, Tenn.: WND Books, 2003).

100. See Michael Collins Piper, *Final Judgment: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Conspiracy* (Washington, D.C.: Wolfe Press, 1993); Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991); and Jacob Peter Hogan, "Democracy, Duplicity and Dimona: The United States of America, Israel and the Globe since 1949," (master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 2010).

101. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 120-28.

To say that every researcher brings his or her biases and preconceptions to the JFK assassination is a truism that fails to do justice to the complexity of the evidence and to the social pressures that inevitably come to bear on researchers. They not only find themselves hampered by the loss, distortion and suppression of evidence but, depending on the investigative lens they choose, face the risks of being misdirected by disinformation and of being marginalized and even vilified by a mainstream media that continues to hold to the narrowest, most filtered and perhaps least likely lens of all—that of Oswald as lone gunman. Those researchers who follow the advice of Gaddis and dare to widen and unfilter the lens to capture the fullest of possible antecedents to the assassination face the most dangerous path of all.

As this dissertation will explore, journalists and researchers who attempt to venture beyond the government version of the JFK assassination in the Warren Report face pressures of marginalization and social isolation that can be explained by the Propaganda Model of Mass Media as well as Spiral of Silence and Political Correctness theories.

The Propaganda Model, advanced by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in their 1998 groundbreaking book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, steers "right-thinking" journalists into accepting the findings of the Warren Report through the influences of their editors, publishers and the powerful sources with which they often have close and mutual ties.<sup>102</sup> In addition, researchers who dare to look too broadly in the search for motives and means in the assassination encounter a second

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102. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), xi.

and more challenging obstacle—a firewall of self-censorship and social condemnation as explicated by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in Spiral of Silence Theory and Glenn C. Loury in Political Correctness Theory. Later chapters will examine exactly how these mechanisms have restricted the debate over the two most important questions in the Kennedy assassination—who may have been responsible, and why.

## Chapter 2: Marginalizing the "Conspiracy Buffs"

By now, one would expect the mainstream media to have rejected the Warren Commission's findings in favor of some other theory that better fits the known facts surrounding the case—what Thomas Kuhn in his seminal book, *The Structure of Scientific Theory*, calls a “paradigm shift.”<sup>1</sup> And, yet, rather than transitioning to a more comprehensive and consistent theory as logic would demand, the media—especially those elements that JFK researcher Peter Dale Scott calls “the responsible media”<sup>2</sup>—seem stubbornly attached to the embattled, half-century-old notion of a lone disturbed gunman having killed John F. Kennedy.

Indeed, many journalists and historians have declared that a "historical consensus" has developed around the Warren Report.<sup>3</sup> In his 1,900-page dissertation in 2003, “Rendezvous with Death: The Assassination of President Kennedy and the Question of Conspiracy,” history doctoral candidate Andrew Lee Dvorak agrees, arguing that, despite the proliferation of conspiracy theories since the release of the Warren Report, “there is not one shred of evidence” to disprove its main conclusion—that Lee

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1. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

2. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), xvii. Scott lists among the responsible media the major newspapers and major TV networks whom local and regional journalists look to as both professional models and as news agenda setters—*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and ABC, CBS and NBC news.

3. Jill Abramson, “The Elusive President,” *The New York Times*, October 27, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

Harvey Oswald assassinated JFK.<sup>4</sup> But as we have seen, adjusting one's investigative lens as to what constitutes "evidence" in the JFK assassination can lead to very dramatic differences in what constitutes a consensus. A better question might be, whose evidence are we talking about?

Regardless, in trying to gauge the mainstream media's treatment of JFK assassination theories, the Warren Report provides a clear benchmark for all theories by dint of its official status and widely publicized findings. This chapter will conduct a comprehensive search of print and TV content related to the assassination over the last twenty-five years and apply first a content analysis and then a textual analysis to the results to see if research supporting the Warren Report is treated differently by the media than research opposed to the report. To supplement both analyses, the author conducted in-depth telephone interviews with five JFK researchers and two publishers in order to "reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible, such as people's subjective experiences and attitudes."<sup>5</sup>

Content analysis is a method that strives to study and analyze the content of messages in a way that is systematic, objective and quantitative by using well-defined and measurable categories as variables.<sup>6</sup> Sample selection of messages must follow explicit and consistently applied rules so that each item has an equal chance of being

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4. Andrew Lee Dvorak, "Rendezvous with Death: The Assassination of President Kennedy and the Question of Conspiracy" (PhD diss., Illinois State University, 2003).

5. Anssi Paraeklae and Johanna Ruusuvoori, "Analyzing Talk and Text," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. Norman K. Denzin and Yvanno S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2011), 529.

6. Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick, *Mass Media Research: An Introduction* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth-Cengage Learning, 2011), 156-7.

included in the analysis. Definitions and rules for coding the different categories of content must be clear and comprehensive so that other researchers who reproduce the process will arrive at the same results. Although perfect objectivity is seldom achieved in content analysis, its goal is “an accurate representation of a body of messages.”<sup>7</sup>

Textual analysis is a rigorous but more qualitative method of investigating print, audio, and visual messages in order to interpret the ways in which audiences find meaning in them. Alan McKee writes, “When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text.”<sup>8</sup> This process normally requires deep reading, including multiple attempts to parse a text to determine layers of meaning.

In the case of the Kennedy assassination, the vast majority of authors clearly and cleanly state their opinions on the Warren Report in the ongoing debate. As a result, this dissertation’s research had little difficulty in parsing their works as pro-, anti-, or mixed based on the following definitions:

- Pro-Warren research may criticize aspects of the Warren Report but supports its chief finding that Oswald acted alone in killing JFK.
- Anti-Warren research criticizes the methods and findings of the Warren Commission and argues against its lone gunman theory.

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7. Ibid, 157.

8. Alan McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner’s Guide* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 1.

- Mixed content criticizes the methods and/or findings of the Warren Report but argues there is not enough evidence to develop an alternative theory.

Because of their length, their sourcing and their time in preparation, books are considered the most credible medium for introducing detailed evidence and complex theories related to historical events. Hundreds of books of varying quality have been written about the Kennedy assassination. To narrow the sample to the more recent books worthy of consideration for this analysis, a search was conducted of the holdings dating from 1988 to 2013 in the Library of Congress, the government research service that acquires materials "necessary to the Congress and the various officers of the Federal Government to perform their duties."<sup>9</sup> The search was restricted to the last twenty-five years in order to limit the sample to a workable size while also including the findings from the 1979 report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations and from the release of millions of new records since the passage of the JFK Records Act in 1992. The keywords for the search were "John F. Kennedy Assassination" in order to gather the largest potential sample of books, which were then screened by a series of rules to assure quality and comparability. Books not published in the U.S. were eliminated to maintain the focus on domestic media. (See Appendices A and B for details.)

A list of eighty-seven books was compiled from the refined search and textually analyzed, either by reading the entire book or some combination of the following—summaries on WorldCat, Amazon.com, and the introduction and selected chapters of the book. (Books read in their entirety were deemed more relevant to the research topic of

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9. "Introduction to Collections Policy Statements," *Library of Congress* website, last modified November 2008, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/cps.html>.



this dissertation.) Of the eighty-seven books compiled, sixty-five were anti-Warren, eighteen were pro-Warren and four were mixed. Hence, the ratio of anti-Warren books to pro-Warren was nearly four to one (3.6 to 1).

To help determine if the author's credentials influenced the media's reaction to the book, the biography of each author was examined via book jackets or the Internet and his or her author status classified under one of the following four categories: 1=Witness or Official Investigator (in a government probe of the assassination); 2=Academic Historian (with Ph.D.); 3=Academic Other (with a Ph.D., M.D. or J.D.); and 4=Non-Academic. (See Appendix A-1) Books by non-academic authors accounted for the majority of those published (55 of 87, or 63 percent) as well as the majority of books reviewed by the mainstream media (19 of 28, or 68 percent). Non-academic authors included lawyers, politicians, history enthusiasts and independent journalists. None of the authors was affiliated with a mainstream media outlet at the time of publication.

The next step in the analysis was to search for and analyze the reviews of JFK assassination books in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, arguably the two most influential mainstream newspapers in the country.<sup>10</sup> A search was conducted of the two newspapers in LexisNexis Academic for the years 1988 through 2013 using the keywords "Kennedy and assassination and conspiracy." Reviews of twenty-eight books related to the JFK assassination were found. Using a coding template, each review was analyzed for its stance (1=positive, 2=negative, 3=mixed or 4=neutral/not applicable)

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10. "Newspaper Quality Rankings," *Journawiki*, last modified October 25, 2011, [http://journalism.wikia.com/wiki/Newspaper\\_quality\\_rankings](http://journalism.wikia.com/wiki/Newspaper_quality_rankings).

toward any or all of the following components of the book—research, reasoning and organization/writing. The reviewer's overall opinion of the book was determined by evaluating the stances toward the three components as well as any generalized comments about the book. (See Appendix C for more details.)

For instance, in analyzing Bryan Burrough's *New York Times* review of Vincent J. Bugliosi's *Reclaiming History*, Burrough's stance toward the book's quality of reasoning was categorized as positive based on the following statement:

It is in the arguing that Bugliosi, as a former prosecutor, truly shines.

When he gets down to the sweaty business of wrestling the conspiracy buffs, he charges into the ring as a righteous avenger, body-slamming everyone from Lane to Oliver Stone.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, *New York Times* reviewer Michiko Kakutani's comments about the quality of research in Norman Mailer's *Oswald's Tale* were categorized as negative based on this supporting text:

Much of this cumbersome volume consists of little but excerpts from earlier books and studies, cut and pasted together into an awkward collage.

At the same time, Mr. Mailer declines to use his enormous gifts as a reporter and novelist to create an unvarnished portrait of his subject...<sup>12</sup>

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11. Bryan Burrough, "Conspiracy... Or Not?" review of *Reclaiming History*, by Vincent Bugliosi, *The New York Times*, May 20, 2007, LexisNexis Academic.

12. Michiko Kakutani, "Books of the Times; Oswald and Mailer: The Eternal Basic Questions," review of *Oswald's Tale*, by Norman Mailer, *The New York Times*, April 25, 1995, LexisNexis Academic.

Average pair agreement among three coders reached a significant level of 86 percent. (See Intercoder Reliability Scores in Appendix B.) Categorizing mixed reviews as either Overall Positive or Overall Negative required a more careful reading of the text but the extra effort led to a greater agreement among coders than using a Mixed Review category. After an initial Intercoder Reliability Test failed to reach significant agreement, the Overall Mixed Review category was eliminated from the Content Analysis Coding Sheet because of its inherent ambiguity (Is the review primarily mixed/positive or primarily mixed/negative?) The coders were asked to re-examine the texts of their Overall Mixed Review answers and re-categorize them as either Overall Positive or Overall Negative.

The analysis found that nine pro-Warren books received a total of fourteen reviews while twelve anti-Warren books garnered thirteen reviews from the two elite newspapers. However, it should be pointed out again that anti-Warren books outnumbered pro-Warren books on the Library of Congress list by nearly four to one (65 to 18, or ratio of 3.6). Adjusting for this ratio, pro-Warren books were five times more likely to be reviewed than anti-Warren—a clear indication that books opposing the Warren Report's lone gunman theory were not given the credence or importance of those supporting it. Even more telling of a pro-Warren bias among the mainstream media is that nine of the fourteen reviews of pro-Warren books were positive (64 percent) while only one of the thirteen reviews of anti-Warren books was positive (less than 10 percent). Hence, if selected for review, a pro-Warren book was more than six times more likely to receive praise than an anti-Warren book.

Although the numbers in the sample are admittedly small, the academic credentials of the authors did not appear to be an important factor in whether a book received a positive review. (See Appendix A-1.) Among the books reviewed by the mainstream media, those by non-academic authors were the most likely to receive a positive review (8 of 19 reviews, or 43 percent) followed by academic historians (1 of 3 reviews, or 33 percent), witnesses and official investigators (4 of 16 reviews, or 25 percent) and academics outside the history field (0 of 2 reviews, or 0 percent). A likely explanation is that advanced academic credentials are not highly valued in the media industry or journalism profession and are seldom a factor in hiring or promotion.

An analysis of the books selected from the Library of Congress, using issues of *Literary Marketplace* as its guide, found that large corporate publishers, nearly all of them based in New York, were far more likely to publish pro-Warren books. The elite newspapers, therefore, were more likely to notice and review pro-Warren books because of the greater marketing resources of corporate publishers and their location in New York, the nation's top media center. Publishers of pro-Warren books on the Library of Congress list issued an average of 1,054 new titles per year, or more than six times the average of 166 new titles issued by publishers of anti-Warren books. Of the eighteen pro-Warren books, nine (50 percent) were published by imprints, divisions or subsidiaries of large commercial firms based in New York. Of the sixty-five anti-Warren books, only four (0.6 percent) were published by New York-based corporate entities. (See Appendix D). Certainly, these numbers also would fall in line with Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model of the Mass Media, in which large corporate ownership and control

lead to the hiring of “right-thinking” editors who would choose not to publish books that threaten those in power or question the legitimacy of a government investigation.

The corporate antipathy to anti-Warren books would appear to be strong enough to overcome even the industry’s profit motive, given that books questioning the Warren Report tend to outsell those supporting it, said David Steele, editorial director of Chicago’s Catfeet Press.<sup>13</sup> Catfeet publishes about twenty new titles each year, most of them dealing with philosophy, but decided to enter the JFK assassination market in 1998 with the publication of James H. Fetzer’s *Assassination Science*, a collection of essays by experts questioning technical aspects of the Warren Report. Catfeet has since published two more books by Fetzer, which “have done very well for us by our modest standards,” Steele said. “In that sense, I believe it has been a good decision.” Steele said he personally agrees with the commission’s lone gunman theory but that has not kept him from publishing alternative theories “because we are an open court and believe that competing views should be ventilated.”<sup>14</sup>

Small, independent publishers have stepped into the breach “for the publishing industry not doing its job,” said Kris Millegan, a sixty-eight-year-old musician turned publisher who is founder and owner of TrineDay in Walterville, Oregon. “We follow the Jeffersonian model of publishing all points of view in the interest of public dialogue.

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13. David Steele, interview by author, April 8, 2014.

14. Ibid.

[Among corporate publishers], we have what I consider a propaganda model, where only those in power get to voice their views.”<sup>15</sup>

Millegan said he borrowed \$5,000 and launched TrineDay in 2001 after several of his friends were frustrated in getting books published by the mainstream industry, including Daniel Marvin, a former Green Beret captain who led a detachment of Special Forces on covert missions in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. In 2003, TrineDay published Marvin’s *Expendable Elite: One Soldier’s Journey into Covert Warfare*, a memoir that Millegan said documents the team’s CIA-sponsored assassination attempt on Cambodian Crown Prince Norodum Sihanouk in 1966. Members of the Special Forces Association sued TrineDay for libel and slander in 2004 in an effort, Millegan said, to keep the book off the market and to ruin TrineDay financially. TrineDay successfully fended off the suit in federal court in 2013, but at a cost of \$150,000 in legal fees, Millegan said.<sup>16</sup>

“We stood up for our Constitution and, basically, people started throwing books at me” that they could not get published by larger commercial houses, he said. Among them were Saint John Hunt, son of CIA operative and Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt, as well as a key witness to the JFK assassination, James Tague, who was wounded by curb fragments from a shot that missed Kennedy’s limousine. The Warren Commission never called Tague as a witness and was going to conclude that Oswald’s three shots hit Kennedy twice and Texas Gov. John Connally once until Tague contacted Jim Lehrer,

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15. Kris Millegan, interview by author, May 23, 2014.

16. Millegan interview; and *Tuttle v. Marvin*, No. 204094818 (filed in U.S. District Court in South Carolina, Charleston Division, 2004)

then a reporter for *The Dallas Times Herald*, who wrote a story about the missed shot.<sup>17</sup> Tague's minor facial wound forced the Warren Commission to adopt a Single Bullet Theory in order to explain how, with just three shots, Oswald could have struck Kennedy twice and inflicted wounds on both Connally and Tague.<sup>18</sup>

Tague's book, *LBJ and the Kennedy Killing*, was published by TrineDay in 2013. "This man's testimony totally changed the Warren Commission [report] and his book had to come out from me—a stupid little hippie out in Oregon. It is ridiculous," Millegan said. "The New York publishing industry is part of the control mechanism."<sup>19</sup>

Textual analyses of news magazine articles and TV news transcripts from 1988 to 2013 also found a decided bias toward the Warren Report. A search using the keywords "Kennedy and assassination and conspiracy" was conducted for the nation's three major news magazines—*Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*—on both LexisNexis Academic and Academic Search Complete. Nine articles and columns were found from 1988 to 2013, six of which were pro-Warren (66 percent), two anti-Warren (22 percent) and one mixed (11 percent). One of the two anti-Warren articles—a 2013

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17. Jason Sickles, "James Teague, Key JFK Assassination Witness, Dies," *Yahoo News*, March 1, 2014, <http://news.yahoo.com/james-tague-key-jfk-assassination-witness-dies-175758762.html>; and *James T. Tague* website, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://jtague.com>, accessed May 24, 2014.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Millegan interview.

interview with filmmaker Oliver Stone—was relegated to *Time*'s website and did not appear in print.<sup>20</sup> (See Appendix E.)

Finally, a similar search was done on LexisNexis Academic of TV news transcripts from 1988 to 2013. The search required a two-step process to eliminate promotional on-air references to JFK assassination stories. A headline search of the keywords "Kennedy or JFK and assassination" was conducted first. The results were then refined by adding the word "conspiracy" to a search of all text. Sources for each broadcast, including reporters who expressed their own opinions on the topic, were categorized as pro-Warren, anti-Warren or mixed based on their on-air comments and/or history of publication. The 101 TV broadcasts related to JFK assassination theories aired the views of 154 pro-Warren sources versus 84 anti-Warren sources, for a ratio of nearly two to one (1.8). (See Appendix F.)

CNBC by far had the highest ratio of pro-Warren to anti-Warren sources, seven to one, but produced only three newscasts on the subject during the twenty-five-year period under study. The pro- to anti-Warren ratios for the other networks ranged from a low of 1.2 for CNN to a high of 2.6 for ABC. CNN also proved to be the least biased network in another category—none of its reporters, as opposed to its sources, expressed a pro-Warren opinion during the network's thirty newscasts on assassination theories. (Fox reporters likewise remained neutral, but the network aired only three newscasts on the topic.)

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20. Jack Dickey, "Interview: Oliver Stone Keeps Rolling," *Time.com*, November 15, 2013, Academic Search Complete.



By comparison, the “responsible” TV media had difficulty maintaining their neutrality on assassination theories. CBS reporters expressed ten pro-Warren opinions during thirty-three newscasts; ABC reporters tallied seven during fourteen newscasts; and NBC reporters lapsed twice in sixteen newscasts. In all, TV journalists expressed twenty pro-Warren opinions in one-hundred-and-one broadcasts. None expressed an anti-Warren opinion.

The tallies clearly show that the nation's mainstream media have developed a consensus—or one might also say bias—in favor of the findings of the Warren Report. But that comes as no surprise to authors whose books question the Warren Commission findings, most of whom say the mainstream media have ignored, panned, and ridiculed their work and questioned their character and motives.

James Fetzer, a JFK researcher and professor of philosophy at the University Wisconsin, pointed out the contrast in the media treatment of two important press conferences in 1992, one that endorsed the Warren Commission’s medical evidence and another that found evidence that the official autopsy X-rays had been altered. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* announced at a May 19 press conference the publication of an article that claimed to have resolved the inconsistencies surrounding the president’s autopsy, including the location and direction of his wounds, based on interviews with two autopsy physicians at Bethesda and other physicians at Parkland who had seen the president’s body earlier in the day. The *JAMA* article concluded that JFK had been shot twice from above and behind, in line with the Warren Commission findings. The press conference and article received widespread national media attention, including a front page story in the *New York Times* and a *Times* editorial the next day

arguing that *JAMA* had presented “irrefutable proof” of the Warren Report’s accuracy.<sup>21</sup> At the press conference, *JAMA* Editor-in-Chief George Lundberg singled out for attack the 1990 book, *Trauma Room One*, by Dr. Charles Crenshaw, an attending physician at Parkland who has consistently maintained that he saw an entry wound to Kennedy’s throat and an exit blow-out at the back of his head. Lundberg called Crenshaw’s book a “sad fabrication based on unsubstantiated allegations” and characterized the motives of Crenshaw and other conspiracy theorists as “paranoia, desire for personal recognition and public visibility, and profit.”<sup>22</sup> Crenshaw sued Lundberg and *JAMA* for slander and settled out of court for \$213,000.<sup>23</sup> Lundberg was fired in 1999 as *JAMA*’s editor-in-chief for timing the release of a journal article about college students’ perceptions of what constitutes having sex to strengthen the impeachment hearings against President Bill Clinton, whose definition of sex with White House intern Monica Lewinsky had been a focus of the hearings.<sup>24</sup>

Fetzer held his own press conference in New York on November 18, 1993, to publicize the findings of a panel of national experts he had assembled to examine the

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21. James H. Fetzer, “Prologue: The Death of JFK,” in *Assassination Science: Experts Speak Out on the Death of JFK*, ed. James H. Fetzer (Chicago: Catfeet Press, 1998), 6-7.

22. D. Bradley Kizzia, “On the Trail of the Character Assassins,” in *Assassination Science*, 67.

23. *Ibid.*, 61-83; and *Crenshaw v. Sutherland*, U.S. Dist., LEXIS 19610 (1993).

24. Suzanne W. Fletcher and Robert H. Fletcher, “Medical Editors, Journal Owners, and the Sacking of George Lundberg,” *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 14, no. 3 (1999): 200-2, MD<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1496545/>.

forensics and medical evidence in the JFK assassination. The strongest finding against the Warren Report was the discovery by physicist and radiologist David Mantik that the Kennedy autopsy X-rays had been altered to hide the massive blow-out at the back of his head and to introduce a 6.5-millimeter metal object that makes it appear as though Kennedy's skull had been pierced from behind by a bullet the same caliber as that shot by Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle.<sup>25</sup> The press conference was sparsely attended by U.S. media and garnered only two sentences from CNN headline news the next morning.<sup>26</sup> "What needs to be understood is that there is a very active disinformation community [supporting the Warren Report] that appears to be rooted in the CIA," Fetzer said. "They are looking to eliminate and control information that contradicts the official version of a lone gunman getting off three lucky shots."<sup>27</sup>

Scott said his 1993 book, *Deep Politics and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, "got the treatment I had expected from the media," especially since it was released at the same time as Gerald Posner's much-heralded defense of the Warren Commission, *Case Closed*, which was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize.<sup>28</sup> In a joint *Washington Post* review with Posner's book and Gaeton Fonzi's *The Last Investigation*, reviewer Jeffrey A. Frank dismissed Scott's book in the final eight sentences of the

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25. Mantik, "The JFK Assassination: Cause for Doubt," in *Assassination Science*, 124.

26. Fetzer, Prologue, *Assassination Science*, 17.

27. James H. Fetzer, interview by author, April 2, 2014.

28. "1994 Finalists," *The Pulitzer Prizes* website, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/1994>.

review, concluding that “ultimately, Scott appears to go around the bend.”<sup>29</sup> In addition to his being characterized as “a nut case” in the mainstream media, Scott said, reviewers in academic journals attacked the University of California Press “four or five times for publishing my book” as a sign of “the scandalous decline of UC Press.”<sup>30</sup>

For his book *Mary’s Mosaic*, about the mysteries surrounding the 1964 murder of JFK mistress Mary Pinchot Meyer on a secluded canal towpath in Georgetown, JFK researcher Peter Janney mounted his own expensive publicity campaign with disappointing results. The book failed to get a mention from either *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* even though (or perhaps because) Janney presents strong evidence that *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee helped the CIA confiscate Meyer’s personal diary soon after her death.<sup>31</sup> Bradlee was married to Meyer’s sister, Toni, at the time and was also part of the CIA’s Operation Mockingbird, which recruited prominent journalists to promote the agency’s views.<sup>32</sup> “Not one mainstream media outlet would touch [the book],” Janney said. “All the press I got was in the alternative media.”<sup>33</sup>

A textual analysis of media content shows that journalists continue to marginalize opponents of the Warren Commission by a variety of fallacious means, including *ad*

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29. Jeffrey A. Frank, “Who Shot JFK? The 30-Year Mystery,” *The Washington Post*, October 31, 1993, LexisNexis Academic.

30. Peter Dale Scott, interview by author, April 19, 2014.

31. Peter Janney, interview by author, April 4, 2014.

32. John Simkin, “Operation Mockingbird,” *Spartacus Educational* website, accessed May 27, 20, <http://spartacus-educational.com/JFKmockingbird.html>.

33. Janney interview.

*hominem* attacks, loaded words and broad-brush criticisms. Just a month before the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination in 2013, *New York Times* Executive Editor Jill Abramson wrote in an editorial:

The historical consensus seems to have settled on Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone assassin, but conspiracy speculation abounds—involving Johnson, the C.I.A., the mob, Fidel Castro or a baroque combination of all of them. Many of the theories have been circulating for decades and have now found new life on the Internet, in websites febrile with unfiltered and at times unhinged musings.<sup>34</sup>

In a *Washington Post* review of historian Larry J. Sabato's book *The Kennedy Half Century*,<sup>35</sup> released in 2013, David Greenberg chided Sabato for having devoted several chapters to the JFK conspiracy debate:

While the book's first section is perfunctory, the second part, which deals with the assassination, is somewhat wearying and likely to interest only those hard-core buffs—I realize there are many—who wallow in outraged speculation about who was behind Kennedy's murder.<sup>36</sup>

The nation's major news magazines have been no less wedded to the simplicity of the Warren Report and no less fierce in attacking its critics. *Newsweek* in 1998 called the

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34. Abramson, "The Elusive President."

35. Larry J. Sabato, *The Kennedy Half Century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

36. David Greenberg, "Every President Wants That JFK Magic," review of *The Kennedy Half Century*, by Larry J. Sabato, *The Washington Post*, October 27, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

report “the official version of what happened in Dallas on November 22, 1963,” slighting the “official” report issued in 1979 by the House Select Committee on Assassinations that criticized the work of the Warren Commission.<sup>37</sup> In a 1991 review of Oliver Stone’s *JFK*, *Newsweek* savaged the film as “a piece of propaganda for a huge conspiracy theory of the Kennedy murder” while defending the Warren Commission as “the imperfect but painstaking government investigation that concluded that Oswald murdered Kennedy acting on his own.”<sup>38</sup>

Not to be outdone, a *U.S. News* cover story in 1993 blamed conspiracy “hobbyists” and “profiteers” for destroying the nation’s faith in the Warren Report, and, ultimately, in government itself. “Fully seven out of ten American think a nameless, craftily concealed conspiracy did Kennedy in—and why would not they? For three decades, harum-scarum conspiracy theories have come not as single spies but in battalions, marching at us out of 200 books and a Hollywood blockbuster.”<sup>39</sup> And while *Time* has been the most restrained among the three major news magazines in its criticism of “conspiracy theorists,” its fiftieth anniversary coverage of the assassination profiled

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37. David Gates, “The Kennedy Conundrum,” *Newsweek*, November 28, 1988, LexisNexis Academic.

38. Kenneth Auchincloss, “Twisted History,” *Newsweek*, December 23, 1991, Academic Search Complete.

39. Gerald Parshall, “The Man with the Deadly Smirk,” *U.S. News and World Report*, August 30, 1993, Academic Search Complete.

one of the chief defenders of the Warren Commission, historian John McAdams, under the headline “Debunker among the Buffs.”<sup>40</sup>

Of the nine articles in major news magazines devoted to JFK assassination theories since 1988, one was an interview with anti-Warren filmmaker Oliver Stone and the second a column by anti-Warren journalist, David Talbot, whose views were safely juxtaposed in the same *Time* article with pro-Warren author Vincent J. Bugliosi.<sup>41</sup> A single news magazine article, appearing in *Time* on the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination in 2013, somehow managed to remain neutral in the debate, declaring the mystery of JFK’s murder forever insoluble.<sup>42</sup>

Book reviews in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have overwhelmingly defended the conclusions of the Warren Report against alternative assassination theories. The reviewers often resorted to broad criticism of conspiracy researchers as paranoid, obsessed, or just plain mercenary. In a 2007 *Washington Post* review of Vincent Bugliosi’s pro-Warren *Reclaiming History*, Alan Wolfe wrote that “Bugliosi is right that this case is, and ought to be, closed. And I share his distaste for the wild finger-pointing and often paranoid reasoning of the Warren Report’s critics, from the overweening New York State Assemblyman Mark Lane in the 1960s to the

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40. Jack Dickey, “Debunker among the Buffs,” *Time*, November 25, 2013, Academic Search Complete.

41. David Talbot, “The Assassination: Was It a Conspiracy?: Yes,” *Time*, July 2, 2007, Academic Search Complete.

42. David Von Drehle, “Broken Trust,” *Time*, November 25, 2013, Academic Search Complete.

irresponsible filmmaker Oliver Stone in the 1990s.”<sup>43</sup> In another largely positive review of Bugliosi’s book for the *New York Times*, Bryan Burrough told readers to “go ahead and buy this book if you feel the need to poke the conspiracy-mongers in the eye.”<sup>44</sup>

Bugliosi got a further rave from historian Tim Naftali as part of a scathing but not very detailed review in the *Washington Post* of David Kaiser’s *The Road to Dallas*. Kaiser’s argument that Oswald may have led a double life as a Castro supporter while working for either the Mafia or the CIA was dismissed simply as “manic and unreadable.”<sup>45</sup> Naftali went on to say that:

Kaiser borrows from Jim Garrison’s hoary theories of the role of the right-wing New Orleans demimonde in recruiting Oswald and adds touches of the Mafia-did-it theory to explain why Jack Ruby silenced Oswald.

Readers interested in why this concoction of hearsay and irrelevancies does not add up cannot do better than to read Vincent Bugliosi’s encyclopedic *Reclaiming History: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy* or Max Holland’s extensive work on the subject.<sup>46</sup>

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43. Alan Wolfe, “Goodbye, Grassy Knoll,” review of *Reclaiming History*, by Vincent Bugliosi, *The Washington Post*, May 27, 2007, LexisNexis Academic.

44. Bryan Burrough, “Conspiracy . . . or Not?” *The New York Times*, May 20, 2007, LexisNexis Academic.

45. Tim Naftali, “A Complex Journey to the Grassy Knoll,” review of *The Road to Dallas*, by David Kaiser, *The Washington Post*, January 15, 2009, LexisNexis Academic.

46. Ibid.



In one of two *New York Times* reviews of Norman Mailer's pro-Warren *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery*, Thomas Powers lauded Mailer for delving into Oswald's psyche and compared his work favorably to Priscilla Johnson McMillan's book, *Marina and Lee*, the latter having "made no deep impression on the public, which was unready to recognize, much less accept, Oswald's humanity, while the professional assassination scholars darkly suspected that Marina (and perhaps even Ms. McMillan!) might be part of the plot."<sup>47</sup>

Reviewers saved their choicest words for conspiracy researchers in their reviews of Gerald Posner's defense of the Warren Commission, *Case Closed*, released before the thirtieth anniversary of the assassination in 1993. In his *New York Times* review, Geoffrey C. Ward praised Posner for his detailed footnotes:

He offers a devastating record of the lengths to which sensationalists have gone to sow suspicion and sell books—omitting inconvenient facts, misrepresenting testimony, favoring stories grown more gaudy with the passing years over those first told when details were fresh, libeling the safely dead. Shame is out of fashion these days, but perhaps it's not too much to hope that one or two of the authors Mr. Posner exposes—along with the editors and publishers who have profited from peddling their

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47. Thomas Powers, "The Mind of the Assassin," review of *Oswald's Tale*, by Norman Mailer, *The New York Times*, April 30, 1995, LexisNexis Academic.

irresponsible wares—might suffer at least a momentary pang of embarrassment.<sup>48</sup>

Veteran *New York Times* book reviewer Christopher Lehmann-Haupt credited Posner with refuting “the mounting welter of conspiracy claims . . . involving the Federal Government, the K.G.B., the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cuba, opponents of Fidel Castro’s Cuba, a cabal of Corsican assassins and, of recently fashionable vintage, members of organized crime.”<sup>49</sup>

Rather than selecting individual books for more detailed reviews, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* collectively dismissed many of the anti-Warren books in overview columns, often in tongue-in-check treatments. In his column “All the President’s Triggermen,” published for the thirtieth anniversary of the assassination, *Washington Post* staff writer Charles Paul Freund compiled a laundry list of books that speculate on different gunmen who may have been involved in the assassination, starting with the wackiest theories that Oswald was robotized by the Soviets and Jack Ruby was hypnotized.<sup>50</sup> For the fiftieth anniversary, *New York Times* writer Gregory Cowles slammed the anti-Warren best seller *They Killed Our President* by sneeringly referring to its co-author as “the renowned historian and investigative journalist Jesse (the Body)

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48. Geoffrey C. Ward, “The Most Durable Assassination Theory: Oswald Did It Alone,” review of *Case Closed*, by Gerald Posner, *The New York Times*, November 21, 1993, LexisNexis Academic.

49. Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, “Books of The Times: Kennedy Assassination Answers,” review of *Case Closed*, by Gerald Posner, *The New York Times*, September 9, 1993, LexisNexis Academic.

50. Charles Paul Freund, “All the President’s Triggermen,” *The Washington Post*, November 22, 1992, LexisNexis Academic.

Ventura.”<sup>51</sup> Cowles pitted Ventura’s book against Bill O’Reilly’s pro-Warren best seller, *Killing Kennedy*, and concluded that he was amazed that “O’Reilly has found a debate where he looks like the non-bullying, rational party.”<sup>52</sup>

In a 1992 *Washington Post* column, “Historians, Buffs and Crackpots,” freelance writer John G. Leyden burned through nearly thirty years of assassination books, writing off whole categories of them in a sentence or two: “Most of the contemporary crop of assassination writers have a more global view and tend to mix and match their conspiracy theories according to the latest fashion. The only consistent element throughout is the alleged involvement of the CIA.”<sup>53</sup> Leyden reserved a special venom for David Lifton, author of *Best Evidence* “as the most imaginative among the current crop, although some might argue that the plot for *Best Evidence* was borrowed from the cult film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.”<sup>54</sup> He continued.

Rather than arguing that the official autopsy photos and X-rays are fakes, as others have done, Lifton alleges that Kennedy’s body was taken from Air Force One, surgically altered to make it look as if the fatal shots came from the rear, and then put back in the casket at Bethesda Naval Hospital before the autopsy began. However, in 1988, when the PBS *Nova* series

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51. Gregory Cowles, “Inside the List,” *The New York Times*, October 27, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

52. *Ibid.*

53. John G. Leyden, “Historians, Buffs and Crackpots,” *The Washington Post*, January 26, 1992, LexisNexis Academic.

54. *Ibid.*

brought four of the doctors who treated Kennedy at Dallas Parkland Hospital to Washington to view the official X-rays and autopsy photos, none could find any evidence of altered wounds.<sup>55</sup>

But a careful viewing of the *Nova* broadcast shows that the interviews with the four Parkland physicians were far from conclusive.<sup>56</sup> Prior to viewing the autopsy photos (the physicians didn't view the X-rays, as Leyden claims), all four doctors described a wound farther to the rear of the head than that shown in the autopsy photos. But they emerged after their private viewings of the photos to say they saw no discrepancies with their memory of the wound. Why? Perhaps because they were too embarrassed to admit in front of a national TV audience that they had made a mistake at Parkland. Or perhaps because they didn't want to appear skeptical or belligerent by protesting that the photos had been altered. Nothing intimidates a candid answer like the intruding lens of a TV camera.

Regardless of the candor of the interviews, the program failed to make its case about the location of JFK's head wound. Host Walter Cronkite pointed out that six physicians at Parkland Hospital, including a neurosurgeon, testified to the Warren Commission that they had been able to see Kennedy's damaged cerebellum, located at the rear and base of the brain, through the head wound. The autopsy photos show no evidence of a wound anywhere near that part of the brain. The two Parkland physicians

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55. Ibid.

56. "Who Shot President Kennedy?" *Nova*, PBS, November 15, 1988, <http://dvp-potpourri.blogspot.com/2010/02/who-shot-president-kennedy.html>.

interviewed for the show admitted they must have made a mistake in identifying the type of brain matter. But that still leaves four other physicians, including a neurosurgeon highly trained in observing and treating all parts of the brain, who testified that they saw Kennedy's cerebellum.

Joel Achenbach's 1992 *New York Times* column, "JFK Conspiracy: Myth vs. Facts," managed to take the numerous doubts about the lone gunman theory and, in flippant style, reduce them to absurdities.

Like, the brain disappeared after the autopsy! Doesn't that mean something? Maybe. But while a brain itself is surely evidence, the fact that a brain is missing isn't necessarily evidence of anything.

Conspiracy theorists exploit doubt. Like, how could Oswald have fired three shots from a bolt-action rifle in merely 5.6 seconds, the interval between Kennedy's wounds? One possible answer: "Easily." The gun requires about 2.3 seconds between shots. Figure it out. Boom, reload, boom, reload, boom. You need 4.6 seconds. Amazingly, this is still cited as evidence of a conspiracy.

Then there's the "single-bullet theory," another doubt-sower. The Warren Commission said there was "persuasive evidence" that a single bullet caused the nonfatal neck wound to Kennedy and the wounds to Gov. John Connally. But the Zapruder film seems to contradict the idea, and Connally says he was hit by a separate shot. What does this mean? Maybe it means that the single-bullet theory is wrong. But the flimsiness of the official theory is not itself evidence of a second gunman. Pony up

an actual name, an actual gun, an actual bullet, an actual eyewitness, then we'll talk.<sup>57</sup>

The flipside of Achenbach's argument, of course, is that conspiracy theories are also hard to prove. Conspirators do not generally leave evidence, or "doubt-sowers," around to implicate themselves.

TV coverage of JFK assassination theories, especially by the "responsible" journalists at ABC, CBS, and NBC, also has skewed in favor of the Warren Report. CBS anchor Bob Schieffer has been one of the most vocal on-air Warren supporters, expressing his views during four separate newscasts since 1988. As the host of a fiftieth anniversary special on *Face the Nation*, Schieffer led into a question asking his panelists why 61 percent of Americans still think that Oswald had not acted alone by first declaring, "I think the evidence is overwhelming that he did."<sup>58</sup>

A month earlier, while introducing JFK author Philip Shenon for a segment on *CBS This Morning*, Schieffer lauded Shenon for having done "a magnificent job of . . . connecting the dots of how the Warren Commission investigated this thing." He then added, "And you know, he doesn't dispute their conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman and he again underlines what the rest of us have been saying for years. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a conspiracy or anybody else was

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57. Joel Achenbach, "JFK Conspiracy: Myth vs. the Facts," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1992, LexisNexis Academic.

58. "A Special on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy," *CBS Face the Nation*, November 17, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

involved.”<sup>59</sup> *CBS Early Show* co-host Harry Smith also has declared his pro-Warren bias on air, signing off on a fortieth anniversary segment by telling viewers, “Did Oswald act alone? I think so.”<sup>60</sup>

Regardless of what TV journalists may tell them, the majority of Americans have never believed the Warren Report, although the lone gunman theory is slowly regaining favor. Skepticism reached its highest point in 1985, when 80 percent of Americans did not believe the Warren Commission. Surveys show the margin has been declining somewhat ever since.<sup>61</sup> A 2003 Gallup poll found that 75 percent of Americans felt there was a conspiracy.<sup>62</sup> By 2013, in an Associated Press-GfK poll, the portion of Americans who believed in multiple assassins had slipped to 59 percent while 24 percent thought Oswald had acted alone. That was the highest percentage of Warren Commission supporters since the mid-1960s, when 36 percent of Americans supported the lone gunman theory.<sup>63</sup>

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59. “Talking About a New Book on the Kennedy Assassination,” *CBS This Morning*, October 25, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

60. “Overview of Investigation into Conspiracy Theory about JFK’s Death,” *CBS The Early Show*, November 21, 2003, LexisNexis Academic.

61. *Ibid.*, 3.

62 Lydia Saad, “Americans: Kennedy Assassination a Conspiracy,” November 21, 2003, *Gallup* website, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/9751/americans-kennedy-assassination-conspiracy.aspx>.

63. Associated Press, “Poll: Belief in JFK Conspiracy Slipping Slightly,” *USA Today* website, May 11, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/05/11/poll-jfk-conspiracy/2152665/>.

Pro-Warren journalists and researchers often resort to a mantra in explaining the disconnect between how the mainstream media and the majority of Americans view the JFK assassination. The mantra argues that Americans are psychologically resistant to believing that a loser like Oswald could have single-handedly vanquished a president of such charismatic and mythical proportions as JFK. The theory that Americans will not accept that a peasant brought down the King of Camelot has been cited twenty times by sources and reporters in the hundred and one TV newscasts on assassination theories over the last quarter century. An ABC special report on the fortieth anniversary recited the mantra four separate times during an hour-long broadcast. “In all these years,” ABC anchor Peter Jennings said in a voiceover, “there hasn’t been a single piece of credible evidence to prove a conspiracy.” So why do so many Americans refuse to believe the Warren Report? Historian Robert Dallek answered, “Because I think it’s very difficult for them to accept the idea that someone as inconsequential as Oswald could have killed someone as consequential as Kennedy.” And if the audience missed the point after three repetitions of the same idea, Jennings concluded the broadcast by quoting William Manchester, author of *Death of a President*: “If you put the murdered president on one side of the scale and that wretched waif, Oswald ... on the other, it doesn’t balance. You want to add some weight to Oswald. It would invest the president’s death with meaning. Kennedy would have died for something. ... A conspiracy would do the job nicely.”<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, anti-Warren sources have never once been given the opportunity to respond to the mantra on air.

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64. “Special Report,” ABC News, November 20, 2003, LexisNexis Academic.



The mantra, indeed, does raise an important question: Why is there such a wide and obstinate divergence of opinion on the Warren Report between the mainstream media and the American public? Perhaps even more curious, why is the same gap widening between the mainstream media and the majority of JFK researchers? The next chapter will examine some of the possible answers.

### Chapter 3: Consensus through Propaganda and Fear

The mainstream media's support for the Warren Report—despite growing evidence of its numerous omissions, misdirections, and unanswered questions—would come as no surprise to Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, authors of *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. In their book, they argue that “the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them.”<sup>1</sup> Normally, they noted, such control is not exercised through direct intervention, “but by the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors’ and working journalists’ internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institution’s policies.”<sup>2</sup> The propaganda model includes structural factors that also influence news coverage, including ownership and control, funding from major advertisers, and “mutual interests and relationships between the media and those who make the news and have the power to define it and explain what it means.”

If all else fails, Herman and Chomsky argue, powerful interests can use “flak” to discipline and intimidate journalists who dare to stray from the dominant ideology. Flak “may take the form of letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches and bills before Congress, and other modes of complaint, threat, and punitive action. It may

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1. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), xi.

2. Ibid.

be organized centrally or locally, or it may consist of the entirely independent actions of individuals. If flak is produced on a large scale, or by individuals or groups with substantial resources, it can be both uncomfortable and costly to the media.”<sup>3</sup>

Ties between the mainstream media and the American intelligence community stretch back to the early years of the Cold War. Alpha 66, a dangerous anti-Castro group that was violently anti-Kennedy in 1963, had the support of Henry Luce and his publishing empire at *Time-Life*.<sup>4</sup> *Life* reporters routinely accompanied Alpha 66 combatants in their attacks on Soviet targets in Cuba in order to publicize their successes.<sup>5</sup> Several JFK researchers, including former military intelligence officer John Newman, say there is evidence that Alpha 66 had backing and guidance from the CIA.<sup>6</sup>

Collaboration with intelligence officials did not stop with publishers. The Church Committee in 1976 found that the CIA had recruited and used hundreds of academics, editors, and reporters during the 1960s and 1970s. According to the committee’s report:

The Central Intelligence Agency is now using several hundred American academics, who in addition to providing leads and occasionally making introductions for intelligence purposes, occasionally write books and other

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3. Ibid, Kindle edition, Kindle locations 1811-1815.

4. Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 254.

5. Michael Benson, *Who’s Who in the JFK Assassination: An A-To-Z Encyclopedia* (Secaucus, N.J.: Carol Publishing Group, 1993), 5.

6. John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA: The Documented Truth about the Unknown Relationship between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), 110.

materials to be used for propaganda purposes abroad. . . . These academics are located in over one hundred American universities, colleges, and related institutions.

Prior to 1967, the Central Intelligence Agency sponsored, subsidized, or produced over 1,000 books. . . . For example, a book written for an English-speaking audience by one CIA operative was reviewed favorably by another CIA agent in the *New York Times*.

Until February 1976, when it announced a new policy toward U.S. media personnel, the CIA maintained covert relationships with about 50 American journalists or employees of U.S. media organizations. They are part of a network of several hundred foreign individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence foreign opinion through the use of covert propaganda.<sup>7</sup>

Investigative journalist Carl Bernstein, in an article published in *Rolling Stone* in 1977, found CIA documents showing that the agency and the House Select Committee on Assassinations had hidden the full extent of the CIA's involvement with major media during the Cold War, and perhaps beyond. As part of the CIA's Operation Mockingbird, more than four hundred American journalists, including Pulitzer Prize winners, "provided a full range of clandestine services—from simple intelligence gathering to serving as go-

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7. Church Committee, *Final Report: Book V - The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies*, S. REP. NO. 94-755, at 452, 453-54, 192 (1976), <https://archive.org/stream/finalreportofsel01unit#page/n3/mode/2up>.

betweens with spies in Communist countries. Reporters shared their notebooks with the CIA. Editors shared their staffs. . . . In many instances, CIA documents show, journalists were engaged to perform tasks for the CIA with the consent of the managements of America's leading news organizations.”<sup>8</sup> In return, journalists were often supplied with classified documents, as long as they guaranteed the agency's spin on the news.<sup>9</sup>

The list of news executives who collaborated with Operation Mockingbird reads like a Who's Who of “responsible” U.S. media. They included William Paley of CBS, Henry Luce of *Time-Life*, Arthur Hayes Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, Barry Bingham Sr. of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, Philip L. Graham and Alfred Friendly of *The Washington Post*, and James Copley of the Copley News Services. Among the more than twenty-five news organizations that cooperated with the CIA were ABC, NBC, the Associated Press, UPI, Reuters, Hearst Newspapers, Scripps-Howard, *Newsweek* magazine, the Mutual Broadcasting System, the *Miami Herald*, and the now-defunct *Saturday Evening Post* and *New York Herald-Tribune*. “By far the most valuable of these associations, according to CIA officials, have been with the *New York Times*, CBS and Time Inc.,” Bernstein wrote.<sup>10</sup>

Less is known about the CIA's inroads into the book publishing industry, but a well-documented example involves Cord Meyer, the head of the CIA's Operation

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8. Carl Bernstein, “The CIA and the Media,” *Rolling Stone*, October 20, 1977, <http://danwismar.com/uploads/Bernstein%20-%20CIA%20and%20Media.htm>.

9. John Simkin, *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (Spartacus Educational, 2010), Kindle Location 115781.

10. Bernstein, “The CIA and the Media.”

Mockingbird, who insisted on, and got, the right from publishing giant Harper and Row in 1972 to preview an upcoming book, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*.<sup>11</sup> Author Alfred McCoy had obtained on-the-record interviews with key figures in the heroin trade detailing how American intelligence had partnered with the drug trade going as far back as World War II.<sup>12</sup> McCoy's book was published mostly intact, in large part because of the public furor created by media coverage of the CIA's request for prior review.<sup>13</sup>

Mark Lane, author of the bestseller *Rush to Judgment* that generated the first widespread doubts about the Warren Report in 1966, obtained a series of CIA memos to its station chiefs detailing the agency's efforts to sway public opinion toward the official theory. One of those documents, titled "Countering Criticism of the Warren Report" and dated April 1, 1967, reads in part:

3. Action. We do not recommend that discussion of the assassination question be initiated where it is not already taking place. Where discussion is active, however, addresses are requested:
  - a. To discuss the publicity problem with liaison and friendly elite contacts (especially politicians and editors), pointing out that the Warren Commission made as thorough an investigation as humanly possible, that the charges of the critics are without serious foundation, and that further speculative discussion only plays into the hands of the opposition. Point

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11. Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991).

12. Peter Janney, *Mary's Mosaic* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2102), 195.

13. Ibid.

out also that parts of the conspiracy talk appear to be deliberately generated by Communist propagandists. Urge them to use their influence to discourage unfounded and irresponsible speculation.

b. To employ propaganda assets to answer and refute the attacks of the critics. Book reviews and feature articles are particularly appropriate for this purpose. . .<sup>14</sup>

One way journalists are pressured to close ranks around the government version of the JFK assassination is to label those opposed to the Warren Report as “conspiracy theorists” and “assassination buffs.” In doing so, the mainstream media sidestep the examination of the evidence and “jam” the machinery of public discourse, argue Ginna Husting and Martin Orr in “Dangerous Machinery,” a seminal paper that appeared in *Symbolic Interaction* in 2007.<sup>15</sup> The term “conspiracy theorist” reframes the debate by disparaging those with opposing views as unworthy of consideration while, at the same time, protecting mainstream views from closer examination. Husting and Orr say the label can call into question a critic or claim in three different ways. First, the label may be directly linked to pejorative words like those cited in book reviews in the previous chapter — “unhinged musings,” “hard-core buffs,” “conspiracy-mongers,” “mounting

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14. Mark Lane, *Last Word: My Indictment of the CIA in the Murder of JFK* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012), 115; and National Archives and Records Administration, “Countering Criticism of the Warren Report,” Record Number: 104-10009-10022, <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=53510andrelPageId=2>.

15. Ginna Husting and Martin Orr, “Dangerous Machinery,” *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 30, no. 2 (2007): 127-50.

welter of conspiracy claims,” and “outraged speculation.” Secondly, “it can be attached to a caricature or misstated claim,” as in Charles Paul Freund’s “All the President’s Triggermen” parody column in the *Washington Post*.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Husting and Orr write, “the label can challenge a claim by equating it with another taken or implied to be patently absurd,” as in Thomas Powers’ parenthetical comment in his review of Norman Mailer’s *Oswald’s Tale* that “perhaps even [JFK researcher] Ms. [Priscilla] McMillan!” is part of the over-up plot.<sup>17</sup> “In all three of these ways, ‘conspiracy theorist’ allows a respondent to shift concern from the truth or falsehood of a claim onto the character, quality, or competence of the claim or claimant.”<sup>18</sup>

In June of 1999, when newly released documents from the National Archives revealed that JFK’s original bronze coffin had been drilled with holes and dumped secretly at sea in 1965,<sup>19</sup> CBS reporter Eric Engberg saw nothing suspicious about the government’s action, which the documents said had been done to prevent “morbid curiosity” among the public. Instead, Engberg’s chief concern was that “all this only fuels the JFK conspiracy industry. And it is puzzling the new documents don’t show anyone

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16. Charles Paul Freund, “All the President’s Triggermen,” *The Washington Post*, November 22, 1992, LexisNexis Academic.

17. Thomas Powers, “The Mind of the Assassin,” review of *Oswald’s Tale*, by Norman Mailer, *The New York Times*, April 30, 1995, LexisNexis Academic.

18. Husting and Orr, “Dangerous Machinery,” 133-4.

19. National Archives and Records Administration, “Documents Relating to the Disposition of the Kennedy Ceremonial Casket,” <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?mode=searchResultandabsPageId=70603>.



worrying that a secret coffin-sinking might raise just the kind of questions the government was trying to put down.”<sup>20</sup> Earlier on the same day on the *CBS Morning News*, reporter Bob Orr also fretted that "the latest revelation is sure to rekindle conspiracy theories. Assassination buffs are anxious to get a hold of the latest Kennedy documents."<sup>21</sup>

Never mind that several JFK researchers, beginning with *Best Evidence* author David Lifton in 1980, have uncovered evidence that the president's wounds were secretly altered before the official autopsy was performed at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Witnesses have testified the body was delivered to naval physicians in a different coffin than the one that left Parkland Hospital in Dallas on the day of the assassination.<sup>22</sup> The original coffin had been significantly damaged, according to JFK historian William Manchester, one of the few people who had viewed the bronze casket prior to its disposal.<sup>23</sup>

On the day of the document's release, Lifton was interviewed on *CBS This Morning* and lamented the loss of one more key piece of evidence in the case. "What we're dealing with here is the issue of whether the body was removed from this coffin.

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20. "Documents Release Show What Happened to JFK's Original Bronze Casket," *CBS Evening News*, June 1, 1999, LexisNexis Academic.

21. "Government Releases New Information about Events Surrounding the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy," *CBS Morning News*, June 1, 1999, LexisNexis Academic.

22. "David Lifton, Author, *Best Evidence*, Discusses the Importance of the Newly Released Documents Related to the Assassination of President Kennedy," *CBS This Morning*, June 1, 1999, LexisNexis Academic.

23. *Ibid.*

That's what makes the damage to the coffin relevant. And the fact that this coffin was dumped secretly in the ocean thirty-four years ago is really bizarre."<sup>24</sup> Casting doubt on the government's explanation, Lifton pointed out that graphic materials held by the National Archives, including Kennedy's blood-soaked clothing and other items of potential "morbid" public interest, have never been available for public viewing. The coffin could have been treated in the same manner.

The fear of being labeled a conspiracy theorist can lead some researchers and journalists to hedge their bets in both directions. After more than a hundred pages in which he weighs the latest evidence for and against a conspiracy in his book *The Kennedy Half Century*, historian Larry J. Sabato concludes in dramatic but waffling fashion that “whether one embraces a conspiracy theory or prefers the lone gunman explanation, there is simply no question that—at the very least—negligence and deception among some officials contributed to the death of a president and the incomplete public explanation of his demise that followed. This is no minor matter, but some have treated it like a typographical error, to be overlooked without full accountability.”<sup>25</sup>

As a frequent guest historian on TV news shows, Sabato has played both sides of the issue. On an October 14, 2013, segment of *CBS This Morning*, he expressed numerous doubts about the Warren Report, including this:

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24. Ibid.

25. Larry J. Sabato, *The Kennedy Half Century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 253.

When you really get into the details, it is amazing how many pieces don't fit. Just to cite one, right after the President was shot, some Dallas policemen ran up the Grassy Knoll and they encountered people who had Secret Service credentials. They let them go. They had their guns drawn. They let them go. You know what we found out since? There were no Secret Service agents in Dealey Plaza. They were all with the motorcade and they went with the motorcade to Parkland [Hospital].<sup>26</sup>

A month later, on CBS *Face the Nation*, Sabato made no mention of why the public might be skeptical of the Warren Report, and fell in line with pro-Warren news anchor Bob Schieffer by affirming the peasant versus king mantra:

People look at this as one of the most terrible things that had ever happened in American history; it was. It was so big, how could you balance it with a loser, a total loser, who had failed at everything, as Lee Harvey Oswald had? There had to be more meaning in it. And they tried to invest it with meaning by saying, it is the CIA, it is the anti-Castro Cubans, it is LBJ. It is this one. It is that one.<sup>27</sup>

The mainstream media have never labeled as “theorists” those researchers who have devoted themselves to framing and parsing the evidence to fit the needs of the

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26. “Larry Sabato Talks about His Book on the Kennedy Assassination,” CBS *This Morning*, October 14, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

27. “A Special on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy,” CBS *Face the Nation*, November 17, 2013, LexisNexis Academic.

Warren Report. Nor has the media accused them or their “industry” of being driven by fame or fortune, despite evidence in some cases to the contrary. Sales of Gerald Posner’s pro-Warren *Case Closed* were “boosted by a steady stream of publicity orchestrated by the indefatigable Harold M. Evans, president and publisher of Random House’s adult trade group,” noted Sarah Lyall in her column in the *New York Times*, adding that *Case Closed* “spent five weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list, reaching No. 8 before falling off.”<sup>28</sup>

A *Newsweek* cover story on Posner and *Case Closed* was hard-pressed to find enough superlatives to describe the book. “Brilliant,” “airtight,” and “unshakable,” the magazine said, arguing that it destroyed all the conspiracy theories “with impressive finality.”<sup>29</sup> More than any other single book about the assassination, *Case Closed* has garnered by far the most attention from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. A LexisNexis search of the two papers found thirty stories or references to Posner’s book since its release, many of them describing it as “definitive” or “the gold standard” for all JFK assassination research. (An interesting side note: *Case Closed* was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in history during a year in which the selection committee declined to choose a winner in that category, including Posner’s “brilliant” achievement.)<sup>30</sup> The

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28. Sarah Lyall, “Book Notes,” *The New York Times*, December 1, 1993, LexisNexis Academic.

29. William F. Powers, “The Kennedy Assassination: Last Word?” *The Washington Post*, August 24, 1993, LexisNexis Academic; and Lyall, “Book Notes,” December 1, 1993.

30. “1994 Winners and Finalists,” *The Pulitzer Prizes* website, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://www.pulitzer.org/awards/1994>.

second highest number of newspaper references, eight in all, went to another pro-Warren book, Vincent J. Bugliosi's *Reclaiming History*.

Most JFK researchers have been less impressed by *Case Closed*, including former military intelligence analyst John Newman, who called the media hype for the book a form of “collective insanity” since Posner claimed to have had the final word on the subject just months before the Assassinations Records Review Board began releasing millions of pages of formerly classified documents.<sup>31</sup> In a review for *The Southern Journal of History*, historian David Wrone argued that Posner's book is suffused “with a massive number of errors” and “asserts simple factual answers to explain complex problems that have plagued the subject for years. In the process [Posner] condemns all who do not agree with the official conclusions as theories driven by conjectures. At the same time, his book is so theory driven, so rife with speculation, and so frequently unable to conform his text with the factual content in his sources that it stands as one of the stellar instances of irresponsible publishing on the subject.”<sup>32</sup> JFK researcher Peter Dale Scott took Posner to task as well for stating that the psychiatrist for the Warren Commission and two Soviet psychiatrists had determined that Oswald was psychotic when, in fact, all three had concluded he was not.<sup>33</sup>

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31. Newman, *Oswald and the CIA*, 420.

32. David R. Wrone, “Review of Gerald Posner, *Case Closed*,” *The Journal of Southern History* 6 (1995): 186-88.

33. Scott, *Deep Politics*, xix.

JFK researcher Jim DiEugenio has perhaps been Posner's most aggressive critic, charging that Posner obtained CIA clearance to speak to sources no other researchers have had access to. DiEugenio also points out that Posner's editor at Random House, Robert Loomis, was once married to the personal secretary of James J. Angleton, head of counterintelligence at the CIA for twenty years and "also the man who many writers and researchers, like John Newman and Lisa Pease, believe was handling the Oswald file in the CIA."<sup>34</sup> Posner, who has written twenty-six books, was fired from *The Daily Beast* in 2010 for plagiarism.<sup>35</sup>

There is no question that sensationalized and misleading books and films about the Kennedy assassination have been issued for commercial gain—a list that contains both pro-Warren and anti-Warren titles. As Carol Publishing chief executive Paul Schragis told *Washington Post* reporter David Streitfeld not long after the release of Oliver Stone's film *JFK*:

"If we didn't have at least one JFK book, I don't think we'd be worthy of calling ourselves trade publishers."

What if you have two?

"It might mean you're not quite as serious," Schragis says with a laugh. Nevertheless, Carol acquired two weeks ago *Passport to*

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34. Jim DiEugenio, "How Gerald Posner Got Rich and Famous: Or, Bob Loomis and the Anti-Conspiracy Posse," *Citizens for Truth about the Kennedy Assassination* website, accessed March 17, 2014, [http://www.ctka.net/posner\\_jd4.html](http://www.ctka.net/posner_jd4.html).

35. Danny Shea, "Gerald Posner RESIGNS From *Daily Beast* over Plagiarism Scandal," *The Huffington Post*, April 13, 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/02/11/gerald-posner-resigns-fro\\_n\\_458169.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/02/11/gerald-posner-resigns-fro_n_458169.html).

*Assassination: The Never-Before-Told Story of Lee Harvey Oswald by the KGB Colonel Who Knew Him*. “There is a huge market for these books,” says Schragis. “That’s been proven as recently as a few months ago.”<sup>36</sup>

Nor can it be dismissed that some of the assassination books may have been written and published as part of a disinformation campaign to mislead the public and confuse the issues, a documented argument advanced by many JFK researchers, including Scott.<sup>37</sup> Disinformation is a common technique employed by intelligence agencies the world over. CIA documents released through the JFK Records Act show that the agency launched a disinformation campaign of its own soon after the Kennedy assassination in order to tie Oswald to Castro.<sup>38</sup> Within hours of the assassination, CIA officer George Joannides began working with Cuban exiles to brand Oswald as a Communist. By the night of the assassination, Oswald's alleged pro-Castro activism had hit the airwaves and, by morning, both *The Miami Herald* ("Oswald Tried to Spy on Anti-Castro Exile Group") and *The Washington Post* ("Castro Foe Details Infiltration Effort") ran stories to that effect.<sup>39</sup>

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36 David Streitfeld, “Book Report,” *The Washington Post*, June 13, 1993, Lexis Nexis Academic.

37. Scott, *Deep Politics*, xix; and *Church Committee Final Report*, 452, 453-54, 192, <https://archive.org/stream/finalreportofsel01unit#page/n3/mode/2up>.

38. Sabato, *Kennedy Half Century*, 180-1.

39. Jefferson Morley, "Revelation 19.63," *Miami New Times*, April 12, 2010, <http://www.miaminewtimes.com/2001-04-12/news/revelation-19-63/7/>; and Sabato, *Kennedy Half Century*, 182.

Twenty-five years later, Joannides was pulled out of retirement to act as the CIA liaison to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, despite a CIA agreement with the committee's chief counsel, Robert Blakey, that no one who had any connections to Oswald or activities related to the assassination would be part of the investigation.<sup>40</sup> The CIA withheld information from Blakey and the committee that Joannides had been the agency's handler in the early 1960s of a CIA-financed group of anti-Castro students in the U.S. known as the DRE (Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil).<sup>41</sup> Oswald had crossed paths with the militant right-wing group in New Orleans in the summer before the assassination. Days before his encounter with DRE, Oswald wrote a letter to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York, a pro-Castro group under the careful watch of the FBI, asking to start a chapter of the FPCC in New Orleans and boasting, falsely, that he had fought in the streets with anti-Castro activists. Several days later, Oswald did an about face and tried to ingratiate himself with the DRE by walking into a Canal Street store owned by the group's chief spokesman in New Orleans, Carlos Bringuier, and offering his services to train anti-Castro commandos.<sup>42</sup>

A week later, on August 9, 1963, Oswald began passing out pamphlets for the FPCC on Canal Street just blocks from Bringuier's store. When Bringuier and two other members of the DRE confronted Oswald about his duplicity and knocked the pamphlets

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40. Sabato, *Kennedy Half Century*, 182.

41. Ibid.

42. Jefferson Morley, *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 171.



out of his hands, Oswald dared them to punch him. A police officer happened on the scene and issued summonses, but a New Orleans police lieutenant later wrote in his report that he thought the fight was contrived: "[Oswald] seemed to have set them up, so to speak, to create an incident, but when the incident occurred he remained absolutely peaceful and gentle."<sup>43</sup>

The bizarre story does not end there. When Oswald and Bringuier appeared in court, local TV crews were there. Robert Stuckey, host of a local radio talk show and a friend of Bringuier, then invited the two apparent adversaries to engage in an on-air debate about Cuba. During the debate, Oswald revealed he had once lived in the Soviet Union. Bringuier followed up on the debate by releasing an open letter to the media, part of which called on Americans to write their congressmen "asking for a full investigation on Mr. Lee H. Oswald, a confessed 'Marxist.'"<sup>44</sup>

Joannides and other CIA officials involved in the post-assassination disinformation effort answered to the CIA's chief of counterintelligence, James J. Angleton, who himself had served as the CIA's liaison to the earlier Warren Commission investigation. Hundreds of the CIA's documents on Joannides' activities are still sealed and are the target of an eight-year-long legal battle by former *Washington Post* reporter and JFK researcher Jefferson Morley, who wrote the original story on Joannides and the DRE for the *Miami New Times* in 2001.<sup>45</sup> Both elite newspapers have ignored the

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43. Ibid., 172.

44. Ibid., 174.

45. Jefferson Morley, "Morley v. CIA: Why I Sued for JFK Assassination Records," *JFKFacts.org*, February 21, 2013,

progress of Morley’s lawsuit, although in 2009, *The New York Times* ran a page 11 story that managed to cast doubt on the importance of the suit while also pointing out the CIA’s resistance to opening the Joannides files. Under a headline that read “CIA Is Cagey about ’63 Files Tied to Oswald,” reporter Scott Shane wrote this bizarrely contorted lead: “Is the Central Intelligence Agency covering up some dark secret about the assassination of John F. Kennedy? Probably not. But you would not know it from the CIA’s behavior.”<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the suffused influences of the intelligence community, the mainstream media have also been known to bow to pressure from organized crime, one of the more frightening examples of “flak.” Scott noted that Random House, owned at the time by the Newhouse newspaper empire, published two of the books that have most kept the Warren report alive in the media—Posner’s *Case Closed* and Mailer’s *Oswald’s Tale*. In 1981, influenced by syndicate lawyer and close friend Roy Cohn, publisher S.I. Newhouse ordered a front-page retraction in Cleveland’s Newhouse paper of an accurate story detailing Jackie Presser’s criminal activities in the Teamsters and his role as an FBI informant.<sup>47</sup> Peter Dale Scott says it is little wonder then that Newhouse would have published Posner’s assurances in *Case Closed* that Ruby “was not a gangster.”<sup>48</sup>

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<http://jfkfacts.org/assassination/news/morley-v-cia-why-i-sued-for-jfk-assassination-records/>; and *Morley v. CIA*, 2006 U.S. Dist., LEXIS 6858.

46. Scott Shane, “CIA Is Cagey about ’63 Files Tied to Oswald,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 2009, LexisNexis Academic.

47. Scott, *Deep Politics*, xxi

48. *Ibid.*

In his 1999 dissertation, “The Media and the Kennedy Assassination,” Ross Frank Ralston discovered a media consensus supporting the Warren Report, but not one based just on the evidence. Ralston concluded that the media had adopted a Hegemony Approach to the tragedy in order to “dissipate the greatest possible doubt of a conspiracy . . . to create the impression that the political structure was secure and legitimate [and] . . . to create an image of the stable institution of government.”<sup>49</sup> Cultural Hegemony, a theory first developed in the early twentieth century by Italian sociologist and Marxist Antonio Gramsci, describes how the dominant class uses cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies. By dint of their privileged access to major ideological institutions, including religion, education, and the media, those in power are able to employ ideology as a dominant, unifying force to reinforce their positions.<sup>50</sup>

Gramsci’s idea that hegemony enables the powerful to limit the boundaries of debate and the legitimacy of alternative views was elaborated on by Chomsky in a series of interviews in the mid-1990s for the book *The Common Good*. Chomsky argues that postmodern democratic societies manufacture a consensus by allowing lively debate but over a narrowed range of issues.<sup>51</sup> Gatekeepers in the media keep the public debate focused only on those issues and their solutions that do not pose a serious threat to people in power. Outliers are ignored or labeled as crackpots and social deviants—or in the case

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49. Ross Frank Ralston, “The Media and the Kennedy Assassination: The Social Construction of Reality” (PhD diss., Iowa State University, 1999), vii.

50. Ibid, 13.

51. Noam Chomsky, *The Common Good* (Canada: Odonian Press, 2001), 43.

of the JFK assassination, “conspiracy theorists”—whose findings and opinions hold no weight in the mainstream discourse. Ironically, Chomsky himself has narrowed the debate over who killed JFK by declaring the subject no longer worthy of time and attention.<sup>52</sup> He thinks it is unlikely that Kennedy was killed for his policies in Cuba and Vietnam because they were no different from his successors, but he will not venture any other possible motivation for a conspiracy.<sup>53</sup>

But while Ralston’s thesis may well explain why the media feared a collapse of government in the early years after the assassination and perhaps through the tumultuous decades of the 1960s and 1970s, it is hard to see how the Warren Report could have retained favor with the media during the relatively calm decades that followed. There appears to be a deep-seated fear among some elements in power that straying too far and too deep into the mysteries of the Kennedy assassination could jeopardize something that is perhaps more powerful than government itself—what Scott calls “the deep political system.” Deep politics “habitually resorts to decision-making and enforcement procedures outside as well as those publicly sanctioned by law and society. In popular terms, collusive secrecy and law-breaking are part of how the deep political system works.”<sup>54</sup> As we will see in later chapters, deep politics creates a natural and mutually

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52. Jim DiEugenio, “Noam Chomsky's Sickness unto Death,” *Citizens for Truth about the Kennedy Assassination* website, accessed July 17, 2014, [http://www.ctka.net/reviews/Chomsky\\_Sickness\\_DiEugenio.html](http://www.ctka.net/reviews/Chomsky_Sickness_DiEugenio.html), accessed July 17, 2013.

53. Ontheearthproduction, “Noam Chomsky Talks about the CIA and Other Topics,” *YouTube* video, 12:32, uploaded April 13, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXcL5o55q8s>.

54. Scott, *Deep Politics*, xi-xii.

beneficial alliance among intelligence communities and organized crime operatives across national boundaries.

Researchers who have dared to look at the transnational connections in the JFK assassination are often those most virulently attacked by supporters of the Warren Commission. One plausible theory that has been shunted aside by the mainstream media and largely ignored by even the most iconoclastic JFK researchers is that Israel's foreign intelligence service, Mossad, was complicit in JFK's death because he blocked Israel's path to nuclear armament. That theory was first developed in 1994 in *Final Judgment*, a controversial book by Michael Collins Piper, a journalist with ties to The American Free Press, an ultraconservative media outlet. Both Piper and the AFP have been accused of being anti-Semitic by the Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai Brith.<sup>55</sup> Piper has denied the charges and argues that his critics have taken his character and his affiliations to task, but not the findings in his book.<sup>56</sup>

Piper has garnered the mixed support of Israeli investigative journalist Barry Chamish, whose 1998 book *Who Killed Yitzhak Rabin?* attacks the widely held view that a lone Zionist gunman assassinated the moderate Israeli prime minister. Chamish reviewed Piper's book in 1999 from the self-described point of view "of a Zionist

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55. "Anti-Semites Attempt to Exploit Anti-Government Conspiracy Theories," *The Anti-Defamation League* archive website, April 5, 2010, <http://archive.adl.org/nr/exeres/c2bcb515-c582-49d0-b936-9ead0eccdda0,0b1623ca-d5a4-465d-a369-df6e8679cd9e,frameless.html>.

56. Michael Collins Piper, *Final Judgment: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Conspiracy* (Washington, D.C.: Wolfe Press, 1993), 541.

committed to the strength and survival of Israel.”<sup>57</sup> In summary, he wrote, “Piper gets lots right and lots wrong. What is bothersome is it doesn’t take much of what he gets right to make a case for Israeli involvement in the murder [of JFK].”<sup>58</sup> While Chamish believes that Piper relies too much on circumstantial evidence, he does not attack Piper personally for his work. “All in all, Piper doesn’t sound like an anti-Semite and I can spot one. I believe he is a sincere truth seeker.”<sup>59</sup>

Whatever his motivations, Piper has been no less careful in his research than many other conspiracy researchers—enough so that his book is among the nearly two hundred publications and films on the JFK assassination to be included in the Library of Congress. And without a mainstream publisher or media attention, *Final Judgment* has sold more than 40,000 copies.<sup>60</sup> Piper calls it the bestselling banned book of all time.

But none of the established JFK researchers, even those most opposed to the findings of the Warren Commission, will comment publicly on Piper’s book. In the case of Piper’s theory, the Chomsky propaganda model may not be enough to explain what is holding back debate. What is more likely at play is self-censorship—a fear that even broaching the possibility that Mossad was involved in JFK’s assassination will lead to charges of anti-Semitism and bigotry.

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57. Barry Chamish, “A Zionist Looks at *Final Judgment*,” *Rense.com*, December 14, 1999, <http://www.rense.com/politics5/zionist.htm>.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. Piper, *Final Judgment*, “A Note from the Publisher,” no page number.

Self-censorship and political correctness theory tell us that, once an unpopular opinion is viewed as likely to lead to an attack questioning the motives of the sender, those who hold the unpopular belief are likely to be silenced or to express themselves in indirect or ambiguous ways to avoid censure. As social beings, most people are afraid of becoming isolated from their social environment; they would like to be popular and respected. Therein lies the psychological basis for both self-censorship and Spiral of Silence theories, as first explicated by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1977.<sup>61</sup> Spiral of Silence theory maintains that a person becomes less comfortable voicing an opinion that is perceived as uncommon or losing ground “for fear of being socially isolated or otherwise negatively evaluated for supporting an unpopular idea.”<sup>62</sup>

In 1994, Glenn C. Loury of Boston University went a step further in explaining self-censorship by examining the complex interaction between sender and receiver on sensitive issues. Loury advanced what he called a “theory of political correctness” that compels “people whose beliefs are sound but who nevertheless differ from some aspect of communal wisdom . . . to avoid the candid expression of their opinions.”<sup>63</sup> Loury turns to earlier theories by sociologist Erving Goffman to help explain the interaction between sender and receiver as an “expression game” in which the sender expresses himself in

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61. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “Turbulences in the Climate of Opinion: Methodological Applications of the Spiral of Silence Theory,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1977): 143-58.

62. Andrew F. Hayes, “Exploring the Forms of Self-Censorship: On the Spiral of Silence and the Use of Opinion Expression Avoidance Strategies,” *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 4 (2007): 785.

63. Glenn S. Loury, “Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of ‘Political Correctness’ and Related Phenomena,” *Rationality and Society* 6, no. 4 (1994): 430.

some way and the receiver, who takes in and reacts to the expression, forms an impression of the sender.<sup>64</sup> Hence, in addressing a controversial topic, the sender risks exposing himself to receivers as either “a friend” or “an enemy” of the community’s shared values.<sup>65</sup>

A regime of political correctness may be viewed as an equilibrium pattern of expression and inference within a given community, where receivers input undesirable qualities to senders who express themselves in an “incorrect way” and, as a result, avoid such expressions.<sup>66</sup> Once the practice of punishing those who express certain ideas is well established, the only people who will risk social isolation by speaking recklessly are those who place so little value on sharing in the community that they must be presumed not to share its dearest common values.<sup>67</sup> Those social pressures, then, have a self-fulfilling effect—only those who have already been outcast dare to express an outcast point of view. Hence, political correctness theory informs us that researchers who have already been labeled as anti-Semitic are most likely to explore the possibility of Mossad complicity in the JFK assassination, thus reinforcing in circular fashion the notion that those who go down that path are anti-Semitic.

JFK researchers who seek not to be “smeared” as an enemy of politically correct communal values must avoid certain sensitive issues altogether or speak on the issue in

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64. Ibid., 432.

65. Ibid., 435.

66. Loury, “Self-Censorship in Public Discourse,” 437.

67. Ibid., 444.



only the most circumspect, ambiguous, or indirect ways—what Loury calls “strategic imprecision” that allows for “plausible deniability” if the sender’s motives are questioned or attacked.<sup>68</sup>

It is important to note that social isolation and political correctness are not part of some monolithic effort to censor the media. As Herman and Chomsky point out in the introduction of *Manufacturing Consent*, both techniques are forms of self-censorship by which journalists and academics themselves “police the boundaries of what can legitimately be articulated in public arenas.”<sup>69</sup>

Chomsky offers a practical and pungent example of how this micro-political power works in public discourse:

If you’re down at a bar. . . and you say something that people don’t like, they’ll. . . shriek four-letter words. If you’re in a faculty club or an editorial office, where you’re more polite—there’s a collection of phrases that can be used which are the intellectual equivalent of four-letter words and tantrums. One of them is “conspiracy theory” . . . [part of] a series of totally meaningless curse words, in effect, which are used by people who know that they cannot answer arguments, and that they cannot deal with evidence. But. . . they want to shut you up.<sup>70</sup>

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68. Ibid.

69. Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, xii.

70. Noam Chomsky, “On Historical Amnesia, Foreign Policy, and Iraq,” interview by Kirk W. Johnson, February 17, 2004, <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/20040217.htm>.

As any investigative journalist will attest, it is those areas of query where the pressure to “shut up” is strongest that often lead us to the truth.

## Chapter 4: The Lens Is Everything

If history proceeds from multiple causes and their intersections, as historian John Lewis Gaddis tells us,<sup>1</sup> then JFK researchers must be careful not to exclude pieces that may fit the larger puzzle of who killed John F. Kennedy and why. Widening and unfiltering the investigative lens to consider all the legitimate facts and possible connections would seem logically preferable to a more restrictive lens that may miss key evidence and linkages, thus keeping the puzzle from ever being solved. Yet so much of the perspective on the JFK assassination, by both the mainstream news media and the publishing industry, has been limited or distorted by propaganda, disinformation, self-censorship, and political correctness that piecing together the larger picture is daunting for anyone who has not been immersed in the full spectrum of the debate.

This chapter will look first at the published evidence that supports as well as undermines the lone gunman theory as a basis for what follows—an examination of the differing lenses that have been employed by JFK researchers to compensate for the flaws and shortcomings of the Warren Report.

Any good detective knows that the strength of a suspect must be measured by three factors—motive, means, and opportunity. Part of the challenge in investigating the Kennedy assassination is that JFK managed in his shortened presidency to create a large number of powerful and potentially violent political and international enemies—and, hence, a large number of suspects. Certainly, all modern American presidents have

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1. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 65.

created powerful enemies by dint of their own power and by the global reach of U.S. foreign policy. But in the case of JFK, many of the plausible suspects for removing him from office were part of the deep political system that respects neither law nor national boundaries. The list of suspects includes:

- Organized crime, for Robert Kennedy's crackdown on the National Crime Syndicate while serving as JFK's Attorney General.<sup>2</sup>
- The CIA, or rogue elements within the agency, for JFK's vow to rein in its covert operations after the Bay of Pigs fiasco.<sup>3</sup>
- Elements of the CIA and anti-Castro Cubans, for having refused to supply air support to the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion.<sup>4</sup>
- Elements of the CIA, organized crime, and French intelligence, for his opposition to CIA links to the U.S. heroin trade through The Marseille Connection.<sup>5</sup>

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2. G. Robert Blakey and Richard N. Billings, *Fatal Hour: The Assassination of President Kennedy by Organized Crime* (New York: Berkley Books, 1992), xi.

3. Mark Lane, *Plausible Denial: Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991), 98.

4. Jim Marrs, *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1989), 170.

5. Bradley S. O'Leary and L.E. Seymour, *Triangle of Death: The Shocking Truth about the Role of South Vietnam and the French Mafia in the Assassination of JFK* (Nashville, Tenn.: WND Books, 2003), 50.

- Right-wing oil interests, in particular Texas oil baron H.L. Hunt, for his willingness to reach out to the Soviet Union and for his plans to eliminate the oil depletion allowance.<sup>6</sup>
- The French secret army (OAS), as well as Israel, for his support of French President Charles DeGaulle's moves to withdraw militarily from Algeria and grant independence to the Arab nation. The OAS (*Organisation de l'armée secrète*) was a rebellious secret faction of the French military determined to assassinate DeGaulle for his anti-colonialist policies.<sup>7</sup>
- The military-industrial complex, for his peace overtures to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and for his intentions to wind down the war in Vietnam. (The latter, however, is the most hotly debated of the assassination motives. Many historians and analysts believe that Kennedy would have escalated the war in Vietnam if he had remained in office.)<sup>8</sup>
- President Lyndon Johnson, for JFK's plans to replace him as the vice presidential nominee in the 1964 election and for his brother Robert's role in leaking information to *Life* magazine that would have exposed Johnson's involvement in

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6. Michael Benson, *Encyclopedia of the JFK Assassination* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2002), 116-117; and Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 212-14.

7. Michael Collins Piper, *Final Judgment: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Conspiracy* (Washington, D.C.: Wolfe Press, 1993), 31.

8. L. Fletcher Prouty, *JFK: The CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009), 147-52.

the Bobby Baker congressional bribery scandal, thus ending his political career and possibly sending him to prison.<sup>9</sup>

- Israel, and its supporters within the CIA, for his active opposition to Israel's development of nuclear weapons and for his overtures to pan-Arabist and Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser.<sup>10</sup>

The Warren Commission's lone gunman theory is, of course, the view through the narrowest of investigative lenses with all the seeming advantages of simplicity and "established" fact: Unstable leftist malcontent (Lee Harvey Oswald) shoots president to make name for himself; unstable small-time thug (Jack Ruby) shoots assassin to avenge president and family. But the lens fails to capture the known historical context because it ignores the considerable ties that both Oswald and Ruby had to what JFK researcher Peter Dale Scott calls the "the deep politics" of America's power base where "political and criminal activities interface."<sup>11</sup> The theoretical foundation of Scott's book *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* is based on demonstrable historical realities: Intelligence organizations use organized crime to do their illegal dirty work, including gun-running, money laundering, and assassinations, while, at the same time, organized crime interpenetrates those government agencies and uses them to sustain their own illegal

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9. John Simkin, *The Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (Spartacus Educational, 2010), Kindle locations 108561-108578.

10. Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991), 98, 101.

11. Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 19.

operations. Deep politics is a symbiotic underworld where distinguishing the good guys from the bad guys becomes murky and ill-defined.

Oswald is an excellent example of just how murky and ill-defined the interface can become. Consider Oswald's connection to gangster and sometimes CIA operative John Martino, who was ignored by both the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee on Assassinations.<sup>12</sup> In August 1963, Martino was seen several times in a New Orleans sports betting bar accompanied by associates of Louisiana mob boss Carlos Marcello.<sup>13</sup> Two of those confidants were Dutz Murrett and Emile Bruneau, both of whom employed Oswald to run errands from the bar. Murrett was Oswald's uncle and, many researchers say, surrogate father for the absence of his real father. Bruneau was the man who bailed Oswald out of a New Orleans jail after he was arrested for a very public and, some observers say, contrived altercation with anti-Castro leader Carlos Bringuier.<sup>14</sup>

In the mid-1950s, Martino worked for Santos Trafficante and Meyer Lansky in a Havana casino. When Castro came to power in 1959, Martino was caught and jailed for trying to sneak out of Cuba with a large bundle of cash. After his release three years later, Martino returned to the United States and was quickly recruited for the CIA-organized crime plots to assassinate Castro. Martino also joined the anti-Castro operations in New Orleans. According to JFK researcher and Pulitzer Prize finalist Anthony Summers,

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12. Michael Kurtz, *The JFK Assassination Debates: Lone Gunman versus Conspiracy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 209.

13. *Ibid.*, 210.

14. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 211.

Martino had inside knowledge of the assassination. Summers disclosed in 1975 that Martino had told a business associate in Texas that the "anti-Castro people put Oswald together. Oswald didn't even know who he was working for."<sup>15</sup> When Oswald failed to shake the Dallas police after the assassination and before his rendezvous with the conspirators at the Texas Theater, Martino said, "they [organized crime] had him killed."<sup>16</sup> In 1963, Martino was a roommate of Johnny Roselli, who also had connections to both the CIA and organized crime.<sup>17</sup> Roselli's mutilated body was found floating in an oil drum in Miami's Dumfoundling Bay after he talked to investigative journalist Jack Anderson and before he could be called to testify before the Church Committee in 1976.<sup>18</sup>

Ruby's connections are just as suspicious. A tough syndicate gangster by way of the Teamsters and the Chicago underworld, Ruby was by no means the "small-time pawn" dismissed by the Warren Commission. In the mid-1950s, Ruby (who went by Jack Rubinstein at the time) was running guns to anti-Batista forces in Cuba with the backing of National Crime Syndicate boss Meyer Lansky, who was hedging his bets by supporting both Cuban dictator Fulgencia Batista and rebel leader Fidel Castro to protect

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15. Anthony Summers, *Not in Your Lifetime: The Defining Book on the JFK Assassination* (New York: Open Road Multimedia, 2013), Kindle edition, Kindle location 6432.

16. Ibid.

17. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 111.

18. Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, Kindle location 94195.



his gambling interests in Cuba.<sup>19</sup> After Castro's takeover in 1959, CIA files show that Ruby visited Trafficante in a Havana jail at the bidding of Lansky. According to Lansky biographer and investigative journalist Hank Messick, Lansky "pulled the strings in every important move made by the National Crime Syndicate" before and after the JFK assassination.<sup>20</sup> At the time of his visit to Trafficante, Ruby was a Potential Criminal Informant for the FBI and was interviewed eight times by federal agents over a seven-month period.<sup>21</sup> HSCA investigators found that Ruby had made twelve phone calls to five organized crime figures in the weeks leading up to the assassination. Seven of those calls were to one individual—Lewis McWillie.<sup>22</sup> In the pre-Castro days, McWillie had run one of Lansky's casinos in Havana and, at the time of the assassination, was working at the Thunderbird hotel and casino in Las Vegas, where Meyer Lansky and his brother Jake had an interest.<sup>23</sup> On November 17, 1963, just five days before the assassination, Ruby made a trip to Las Vegas, FBI records show, although it is not known whether he visited with McWillie.<sup>24</sup>

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19. Alan J. Weberman and Michael Canfield, *Coup d'Etat in America: The CIA and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (San Francisco: Quick American Archives, 1992), 155.

20. Seth Kantor, *Who Was Jack Ruby?* (New York: Everest House, 1978), 13.

21. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 133.

22. *Ibid.*, 184.

23. *Ibid.*, 180.

24. Kantor, *Jack Ruby*, 24.

Shortly before killing Oswald, Ruby had talked on the phone with Al Gruber, a henchman for Mickey Cohen, Lansky's West Coast operative.<sup>25</sup> After Ruby was arrested for killing Oswald, he told his lawyer Tom Howard that the one person who could hurt his defense as a patriotic avenger was his former business associate, Thomas Eli Davis III, a gun-runner to Cuba and to the French OAS.<sup>26</sup> As head of the syndicate in Dallas, Ruby had considerable influence in the Dallas Police Department, working for them as a narcotics informant and, if rumors at the time were true, also supplying their parties with prostitutes.<sup>27</sup> The HSCA conceded that someone, possibly members of the Dallas police, may have helped Ruby gain access to the Dallas jail basement prior to his shooting Oswald.<sup>28</sup>

If one goes further into the history of Oswald's and Ruby's connections and up the chains of command, the deep politics grow deeper and more unsettling. Lansky's ties to U.S. intelligence operatives go back to World War II, when the Office of Naval Intelligence struck a secret deal with Lansky and business partner Lucky Luciano to use their union control to ferret out enemy saboteurs among the dock workers in New York

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25. Piper, *Final Judgment*, x.

26. Kantor, *Jack Ruby*, 15.

27. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 137, 233.

28. Ibid, 133; and House Select Committee on Assassination, *Final Report: Volume IX: V – Possible Associations between Jack Ruby and Organized Crime*, at 125-46 (1979), <https://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=955andrelPageId=133>.

harbor, where they were doing considerable damage to U.S. overseas shipping.<sup>29</sup> Lansky and U.S. intelligence authorities also worked out a deal to have Luciano released from a New York state prison, where he was serving a thirty- to fifty-year sentence for running prostitutes, so that he could recruit U.S. mafia deportees willing to return to Sicily and gather intelligence for the coming Allied invasion.<sup>30</sup>

After the war, James J. Angleton, an OSS official in Italy who later became chief of counterintelligence for the CIA, used the Mafia deportees to counter the growing power of the Communists in Sicily.<sup>31</sup> In much the same way, Angleton, along with French intelligence, recruited Corsican gangsters to work against the Communists who threatened to take control of the key Mediterranean port of Marseille.<sup>32</sup> Angleton's close relationships with key figures in organized crime included Jay Lovestone of the AFL's Free Trade Union Committee, who passed on funds from the CIA to the French gangs in Marseille. The Marseille gangs, in turn, worked with the Corsican heroin labs and distributors that Lansky had integrated into the drug-trafficking network known as The Marseille Connection—the mainline of heroin to the United States.<sup>33</sup>

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29. O'Leary and Seymour, *Triangle of Death*, 72.

30. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 165.

31. *Ibid.*, 195.

32. Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991), 18.

33. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

As Alfred McCoy explains in *The Politics of Heroin*, intelligence agencies and criminal syndicates have a natural affinity. Both are versed in the clandestine arts—"the basic skill of operating outside the normal channels of civil society."<sup>34</sup> On a more practical level, they both need each other—intelligence agencies rely on the street-smarts and confidentiality of syndicates to muscle the enemy while keeping their own hands clean; syndicates rely on the protection of intelligence agencies to keep law enforcement officials off their backs.<sup>35</sup>

To see the views through all the possible lenses in the JFK assassination, two more chains of connections must be considered. In the summer of 1963, Oswald was often seen in the New Orleans office of Guy Banister, a former FBI agent and rabid anti-Communist and racist who performed regular duties for the CIA.<sup>36</sup> One of Banister's employees was David Ferrie, who also worked as a private investigator for Louisiana syndicate boss Carlos Marcello. Ferrie, a pilot who had instructed Oswald as a teenager in the Civil Air Patrol, was famous for having flown dangerous missions to Cuba to supply anti-Castro forces.<sup>37</sup>

During his five months in New Orleans prior to the assassination, Oswald was seen on several occasions in the company of both Ferrie and Clay Shaw, a prominent

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34. *Ibid.*, 15.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 158.

37. Benson, *Encyclopedia*, 81-82.

New Orleans businessman who worked for the CIA.<sup>38</sup> In the 1962 edition of *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, Shaw included in his biographical information that he was on the board of directors of CMC-PermindeX, a shadowy trade promotion company accused publicly by French President Charles DeGaulle of channeling funds to the OAS for his assassination. (Interestingly, Shaw's CMC-PermindeX connection was eliminated from the 1963-64 edition.)<sup>39</sup> The chief of the PermindeX board, as well as the top stockholder in the company "for party or parties unknown,"<sup>40</sup> was Louis Mortimer Bloomfield, a Montreal lawyer who represented the wealthy Bronfman family and also provided services for U.S. intelligence.<sup>41</sup>

As a former OSS officer, Bloomfield had connections both to the FBI, as a working partner with division chief William Sullivan, and to Lansky, with whom he had smuggled arms to the Jewish underground in Palestine prior to the formation of Israel.<sup>42</sup> Several investigators, including those at *Life* magazine, discovered that PermindeX had banking connections with Lansky and his Bahamas gambling operations in the early 1960s.<sup>43</sup>

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38. Kurtz, *JFK Assassination Debates*, 158-59.

39. Marrs, *Crossfire*, 499.

40. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 191.

41. Marrs, *Crossfire*, 498-99.

42. Piper, 187.

43. Marrs, *Crossfire*, 500.

The CMC-Permindex connection to the OAS and the assassination attempts on DeGaulle seem hardly relevant to the JFK assassination until another piece of evidence is added to the puzzle. Two days after JFK was killed, Jean Rene Souetre, an assassin for the OAS, was secretly deported by U.S. officials from Texas after he had spent the morning of the assassination in Fort Worth, where Kennedy had given a speech in front of the Hotel Texas, and the afternoon of that day in Dallas, where Kennedy was assassinated.<sup>44</sup> JFK researcher Mary Ferrell stumbled upon the document among the thousands that were released by the CIA prior to 1977. The photocopied document was heavily redacted with a magic marker, but by using strong backlighting and a magnifying glass, Ferrell was able to make out its contents.<sup>45</sup> Neither the deportation nor the CIA document was ever reported to the Warren Commission. The CIA memo was generated after the French secret service had contacted U.S. diplomats with concerns that Souetre was in Mexico, where DeGaulle was planning a visit.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, there is the curious case of Angleton and his intense but secret interest in Oswald. Angleton's counterintelligence department in the CIA was interested enough in Oswald to intercept and read his mail under a top-secret, illegal program called HT/LINGUAL. And yet despite Oswald's attempt in 1959 to defect to the Soviet Union

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44. O'Leary and Seymour, *Triangle of Death*, 60; and "Document Page Re Jean Souetre," *Mary Ferrell Foundation* website, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=64996andreIPageId=2>.

45. *Ibid.*, 63. Mary Ferrell devoted her life to obtaining records on the JFK assassination and making them available to other researchers and the public, but she never published anything herself. See Benson, *Encyclopedia*, 81.

46. O'Leary and Seymour, *Triangle of Death*, 62.

and to provide the Soviets with sensitive radar information on the U2 spy program, the CIA did not open a counterintelligence file on Oswald until fourteen months after this attempted defection.<sup>47</sup> Nor did the CIA alert the Secret Service that, in October of 1963, Oswald (or an Oswald impersonator) had visited the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City and talked with Valery Kostikov, the Soviets' top assassin and terrorist in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>48</sup> Still missing or sealed is a good deal of CIA evidence related to Oswald's visit to Mexico City in the month before the assassination, including surveillance photos of Oswald (or an impersonator) entering the Cuban Embassy as well as tape recordings of intercepted calls that Oswald (or an impersonator) made to the Soviet Embassy.<sup>49</sup> In 1971, when Winston Scott, head of the CIA's Mexico City bureau, died of a heart attack, Angleton flew to Mexico City and personally collected the contents of Scott's safe.<sup>50</sup>

Angleton, who was the CIA's liaison to the Warren Commission, is at the center of much of the mystery and muddle that surrounds JFK's assassination. A fervent anti-Communist with a deep streak of paranoia and a love of poetry and orchids, Angleton was a spook's spook with a genius for deception but a drinking problem that worsened with age. Years after the Warren Report was released, JFK researchers discovered that it

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47. John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA: The Documented Truth about the Unknown Relationship between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), 421-422.

48. *Ibid.*, 428.

49. Jefferson Morley, *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 189.

50. *Ibid.*, 286.

was Angleton's staff that had raised the false flag that Oswald had been working for the Soviets.<sup>51</sup> It was no secret in Washington that Angleton loathed Kennedy for his peace overtures to the Soviet Union and perhaps for personal reasons as well—Kennedy's mistress, Mary Meyer, had been married to one of his top agents, Cord Meyer, and her affair with the president was recorded and closely watched by Angleton.<sup>52</sup> As head of counterintelligence for the CIA from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, Angleton was legendary for his secretiveness and his alcohol-fueled, anti-Communist paranoia, including his suspicions that W. Averell Harriman and Henry Kissinger were both Soviet spies.<sup>53</sup> Angleton had his own secret channels of communication to which other departments in the CIA were not privy.<sup>54</sup> He was known for one more thing—his long and close ties to Israel's secret intelligence services, prior even to the formation of Israel and Mossad.

Angleton's connections went back to his OSS post in Italy during World War II when he worked with Italian Jews as part of the resistance to German and Italian fascists.<sup>55</sup> Toward the end of the war, the Jewish Agency, against the wishes of the British government, began moving Jewish refugees and arms through Italy to Palestine

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51. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 195.

52. David Talbot, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 2007), 197,202-203, 275.

53. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 304.

54. Michael Holzman, *James Jesus Angleton: The CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 170.

55. *Ibid.*, 151.



for the Jewish colonization effort. Angleton was certainly aware of, and perhaps assisted, the effort. What is known for certain is that, during this period, he formed close relationships with the founders of Mossad, including Teddy Kollack and Meir Dshalit.<sup>56</sup> Angleton felt it was important to build up and to form an alliance with Israeli intelligence to provide the U.S. greater access in the Middle East and to act as a bulwark against Soviet and Communist influence there.<sup>57</sup> In the mid-1950s, when Angleton was moved from foreign collection of intelligence to the head of counterintelligence, he was also given the highly unusual and independent position as head of the Israeli desk of the CIA, in which the two countries shared their intelligence.<sup>58</sup> Angleton's relationship with Mossad was so intimate that he was known to assign Mossad agents to CIA operations, including, as he told the Church Committee in 1973, placing a Mossad agent in Havana to spy on Castro.<sup>59</sup>

Today, there are not one but two monuments to Angleton in Israel—large stones with bronze plaques, one in Jerusalem and one on a hill outside the city—which leads to an obvious question: What did Israel owe to Angleton? As Michael Holzman points out in his biography, *James Jesus Angleton: The CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence*, the answer may never be known until the secret files of both Mossad and the CIA are

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56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 152.

58. Ibid., 153.

59. Ibid., 192.

revealed.<sup>60</sup> Beginning in the late 1950s, Angleton knew from his personal contacts in Israel of its secret plans to build a nuclear weapon "but never learned—or, at least, never reported—the extent to which Israel was deceiving Washington about its nuclear weapons progress," wrote former *New York Times* investigative reporter Seymour Hersh in his book about the secret history of Israel's nuclear weapons program, *The Samson Option*.<sup>61</sup> There is at least one report that Angleton actively aided Israel in its development of a nuclear bomb, despite the fervent opposition of the Kennedy administration to nuclear proliferation. *New York Times* foreign correspondent Tad Szulc testified to that effect before the Church Committee in 1975:

I was told by one of my news sources that a situation had occurred in the 1960s in which the CIA delivered to the Israeli government classified information, technical knowledge, know-how, the services of distinguished physicists and fissionable material in the form of plutonium to assist in the development of an Israeli nuclear weapon at the Dimona Israeli Nuclear Testing grounds. . . . I have raised the subject in a private conversation with Mr. James Angleton in the spring of this year [April 1975]. Mr. Angleton told me that essentially this information was correct.<sup>62</sup>

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60. *Ibid.*, 155.

61. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 147.

62. Holzman, *James Jesus Angleton*, 167-68.

Angleton later denied that Israel had been supplied with any nuclear material and that the technical assistance to Israel was provided in the late 1950s, not the early 1960s, when JFK was in office.<sup>63</sup> Hersh, however, claims that Angleton's technical assistance continued into the 1960s.<sup>64</sup>

During this same period, Angleton was deeply connected to the National Crime Syndicate. After his forced retirement in 1976, he told an investigator that he knew which mobsters had killed Sam Giancana. He blamed the Church Committee for the deaths of both Giancana and Roselli for having subpoenaed them to testify.<sup>65</sup>

Trying to stretch one's arms around the intertwining connections and motives for assassinating JFK is akin to Hercule Poirot trying to solve the case in *Murder on the Orient Express*. Agatha Christie's famous fictional detective needed a good deal of imagination to explore the possibility that all twelve suspects took part in the murder. As in Christie's novel, it is possible that all, or some group, of the suspects in the JFK assassination could have worked together although, in this case, only a very few people at the top would have needed to know the full-spectrum of the conspiracy to coordinate the actions of those below them. The scenario is not unreasonable given another example from American history—the thousands of people in scores of locations across America who worked on different parts of the Manhattan Project to develop the nation's first

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63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 164.

65. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 194.

atomic bomb. The top-secret project, launched in 1942, did not become public until after the first two bombs were dropped on Japan in the late summer of 1945.

Perhaps an even better example comes from a lesser-known secret enterprise during World War II—the U.S. Navy’s successful attempt to design and build a computer-like codebreaking machine that would help the Allies crack the Nazi’s advanced U-boat Enigma codes. More than a thousand people, including some six hundred U.S. Navy WAVES, worked on the project between 1942 and 1945 inside NCR’s Building 26 in Dayton, Ohio. Not a single participant broke the silence for nearly fifty years until documents related to the project were finally declassified in the mid-1990s. Evelyn Hodges Vogel, a plucky Missouri native who had lied about her age to enlist in the WAVES at age eighteen, said a combination of fear and pride kept the women from speaking to anyone about the project, including their own families, for half a century. Their commanding officers “told us they would shoot us at sunrise if we talked about what we were doing,” Vogel said in an interview with the author in 2002. “And we did keep our mouths shut. Men always think women have big mouths, but we didn’t. We were so proud to be serving in the armed forces and doing something women had never done before.”<sup>66</sup>

There are hints of a broad conspiracy in the JFK assassination in several sightings of suspicious persons who seemed to trail the president during his visit to Texas. Souetre, the OAS assassin, was in Fort Worth the morning JFK appeared there and then traveled

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66. Jim DeBrosse and Colin Burke, *The Secret in Building 26* (New York: Random House, 2004), 128.

that afternoon to Dallas.<sup>67</sup> Eugene Hale Brading (aka Jim Braden), an ex-convict with ties to Lansky and organized crime, was stopped by Dallas police for "suspicious behavior" in a Dealey Plaza office building minutes after the assassination. He was taken in for questioning and let go. (Brading, who used numerous aliases, also happened to be visiting in Los Angeles on the night that Robert F. Kennedy was killed, a mile from the hotel where RFK was gunned down. Again, he was questioned by police and released.)<sup>68</sup> According to a Secret Service report, Ruby was seen by five witnesses hanging around the 400 block of Milam Street in Houston for several hours on November 21, 1963, a block from JFK's entrance route to his hotel.<sup>69</sup>

Michael Collins Piper was one of the first JFK researchers to argue in his 1994 book *Final Judgment* that a small cabal at the top of the intelligence and organized crime communities could have coordinated the extensive but secretive collaboration needed to murder a president of the United States:

The number of those involved in the conspiracy who actually knew that JFK was going to be assassinated was probably very limited indeed—yet those who were "in the know" had vast resources at their command to influence substantially larger numbers of people who would never

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67. O'Leary, *Triangle of Death*, 62.

68. David E. Scheim, *Contract on America* (New York: Zebra Books, 1988), 45-47; Summers, *Not in Your Lifetime*, 452-3, Blakey and Billings, *Fatal Hour*, 306, 396-97; and Kantor, *Jack Ruby*, 32-37.

69. *Ibid.*, 291-93.

necessarily know that they were indeed participating in an assassination conspiracy aimed at President Kennedy.<sup>70</sup>

Piper's theory would appear to explain a remarkable *non sequitur* that slipped from Angleton's tongue during a 1974 interview with then-*New York Times* reporter Seymour Hersh. Angleton, who observers at the time say was increasingly at the mercy of his alcoholism, was asked by Hersh about the CIA's illegal covert operations against U.S. antiwar protestors that eventually led to his forced retirement. "I've got problems," Angleton said. He then explained his domestic counterintelligence activities by saying, "A mansion has many rooms, and there were many things going on during the period of the [anti-war] bombings." With no prodding, Angleton added out of nowhere, "I'm not privy to who struck John."<sup>71</sup> Angleton later denied in court that he was referring to John F. Kennedy but offered no explanation for his cryptic comment. Years later, JFK researcher and *Salon.com* founder David Talbot asked Hersh if he knew what Angleton had meant. "I would be absolutely misleading you if I told you I had any fucking idea," Hersh said in his usual colorful language. "But my instinct about it is he was basically laying off [blame] on somebody else inside the CIA, and the whole purpose of the conversation was to convince me to go after somebody else and not him. And also that he was a completely crazy fucking old fart."<sup>72</sup>

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70. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 559.

71. Seymour Hersh, "Huge C.I.A. Operation Reported in US against Antiwar Forces, Other Dissidents During Nixon Years," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1974, 1.; and Weberman and Canfield, *Coup d'Etat in America*, 194.

72. Talbot, *Brothers*, 275.

Over the last fifty years, JFK researchers have employed diverse and sometimes conflicting lenses for investigating a conspiracy that, in more recent years, have been combined into a smaller number of views. In the early decades after the assassination, there were two main camps of researchers who often exchanged harsh words in print—those who believed the CIA and military intelligence were primarily responsible for the assassination<sup>73</sup> and those who pinned the blame exclusively on organized crime.<sup>74</sup> As new documents came to light, however, especially after the JFK Records Act in 1992, most researchers adopted the view that elements of both the CIA and organized crime may have been working together. Two of the most recent books on the JFK assassination, one by journalist David Talbot (*Brothers*) and one by historian Larry J. Sabato (*The Kennedy Half Century*), blend together the two lenses without distortion.

Outliers among investigative lenses include those that implicate LBJ along with big oil interests and/or the Secret Service.<sup>75</sup> Other more credible lenses, however, have been given short shrift by the community of conspiracy researchers and have been ignored, even attacked, by the mainstream media. The Marseille or French connection to

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73. Lane, *Plausible Denial*; Marrs, *Crossfire*; Prouty, *JFK*; and Weberman and Canfield, *Coup d'Etat*.

74. Blakey, *Fatal Hour*; John H. Davis, *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Signet, 1989); and Scheim, *Contract on America*.

75. See David S. Lifton, *Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (New York: McMillan, 1980); Barr McLellan, *Blood, Money and Power: How LBJ Killed JFK* (New York: Hannover House, 2003); and Fred T. Newcomb, *Murder from Within: Lyndon Johnson's Plot Against President Kennedy* (Bloomington, IN.; Author House, 2011).

the assassination has been taken up by only a handful of JFK researchers, even though evidence for the link surfaced in the late 1970s with the discovery of the CIA memo revealing Souetre's deportation from Texas.<sup>76</sup> In *Triangle of Death*, one of the few assassination books to look closely at the French connection, TV and print journalist Brad O'Leary wrote that he was baffled that so many high-profile JFK researchers, including former BBC producer Anthony Summers, former U.S. special operations chief L. Fletcher Prouty, and investigative reporters Henry Hurt and Jim Marrs, have all but ignored the presence of so deadly and mysterious a figure on the heels of Kennedy's final appearances in Texas.<sup>77</sup> Even Scott, who chides other researchers for the narrowness of their lenses, fails to acknowledge the presence of Souetre (or possibly another French assassin who may have taken Souetre's name as a cover, Michael Mertz<sup>78</sup>) in Dallas on the day of the assassination. None of the books incorporating the French connection, including O'Leary's, has been reviewed or even acknowledged by the elite media.

To acknowledge a French connection in the JFK assassination is to acknowledge the possibility of an Israeli connection—a view that both the mainstream media and the JFK research community have been careful to avoid. Allied in the 1950s against France's withdrawal from Algeria and the formation of a new Arab state in the Middle East, French and Israeli intelligence officials often worked together in the years before and after the JFK assassination. Israeli investigative journalist Barry Chamish, author of *Who*

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76. O'Leary, *Triangle of Death*, 60.

77. *Ibid.*, 64.

78. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 143.



*Killed Yitzhak Rabin*, concluded that "French intelligence provided the operational guidance behind Rabin's murder" by a lone gunman and alleged Zionist.<sup>79</sup>

The more immediate nexus between the French and Israeli lenses is CMC and its subsidiary Permindex, the shell corporation that was expelled from Switzerland and Italy after being accused of financing the assassination attempts on DeGaulle as well as anti-Communist subversion in Europe. CMC-Permindex may have had ties to the CIA as well. As we have seen, both its board member Clay Shaw and top stockholder Louis Bloomfield had worked with U.S. intelligence. Bloomfield also may have had ties to Lansky and Israel's Mossad. Like Lansky, Bloomfield was part of the gun-running operation to the Jewish terrorist underground prior to the formation of Israel in 1948.<sup>80</sup> He was also director of the Israeli-Canadian Maritime League and chairman of the Histadrut Campaign in Canada, Israel's national labor federation.<sup>81</sup> As an attorney, Bloomfield represented the Bronfman distillery family, which built its fortune in Canada working with Lansky in the bootleg trade.<sup>82</sup> Another top investor in CMC-Permindex was Banque de Credit International (BCI), whose founder was Tibor Rosenbaum, the longtime chief financial officer for Israel's Mossad.<sup>83</sup>

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79. Barry Chamish, "A Zionist Looks at *Final Judgment*," *Rense.com*, December 14, 1999, <http://www.rense.com/politics5/zionist.htm>.

80. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 86-87.

81. *Ibid.*, 192.

82. *Ibid.*, 191.

83. *Ibid.*, 187.

CMC-Permindex and its shady operations were first publicized in a leftist Italian newspaper, *Paesa Sera*, in March 1967. The article noted the involvement of Shaw and Bloomfield as well as the financial backing of Dr. David Biegun, secretary of the National Committee for Israel Labor, Inc., based in New York.<sup>84</sup> The article went on to say that CMC-Permindex "was a creature of the CIA . . . set up as a cover for the transfer of CIA . . . funds in Italy for illegal political-espionage activities."<sup>85</sup>

Max Holland, a pro-Warren historian, came to the defense of the CIA in an article for the agency's website (later republished in *The Wilson Quarterly*) in which he cited KGB documents, obtained through the CIA, that claim the *Paesa Sera* article was part of a KGB disinformation campaign to smear the CIA.<sup>86</sup> However, Holland's defense does not explain the involvement of Shaw and Bloomfield in the organization, nor does it counter allegations that CMC-Permindex had links to the OAS and Mossad. Agreeing at least partly with Piper's theory, Chamish accepts that "Permindex . . . was a Mossad front for covert operations" and that "the real killers [of JFK] were OAS-employed Corsican hit men, or at least one was for certain, and they were recruited by the Mossad's European chief assassin, Yitzhak Shamir."<sup>87</sup>

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84. Paris Flammonde, *The Kennedy Conspiracy: An Uncommissioned Report on the Jim Garrison Investigation* (New York: Meredith Press, 1969), 219.

85. *Ibid*, 221.

86. Max Holland, "The Power of Disinformation: The Lie that Linked CIA to the Kennedy Assassination," *The Center for the Study of Intelligence*, Vol. 45, no. 5, CIA Library website, last updated August 3, 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol45no5/html/v45i5a02p.htm>.

87. Chamish, "A Zionist Looks at *Final Judgment*."

So far, only one published JFK researcher, Piper, has tried to view the conspiracy through all the investigative lenses, including links to the CIA, Israel/Mossad, the French OAS and Lansky's National Crime Syndicate, and he has paid a price for it. After turning to the ultraconservative newspaper *American Free Press* as the only media outlet willing to publish his book, Piper has been accused of anti-Semitism, an *ad hominem* form of flak, by the Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai Brith.<sup>88</sup> Piper's one mainstream public speaking engagement, as part of a community college non-credit course on the JFK assassination in California in 1997, was canceled after pro-Israel supporters protested to college administrators, who received more than two hundred angry calls.<sup>89</sup> In media coverage leading up to the seminar, the ADL accused Piper of being a Holocaust denier, a charge he says is false.<sup>90</sup> The ADL also accused another speaker, Chicago author Sherman Skolnik, of being on the board of *The Spotlight* (now *The American Free Press*), which it called "the most anti-Semitic publication in America." Skolnick denied being on the board and called himself "a traditional Jew."<sup>91</sup>

At least one pair of national journalists pushed for cancellation of the course with no qualms about academic freedom or First Amendment rights. Arianna Huffington and Stephanie Miller, co-hosts of CNBC's *Equal Time*, said the college had no "free speech"

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88. Piper, *Final Judgment*, Author's Foreword (pages not numbered), 426-28.

89. "College Cancels Controversial JFK Course," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, August 22, 1997, LexisNexis Academic.

90. Piper, *Final Judgment*, Author's Foreword (pages not numbered), 426-28.

91. "College Cancels Controversial JFK Course," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

right to conduct a course on JFK conspiracy theories.<sup>92</sup> The co-hosts were given a strong on-air assist from guest panelist Gerald Posner, author of the pro-Warren book *Case Closed*, who repeated the accusation that Piper was a Holocaust denier.<sup>93</sup> "The people that say the Holocaust didn't happen, they don't even get past [a] screener on a radio talk show," Miller said. "I mean, where do these people get off teaching a course?" After radio talk show host and guest panelist Holly McClure pointed out that courses on Satanism and other bizarre topics have been taught on college campuses without an outcry, Huffington responded, "If Satanism is being taught, it clearly shouldn't be taught because, after all, this is not an issue of free speech; this is a college course."<sup>94</sup>

Piper's *Final Judgment* has many flaws. For one thing, Piper badly needed a good editor. His book is poorly organized and indexed, maddeningly repetitious, often self-congratulatory and full of less-than-ironclad certitudes. And he does not help the case for his book when he calls one of its critics, a Jewish Defense League member, "a bizarre troll,"<sup>95</sup> and members of a young military group in Dallas "five Jewish boys,"<sup>96</sup> or points out irrelevancies such as how many members of the Warren Commission were Jewish or married to Jewish women.<sup>97</sup>

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92. "Community College Offers Seminar on JFK Assassination Conspiracy Theory," *CNBC Equal Time*, August 22, 1997, LexisNexis Academic.

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*

95. Piper, *Final Judgment*, Author's Foreword (pages not numbered).

96. *Ibid.*, 544.

97. *Ibid.*, 430.

Piper also has admitted ties to the Liberty Lobby, a rightwing organization that has often been critical of the pro-Israel lobby in the United States.<sup>98</sup> But his book has 746 footnotes, nearly all of them to credible sources, and it cannot be discounted in its entirety for its flaws.

The Israeli/Mossad lens has been marginalized by the media in the JFK assassination debate by a number of means, with the threat of being labeled an anti-Semite the most obvious one. But more subtle means can be discovered by analyzing the other lenses in the debate. Many JFK researchers, for instance, use the misleading label of "Mafia" or "La Cosa Nostra" to describe the network of organized crime in America, as though Italian-Americans are its only, or even its most powerful, members. Scott tackles this misleading characterization in his critique of the HSCA investigation, citing this excerpt from its report as a case of "committee doublethink":

A major reason for suspecting conspiracy was Oswald's murder by Jack Ruby. Organized crime—specifically the national syndicate known as La Cosa Nostra or the mafia—was a logical choice for the study. A number of leads to organized crime existed, mostly through Ruby:

- Ruby had moved from Chicago to Dallas in 1946, at a time when the Mafia was said to be moving into that city. It has been alleged that Ruby was a front man. . . .

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98. Piper, *Final Judgment*, Author's Foreword (pages not numbered), 426-28.

- Ruby had made several unexplained phone calls to underworld figures in the months preceding the assassination.<sup>99</sup>

Scott goes on to point out that 1) Ruby (who had changed his last name from Rubinstein) was a Jew; 2) of the fifteen Chicago mobsters who had moved to Dallas with Ruby, nine were Jewish, according to the same HSCA memo; and 3) according to another HSCA report, of the seven or eight mob-linked individuals that Ruby called, only one was Italian. Why, then, is there such emphasis in the media and in government investigations on the Mafia?<sup>100</sup>

In his unauthorized biography of Meyer Lansky published in 1971, Hank Messick wrote in an author's note that "I try to show [in this book] that organized crime isn't the province of any one ethnic group or secret society. Just as no such group has a monopoly on virtue, neither does one have a monopoly on evil."<sup>101</sup> But by detailing in his book how Lansky had risen to the top of the National Crime Syndicate in America, "I've been smeared as anti-Semitic from coast to coast by gangsters who used religion as a cloak."<sup>102</sup> Messick, an investigative journalist and one-time reporter for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, wrote extensively about organized crime and conducted much of his research where the action was taking place—interviewing the key players in the back rooms and

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99. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 183.

100. Ibid.

101. Hank Messick, *Lansky* (New York: Berkley Publishing, 1971), 11.

102. Ibid., 10.

streets of America's most corrupt cities.<sup>103</sup> While the HSCA report suggests that Carlos Marcello of Louisiana and Santos Trafficante of Florida were at the center of the intrigue surrounding JFK's assassination, Messick makes a strong case that both were front men for Lansky. Messick points out that Marcello was an obscure immigrant struggling in the Algerian section of New Orleans when Lansky cut him in on the syndicate's lucrative slot machine operations in Louisiana.<sup>104</sup> By 1959, according to Messick, Lansky was "the Chairman of the Board of the National Crime Syndicate with no one left to contest that fact."<sup>105</sup> And while the public heat was on the "Mafia" from 1960 to 1965, Lansky "succeeded in keeping his name completely out of the newspapers" during a period that for Lansky "was one of the most active, and profitable, eras he had known."<sup>106</sup> When Messick once asked a "high-ranking Justice [Department] official" why investigators emphasized the Mafia rather than the National Crime Syndicate, the official answered:

The Mafia was small and handy. The feeling was the American people would buy it with its family relations and blood oaths a lot quicker than they could understand the complex syndicate. You must remember, we wanted to get public support behind the drive on crime.<sup>107</sup>

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103. John Harney, "Hank Messick: Journalist and Author on Organized Crime," *The New York Times*, November 20, 1999, LexisNexis Academic.

104. Messick, *Lansky*, 86-87.

105. *Ibid.*, 87, 214, 219.

106. *Ibid.*, 241.

107. *Ibid.*, 242.

JFK researchers who cite the involvement of organized crime in JFK's murder seldom go up the chain of command to name Lansky as the head of the National Crime Syndicate or to bring up Lansky's ties to those involved in the assassination. Only Piper and the authors of *Coup d'Etat in America*, Alan J. Weberman and Michael Canfield, draw Lansky into their investigative lenses.<sup>108</sup> Piper argues that Lansky worked with both Mossad and the CIA's Angleton to pull off the assassination.<sup>109</sup> Weberman and Canfield do not mention Mossad or Israel, but list a number of links between Lansky and key suspects in the assassination, including Ruby, who had worked under Lansky running guns to Cuba.<sup>110</sup> When the national syndicate needed another man to direct affairs in Dallas, it sent Ruby.<sup>111</sup> Weberman and Canfield also point out that Ruby's close friend, Lewis McWillie, was a henchman for Lansky.<sup>112</sup>

Other researchers who argue that organized crime was part of the JFK assassination plot are careful to avoid any connection to Lansky. In *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, author John H. Davis notes that Lansky was key in elevating Marcello to the head of syndicate operations in Louisiana, but leaves Lansky entirely out of his discussion of the events leading up to the

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108. Weberman and Canfield, *Coup d'Etat*, 151, 155, 163, 294.

109. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 2, 85.

110. Weberman and Canfield, *Coup d'Etat*, 155

111. *Ibid.*, 154.

112. *Ibid.*, 294.



JFK assassination.<sup>113</sup> Numerous JFK researchers point the blame at mobsters Trafficante, Giancana, Roselli, and, to varying degrees, Jimmy Hoffa, but drop syndicate chairman Lansky out of the equation. The list includes authors David Kaiser (*The Road to Dallas*), Jim Marrs (*Crossfire*), David Scheim (*Contract on America*), Dale Peter Scott (*Deep Politics and the Murder of JFK*), and Lamar Waldron (*Ultimate Sacrifice*). And even though Marrs details the ties among Lansky, McWillie, and Ruby, he distances Lansky from the anti-Castro groups involved in the assassination by quoting HSCA investigator Robert Blakey that Trafficante, not Lansky, was "the undisputed Mafia gambling boss in Havana."<sup>114</sup>

Historian Larry J. Sabato mentions Ruby's ties to numerous organized crime figures, including Sam Giancana and Lewis McWillie, but does not mention the close connection of both men to Lansky.<sup>115</sup> O'Leary is one of the few JFK researchers to delve into the possible Marseille connection to the assassination and, although he notes that Lansky set up the longstanding deal to supply America's underworld with heroin via the French connection, he fails to include Lansky in the conspiracy to murder JFK among "the U.S. Mafia, the Marseille Mafia, and the highest echelons of the South Vietnamese government."<sup>116</sup> In an authorized 1991 biography of Meyer Lansky, *Little Man*, author Robert Lacey defends Lansky against accusations of involvement in the JFK

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113. Davis, *Kingfish*, 50.

114. Marrs, *Crossfire*, 168-69.

115. Sabato, *Kennedy Half Century*, 202.

116. O'Leary, *Triangle of Death*, 151.

assassination<sup>117</sup> but also avoids any reference in his book to Marcello, whom Lansky sponsored as head of the Louisiana syndicate.

Likewise, many JFK researchers have been careful to distance the curious maneuverings of mobster Eugene Hale Brading (aka Jim Braden) from Lansky, even though Brading was a "personal courier" for Lansky, according to CBS producer Peter Noyes, author of *Legacy of Doubt*.<sup>118</sup> In his book, *Fatal Hour*, Blakey wrote that he and other staff investigators for the HSCA had interviewed Brading extensively but had come to no conclusions.<sup>119</sup> Brading, a charter member of the syndicate-financed La Costa Country Club,<sup>120</sup> visited the same Dallas office of the H.L. Hunt Oil Company on the same afternoon that Ruby did, one day before the assassination.<sup>121</sup> Brading was staying at the Cabana Motel in Dallas at the time, a mob hangout where Ruby had visited a friend around midnight before the assassination. Brading showed up again the next day in the Dal-Tex Building overlooking Dealey Plaza, where not long after the assassination he was arrested for "acting suspiciously" and taken in for questioning. Brading told police he had gone into the building to make a phone call related to his oil business dealings in

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117. Robert Lacey, *Little Man: Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), 386.

118. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 177; and Peter Noyes, *Legacy of Doubt: Did the Mafia Kill JFK?* (Lexington, Ky.: PandG Publications, 2010), 240.

119. Blakey and Billings, *Fatal Hour*, 430.

120. Ibid.

121. Blakey and Billings, *Fatal Hour*, 430.

Dallas. He was released without charge.<sup>122</sup> In the months leading up to the assassination, Brading was seen in New Orleans frequenting an office in the Pere Marquette Building (Room 1701) just down the hall from where Marcello's attorney, G. Wray Gill, employed David Ferrie as an investigator (Room 1707).<sup>123</sup>

In interviews and testimony where a reference to "Jew" or "Jews" has been used in relation to the JFK assassination, many researchers tread lightly, if it all—again, likely because they expect to receive flak. In *Coup d'Etat in America*, first released in 1975, Weberman and Canfield quote an FBI informant who was in the process of selling weapons to a Cuban exile group just prior to the JFK assassination. The informant, Thomas Mosley, reported that a member of the exile group, Homer Echevarria, told him on November 21, 1963 that "we now have plenty of money—our new backers are the Jews—as soon as they take care of JFK."<sup>124</sup> Yet when David Scheim's book, *Contract on America: The Mafia Murder of President John F. Kennedy*, was released in 1988, Scheim trimmed and altered Echevarria's quote to read "as soon as we take care of Kennedy."<sup>125</sup>

Jeanne de Mohrenschildt, the wife of George de Mohrenschildt—Oswald's closest friend and, some say, CIA handler—told Marrs that her husband, following his nervous breakdown, thought that "the Jewish Mafia and the FBI" were out to get him.<sup>126</sup> George

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122. Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, Kindle locations 82319-82322.

123. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 178.

124. Weberman and Canfield, *Coup d'Etat*, 41.

125. Scheim, *Contract on America*, 218.

126. Marrs, *Crossfire*, 285.

de Mohrenschildt killed himself with a shotgun on the day that the HSCA served him with a subpoena to testify in its investigation. De Mohrenschildt's statements to his wife have been dismissed by researchers and the media as evidence only of his increasing paranoia. In the two months leading up to his suicide, however, de Mohrenschildt had been receiving injections and prescriptions for chronic bronchitis from a mysterious physician, Dr. Charles Mendoza, who appeared in Dallas soon after the HSCA was established. Mendoza disappeared with a nonexistent forwarding address just a few months after Jeanne de Mohrenschildt insisted her husband stop treatments.<sup>127</sup> Even the most comprehensive accounts of the JFK assassination and its aftermath fail to include references to Echevarria's or de Mohrenschildt's statements. John Simkin's 7,000-page encyclopedia on the JFK assassination,<sup>128</sup> which includes more than a hundred references to the Mafia, forty-one references to Irish or Irishman, and nine references to Sicilians, contains not a single reference to the words Jew or Jewish Mafia.

Potential Israeli/Mossad connections to the assassination have been ignored by both the U.S. media and JFK researchers, with the exception, of course, of Piper. While hanging around the Dallas police station where Oswald was in custody after the assassination, Ruby told a number of witnesses at the scene that he was there to translate for "Israeli reporters."<sup>129</sup> Piper asks in *Final Judgment* why Ruby would make such a

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127. Ibid., 286.

128. Simkin, *Assassination of John F. Kennedy*.

129. "Warren Commission Documents: Commission Document 355—DOJ Criminal Division Listing of Witnesses Interviewed," *Mary Ferrell Foundation* website, 256, accessed July 17, 2014,

claim (Israeli newspapers had no competent English-speaking correspondents?) and why federal investigators have never sought the identities of the newspapers and their reporters.<sup>130</sup>

Foreign media, including Israeli newspapers, have been less reluctant to report on possible Israeli links to the assassination. On July 25, 2004, Israel's respected *Jerusalem Post* carried the headline: "Vanunu: Israel was behind JFK assassination." The *Post* based its story on an interview that Israeli nuclear physicist, Mordechai Vanunu, had reportedly given to a London-based Arabic paper in violation of his parole agreement not to talk to foreign media. Vanunu had just been released after eighteen years in an Israeli prison for exposing Israel's covert atomic weapons program, which today is still part of a "don't ask, don't tell" agreement between the U.S. and Israel. In the interview, Vanunu said that "according to 'near-certain indications,' Kennedy was assassinated due to 'pressure he exerted on then head of government, David Ben-Gurion, to shed light on Dimona's nuclear reactor,'" where Israel had been secretly developing nuclear weapons.<sup>131</sup>

Newspapers around the world picked up the report but none did so in the United States, except for the Washington-based weekly, *The American Free Press*, which had also

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<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?mode=searchResultandabsPageId=345628>.

130. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 232.

131. Arian O'Sullivan, "Vanunu—Israel Was Behind JFK Assassination," July 25, 2004, *Rense.com*, <http://www.rense.com/general54/jfk.htm> accessed.

published Piper's book. *The American Free Press* conducted its own interview with Vanunu several weeks later, in which he made the same claims.<sup>132</sup>

Originally called *The Spotlight*, *The American Free Press* was founded by Willis Carto, whom the ADL calls "one of the most influential American anti-Semitic propagandists of the past 50 years."<sup>133</sup> Piper fired back in *Final Judgment* that the ADL is "the primary intelligence and propaganda arm of Israel's Mossad in the United States."<sup>134</sup> His source is the *Executive Intelligence Review* (EIR), a weekly news magazine founded by Lyndon LaRouche, the controversial head of the LaRouche Movement and eight-time presidential candidate for the U.S. Labor Party. LaRouche has been called a racist and an anti-Semite by the mainstream media and the Democratic Party.

In later editions of *Final Judgment*, Piper points out that thirty of his 746 footnotes are culled from LaRouche publications, including EIR.<sup>135</sup> Piper argues that the notes were not key to his thesis of Israeli and Lansky involvement in the JFK assassination. The thirty notes break down in the following ways: eight tie the ADL to bankers who also had ties to Lansky; three involve Rabbi Tibor Rosenbaum and Banque De Credit International and their ties to CMC-Perminde; three involve gun-running to

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132. Christopher Bollyn, "Vanunu Speaks: Israeli Nuclear Whistleblower Risks Jail to Talk Exclusively to AFP," July 31, 2004, *The American Free Press*, <http://www.americanfreepress.net/html/vanunu.html>.

133. "Extremism in America: Willis Carto," *The Anti-Defamation League* archive website, 2005, [http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext\\_us/carto.html](http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/carto.html).

134. Piper, *Final Judgment*, 141.

135. *Ibid.*, 516-17.

Israel in the 1940s; four contain background information on people connected to Rosenbaum and CMC-Perminde; one ties the law firm of Louis Broomfield and its client the Bronfman family to CMC-Perminde, and one refers to reports that the French OAS received money from Guy Banister, an associate of CMC-Perminde board member Clay Shaw.<sup>136</sup>

Obviously, supporters of Piper and supporters of Israel both have agendas in the JFK assassination debate. Researchers and journalists must proceed with caution about claims made by either side, but to dismiss either side's arguments based solely on their alleged reputations is a disservice to public discourse. As Noam Chomsky tells us, the intellectual's only obligation is to the truth.<sup>137</sup>

A further word of caution is important here. To explore the possibility of Israeli involvement in the JFK assassination should not be equated with "blaming it on the Jews." The covert operations of Israeli government and intelligence officials no more represent all Jews, or even all Israelis, than the covert operations of the CIA and its leaders represent all Americans. By that same logic, if members of an Israeli cabal were found to be complicit in the assassination, it should not give license to those who would try to extend the blame to all Israelis, much less to Jews of other nations.

Whatever his reasons, Ruby also feared a backlash against Jews would follow the Kennedy assassination. On three occasions, Ruby reportedly told his attorney, William

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136. Ibid., 517.

137. Noam Chomsky, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," *The New York Review of Books*, February 23, 1967, <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/19670223.htm>.

Kunstler, that "I did this [killed Oswald] so they wouldn't implicate Jews."<sup>138</sup> On Kunstler's last visit to his jail cell, Ruby handed him a note that stressed again his wish to protect Jews from a pogrom that he feared would follow the nation's outrage over the assassination.<sup>139</sup> Kunstler attributed Ruby's "convoluted thinking" to Oswald's ties to Fair Play for Cuba, whose members included Jews.<sup>140</sup> But even for someone as reportedly paranoid about anti-Semitism as Ruby, this logic seems a stretch when few Americans had even heard of Fair Play for Cuba and Oswald himself was not Jewish.

And yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, one need not be anti-Semitic to understand the deep motivation for Israel's possible involvement in the assassination of JFK.

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138. William M. Kunstler, *My Life as a Radical Lawyer* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1994), 158.

139. *Ibid.*

140. *Ibid.*



## Chapter 5: The Firewall

In *Deep Politics*, Peter Dale Scott observed that transnational links are common among intelligence officials who share information when it works to their advantage, "often in intrigues of which heads of government may be, at best, dimly aware."<sup>1</sup> Transnational, Scott reminds, does not necessarily mean government involvement but rather elements of intelligence and organized crime that transcend national boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Widening and unfiltering the investigative lens to include the possibility of a French/Mossad/CIA connection is logical and yet daunting. The logic stems from an understanding of the secret history at the time, and the fact that Israeli leaders felt that JFK's policies threatened their nation's very existence. The exploration is daunting, however, because of the legal and logistical challenges of investigating transnational covert operations as well as the likelihood of censorship from the pro-Israel lobby in the U.S. The two barriers form a firewall around a complete investigation into the assassination of JFK.

This chapter will first explore the relations between the United States and Israel during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, particularly with regard to Israel's development of nuclear weapons, then move into the silence of journalists and historians about issues that might be deemed critical of Israel. It then goes on to explore the likely reasons behind the failure of the media to examine possible links between the Mossad

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1. Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 301.

2. *Ibid.*, 300.

and the JFK assassination. If "likely reasons" seems speculative, it is because we don't know what we don't know. Like any rigorous examination of censorship, it is constrained by the ability to look only at what is published and spoken, rather than what is kept from circulation.

To understand the possible motivation of Israel's leaders requires a detailed knowledge of what was happening behind the scenes between the U.S. and Israel in the early 1960s—crucial developments that continue to have major foreign policy repercussions for both countries and yet have been largely ignored by the U.S. media. It was not until 1991, nearly three decades after Israel acquired its own nuclear arsenal, that investigative journalist Seymour Hersh blew the lid off the secret history of Israel's nuclear weapons development, and America's complicity in that secret, in his book *The Samson Option*. In a one-page author's note, Hersh by necessity avoided details about his sources, many of whom were confidential, but it is clear from his research that he talked to dozens of U.S. and Israeli journalists, scientists, diplomats, and intelligence officials. He points out that none of his interviews was conducted in Israel because he refused to submit his research to Israeli military censors. He concludes his note with this observation: "Those Israelis who talked weren't critics of Israel's nuclear capability, nor would they feel secure without the bomb. They spoke because they believe that a full and open discussion of the Israeli nuclear arsenal—and of the consequences of its development—is essential in a democratic society."<sup>3</sup>

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3. Seymour M. Hersh, *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991), author's note.

In many ways, Hersh's book was groundbreaking, both for its historical research and its implications for U.S. foreign policy and world peace.<sup>4</sup> The *New York Times* did not review the book, but it ran a front-page story summarizing the news contained in its pages.<sup>5</sup> The *Washington Post's* review called the book “a good read” and a “welcome” addition to the topic. However, according to Hersh biographer Robert Miraldi, most reviews coalesced around a negative frame that questioned Hersh’s use of unnamed sources and cast doubt on his findings. Nuclear physicist Peter D. Zimmerman dismissed Hersh’s work as “trust me” journalism that was weak and poorly sourced. Journalist Steve Emerson accused Hersh of “outright inventions.” On the other hand, in a capsule review for *Foreign Affairs*, Yale history professor Gaddis Smith called the book a “fascinating work of investigative history [that] sifts hard fact from the decade's rumors and half-confirmed reports about Israel's nuclear weapons program.”<sup>6</sup> According to Miraldi, *The Samson Option* became a bestseller in Europe, but American Jews, whom Miraldi called a big part of the book-buying public, quickly turned against Hersh. The book did not sell well in Manhattan bookstores patronized heavily by Jews, Miraldi said,

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4. Dan Charles, “Review: Israel Has Its Nuclear Demons,” *New Scientist* magazine 1796, November 1991, 58.

5. Joel Brinkley, “Israeli Nuclear Arsenal Exceeds Earlier Estimates, Book Reports,” *The New York Times*, October 20, 1991. See also, Seymour M. Hersh, “U.S. Said to Have Allowed Israel to Sell Arms to Iran,” *The New York Times*, December 8, 1991.

6 Gaddis Smith, "The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1992, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/47574/gaddis-smith/the-samson-option-israels-nuclear-arsenal-and-american-foreign-p>.

and synagogues that invited Hersh to speak about the book canceled the invitations once they discovered that he did not favor Israel possessing the atomic bomb.<sup>7</sup>

Hersh's book revealed new information about the close working relationship between the Mossad and the CIA. When the Carter administration "abruptly cut back [its] intelligence liaison with Israel," Hersh wrote, "[it] perhaps didn't fully understand how entwined Israel's primary intelligence agency, Mossad, had become with the CIA during the Cold War."<sup>8</sup> He went on to write that "the complex amalgamation of American financing and Israeli operations remains one of the great secrets of the Cold War."<sup>9</sup> It remains so today.<sup>10</sup> The possibility that this long-held secret could be implicated in the JFK assassination has been ignored by the mainstream media while those who have tried to explore the connection have been dismissed as cranks or bigots.

Hersh's book makes abundantly clear how Israel's leadership in the early 1960s believed that the development of nuclear arms was both urgent and vital to the fledgling nation's survival. He also shows how President Kennedy was just as determined to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis when, over a thirteen-day period, the world was brought to its closest point of mutual annihilation. The

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7. Robert Miraldi, *Seymour Hersh: Scoop Artist* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2013), 280.

8. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 5.

9. Ibid.

10. Alcibiades Bilzerian, "How Much does Israel Cost the Average American?" *Veterans Today*, July 17, 2013, [://www.veteranstoday.com/2013/07/17/how-much-does-israel-cost-the-average-american/](http://www.veteranstoday.com/2013/07/17/how-much-does-israel-cost-the-average-american/); and "The CIA and Mossad: A Murderous Alliance," *WL Central*, December 3, 20011, <http://wlcentral.org/node/2370>.

depth and animosity of the rift between Kennedy and Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion is still locked in the classified U.S. records of their private meetings and phone calls and the pages of their personal correspondence.<sup>11</sup> Even so, Hersh was able to uncover through interviews and available documents a struggle between the two men that surely marks a low point in the relations between the two longtime allied nations. Yuval Neeman, an Israeli intelligence officer who drafted Ben-Gurion's responses to JFK, told Hersh "it was not a friendly exchange. Kennedy was writing like a bully. It was brutal."<sup>12</sup>

JFK was at an immediate disadvantage in his relations with Israel because of his father's perceived anti-Semitism among many Jewish leaders at the time. As ambassador to England just before World War II, Joseph P. Kennedy had opposed going to war against Germany, as did many people in Catholic Ireland, where the Kennedys had their roots.<sup>13</sup> JFK was also seen as being ungrateful for both the financial support he received from the Jewish community during his presidential campaign and the overwhelming support of Jewish voters who helped elect him (81 percent, or 8 percentage points higher than even those voters who shared Kennedy's Catholic faith).<sup>14</sup> In his drive to head off what he felt would be a disaster for world and Middle Eastern peace, Kennedy pressed hard and often for thorough inspections of the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev desert, where Israel was secretly engaged in a massive and intensive effort to develop

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11. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 101-2.

12. *Ibid.*, 121.

13. *Ibid.*, 95.

14. *Ibid.*, 96-97.

nuclear weapons.<sup>15</sup> Kennedy not only demanded inspections of the plant but also the right to convey the results to Israel's arch-nemesis at the time, Gamal Abdul Nasser, the Egyptian dictator and charismatic leader whose vision of a unified Arab world seemed predicated on the destruction of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Israel's leaders, and perhaps especially Ben-Gurion, were convinced that Israel must have nuclear weapons to assure the survival of its nation—and, ultimately, its race—against an increasingly hostile Arab world and the growing menace of the Soviet Union. What cannot be forgotten is that the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, and Hitler's "ultimate solution" of eradicating the Jewish people, was then less than two decades old—still painfully acute in the minds of Israel's leadership. Then, in late April 1963, a short-lived alliance among Egypt, Syria and Iraq seemed an Israeli nightmare come true.<sup>17</sup> Ben-Gurion appealed to Kennedy to declare jointly with the Soviet Union a guarantee of the territorial integrity and security of every nation in the Middle East. Kennedy declined, as well as rejecting the offer of a White House visit with Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion's fears, and frustrations, can be gauged in the letter that he sent to Kennedy five days later: "Mr. President, my people have the right to exist . . . and this existence is in danger."<sup>18</sup> He asked that the United States sign a security agreement with Israel. Again, Kennedy declined.<sup>19</sup> Under pressure from his own party in Israel, and in part for

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15. Ibid., 119-28.

16. Ibid., 101-2.

17. Ibid., 121.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

his inability to work with Washington, Ben-Gurion resigned a few weeks later after fifteen years as Israel's prime minister and defense minister. But under Israel's new leader, Golda Meir, Israel's nuclear weapons program at Dimona continued unimpeded and Ben-Gurion, in an unofficial capacity, only enhanced his role as one of its chief supporters.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time JFK was trying to prevent Israel from acquiring nuclear weapons, he was reaching out to Nasser, offering a combination of economic aid and promises that he would oppose nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.<sup>21</sup> Kennedy's aim was to put the United States on a better footing with Arab extremists, both to assure Western access to Middle Eastern oil and to thwart the growing reliance of Arab nations on the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> He also tried to bring stability and peace to the troubled region with a failed plan to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict over the issue of Palestinian refugees, including the right to return to their homeland.<sup>23</sup>

To put it mildly, Kennedy's policy goals in the Middle East were not popular with Israeli leaders or the growing number of Jewish supporters of Israel in America.<sup>24</sup> To see Egypt receiving U.S. economic aid while also being supplied with advanced Soviet

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20. Ibid., 129.

21. Abraham Ben-Zvi, "Stumbling into an Alliance," *Israel Affairs* 15, no. 3 (2002): 226; and Jeffrey Michael Nadaner, "Shifting Sands: John F. Kennedy and the Middle East" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2002), ix.

22. Ben-Zvi, "Stumbling into an Alliance," 233; and Nadaner, "Shifting Sands," 2.

23. Nadaner, "Shifting Sands," x.

24. Ibid.

weapons must have been one of Ben-Gurion's deepest fears come true.<sup>25</sup> As a result of pressure from Israel and its supporters at home, Kennedy was forced to balance his overtures toward Egypt by supplying Israel with HAWK defensive missiles and greater U.S. assurances of Israel's security.<sup>26</sup>

In a 2009 article published in *Israel Affairs*, University of Haifa professor Abraham Ben-Zvi, who has long written about U.S.-Israeli relations, viewed Kennedy's compromise with Israel as the "unintentional" beginning of the U.S.-Israeli military alliance and "the Rubicon" that was crossed prior to LBJ's supplying of offensive weapons to Israel. Ben-Zvi wrote that Kennedy "emerges—in terms of his basic attitudes and policies toward Israel—as neither a villain nor a hero but, essentially, as a cold, calculating, and unsentimental statesman."<sup>27</sup> Ben-Zvi intuits from a single memorandum sent by Robert Komer, the Middle East expert for the National Security Council, to JFK on July 23, 1963 that the president had realized in his final months that he could not force Israel to drop its plans for developing nuclear weapons. Ben-Zvi then concludes that Kennedy offered Israel "upgraded security guarantees without insisting any longer on a reciprocal Israeli concession concerning Dimona."<sup>28</sup> What Ben-Zvi does not mention is that Israel went to extreme lengths to deceive Kennedy and his administration that Dimona was aimed solely at generating nuclear power rather than nuclear weapons. After

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25. Ben-Zvi, "Stumbling into an Alliance," 240.

26. Ibid., 226-27.

27. Ibid., 226.

28. Ibid., 240.



Kennedy agreed to supply Israel with HAWK missiles in 1962, Ben-Gurion agreed to allow a team of U.S. inspectors into the facilities at Dimona. But what they would find was an elaborate "Potemkin Village and never know it."<sup>29</sup> With the help of its French allies, Israel went so far as to construct a false control room, replete with computerized measuring devices, that appeared to operate a working nuclear power reactor. The U.S. team, none of whom could speak Hebrew, spent two days inspecting Israel's elaborate ruse and, of course, found nothing suspicious.<sup>30</sup> In a visit with JFK later in April 1963, then-Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Shimon Peres lied to the president by saying Israel had no interest in developing nuclear weapons and added that "our interest is in de-escalating" the arms race in the Middle East.<sup>31</sup> Hersh argues in *The Samson Option* that JFK was passionately opposed to an Israeli bomb up until the moment of his death and clearly believed that Israel had not yet developed a nuclear capability.<sup>32</sup>

The fear and panic of Israel's early leaders, whose memories of the Holocaust were far from faded, were a major factor in the development of its nuclear arsenal—and one of its biggest strategic blunders, according to Israeli journalist Ari Shavit in his 2013 book *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*. By the mid-1950s, Britain had withdrawn its protection from Israel and the Arab world surrounding it was uniting and mustering its forces, eventually with the help of the Soviet Union. "Israel's leaders

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29. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 111.

30. *Ibid.*, 112.

31. *Ibid.*, 119.

32. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 125.

discovered that the protective umbrella of the West was slowly furling," Shavit writes. "The colonial era was coming to an end, Europe was in retreat, and Israel was left on its own in a hostile desert. At the same time, Arab nationalism was coalescing, being transformed by rapid modernization and swift military build-up."<sup>33</sup> Ben Gurion, with an able assist from Shimon Peres, manipulated French scientists and intelligence officials into aiding Israel in its nuclear quest—despite the opposition of French President Charles de Gaulle—while U.S. officials opposed to nuclear proliferation, especially Kennedy, were lied to and deceived.<sup>34</sup>

Israel's nuclear shield may have worked for forty-six years, but has become more a strategic curse than a blessing, Shavit argues. As JFK and many of Israel's more cautious leaders feared at the time, Israel's nuclear quest has triggered an arms race in the Middle East that has become its biggest threat.<sup>35</sup> Shavit has chosen not to cast those early Jewish leaders as either villains or heroes, but as fearful, loyal men caught up in the race to keep Israel one step ahead of its enemies. For them, he wrote, thinking was paralysis and paralysis was doom.<sup>36</sup>

After Kennedy's assassination, the administration of President Lyndon Johnson would mark a sea change in U.S.-Israeli military relations. Johnson and his team continued to request inspections of the Dimona reactor, but certainly not with the rigor or

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33. Shavit, *My Promised Land*, 77.

34. *Ibid.*, 179, 185-86.

35. *Ibid.*, 194.

36. *Ibid.*, 197.

insistence of JFK.<sup>37</sup> Like Kennedy before him, LBJ had no inkling of how far Israel had progressed toward a nuclear capability, even though there is evidence that his own national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, had been aware of the progress.<sup>38</sup> In fact, as early as 1960, the CIA knew that Israel had broken ground at Dimona for a chemical reprocessing plant—a crucial step in developing a nuclear bomb and key information that had been withheld from the U.S. inspection team at Dimona and from Kennedy himself.<sup>39</sup>

Regardless of whether Kennedy was aware of what was truly happening at Dimona, Israel's leaders knew that LBJ was far more sympathetic to the Israeli cause than Kennedy had been. As a young congressman from Texas prior to World War II, LBJ had pushed hard to cut the red tape for European Jews seeking asylum from Nazi Germany and to prevent the deportation of those refugees already in the U.S., including the eminent conductor Erich Leinsdorf.<sup>40</sup> Johnson visited Dachau just days after its liberation at the end of World War II, and had returned to the U.S., according to his wife Lady Bird, "just shaken, bursting with overpowering revulsion and incredulous horror at what he had seen. Hearing about it is one thing, being there is another."<sup>41</sup> As Senate Majority Leader, Johnson was perhaps the strongest voice in Congress to oppose Eisenhower's sanctions

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37. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 135-136.

38. *Ibid.*, 133.

39. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 112; and Michael Holzman, *James Jesus Angleton: The CIA, and the Craft of Counterintelligence* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 166.

40. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 127.

41. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 127.

against Israel for refusing to withdraw from the Gaza Strip after the 1956 Suez Crisis. LBJ detailed his objections in a much-publicized letter to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and privately told an Israeli diplomat that the Eisenhower administration was “not going to get a goddamn thing here (Congress) until they [treat you fairly].”<sup>42</sup> Unlike Kennedy’s staff, two of LBJ’s closest advisers, Abe Fortas (whom he named to the Supreme Court) and Edwin L. Weisl Sr., had been strong supporters of Israel’s security.<sup>43</sup> By the mid-1960s, LBJ and his advisers had adopted an unofficial policy of pretending that America’s cursory inspections proved that Israel was not going nuclear while appearing to continue JFK’s policy of nonproliferation.<sup>44</sup> By 1967, Israel had the capability to build its own bomb—the ultimate answer, its leaders felt, to its existential anxieties.

LBJ proved a staunch supporter of Israel’s security in other ways as well. Under his administration, the United States supplanted France as Israel’s top arms supplier in 1968.<sup>45</sup> As David Schwam found while researching his master’s thesis, “The Forgotten Legacy of Lyndon Johnson: US-Israel Arms Policy Development, 1963-1968,” few

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42. , “Letter From Senator Lyndon B. Johnson to the Secretary of State,” Washington, February 11, 1957, U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, *Foreign Relations of The United States, 1955–1957, Volume XVII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1957*, Document 83, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v17/d83>; and Edward Tivnan, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 51.

43. Hersh, *The Samson Option.*, 126.

44. *Ibid.*, 143.

45. David S. Schwam, “The Forgotten Legacy of Lyndon Johnson: U.S.-Israeli Arms Policy Development, 1963-1968” (master’s thesis, University of Houston, 1994), 125-26; and Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 160.

historians, and by extension even fewer journalists, have noted this dramatic turning point in the relations between the United States and Israel—a move that would entrench the United States in the quagmire of the Middle East conflict up to the present day.<sup>46</sup> The pivotal year was 1964, when LBJ agreed to supply Israel with offensive weapons but did so secretly through a third party, West Germany, which sold Israel its best tanks.<sup>47</sup>

Prior to the LBJ administration, the U.S. held mostly to a policy of not selling military weapons of any kind to Israel, and only twice granted exceptions for defensive armaments under Eisenhower and Kennedy. Between 1949 and 1963, total U.S. military aid to Israel was \$27.4 million. In four years of the Johnson administration, however, total outlays rose to \$134.9 million for both defensive and offensive weaponry, including tanks and advanced aircraft.<sup>48</sup> Today U.S. military aid to Israel is about \$3 billion annually.<sup>49</sup> As Schwam pointed out, LBJ was not only sympathetic to the Israeli cause but savvy about the growing political strength of the American Jewish community and the pro-Israel lobby, both of which had been vital to the election of JFK in 1960.<sup>50</sup>

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46. Schwam, "The Forgotten Legacy," viii, 1.

47. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 133; and John W. Finney, "U.S. Secretly Let Germans Transfer Tanks to Israelis," *The New York Times*, January 31, 1965.

48. Schwam, "The Forgotten Legacy," 2; and Clyde R. Mark, "Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance," *Congressional Research Service*, April 26, 2005, 13, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IB85066.pdf>.

49. Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," *Congressional Research Service*, April 11, 2014, Summary, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>.

50. Schwam, "The Forgotten Legacy," 19.

Once again, it is imperative to point out that the American Jewish community is not synonymous with the pro-Israel lobby and even less so with Mossad. That said, Mossad has shown its willingness to subvert and manipulate U.S. policy for its own aims. In the last years of the George W. Bush administration, CIA memos reveal, Mossad officers posed as CIA agents—equipped with U.S. passports and U.S. dollars—to recruit operatives from the terrorist group Jundallah for a covert war against Iran. The aim was to raise a "false flag" that the U.S. was conspiring with terrorists against the Iranian regime even though U.S. agents had been told to avoid all contact with the terrorist group, whose members had assassinated Iranian government officials and killed Iranian women and children.<sup>51</sup> The story did not find its way into *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*.

JFK researchers with a more balanced outlook than Michael Collins Piper would certainly face accusations of anti-Semitism if they dared to investigate, or speculate upon, the possibility of Mossad's having a role in the JFK assassination. There is much anecdotal evidence to show that those in the U.S. media who criticize Israeli policies are often accused of being "anti-Semitic" or "not a friend of Israel," as detailed by two prominent American scholars, John J. Mearsheimer of The University of Chicago and Stephen M. Walt of Harvard University, in their 2007 book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*.<sup>52</sup> The evidence includes the personal attacks on former President Jimmy Carter after the 2006 publication of his book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, in which

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51. Mark Perry, "False Flag," *Foreign Policy*, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/13/false\\_flag](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/13/false_flag), January 13, 2012.

428. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), v, 9, 171, 188.

he urged Israel to return to its pre-1967 borders and to end Jewish settlements in the occupied territories as the basis for negotiating peace between Israel and the Arab world.<sup>53</sup> In 2002, media coverage showing the destruction of homes and the loss of life after the Israeli military incursion into the West Bank in response to Palestinian suicide bombings led supporters of Israel to boycott *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*.<sup>54</sup>

The U.S. media have long been chided by foreign journalists and media watchdogs for a reluctance to criticize Israeli policies in the Middle East or to question U.S. support for Israel and its policies. More recently, Mearsheimer and Walt have argued that media coverage of U.S.-Israeli relations has been dominated by the influence of pro-Israel lobbies, in particular the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC. “Channeling public discourse in a pro-Israel direction is critically important, because an open and candid discussion of Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories, Israeli history, and the lobby’s role in shaping America’s Middle East policy might easily lead more Americans to question existing policy toward Israel and to call for a relationship with Israel that more effectively serves the U.S. national interest,” Mearsheimer and Walt wrote.<sup>55</sup>

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53. *Ibid.*, ix.

54. Felicity Barringer, “Mideast Turmoil: The News Outlets; Some U.S. Backers of Israel Boycott Dailies Over Mideast Coverage They Deplore,” *The New York Times*, May 23, 2002.

55. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 168.

AIPAC is broadly viewed as the most influential lobbying organization in America. Along with more than sixty allied Political Action Committees and individual contributors, it is collectively the biggest single-issue donor to political campaigns in America.<sup>56</sup> Beyond its monetary influence, its sixty thousand active members, as well as several hundred thousand of its supporters in Jewish communities, can generate flak through intimidating letters, emails, and phone calls on a scale that editors and reporters seldom see on other issues. Most recently, a *Time* magazine cover story on September 13, 2010, with the headline “Why Israel Doesn’t Care about Peace”—based on a poll that showed just 8 percent of Israelis rated the conflict with Palestine as the nation’s top concern—drew more than a thousand letters, most of them protests from Israeli supporters, according to an editor’s note in the September 27, 2010, issue of the magazine. In a press release issued September 18 of that year, The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith charged *Time* with “calling up age-old anti-Semitic stereotypes about Jews and money” and demanded an apology from the magazine’s editors.<sup>57</sup>

Accusations of “anti-Semitism” in varying forms has become one of the most powerful tools in the pro-Israel lobby’s arsenal of flak for silencing those in the media who question Israel’s treatment of Palestinians or America’s unconditional support for

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56. E.S. Herman, "The Pro-Israel Lobby," *Canadian Dimension* 36, no. 3 (2002): 27; and Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 120.

57. “ADL: *Time* Magazine Cover Story Rehashes Anti-Semitic Lies,” *Haaretz*, September 10, 2010; and “CAMERA Alert: *Time* Magazine Cover Story Update,” *JewishIndy*, <http://www.jewishindy.com/modules.php?name=Newsandfile=articleandsid=13377>, September 22, 2010.



Israel.<sup>58</sup> “In fact, anyone who says there is an Israel lobby runs the risk of being charged with anti-Semitism, even though [the lobbyists themselves] are hardly bashful about describing their influence,” Mearsheimer and Walt wrote.<sup>59</sup>

The silencing campaign against U.S. critics of America's pro-Israeli foreign policy also extends to American universities, where the media often turn to find experts who can provide analysis and commentary on news events in the Middle East. Campus Watch, sponsored by the pro-Israel organization Middle East Forum, posts articles attacking the work of academics it calls “enemies of the Israeli state.”<sup>60</sup> The site encourages donors to withhold their contributions from the academics’ institutions and to urge university officials to dismiss or block the promotion of offending academicians. Rachid Khalidi, a professor of Arab studies at Columbia University, told *The New York Times* that he believes the aim of Campus Watch is to have “a chilling effect” on free speech.<sup>61</sup> “There is a dearth of proper debate in the media and politics about the Middle East. The only place where these views can be found is in academia. They want to shut down this last window.”<sup>62</sup>

Seth Ackerman, a staff member of the media watchdog Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, has pointed out that “American journalists probably feel more pressure about

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58. Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 188-96.

59. *Ibid.*, 188.

60. Michael North, "We Have Our Eye On You . . . So Watch Out," *Times Higher Education Supplement*, January 25, 2005.

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*

their coverage of Israel than any other subject.”<sup>63</sup> That was true even at FAIR, he said, where “despite having a readership that is overwhelmingly sympathetic to our progressive critique of the media, our Middle East coverage invariably elicits angry letters and complaints, sometimes resulting in canceled subscriptions.”<sup>64</sup>

U.S. support for Israel was a primary reason that the architects of the 9/11 attack targeted the United States and killed nearly three thousand innocent civilians in September 2001, according to the 9/11 Commission Report. Khalid Sheik Muhammad, cited by the report as “the mastermind of the 9/11 attack” and a top al-Qaeda leader, was driven “by his violent disagreement with U.S. foreign policy favoring Israel. . . . KSM himself was to land [a hijacked plane] at a U.S. airport and, after killing all adult male passengers on board and alerting the media, deliver a speech excoriating U.S. support for Israel, the Philippines and repressive governments in the Arab world.”<sup>65</sup> The report also states that Osama Bin Laden, then leader of al-Qaeda and KSM’s superior, had twice urged KSM to advance the date of the attack to coincide with media events tied to Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem—the first time after then-Israeli opposition party leader Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount and the second “supposedly after Bin Laden learned from the media that Sharon would be visiting the White House.”<sup>66</sup>

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63. Seth Ackerman, "Al-Agsa Intifada and the U.S. Media," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Winter 2001): 73.

64. *Ibid.*, 74.

65. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 154, <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf>.

66. *Ibid.*, 250.

Media critics and foreign journalists alike have taken the U.S. media to task since 9/11 for, one, failing to make the connection in its coverage between the al-Qaeda attack and U.S. foreign policy and, two, obscuring the issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that might have made clearer the animus that al-Qaeda and other Arab extremists have toward the United States.<sup>67</sup> That animus has led to two wars in the Middle East initiated by the U.S.—those in Iraq and Afghanistan—at a considerable cost in lives, taxpayers' dollars and investment at home. By at least one estimate that includes disease, injuries, and mental health issues, U.S. casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq exceed 500,000.<sup>68</sup> According to a Harvard researcher, the cost to U.S. taxpayers for those wars, including the treatment of veterans, will run from \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion, or more than a third of the U.S. total debt of \$17 trillion.<sup>69</sup> Today, our alliance with Israel may draw us into a third war as the pro-Israel lobby pressures Congress and President Obama to end negotiations with Iran and take military action instead to stop Iran's quest to join Israel in the region's nuclear club.<sup>70</sup>

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67. Shahira Fahmy, "How Could So Much Produce So Little? Foreign Affairs Reporting in the Wake Of 9/11" (conference paper, International Communication Association, 2007); Herman, "The Pro-Israel Lobby"; and Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 64-70, 169-75.

68. "Iraq, Afghanistan: American Casualties Total 500,000, Counting Injury and Disease, Writer Claims," *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 2010, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/06/iraqafghanistan-.html#sthash.IXCadj1Q.dpuf>.

69. Ernesto Londono, "Iraq, Afghan Wars Will Cost \$4 Trillion to \$6 Trillion, Harvard Study Says," *The Washington Post*, March 28, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/study-iraq-afghan-war-costs-to-top-4-trillion/2013/03/28/b82a5dce-97ed-11e2-814b-063623d80a60\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/study-iraq-afghan-war-costs-to-top-4-trillion/2013/03/28/b82a5dce-97ed-11e2-814b-063623d80a60_story.html).

70. John Hudson, "Despite AIPAC Lobby, Obama Calms Congress on Iran Talks," *Foreign Policy*, October 23, 2013,

A nuclear arms race in the tinder box of the Middle East was exactly what President Kennedy was trying to prevent when he insisted on meaningful inspections of Israel's Dimona facility. With the assassination of JFK and the change in leadership to LBJ, the balance of power in the Middle East took a dramatic and destabilizing turn—not only by introducing nuclear weapons into a deeply divided region but by allying America's interests with that of Israel as its chief arms supplier. This, indeed, is LBJ's forgotten legacy.

As a leading leftist intellectual and a hero of the progressive media, Noam Chomsky has disappointed many critics of the Warren Commission by chastising JFK researchers for wasting their time chasing after the conspirators in the JFK assassination. Why bother, he argues in *Rethinking Camelot*, when Kennedy would not have changed the course of history. Despite the hopes for peace infused in him by an adoring generation of baby boomers, Chomsky says, Kennedy would have continued and escalated the war in Vietnam and continued to serve the needs of the military-industrial complex and the nation's business elite.<sup>71</sup>

But could JFK have prevented a nuclear-armed Israel? Perhaps not, not when Israel had a decisive start at Dimona by 1963 and an iron-willed determination to see it through. But there can be little doubt that Kennedy, up to the moment of his death, intended to try.<sup>72</sup> Nor can there be any doubt that he favored a more even-handed policy

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[http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/10/23/despite\\_aipac\\_lobbying\\_obama\\_admin\\_pacifies\\_congress\\_on\\_iran](http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/10/23/despite_aipac_lobbying_obama_admin_pacifies_congress_on_iran).

71. Noam Chomsky, "Vain Hopes, False Dreams," *Z Magazine*, September 1992, <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199209--.htm>.

72. Hersh, *The Samson Option*, 125.

in the Arab-Israeli conflict than the president who succeeded him. The question then becomes whether Kennedy's policies toward Israel, and their dramatic reversals after this assassination, might have been a motive in his murder.

No one in the mainstream media or in the nation's academic circles has dared to explore or even to suggest that connection. As we have seen, more than self-censorship is involved. There is a well-based fear that one's reputation and livelihood will be harmed by such a venture.

Many respected JFK researchers now believe that James J. Angleton, the chief of counterintelligence for the CIA and the agency's liaison to Mossad during much of the Cold War, was at the very center of a broad conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. Only Angleton had the authority and the access to pull off what Scott calls a two-phase "dialectical cover-up" that first led U.S. leaders, including LBJ and Federal Bureau of Investigation Chief J. Edgar Hoover, to believe that Oswald had been an agent for the Kremlin.<sup>73</sup> Their fear was that, if the American public learned the truth, it would lead to a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union and the instant obliteration of tens of millions of Americans.<sup>74</sup> But by the time the nation's leaders realized there was no truth to the Oswald-Soviet connection, they had become victims of their own hasty cover-up, trapped inside Phase II of the cover-up—the lone nut gunman theory first devised by the

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73. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 38-44.

74. John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA: The Documented Truth about the Unknown Relationship between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008), 618.

Warren Commission in 1964 and patched and jerry-rigged over the past fifty years like the wheezing engine of an old jalopy.<sup>75</sup>

In the epilogue of the 2008 edition of his book, *Oswald and the CIA*, author and former military intelligence analyst John Newman argues that only Angleton could have coordinated the cover-up for the Crime of the Century. He details how Angleton played a shell game with the records in Oswald's CIA files so that, on the day of the assassination, "a World War III virus" implicating Oswald as a Soviet agent would suddenly emerge within the agency. The resulting national security crisis could be stemmed only by a massive cover-up reaching all the way to the White House and into the Warren Commission.

It is now apparent that the World War III pretext for a national security cover-up was built into the fabric of the plot to assassinate President Kennedy. The plot required that Oswald be maneuvered into place in Mexico City and his activities there carefully monitored, controlled, and, if necessary, embellished and choreographed. The plot required that, prior to 22 November, Oswald's profile at CIA HQS and the Mexico station be lowered; his 201 file had to be manipulated and restricted from incoming traffic on his Cuban activities. The plot required that, when the story from Mexico City arrived at HQS, its significance would not be understood by those responsible for reacting to it. Finally, the plot required that, on 22

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75. Scott, *Deep Politics*, 44-57.

November, Oswald's CIA files would establish his connection to Castro and the Kremlin.

The person who designed this plot had to have access to all of the information on Oswald at CIA HQS. The person who designed this plot had to have the authority to alter how information on Oswald was kept at CIA HQS. The person who designed this plot had the authority to alter how information on Oswald was kept at CIA HQS. The person who designed this plot had to have access to project TUMBLEWEED, the sensitive joint agency operation against the KGB assassin, Valery Kostikov [whom Oswald had made contact with in Mexico City]. The person who designed this plot had the authority to instigate a counterintelligence operation in the Cuban affairs staff (SAS) at CIA HQS. In my view, there is only one person whose hands fit into these gloves: James Jesus Angleton, Chief of CIA's Counterintelligence Staff.<sup>76</sup>

Newman points out that, from the time of Oswald's attempted defection to the Soviet Union in 1959 to his dual dalliances with both pro-Castro and anti-Castro organizations in New Orleans and on to his alleged visits to the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City, Angleton and his closest staff members kept the files on Oswald, and kept them very close to the vest, until after the assassination. Newman continued:

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76. Newman, *Oswald and the CIA*, 636-37.

In my view, whoever Oswald's direct handler or handlers were, we must now seriously consider the possibility that Angleton was probably their general manager. No one else in the Agency had the access, the authority, and the diabolically ingenious mind to manage this sophisticated plot. No one else had the means necessary to plant the WWII virus in Oswald's files and keep it dormant for six weeks until the president's assassination. Whoever those who were ultimately responsible for the decision to kill Kennedy were, their reach extended into the national intelligence apparatus to such a degree that they could call upon a person who knew its inner secrets and workings so well that he could design a failsafe mechanism into the fabric of the plot. The only person who could ensure that a national security cover-up of an apparent counterintelligence nightmare was the head of counterintelligence.<sup>77</sup>

Yet Newman fails to mention Angleton's role as liaison to Mossad and his close ties to Israeli intelligence officials, whom Angleton often lunched with at his favorite Washington, D.C., restaurant.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, in his best-selling biography of Angleton, *Cold Warrior* author Tom Mangold gives short-shrift to Angleton's partnership with Mossad, writing in a footnote that it was irrelevant to the narrative of his book.<sup>79</sup> A more telling point, however, may have been made in another of Mangold's footnotes, in which he

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77. Ibid.

78. Pamela Kessler, "Cloak-and-Swagger," *The Washington Post*, March 3, 1989.

79. Charles R. Babcock, "Obsessions of a Spymaster," *The Washington Post*, July 7, 1991; and Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1991), 362.



points out that the CIA's officially designated historian for the counterintelligence staff, Richard Klise, was told flatly by Angleton in 1968 that the records on the Israeli desk were all "off limits."<sup>80</sup>

The elite media also have glossed over Angleton's close ties to Israel. *The New York Times'* obituary on Angleton, who died in 1987, mentions in just a sentence that Angleton handled "the Israeli account" at the CIA for more than a decade.<sup>81</sup> *The Washington Post* obituary includes two sentences on Angleton's ties to Israel, including that he helped "establish what came to be the CIA's 'special relationship' with Israel's secret service, the Mossad, that resulted in the United States' obtaining vast quantities of data on Soviet military hardware and on conditions in the Soviet Union."<sup>82</sup>

Angleton's long and close relationship with Mossad is given the same circumspect treatment in Israel, where eight months after his death, the top leaders of Israel's intelligence community gathered in a secret ceremony outside Jerusalem and planted a tree on a barren hillside to honor a "friend" for services that were never specified. In the only story in either elite U.S. newspaper to provide more than a passing reference to Angleton's ties to Israel, *Washington Post* foreign correspondent Glenn Frankel wrote from Jerusalem about the secret tribute to Angleton following his death in 1987:

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80. Mangold, *Cold Warrior*, 433.

81. Stephen Engelberg, "James Angleton, Counterintelligence Figure, Dies" *The New York Times*, May 12, 1987.

82. Richard Pearson, "James Angleton, Ex-Chief Of Counterintelligence, Dies," *The Washington Post*, May 12, 1987.

The head of the pathologically secretive spy agency, the Mossad, was there, as was his counterpart with Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security service. Five former heads of those agencies and three former military intelligence chiefs were also present. Their mission: to pay final tribute to a beloved member of their covert fraternity—the late CIA chief of counterintelligence, James Jesus Angleton.

The tree planting, a traditional ceremony of reverence here, took place at noon at a site about ten miles west of here. Eventually there will be hundreds of trees at the spot, just across the road from a similar forest dedicated to the late Israeli war hero Moshe Dayan.

Following the planting, the group gathered again in Jerusalem behind the King David Hotel at a scenic spot not far from the walls of the Old City that Angleton often visited on his trips here. There they dedicated a memorial stone that read, in English, Hebrew and Arabic: "In memory of a dear friend, James (Jim) Angleton" but that gave no indication of who Angleton was or what he did.<sup>83</sup>

Angleton more than any other JFK assassination suspect was in a key position of power and secrecy to coordinate the actions among all those with a motive to kill the president, including elements of the CIA, organized crime, the French OAS, and Israel's Mossad. Angleton, more than any other suspect, likewise emerges at pivotal moments in the gathering of evidence in the JFK case—as the CIA liaison to the Warren Commission

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83. Glenn Frankel, "The Secret Ceremony: Israel's Memorial to the CIA's James Angleton," *The Washington Post*, December 5, 1987.

and as the "friend" who, soon after their deaths, visited the home of CIA Mexico City bureau chief Winston Scott to confiscate cartons of sensitive files, photos and tapes, and the manuscript of a potentially damning novel that Scott had written,<sup>84</sup> and likewise broke into the Georgetown home of JFK's closest mistress, Mary Pinchot Meyer, to confiscate her sensitive diary.<sup>85</sup>

Could Angleton, who was at least complicit in hiding Israel's nuclear development program from JFK and who may have actively aided in its secret development, have partnered with Israel and the Mossad in Kennedy's assassination? The question needs to be asked and explored without demonizing journalists and historians who venture there.

The firewall must come down.

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84. Jefferson Morley, *Our Man in Mexico: Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008), 1-9.

85. Peter Janney, *Mary's Mosaic: The CIA Conspiracy to Murder John F. Kennedy, Mary Pinchot Meyer, and Their Vision for World Peace* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012), 75-85.

## Chapter 6: Lost in the Master's Mansion

My Father's mansion has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

John 14:2

On the eve of his firing from the CIA in 1975, chief counterintelligence officer James Jesus Angleton tried to explain to *New York Times* reporter Seymour Hersh how his division could have been involved in illegal covert tactics against Vietnam War protestors.

"A mansion has many rooms, and there were many things going on during the period of the [anti-war] bombings," Angleton said. He then added with a now-famous slip of the tongue, "I'm not privy to who struck John."<sup>1</sup>

It is anybody's guess as to which "John" Angleton was referring to in the last sentence of his quote, although he later testified in court, without being asked directly, that it was not John F. Kennedy.<sup>2</sup> Nor can we be certain how he was applying the biblical reference in his opening clause ("A mansion has many rooms. . .") to his counterintelligence operations. But many biblical scholars say the passage is the Apostle

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1. Seymour Hersh, "Huge C.I.A. Operation Reported in US against Antiwar Forces, Other Dissidents During Nixon Years," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1974, 1.

2. David Talbot, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 2007), 275.

John's promise that those who have faith in Jesus will be saved no matter what their religious differences.

On many levels, the passage can be seen as an apt metaphor for the mysteries surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy. There are solid clues that suspects with varying loyalties but a shared interest in killing the president may have worked together in Angleton's labyrinthine mansion, among them elements of the CIA, organized crime, the anti-Castro community, right-wing political groups, the French OAS, and Israel's Mossad. But, for the most part, the media have been stuck in the foyer where the master has confined them for the past fifty years.

“Master” has a dual meaning in this case. It refers, above all, to Herman-Chomsky’s Propaganda Model in which an elite media serve the interests of those in power because news “makers” and news “producers” share a common mindset through ownership, management, overlapping social circles, and mutual self-interests. For-profit media organizations are by economic necessity conservative in their outlook because they are dependent upon the advertising revenue and financial investment provided by powerful interests.<sup>3</sup>

“Master” refers as well to Angleton, who used his legendary skills in the art of counter-intelligence to fashion walls of mirrors throughout the mansion that continue to confuse and deceive those who try to navigate its rooms. Like most people who work in a top-down culture where the lines of command are clear and straightforward, journalists have a hard time thinking beyond the centralized, hierarchical structure of non-covert

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3. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), xi.

operations. But counterintelligence operations are different. They are more often free-floating, decentralized, and deceptive in achieving their aims. Agents, or those working for agents, are often asked to do things that appear to be in their own self-interest (or the interest of some larger entity to which they are loyal) when, in truth, they may be serving an entirely different or even antagonistic purpose of which the actor is unaware.

For instance, based on what we now know about Lee Harvey Oswald's activities and associates, we might well ask if he was pro-Castro or anti-Castro? His carefully crafted public persona showed him to be pro-Castro, but in his personal life, he associated primarily with those who were anti-Castro and anti-communist, including his closest friend George de Mohrenschildt and his family's primary benefactors, Ruth and Michael Paine. Or was Oswald simply a psychotic sociopath with no allegiances at all? Certainly, supporters of the Warren Report would like us to think so. But others who knew him well believed him to be intelligent, confident to the point of cockiness and entirely sane.

Many JFK researchers believe that Oswald was working as a double agent—that is, he appeared to be a Castro supporter while, in truth, he was gathering information for the CIA on the activities of Castro supporters in New Orleans. The same JFK researchers will tell you that the deception probably did not stop there. They argue that Oswald did not realize that his ultimate purpose for the CIA, or more likely for rogue elements within the CIA, was to be set up as a pro-communist patsy who would later be blamed for the assassination of JFK.

For those who have not seriously studied the record of Oswald's conflicting associations and contorted maneuverings in the months leading up to the assassination, or the details of what happened in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963—and that includes

the vast majority of journalists, past and present—Oswald's public claim that he was "a patsy" seems like so much guilty denial. Journalists especially are skeptical of conspiracy theories because they don't know what they don't know and what they do know is often served up by those in positions of power and authority that give them instant credibility with journalists. This bit of circular logic has its origins in the Propaganda Model. Unconsciously more often than not, journalists do the bidding of the rich and powerful because that is who controls and finances them—from their corporate owners and their major advertisers to the army of "experts," spin doctors, and public relations people who serve up irresistibly easy-to-use information from the points of view of those who can afford to pay them. Coercion is seldom needed, Herman and Chomsky argue, because "right-thinking" journalists will be hired in a corporate environment to begin with.<sup>4</sup>

Reporters and editors at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are perhaps the most susceptible to being co-opted because of their proximity to the centers of power and their ambition to be a part of the inner circle where they can "scoop" whatever the power structure is willing to provide as "news." Those inner circles are more than happy to invite them in where they can be more easily manipulated and perhaps even recruited as "patriots" for spying and propaganda purposes, as the CIA's Operation Mockingbird did with more than four hundred top journalists and publishers during the Cold War. It is no wonder that *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee felt he could not direct his news staff to investigate the Kennedy assassination. Bradlee was not only close to JFK and his family, but he was the brother-in-law of JFK's most intimate

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4. Ibid.

mistress, Mary Pinchot Meyer, whose ex-husband Cord Meyer ran the CIA program that recruited high-powered journalists (including Bradlee) to work for the CIA. For Bradlee, probing the Crime of the Century would have been like tattling on one circle of friends for what they did to another circle of friends.

Journalists are at a distinct disadvantage in reporting on events that occur at the level of what JFK researcher Peter Dale Scott calls "deep politics"—the underworld of fluid connections among government leaders, intelligence officials and organized criminals that respects neither law nor international boundaries. The players in deep politics are not likely to leave behind records of their illegal activities, especially details of how those operations were financed. And when they do leave a money trail, it is often through complex international money laundering operations such as Centro Mondiale Commerciale (CMC), the shadowy Rome-based trade promotion group whose board member Clay Shaw of New Orleans may have acted as paymaster for the JFK assassination. Obviously, too, sources operating at the level of deep politics are not likely to talk to the media and, when they do, they are not likely to tell the truth. For those engaged in counterintelligence activities, the media are just one more tool to be used and, if necessary, lied to and misled.

Indeed, in the first hours after the assassination, the media became a tool to spread the disinformation that Oswald, whom the FBI and Dallas police were already identifying as the president's assassin, had ties to the Soviet Union and Cuba. Angleton's counterintelligence division was directly responsible for generating this lie, which effectively shut down both media and government inquiries into the details of the assassination for fear of provoking a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union.



When it became clear that Oswald had no such ties, the media switched gears and took their cues from government and intelligence officials by maintaining that Oswald had acted as a lone crazed gunman in the shooting. The official theory was backed by a pantheon of authority figures on the Warren Commission, from respected members of the Senate and House to the heads of the CIA and the World Bank, with esteemed Chief Justice Earl Warren as its chairman. How could members of the media possibly think that such a distinguished body would conduct anything less than a complete and impartial investigation into the murder of the nation's highest elected official?

At the same time, however, the elite media were not keen at looking too carefully at the work of the commission. Just hours after the assassination, *Time-Life* purchased the Zapruder film and then suppressed evidence in the film for more than a decade that appears to show Kennedy being shot in the head from the front of his motorcade, indicating there were at least two assassins in Dealey Plaza that day. *The New York Times* dropped its investigation into the Kennedy assassination in 1966 and, of course, *The Washington Post* never launched one. In 1967, CBS secretly altered and misrepresented a broadcast so that it would show that its panel of marksmen had reproduced Oswald's apparent feat of firing off three rifle shots in 5.6 seconds and hitting a moving target at the distance of the president's limousine.

By choosing the appearance of stability over truth, however, the media established their passive role in the JFK mystery for the next half century, allowing government and intelligence officials to control and manipulate the information that has so far reached the American public. Rather than conducting their own investigations into the case, the media have failed in their duty as government watchdogs by endorsing the

patchwork of inconsistencies, improbabilities, and outright deceptions that have sustained the Warren Report for fifty years.

Despite the mainstream media's unquestioning support for the commission's findings, the lone gunman theory is, indeed, just a theory, and a weak one at that. It takes into account only a narrow range of eyewitness testimony, physical evidence, possible motivations, and known linkages among suspects in the case. To reach its conclusions, the Warren Commission ignored both Oswald's and Jack Ruby's ties to the CIA and organized crime as well as the testimony of scores of eyewitnesses to the shooting in Dealey Plaza and to the arrival of the president's body at Parkland Hospital. Doctors, nurses, technicians, and law enforcement officials at the hospital that afternoon swore they saw a small entry wound in JFK's throat and a large blow-out in the back of his head, indicating a second shooter from the front. The commission also ignored the testimony of numerous eyewitnesses, including Dallas Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig, who said their advance on the grassy knoll immediately after the assassination was blocked by several men who identified themselves as Secret Service agents. In truth, there were no Secret Service agents in Dealey Plaza at the time; all of them had gone on to Parkland with the president's speeding motorcade.

The cornerstone of the Warren Commission's lone gunman theory, the so-called Magic Bullet, continues to hold sway with the mainstream media despite the high improbability that a single bullet could have caused seven wounds in two men (including the shattered bones in Connally's rib cage and wrist) and remain essentially intact, and despite the belief of the two closest eyewitnesses to the shooting, Texas Governor John Connally and his wife, Nellie, that Connally had been wounded by a separate bullet,

again indicating a second shooter. Further suspicion is cast upon the Warren Report by 1) eyewitnesses who say the president's head was surgically altered prior to its autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital, 2) the burning of the original autopsy report, 3) missing and/alterd photos and X-rays from the autopsy and 4) the disappearance of the president's brain and original casket.

JFK researchers who have dared to knock on other rooms in Angleton's mansion in search of conspirators have been marginalized and belittled by a mainstream media that have never ventured out of the foyer. Indeed, as Herman-Chomsky's Propaganda Model informs us, that is the price "conspiracy buffs" pay for failing to fall into line with the "right-thinking" of those in power. In line with the Propaganda Model, this dissertation found that the books of anti-Warren authors had one fifth the chance of being reviewed by the elite newspapers as did the books of pro-Warren authors. Further, when anti-Warren books were reviewed, they had little if any chance of being praised while the majority of pro-Warren books garnered positive reviews. In the TV news industry, networks were nearly twice as likely to interview pro-Warren as anti-Warren experts. And although individual anti-Warren researchers seldom have been targeted by name, mainstream journalists have often questioned their mental stability as a group and/or condemned their motivation as simple greed.

We have learned from historian John Lewis Gaddis that pivotal historical events often have multiple and interdependent causes, none of which can be ignored if we are to gain a satisfactory understanding of how and why the transition occurred. Those researchers and journalists who pursue broader and more inclusive theories than the lone

gunman narrative of the Warren Report are, in fact, exhibiting a more compelling logic than their timid counterparts.

The inner-most rooms in the master's mansion, those that may hold members of the Israeli government and the Mossad along with their allies in organized crime and the French OAS, continue to be locked and barred by social ostracism and outright censorship in line with Glenn C. Loury's Political Correctness theory and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence theory. Those who go knocking there face accusations of anti-Semitism and "blaming it on the Jews" when the covert actions of errant leaders and intelligence officials are no more representative of a people than such actions are amenable to their control. So far, only one JFK researcher—one with an extremist agenda, Michael Collins Piper—has tried to fit all the pieces together in the assassination puzzle, including potential links to Israel, Mossad, the French OAS, and Meyer Lansky's National Crime Syndicate. For his failure to share what Loury calls the "dearest communal values," Piper has been labeled anti-Semitic and his work has been shunned by the JFK research community, even by those who most passionately disagree with the findings of the Warren Report. Political Correctness theory predicts that anyone following Piper down that path, even those with a more moderate political agenda, will likewise be labeled anti-Semitic and shunned.

The textual analysis in this dissertation examined over a twenty-five year period (1988-2013) the news transcripts of the nation's commercial TV and cable news networks as well as the articles and reviews in its three major newsmagazines—*Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News*—and its two most influential newspapers, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. It also looked at the book selection biases during the same period

among U.S. publishers, based on the size and ownership of the publisher. Further areas for research might target:

- The nation's top regional newspapers to see if and how much they have differed from the elite U.S. papers in their treatment of JFK assassination theories.
- The foreign mainstream media to see if and how much they have differed from their U.S. counterparts.
- Trends among the growing number of Web pages and blogs devoted to the JFK assassination. Alternate theories to the Warren Commission findings appear to be flourishing on the Internet with, of course, varying degrees of credibility. To what extent have the alternative media filled the void left by a mainstream media reluctant to pursue an investigation beyond the narrow lens of the Warren Report?

Whether the full story of the JFK assassination is ever revealed depends not only on what evidence has been destroyed or withheld in our own country but in other countries as well, including Israel, France, Cuba, Russia, and Mexico, the last being the country where Oswald and/or an Oswald impostor contacted the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City in the weeks prior to the assassination. Unfortunately, while Americans can pressure our own government to reveal the last of the documents still sealed in the Kennedy case, we have no such leverage with foreign governments. Even so, an aggressive pursuit of the truth in this country could encourage investigators and government officials in other countries to release new information in the case.

By no means has this dissertation argued that Mossad's involvement in the JFK assassination is a certainty. With so much evidence in the case now missing, destroyed, altered or still classified, few things in the assassination are known for certain, and that

includes the Warren Commission's lone gunman theory. As Gaddis informs us, we will never have full knowledge of all the circumstances surrounding any historical event—a fact that should not deter historians and journalists from seeking a narrative "fit" that is as close as possible to the knowable truth.

Fifty years after the Kennedy assassination, the quest for the truth is no longer about finding and punishing those responsible for his death given that most, if not all, of the key players are likely dead as well. The quest is about the defense of our democracy against those who may have subverted and taken control of it. If, as many JFK researchers now believe, rogue elements of the CIA and U.S. military intelligence were involved in the killing of our nation's top elected leader, we are long overdue in placing oversight and constraints on those agencies. And if foreign elements were also involved, no matter how marginally, we as a nation have an even bigger task ahead of us in protecting our democratic processes. Exposing the transnational, covert connections among intelligence officials and organized crime—Scott's "deep politics"—will require international cooperation at a level never seen before.

Seeking truth has a value beyond finding definitive answers. Even when our knowledge of a national disaster is incomplete, the pursuit of truth keeps us alert to similar dangers and to the emergence of clues that may ultimately point to its causes. The mysteries surrounding the murder of one of our nation's most beloved and perhaps pivotal presidents may never be entirely vanquished. Yet we as a nation cannot afford to abandon, now or in the future, the search into every dark corner of its circumstances—an investigation that ought to be led by the nation's ultimate guardians of truth, its media.

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Horne, Douglas P. Interview by author. April 6, 2014.

Janney, Peter. Interview by author. April 4, 2014.

Morley, Jefferson. Interview by author. April 1, 2014.

Millegan, Kris. Interview by author. May 23, 2014.

Scott, Peter Dale. Interview by author. April 19, 2014.

Steele, David. Interview by author. April 8, 2014.

## Appendix A: Library of Congress Book Selection

The selection of books began with a simple search on the main page of the Library of Congress website ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)) using the following delimiters:

- Search keywords “John F. Kennedy Assassination”
- Check “All Items”
- Format: Books. Site: Catalog. Language: English.
- Years 1988 to 2013

The selection of books was further refined by the use of the following rules to assure quality and comparability:

- No ebooks
- No self-published books
- No contract books
- No reference books or guides
- Must be aimed at a national market for non-juveniles
- Must be non-fiction and non-humorous
- Must be primarily about the JFK assassination or someone key to the JFK assassination
- Must be published in U.S.
- Must be earliest edition of printed book

### Results of Library of Congress Search

The lists below includes all relevant books found in the Library of Congress catalogue from 1988 to 2013, per the selection rules cited above.

The books were categorized as **pro-Warren**, **anti-Warren** or **Mixed** after either a full reading (those marked with an asterisk) or a reading of some or all of the following: summaries on WorldCat and/or Amazon.com websites, online and/or newspaper reviews, and the introduction and/or selected excerpts from the book.

Finally, each **author’s status** was categorized under the following sets of credentials:

- 1=Witness or Official Investigator
- 2=Academic Historian (with Ph.D.)
- 3=Academic Other (with Ph.D., M.D. and/or J.D.)
- 4=Non-Academic

**Anti-Warren Books: Authors criticize the methods and findings of the Warren Commission and argue against a lone gunman theory.**

1. Adams, Don. *From an Office Building with a High-Powered Rifle: A Report to the Public from an FBI Agent Involved in the Official JFK Assassination Investigation*. Walterville, OR: TrineDay, 2012. Author Status: 1
2. Albarelli, H. P. *A Secret Order: Investigating the High Strangeness and Synchronicity in the JFK Assassination*. Walterville, OR: Trine Day, 2013. Author Status: 4
3. Baker, Judyth Vary, Edward T. Haslam, and Jim Marrs. *Me and Lee: How I Came to Know, Love and Lose Lee Harvey Oswald*. Walterville, OR: Trine Day, 2010. Author Status: 1
4. Belzer, Richard and David Wayne. *Hit List: An In-Depth Investigation into the Mysterious Deaths of Witnesses to the JFK Assassination*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013.\* Author Status: 4
5. Canal, John A. *Silencing the Lone Assassin*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2000. Author Status: 4
6. Chambers, G. Paul. *Head Shot: The Science behind the JFK Assassination*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2010. Author Status: 2
7. Craig, John R., and Philip A. Rogers. *The Man on the Grassy Knoll: Did the CIA Hire a Psychopath to Assassinate JFK?*. New York: Avon Books, 1992. Author Status: 1
8. Crenshaw, Charles A. *JFK: Conspiracy of Silence*. New York: Signet, 1992. Author Status: 1
9. Crenshaw, Charles A. *Trauma Room One: The JFK Medical Cover-Up Exposed*. New York: Paraview Press, 2001.\* Author Status: 1
10. Cornwell, Gary. *Real Answers: The True Story*. Spicewood, TX: Paleface Press, 1998.\* Author Status: 1
11. Davis, John H. *The Kennedy Contract: The Mafia Plot to Assassinate the President*. New York, N.Y.: HarperPaperbacks, 1993. Author Status: 4
12. Davis, John H. *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989.\* Author Status: 4



13. DiEugenio, James. *Destiny Betrayed: JFK, Cuba, and the Garrison Case*. New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1992. Author Status: 4
14. Douglass, James W. *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010. Author Status: 4
15. Elliott, Todd C. *A Rose by Many Other Names: Rose Cherami and the JFK Assassination*. Walterville, OR: TrineDay, 2013.\* Author Status: 4
16. Ernest, Barry. *The Girl on the Stairs: The Search for a Missing Witness to the JFK Assassination*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2013.\* Author Status: 4
17. Fetzer, James H., ed. *Assassination Science: Experts Speak Out on the Death of JFK*. Chicago: Catfeet Press, 1998.\* Author Status: 3
18. Fetzer, James H. *The Great Zapruder Film Hoax: Deceit and Deception in the Death of JFK*. Chicago: Catfeet Press, 2003. Author Status: 3
19. Fetzer, James H. *Murder in Dealey Plaza: What We Know Now that We Didn't Know Then about the Death of JFK*. Chicago: Catfeet Press, 2000. Author Status: 3
20. Fonzi, Gaeton. *The Last Investigation*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1993. Author Status: 1
21. Garrison, Jim. *On The Trail of the Assassins: My Investigation and Prosecution of the Murder of President Kennedy*. New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1988. Author Status: 1
22. Giancana, Antoinette, John R. Hughes and Thomas H. Jobe. *JFK and Sam: The Connection between the Giancana and Kennedy Assassinations*. Nashville, TN: Cumberland House, 2005. Author Status: 1
23. Groden, Robert J., and Harrison Edward Livingstone. *High Treason: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: What Really Happened?* New York: Conservatory Press, 1989.\* Author Status: 1
24. Groden, Robert J. *The Killing of a President: The Complete Photographic Record of the JFK Assassination, the Conspiracy and the Cover-Up*. New York: Viking Studio Books, 1993. Author Status: 1
25. Hosty, James P. *Assignment: Oswald*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996. Author Status: 1

26. Hepburn, James. *Farewell, America: The Plot to Kill JFK*. Roseville, CA: Penmarin Books, 2002.\* Author Status: 4
27. Heiner, Kent. *Without a Smoking Gun: Was the Death of Lt. Cmdr. William B. Pitzer Part of the JFK Assassination Cover-Up Conspiracy?* WALTERVILLE, OR; TrineDay, 2004. Author Status: 4
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32. Livingstone, Harrison. *High Treason 2: The Assassination of JFK and the Case for Conspiracy*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1992. Author Status: 4
33. Livingstone, Harrison Edward. *Killing the Truth: Deceit and Deception in the JFK Case*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1993. Author Status: 4
34. Livingstone, Harrison E. *Killing Kennedy and the Hoax of the Century*. New York: Carroll and Graf, 1995. Author Status: 4
35. Marrs, Jim. *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1989.\* Author Status: 4
36. McClellan, Barr. *Blood, Money and Power: How LBJ Killed JFK*. New York: Hannover House, 2003. Author Status: 4
37. McKnight, Gerald D. *Breach Of Trust: How the Warren Commission Failed the Nation and Why*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005.\* Author Status: 2
38. Melanson, Dr. Phillip. *Spy Saga: Lee Harvey Oswald and U.S. Intelligence*. New York: Praeger, 1990. Author Status: 3
39. Mellen, Joan. *Jim Garrison: His Life and Times, the Early Years*. Southlake, TX: JFK Lancer Productions and Publications, 2005. Author Status: 3

40. Menninger, Bonar. *Mortal Error: The Shot That Killed JFK*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992. Author Status: 4
41. Nelson, Phillip F. *LBJ: The Mastermind of the JFK Assassination*. New York: Skyhorse Pub., 2011. Author Status: 4
42. Newman, John. *Oswald and the CIA: The Documented Truth about the Unknown Relationship between the U.S. Government and the Alleged Killer of JFK*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 1995.\* Author Status: 4
43. Nolan, Patrick. *CIA Rogues and the Killing of the Kennedys: How and Why U.S. Agents Conspired to Kill JFK and RFK*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013. Author Status: 4
44. North, Mark. *Act of Treason: The Role of J. Edgar Hoover in the Assassination of President Kennedy*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1991. Author Status: 4
45. Oglesby, Carl. *The JFK Assassination: The Facts and the Theories*. New York: Signet Books, 1992. Author Status: 4
46. Oglesby, Carl. *Who Killed JFK?* Berkeley, CA: Odonian Press, 1992. Author Status: 4
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48. Piper, Michael Collins. *Final Judgment: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Conspiracy*. Washington, D.C.: Wolfe Press, 1993.\* Author Status: 4
49. Prouty, L. Fletcher. *JFK: The CIA, Vietnam, and the Plot to Assassinate John F. Kennedy*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 1996.\* Author Status: 4
50. Russell, Dick. 1992. *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers/R. Gallen. Author Status: 4
51. Russell, Dick. *On The Trail of the JFK Assassins: A Groundbreaking Look at America's Most Infamous Conspiracy*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2008. Author Status: 4
52. Scheim, David E. *Contract on America: The Mafia Murder of President John F. Kennedy*. New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1988.\* Author Status: 4

53. Scott, Peter Dale. *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.\* Author Status: 3
54. Shaw, Mark. *The Poison Patriarch: How the Betrayals of Joseph P. Kennedy Caused the Assassination of JFK*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013. Author Status: 4
55. Sloan, Bill with Jean Hill. *JFK: The Last Dissenting Witness*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publications, 1992. Author Status: 1
56. Stone, Roger J. *The Man Who Killed Kennedy: The Case against LBJ*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013. Author Status: 4
57. Talbot, David. *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 2007.\* Author Status: 4
58. Ventura, Jesse. *They Killed our President: 63 Reasons to Believe There Was a Conspiracy to Assassinate JFK*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013. Author Status: 4
59. Waldron, Lamar. *The Hidden History of the JFK Assassination*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2013. Author Status: 4
60. Waldron, Lamar, and Thom Hartmann. *Legacy of Secrecy: The Long Shadow of the JFK Assassination*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2009. Author Status: 4
61. Waldron, Lamar with Thom Hartmann. *Ultimate Sacrifice: John and Robert Kennedy, the Plan for a Coup in Cuba, and the Murder of JFK*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2005. Author Status: 4
62. Wecht, Cyril H., Mark Curridan and Wecht, Benjamin. *Cause of Death*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1993. Author Status: 3
63. Weisberg, Harold. *Case Open: The Unanswered JFK Assassination Questions*. New York: Carroll and Graf, 1994. Author Status: 4
64. Weisberg, Harold. *Never Again!: The Government Conspiracy in the JFK Assassination*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1993. Author Status: 4
65. Wrone, David R. *The Zapruder Film: Reframing JFK's Assassination*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993. Author Status: 2

**Pro-Warren Books: Authors may criticize aspects of the Warren Report but support its chief finding that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing JFK.**

1. Belin, David W. *Final Disclosure: The Full Truth about the Assassination of President Kennedy*. New York: Scribner's, 1988. Author Status: 1
2. Bugliosi, Vincent. *Parkland*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013.\* Author Status: 4
3. Bugliosi, Vincent. *Reclaiming History: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007. Author Status: 4
4. Fuhrman, Mark. *A Simple Act of Murder: November 22, 1963*. New York: William Morrow, 2006. Author Status: 4
5. Holland, Max. *The Kennedy Assassination Tapes*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004. Author Status: 2
6. Lambert, Patricia. *False Witness: The Real Story of Jim Garrison's Investigation and Oliver Stone's Film JFK*. New York: M. Evans, 1998. Author Status: 4
7. Latell, Brian. *Castro's Secrets: The CIA and Cuba's Intelligence Machine*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Author Status: 4
8. Mailer, Norman. *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery*. New York: Random House, 1995. Author Status: 4
9. Mallon, Thomas. *Mrs. Paine's Garage and the Murder of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2002. Author Status: 4
10. McAdams, John. *JFK Assassination Logic: How to Think about Claims of Conspiracy*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011.\* Author Status: 3
11. Nechiporenko, Oleg. *Passport to Assassination: The Never-before-Told Story of Lee Harvey Oswald by the KGB Colonel Who Knew Him*. New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993. Author Status: 4
12. O'Reilly, Bill. *Kennedy's Last Days: The Assassination that Defined a Generation*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013. Author Status: 4
13. Posner, Gerald. *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK*. New York: Anchor Books, 2003.\* Author Status: 4
14. Russo, Gus, and Stephen Molton. *Brothers in Arms: The Kennedys, the Castros, and the Politics of Murder*. New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2008. Author Status: 4

15. Russo, Gus. *Live by the Sword: The Secret War against Castro and the Death of JFK*. Baltimore: Bancroft Press, 1998. Author Status: 4
16. Specter, Arlen, and Charles Robbins. *Passion for Truth: From Finding JFK's Single Bullet to Questioning Anita Hill to Impeaching Clinton*. New York: HarperCollinsPub, 2000. Author Status: 1
17. Swanson, James L. *End of Days: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*. New York: William Morrow, 2013. Author Status: 4
18. Willens, Howard P. *History Will Prove Us Right: Inside the Warren Commission Report on the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*. New York: The Overlook Press, 2013. Author Status: 1

**Mixed Toward Warren: Authors criticize the methods and findings of the Warren Report but argue there is not enough evidence to develop a conspiracy theory.**

1. Kurtz, Michael L. *The JFK Assassination Debates: Lone Gunman versus Conspiracy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006.\* Author Status: 2
2. Johnson, Scott Patrick. *The Faces of Lee Harvey Oswald: The Evolution of an Alleged Assassin*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013. Author Status: 3
3. Sabato, Larry J. *The Kennedy Half-Century: The Presidency, Assassination, and Lasting Legacy of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2013.\* Author Status: 2
4. Shenon, Philip. *A Cruel and Shocking Act: The Secret History of the Kennedy Assassination*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013. Author Status: 4

**Appendix A-1: Author Status**

<b>Author Status</b>	<b>Books Published</b>	<b>Books Reviewed</b>	<b>Percent Reviewed</b>	<b>Positive Review</b>	<b>Percent Positive</b>
1	16	4	25 percent	1	25 percent
2	7	3	43 percent	1	33 percent
3	9	2	22 percent	0	0 percent
4	55	19	35 percent	8	43 percent

1=Witness or Official Investigator; 2=Academic Historian (with Ph.D.);  
 3=Academic Other (with Ph.D., M.D. or J.D.); 4=Non-Academic

## Appendix B: Content Analysis

### Coding Sheet

Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

Review appeared in: New York Times=1, Washington Post=2 \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of reviewer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date (MM/DD/YEAR): \_\_\_\_\_

Page and/or Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Headline: \_\_\_\_\_

Length (in Words): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Review: Single Book=1, Multiple Books=2, Brief=3 \_\_\_\_\_

How did the reviewer react to the following aspects of the book?

Quality of Research: Positive=1, Negative=2, Mixed=3, Neutral or NA=4 \_\_\_\_\_

Quality of Reasoning: Positive=1, Negative=2, Mixed=3, Neutral or NA=4  
\_\_\_\_\_

Writing/Organization: Positive=1, Negative=2, Mixed=3, Neutral or NA=4 \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Character/Motivations:

Positive=1, Negative=2, Mixed=3, Neutral or NA=4 \_\_\_\_\_

Based on your previous findings, what was the reviewer's OVERALL reaction to the book?

Choose One. Positive=1, Negative=2 \_\_\_\_\_



## Coders

Coders were three white, college-educated, Midwestern males, author included, in their 50s and 60s.

## Coding Results

<b>Author Reviewer</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Paper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Slant</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Logic</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Overall</b>
David W. Belin Ronnie Dugger	Final Disclosure	NYT	19890129	PW	2	2	4	2
Vincent Bugliosi Bryan Burrough	Or Not?	NYT	20070520	PW	4	1	3	1
Vincent Bugliosi Alan Wolfe	Goodbye, Grassy Knoll	WP	20070527	PW	1	1	3	1
Max Holland Thomas Mallon	The 11/22 Commission	NYT	20041031	PW	1	1	1	1
Norma Mailer M. Kakutani	Oswald and Mailer	NYT	19950425	PW	2	2	2	2
Norma Mailer Thomas Powers	The Mind of the Assassin	NYT	19950430	PW	1	1	1	1
Thomas Mallon Sara Mosle	Russian Lessons	NYT	20020203	PW	2	2	3	2
Bill O'Reilly Janet Maslin	Unabashed in the Face of Tragedy	NYT	20121011	PW	3	1	2	2
Gerald Posner Jeffrey A. Frank	Who Shot JFK?	WP	19931031	PW	3	3	1	1
Gerald Posner Lehmann-Haupt	Kennedy Assassination Answers	NYT	19930909	PW	1	1	4	1

Gerald Posner Geoffrey Ward	The Most Durable Assassination Theory	NYT	19931121	PW	1	1	1	1
Gus Russo Tim Naftali	A Complex Journey to the Grassy Knoll	WP	20090115	PW	2	2	4	2
Gus Russo Charles Salzberg	Review in Brief	NYT	19990523	PW	1	1	1	1
Arlen Specter Allen D. Boyer	Books in Brief: Non-Fiction	NYT	20010114	PW	1	4	2	1
<b>Sums</b>	<b>Total Reviews PW=14</b>							<b>Positive =9 Negative =5</b>
John H. Davis Ronnie Dugger	Reverberations of Dallas	NYT	19890129	AW	2	4	4	2
Gaeton Fonzi Jeffrey A. Frank	Who Shot JFK?	WP	19931031	AW	2	3	2	2
Jim Garrison Ronnie Dugger	Reverberations of Dallas	NYT	19890129	AW	3	4	4	2
David Kaiser Tim Naftali	A Complex Journey to the Grassy Knoll	WP	20090115	AW	2	2	4	2
Mark Lane Rory Quirk	Conspiracies	WP	19911215	AW	3	1	3	1
Jim Marrs Deborah Price	A Complete Catalog	WP	19891024	AW	3	2	1	2
Joan Mellen Jefferson Morley	A Farewell to Justice	WP	20051224	AW	2	3	4	2
Bonar Menninger David Streitfeld	The Accidental Assassination ?	WP	19920327	AW	2	4	4	2
Mark North	Conspiracies	WP	19911215	AW	2	2	4	2

A.G. Theoharis								
Peter Dale Scott Jeffrey A. Frank	Who Shot JFK?	WP	19931031	AW	1	2	1	2
David Talbot Alan Brinkley	Conspiracy	NYT	19930520	AW	3	3	4	2
David Talbot Matthew Dallek	Beyond the Grassy Knoll	WP	19930617	AW	3	3	2	2
Lamar Waldron Jefferson Morley	Conspiracy Theories	WP	19931127	AW	1	2	4	2
<b>Sums</b>	<b>Total Reviews AW=13</b>							<b>Positive =1 Negative =12</b>
Larry J. Sabato David Greenberg	Every President Wants that JFK Magic	WP	20131027	M	3	4	2	2
<b>Sums</b>	<b>Total Reviews Mixed=1</b>							<b>Positive =0 Negative =1</b>

### Intercoder Results

Positive Overall Review=1; Negative Overall Review=2

<b>Author/Reviewer</b>	<b>Coder J</b>	<b>Coder F</b>	<b>Coder L</b>
Belin/Dugger	2	2	2
Bugliosi/Burrough	1	1	1
Bugliosi/Wolfe	1	1	1
Holland/Mallon	1	1	1
Mailer/Kakutani	2	2	2
Mailer/T. Powers	1	1	1
Mallon/Mosle	2	2	2
O'Reilly/Maslin	2	2	2
Posner/Frank	1	1	2

Posner/LH	1	1	1
Posner/Ward	1	1	1
Russo Brothers/Naftali	2	2	2
Russo Live/Salzberg	1	1	1
Specter/Boyer	1	1	1
Davis/Dugger	2	2	2
Fonzi/Frank	2	1	2
Garrison/Dugger	2	1	2
Kaiser/Naftali	2	2	2
Lane/Quirk	1	1	1
Marrs/Price	2	1	2
Mellen/Morley	2	1	2
Menninger/Streitfeld	2	2	2
North/Theoharis	2	2	2
Scott/Frank	2	2	2
Talbot/Brinkley	2	2	2
Talbot/Dallek	2	2	2
Waldron/Morley	2	2	2
Sabato/Greenberg	2	1	2

Intercoder Reliability Scores

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders  
results for file "ReCalc CSV.csv"

File size: 196 bytes

N coders: 3

N cases: 28

N decisions: 84

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

<b>Average pairwise percent agr.</b>	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 and 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 and 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 and 3
85.714%	96.429%	82.143%	78.571%

Fleiss' Kappa

<b>Fleiss' Kappa</b>	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.704	0.857	0.518

Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

<b>Average pairwise CK</b>	Pairwise CK cols 1 and 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 and 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 and 3
0.718	0.92	0.65	0.582

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

<b>Krippendorff's Alpha</b>	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.707	84	72	3572

\*\*\*These figures are drawn from Krippendorff (2007, case C.)

### Appendix C: Publisher Information

In the charts below, publishers of JFK assassination books have been grouped by the book's Warren Report stance and listed in ascending order of their number of annual titles, unless data was not available. The mean of annual titles was calculated for each category of Anti-Warren, Pro-Warren and Mixed stance books.

Data for annual titles were drawn from the Literary Market Place catalog for each book's publication year or by direct contact with the publisher.

<b>Anti-Warren Books</b>					
<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Annual Titles</b>
James DiEugenio	Destiny Betrayed	1992	New York	Sheridan Square Press	1
Carl Oglesby	Who Killed JFK?	1992	Berkeley, CA	Odonian Press	3
James Hepburn	Farewell, America	2002	Roseville, CA	Penmarin Books	6
Don Adams	From an Office Building with a High-Powered Rifle	2012	Waterville, OR	Trine Day	8
H.P. Albarelli	A Secret Order	2013	Waterville, OR	Trine Day	8
Judyth Vary Baker	Me and Lee	2010	Waterville, OR	Trine Day	8
Todd C. Elliott	A Rose by Many Other Names	2013	Waterville, OR	Trine Day	8
Kent Heiner	Without a Smoking Gun	2004	Waterville, OR	Trine Day	8
David Talbot	Brothers	2007	Glencoe, Ill.	Free Press	9
Mark Lane	Plausible Denial	1991	New York	Thunder's Mouth Press	11
David E. Scheim	Contract on America	1988	New York	Shapolsky	20
Gaeton Fonzi	The Last Investigation	1993	New York	Thunder's Mouth Press	24
James H. Fetzer, ed.	Assassination Science	1998	Chicago	Catfeet Press	31

Bill Sloan	JFK: The Last Dissenting Witness	1992	Gretna, LA	Pelican Publishing	51
Gerald D. McKnight	Breach of Trust	2005	Lawrence	Univ. Press of Kansas	55
David Wrone	The Zapruder Film	2003	Lawrence	Univ. Press of Kansas	55
Mark North	Act of Treason	1991	New York	Carroll and Graf	56
Ray and Mary LaFontaine	Oswald Talked	1996	Gretna, LA	Pelican Publishing	65
Barry Ernest	The Girl on the Stairs	2013	Gretna, LA	Pelican Publishing	70
Jim Marrs	Crossfire	1989	New York	Carroll and Graf	85
G. Paul Chambers	Head Shot	2010	New York	Prometheus Books	120
Harrison Livingstone	High Treason 2	1992	New York	Carroll and Graf	120
Dick Russell	The Man Who Knew Too Much	1992	New York	Carroll and Graf	120
Lamar Waldron	Ultimate Sacrifice	2005	New York	Carroll and Graf	120
James Douglass	JFK and the Unspeakable	2010	New York	Simon and Schuster	125
David Kaiser	The Road to Dallas	2008	Cambridge, MA	Belknap Press	130
Harrison Livingstone	Killing Kennedy and the Hoax of the Century	1995	New York	Carroll and Graf	130
Harold Weisberg	Case Open	1994	New York	Carroll and Graf	130
Harold Weisberg	Never Again!	1995	New York	Carroll and Graf	130
Harrison Livingstone	Killing the Truth	1993	New York	Carroll and Graf	150
Carl Oglesby	The JFK Assassination: Facts and Theories	1992	New York	Signet	220
Antoinette Giancana	JFK and Sam	2005	Nashville, TN	Cumberland House	240

Peter Dale Scott	Deep Politics and the Death of JFK	1993	Berkeley, CA	Univ. of California Press	260
Robert J. Groden	The Killing of a President	1993	New York	Viking Studio Books	290
James H. Fetzer	Murder in Dealey Plaza	2000	Chicago	Catfeet Press	300
Dr. Phillip Melanson	Spy Saga	1990	New York	Praeger	300
John R. Craig	The Man on the Grassy Knoll	1992	New York	Avon Books	381
John H. Davis	The Kennedy Contract	1993	New York	HarperPaperbacks	388
John A Canal	Silencing the Lone Assassin	2000	St. Paul, MN	Paragon House	400
Phillip F. Nelson	LBJ: The Mastermind of the JFK Assassination	2011	New York	Skyhorse	400
Cyril H. Wecht	Cause of Death	1993	New York	E.P. Dutton	617
Bonar Menninger	Mortal Error	1992	New York	St. Martin's Press	1300
<b>Mean of AW Titles</b>					<b>166</b>
Richard Belzer	Hit List	2013	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Charles A. Crenshaw	Trauma Room one	2001	New York	Paraview Press	NA
Gary Cornwell	Real Answers	1998	Spicewood, TX	Paleface Press	NA
John H. Davis	Mafia Kingfish	1989	New York	McGraw-Hill	NA
James H. Fetzer	The Great Zapruder Film Hoax	2003	Chicago	Catfeet Press	NA
Jim Garrison	On the Trail of the Assassins	1988	New York	Sheridan Square Press	NA
Robert J. Groden	High Treason	1989	New York	Conservatory Press	NA
James P. Hosty	Assignment: Oswald	1996	New York	Arcade Publications	NA
Peter Janney	Mary's Mosaic	2012	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Barr McClellan	Blood, Money and Power	2003	New York	Hannover House	NA



Joan Mellen	Jim Garrison	2005	Southlake, TX	JFK Lancer	NA
John Newman	Oswald and the CIA	1995	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Patrick Nolan	CIA Roguesa and the Killing of the Kennedys	2013	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Bradley S. O'Leary	Triangle of Death	2003	Nashville, TN	WND Books	NA
Michael Collins Piper	Final Judgment	1993	Washington, DC	Wolfe Press	NA
L. Fletcher Prouty	JFK: The CIA, Vietnam and the Plot to	1996	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Dick Russell	On the Trail of the Assassins	2008	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Mark Shaw	The Poison Patriarch	2013	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Roger J. Stone	The Man Who Killed Kennedy	2013	New York	Skyhorse	NA
Jesse Ventura	They Killed Our President	2013	New York	Skyhorse	NA
<b>Pro-Warren Books</b>					
Gus Russo	Live by the Sword	1998	Baltimore	Bancroft Press	6
Patricia Lambert	False Witness	1998	New York	M. Evans	25
John McAdams	JFK Assassination Logic	2011	Washington, D.C.	Potomac Books	80
Howard P. Willens	History Will Prove Us Right	2013	New York	The Overlook Press	90
Bill O'Reilly	Kennedy's Last Days	2013	New York	Henry Holt and Co.	100
Gus Russo	Brothers in Arms	2008	New York	Bloomsbury	100
Oleg Nechiporenko	Passport to Assassination	1993	New York	Carol Publishing Group	160

Vincent Bugliosi	Parkland	2013	New York	W.W. Norton and Co.	400
Vincent Bugliosi	Reclaiming History	2007	New York	W.W. Norton and Co.	400
David W. Belin	Final Disclosure	1988	New York	Scribner's (MacMillan)	600
Mark Fuhrman	A Simple Act of Murder	2006	New York	William Morrow (HarperCollins)	1700
Arlen Specter	Passion for Truth	2000	New York	HarperCollins	1700
James Swanson	End of Days	2013	New York	William Morrow (HarperCollins)	1700
Max Holland	The Kennedy Assassination Tapes	2004	New York	Alfred A. Knopf (Random House)	3152
Brian Latell	Castro's Secrets	2012	New York	Palgrave Macmillan	3200
Norman Mailer	Oswald's Tale	1995	New York	Random House	3444
<b>Mean of PW Titles</b>					<b>1054</b>
Thomas Mallon	Mrs. Paine's Garage	2002	New York	Pantheon Books (Random House)	NA
Gerald Posner	Case Closed	1993	New York	Random House	NA
<b>Mixed Books</b>					
Michael L. Kurtz	The JFK Assassination Debates	2006	Lawrence	Univ. Press of Kansas	55
Scott Patrick Johnson	The Faces of Lee Harvey Oswald	2013	Lanham	Lexington Books	400
Larry J. Sabato	The Kennedy Half-Century	2013	New York	Bloomsbury	100
Philip Shenon	A Cruel and Shocking Act	2013	New York	Henry Holt and Co.	100
<b>Mean of Mixed</b>					<b>164</b>

### Appendix D: News Magazine Coverage

<b>News Magazine</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Slant</b>
Newsweek	19881128	The Kennedy Conundrum	David Gates	PW
Newsweek	19911223	Twisted History	K. Auchincloss	PW
Time	20131125	Broken Trust	David Von Drehle	Neutral
Time	20070702	The Assassination: Was It a Conspiracy? Yes	David Talbot	AW
Time	20131125	Debunker Among the Buffs	Jack Dickey	PW
Time	20070702	The Assassination: Was It a Conspiracy? No	Vincent Bugliosi	PW
Time.com	20131115	Interview: Oliver Stone Keeps Rolling	Jack Dickey	AW
U.S. News	19930830	The Man With the Deadly Smirk	Gerald Parshall	PW
U.S. News	20070611	The Final Verdict	Alex Kingsbury	PW

### Appendix E: TV News Coverage

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
ABC	19920122	Talk	2	5	1			
ABC	19920519	News	2				1	
ABC	19930617	News		2				
ABC	19930823	Book	1					
ABC	19931121	News	1				1	1
ABC	19940503	News	1					
ABC	19981123	News			1			
ABC	20031120	Special	22	1			1	4
ABC	20031120	News	4				2	
ABC	20040803	News	1					
ABC	20130112	News	1	1				
ABC	20130113	News	1	2				
ABC	20131119	Talk	3	2				1
ABC	20131119	News	3	2			2	
ABC	20131122	Talk		2				
CBS	19900806	News		1				
CBS	19911213	News	3	2			1	
CBS	19920205	News	1					
CBS	19920205	Special	1	4				
CBS	19920519	News	1	1				
CBS	19920520	News	2					
CBS	19920521	News	2	1				
CBS	19920521	News	1					
CBS	19930117	News		2				
CBS	19930823	News	1	1				
CBS	19930824	News		2				
CBS	19931118	News	2					
CBS	19960529	News	1					
CBS	19960529	News	1				1	
CBS	19960626	News		1				
CBS	19971008	News	2	2				
CBS	19990601	News		1				
CBS	19990601	News						
CBS	20031121	News	2	1			1	
CBS	20060512	Book			1			
CBS	20120131	News	1			1		1

CBS	20131011	News	1				1	
CBS	20131014	Book		1				
CBS	20131025	Book	1				1	
CBS	20131027	Book	2				1	
CBS	20131028	Book	1					
CBS	20131108	News	1					
CBS	20131111	News	1					1
CBS	20131116	News	1				1	1
CBS	20131116	Special	3				1	1
CBS	20131117	Talk	4				1	1
CBS	20131117	Special	4	1			1	2
CBS	20131122	News	1					1
CNBC	19970822	Talk	3					
CNBC	19990803	Special	3	1	1		1	
CNBC	20010203	Book	1					
CNN	19911120	Talk		1				
CNN	19920116	Talk	1	1				
CNN	19920406	Talk	1	2				
CNN	19920428	News		3				
CNN	19920519	News			1			
CNN	19920519	News	2	1				
CNN	19921126	Talk		1		1		
CNN	19930823	News		3				
CNN	19930830	Book	1	1				
CNN	19931122	Talk	1	1				
CNN	19940415	News	1	2				
CNN	19941118	News	1	1				
CNN	20030919	Book		2				
CNN	20031108	News	1	1		1		
CNN	20031120	News	4	1				1
CNN	20070518	News	1	1				1
CNN	20090108	Book	1	1				
CNN	20120204	News	1					
CNN	20131114	Special	14	5				1
CNN	20131115	Book			1			
CNN	20131120	News	2					
CNN	20131120	News	2					

CNN	20131121	News		1				
CNN	20131122	News		1				
CNN	20131122	Special	1					1
CNN	20131122	News	4	4				
CNN	20131122	News	1	2				
CNN	20131122	News	1	1				
CNN	20131123	Special	4					
CNN	20131123	News	1					
FOX	20060512	News			1	1		
FOX	20131122	News	2					
FOX	20131123	Book		1				
NBC	19971006	Book		1				
NBC	19980929	News	2	1				
NBC	19980930	News	1					
NBC	19981120	News			1			
NBC	19990601	News		1				
NBC	20010809	Special	2			1		
NBC	20040804	News	1			2		
NBC	20070517	News	1	1				
NBC	20081113	News	2					
NBC	20081122	News	1					
NBC	20100309	Book		1				
NBC	20130114	News		1				
NBC	20130912	Book			1			
NBC	20131109	News	2					
NBC	20131110	Special		1				
NBC	20131116	News	2					
NBC	20131122	News	2				2	
Sums			154	84	9	7	20	18

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
ABC	19920122	Talk	2	5	1			
ABC	19920519	News	2				1	
ABC	19930617	News		2				
ABC	19930823	Book	1					
ABC	19931121	News	1				1	1
ABC	19940503	News	1					
ABC	19981123	News			1			

ABC	20031120	Special	22	1			1	4
ABC	20031120	News	4				2	
ABC	20040803	News	1					
ABC	20130112	News	1	1				
ABC	20130113	News	1	2				
ABC	20131119	Talk	3	2				1
ABC	20131122	Talk		2			2	
Sums			39	15	2		7	6

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
CBS	19900806	News		1				
CBS	19911213	News	3	2			1	
CBS	19920205	News	1					
CBS	19920205	Special	1	4				
CBS	19920519	News	1	1				
CBS	19920520	News	2					
CBS	19920521	News	2	1				
CBS	19920521	News	1					
CBS	19930117	News		2				
CBS	19930823	News	1	1				
CBS	19930824	News		2				
CBS	19931118	News	2					
CBS	19960529	News	1					
CBS	19960529	News	1				1	
CBS	19960626	News		1				
CBS	19971008	News	2	2				
CBS	19990601	News		1				
CBS	19990601	News						
CBS	20031121	News	2	1			1	
CBS	20060512	Book			1			
CBS	20120131	News	1			1		1
CBS	20131011	News					1	
CBS	20131014	Book		1				
CBS	20131025	Book	1				1	
CBS	20131027	Book	2				1	
CBS	20131028	Book	1					
CBS	20131108	News	1					
CBS	20131111	News	1					1

CBS	20131116	News	1				1	1
CBS	20131116	Special	3				1	1
CBS	20131117	Talk	4				1	1
CBS	20131117	Special	4	1			1	2
CBS	20131122	News	1					1
Sums			40	21	1	1	10	8

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
CNBC	19970822	Talk	3					
CNBC	19990803	Special	3	1	1		1	
CNBC	20010203	Book	1					
Sums			7	1	1		1	

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
CNN	19911120	Talk		1				
CNN	19920116	Talk	1	1				
CNN	19920406	Talk	1	2				
CNN	19920428	News		3				
CNN	19920519	News			1			
CNN	19920519	News	2	1				
CNN	19921126	Talk		1		1		
CNN	19930823	News		3				
CNN	19930830	Book	1	1				
CNN	19931122	Talk	1	1				
CNN	19940415	News	1	2				
CNN	19941118	News	1	1				
CNN	20030919	Book		2				
CNN	20031108	News	1	1		1		
CNN	20031120	News	4	1				1
CNN	20070518	News	1	1				1
CNN	20090108	Book	1	1				
CNN	20120204	News	1					
CNN	20131114	Special	14	5				1
CNN	20131115	Book			1			
CNN	20131120	News	3					
CNN	20131120	News	2					



CNN	20131121	News		1				
CNN	20131122	News		1				
CNN	20131122	Special	1					1
CNN	20131122	News	4	4				
CNN	20131122	News	1	2				
CNN	20131122	News	1	1				
CNN	20131123	Special	4					
CNN	20131123	News	1					
Sums			47	37	2	2		4

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
FOX	20060512	News			1	1		
FOX	20131122	News	2					
FOX	20131123	Book		1				
Sums			2	1	1	1		

Network	Date	Show Type	PW	AW	Mixed	Neutral	PW Reporters	Mantra
NBC	19971006	Book		1				
NBC	19980930	News	1					
NBC	19981120	News			1			
NBC	19990601	News		1				
NBC	20010809	Special	2			1		
NBC	20040804	News	1			2		
NBC	20070517	News	1	1				
NBC	20081113	News	2					
NBC	20081122	News	1					
NBC	20100309	Book		1				
NBC	20130114	News		1				
NBC	20130912	Book			1			
NBC	20131109	News	2					
NBC	20131110	Special		1				
NBC	20131116	News	2					
NBC	20131122	News	2				2	
Sums			14	6	2	3	2	



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