

CONTRACT ON CAMELOT:
NEW BOOKS CAST MORE LIGHT ON JFK ASSASSINATION

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It has been 37 years since President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, and books providing additional information or helpful insights regarding the Dallas tragedy continue to appear.

An important new book on the JFK assassination is John A. Canal's *Silencing the Lone Assassin* (2000). Canal is a former Air Force instructor whose specialty is electronic communications, and in the first part of his book he attempts to prove that Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole assassin and that there was no conspiracy. Canal, who reposes great confidence in the Warren Commission, relies upon evidence adduced by that body, and even reproduces many of the same photographs that appeared in the Warren Report. Canal also relies on Gerald Posner's discredited *Case Closed* (1993), which lamely defended the Warren Report. For these reasons, the first part of Canal's book is weak and unpersuasive.

Whereas Canal whitewashes the Warren Report with respect to the JFK assassination, the second part of *Silencing the Lone Assassin* paradoxically argues that the Warren Commission, while correct in finding no conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy, was totally wrong in finding that there was no conspiracy in the murder of Oswald by Jack Ruby two days after the assassination. According to Canal, the death of Oswald was a mob rubout. The Mafia wanted Oswald dead, and Jack Ruby was the gangster chosen by the Mafia leadership to make the hit.

Why did the Mafia want Oswald iced? Canal thinks Oswald knew about then-secret plots by the Mafia, working at the behest of and in cahoots with, the CIA, to bump off Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. And how did Oswald know of these plots? Because, Canal asserts, Oswald, a pro-Castro Marxist, had traveled in the summer of 1963 to New Orleans and, masquerading as an anti-Castroite, infiltrated anti-Castro groups there. One flaw in Canal's thesis is that the evidence that Oswald was indeed pro-Castro or a Marxist is not very compelling. But the fundamental flaw in Canal's thesis is that it is extremely unlikely that 23-year old Oswald, who had once publicly defected to the Soviet Union, could have fooled the experienced, knowledgeable right-wing zealots with law enforcement or intelligence backgrounds that he fell in with in New Orleans. The mysterious Guy Bannister, for example, the head of the "Anti-Communist League of the Caribbean," had been an FBI agent and a police detective for years and, although retired, had numerous law enforcement connections. The sinister David Ferrie, a brilliant but disturbed individual who had worked for both the CIA and the Mafia, had extensive intelligence connections and would never have been duped by any ruse of a clever Oswald.

Although Canal seems not to realize it, some of the material in the second part of *Silencing the Lone Assassin* tends to undermine his prior claim that the Warren Commission was right in concluding that Oswald was the lone assassin of JFK. For example, by acknowledging that Oswald had associated with people like Bannister and Ferrie, and by claiming that Oswald was the type of person who would cunningly infiltrate anti-Communist groups, Canal undermines the

Warren Commission claim that Oswald was a misfit loner with no connections. And if the Warren Commission was wrong in concluding that there was no conspiracy to silence Oswald, could it not have been just as wrong in concluding that JFK's assassination was the work of one man?

For years conspiracy theorists have commented on the strange and suspicious sluggishness of the Secret Service agents supposed to protect JFK and hinted that the conspiracy might have extended to some members of the presidential entourage. When Canal assesses the facts of the Kennedy assassination itself, he appears to share the views of the conspiracy advocates to the extent they maintain that the agents reacted with abnormal slowness. Referring to what he describes as "the dismal response" of the agents near JFK, Canal writes: "Among those ten agents ... six initially thought they heard firecrackers going off, three immediately recognized the sound as gunfire, and one believed that he heard a motorcycle backfiring.... It is inexcusable that those agents didn't react immediately to the sound... because they thought it was a 'firecracker exploding' or a 'motorcycle backfiring'! More than eight seconds passed between the first and last shots, enough time for at least one of those agents to shield the president, if not before the second shot, then certainly before the third! The fact that he was left exposed for that long should haunt those agents to their last day."

Stewart Galanor's *Cover-Up* (1998) is another recent work. "This book," the author writes in the introduction, "presents the evidence of a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy and documents the disturbing measures taken by our government and major news media to cover it up."

In his 183-page, encyclopedically researched book, Galanor, a technical writer who has authored several textbooks, persuasively sets forth his view--increasingly shared by responsible JFK assassination researchers--that "the evidence of a conspiracy [to kill JFK] is overwhelming." *Cover-Up* should be read by anyone who wants a concise factual overview of the reasons why the Warren Commission erred in concluding that a single assassin named Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, murdered the president. As Galanor admirably demonstrates, time after time the Warren Commission, in order to bolster its lone assassin theory, would embrace a factual scenario of an event which, while theoretically possible and not factually impossible, was nonetheless highly improbable. The single assassin theory is built on a mass of these improbable occurrences.

Galanor agrees with what critics of the lone assassin theory have been saying for years--that Lee Harvey Oswald, the supposed "lone nut," gives every appearance of having been intelligence agent, although it is not clear which intelligence agencies employed him or whether he was a double or even a triple agent. "Although Oswald's life was filled with the intrigue and mystery that one would expect of a secret agent, there is still no solid evidence that he worked for any U. S. intelligence agency," Galanor writes. "His life contained, however, a series of inexplicable events and encounters that undermine the view that he was acting entirely on his own."

Galanor points out correctly that, for whatever reason, the Warren Commission covered up glaring indications that JFK's assassination was carried out by a conspiracy; and therefore, he unflinchingly states, the Warren Report--which found no conspiracy--relies upon "Evidence

Falsified," "Evidence Ignored," "Evidence Concealed," "Evidence Manufactured," "Evidence Omitted," "Evidence Neglected," "Evidence Invented," "Evidence Destroyed," and "Evidence Contrived." Strong language, but justified language--at least in the eyes of researchers who, like Galanor, have seriously studied the assassination.

The problem of the governmental coverup of the conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy has been exacerbated, Galanor also correctly points out, by a similar coverup by the news media establishment. "Over the last four decades the mainstream media have acted as an extension of the Warren Commission, misrepresenting evidence countless times to argue that Oswald was the lone assassin."

In addition to providing a compact yet factual account of the evidence of a conspiracy against JFK, and of the coverup of that conspiracy by government and media, *Cover-Up* features numerous excellent quality photographs, including frames 290 through 329 of the famous Zapruder film in color.

With Malice: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Murder of Officer J. D. Tippit (1998), by Dale K. Myers, is a major contribution to JFK assassination literature in that it provides a wealth of information on what has been called "the Rosetta stone" of the assassination--the mysterious shooting of Dallas police officer Tippit less than hour after the president had been slain. Myers, a writer of TV documentaries, is forthright about his perspective on Tippit's death: the "evidence is overwhelming," he says, that "Lee Harvey Oswald killed Officer J. D. Tippit."

One does not have to agree with the viewpoint that Oswald killed Tippit to appreciate the value of Myers' 700-page book. In addition to giving a full account of Tippit's movements on his last day, of his murder, of the investigation of his murder, and of the arrest of Oswald for that murder, the book is full of photographs and official documents relating to the Tippit killing, including autopsy photographs and the autopsy report.

With Malice: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Murder of Officer J. D. Tippit even includes the test result of a Rorschach ink blot test given to Tippit in 1952 to assess his mental functioning. The devastating test result, which may explain in part how Tippit could have been so inept as to allow a stopped pedestrian (whether Oswald or someone else) to pull a pistol and begin shooting as the officer exited his patrol car, states of Tippit: "This man appears to be wholly devoid of any imaginative facilities. His percepts are predominantly the most common. His range of interest and achievements is quite limited.... He takes little note of rare and unusual stimuli in his environment. He mental functioning is highly stereotyped.... His grip on reality is below the average. Errors in judgment may be expected."

The best recent Kennedy assassination book is *Assassination Science* (1998), edited by James H. Fetzer, a Minnesota college professor who has written 20 scientific books and in recent years has emerged as a leading authority on the assassination. *Assassination Science* consists of a number of articles by Fetzer and others focusing on JFK's autopsy, the lone gunman theory, and the Zapruder film.

The most intriguing articles are those setting forth the view that the Zapruder film has been

tampered with. There are, for example, numerous indications that some of the frames were removed from the film at the time it was developed or shortly after it came into the hands of the government. There is the unnaturally abrupt head turn of William Greer, the 54-year old Secret Service agent driving the presidential limousine. The film depicts Greer at the time of the assassination twice turning his head at least 110 degrees, each time in one-eighteenth of a second--a physical impossibility, and a sure sign that frames have been excised. However, the best indication that the film has been edited to misrepresent events is the blink light pattern evidence.

At the time of the Dallas motorcade the presidential limousine was equipped with two emergency blinking lights embedded in the front fender grill. The lights would automatically go through one cycle every .82 seconds: the light on the passenger side would switch on and stay on for .41 seconds; then it would switch off and the light on the driver side would switch on and stay on for .41 seconds; and the cycle would begin again. Since the Zapruder film moved through its camera at 18.3 frames per second, the blinking lights for one cycle would take up 16 Zapruder frames--8 for the passenger side, followed by 8 for the driver side.

Careful examination of the film has revealed that anomalies in the blink rate begin to appear early as frame 133, and that the anomalies become spectacular beginning at frame 225. Frame 225 is the last frame at which President Kennedy could have been hit by the nonfatal bullet that struck him from behind. It is also the first frame to show without question that the president has been shot; as Edward Epstein writes in his authoritative *Inquest* (1966), at frame 225 "President Kennedy raises his hands to his throat." Thus, the Zapruder film anomalies in the blink pattern begin to become most marked at the very time the assassination is commencing, which is highly suspicious. The most likely explanation for the anomalies is that frames have been deleted from the film. "From this analysis [of the blink lights]," one of the articles in *Assassination Science* concludes, "the Abraham Zapruder film in all probability was extensively altered."

One other book deserves brief mention--Gary Savage's *JFK First Day Evidence* (1993), which is still in print. Savage is the nephew of a retired police detective, Rusty Livingston, who as a member of the Dallas police crime lab processed much of the evidence gathered on Nov. 22, 1963, the day of the JFK assassination. With the assistance of his uncle, Savage has located numerous documents and photographs, previously unknown or unavailable, that had been languishing in obscurity in official Dallas police files or the private files of retired police officers. *JFK First Day Evidence* consists of those documents and photographs interwoven with an informative text on the investigative activities of the Dallas police on the day of and shortly after the assassination. The book also contains transcripts of communications on two Dallas police radio channels for a one-hour period that includes the assassination.

Savage's book confirms that Dallas police who seized Oswald's possessions after the assassination found a Minox spy camera and after photographing it turned it over the FBI, which oddly later denied receiving the camera. What was Oswald doing with this small camera, and does this not confirm suspicions that he was an intelligence agent of some sort? Savage also reveals something important about one of the famous photographs of Oswald holding his Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, supposedly taken by his wife in their backyard with a different camera. In 1978 the U. S. House of Representatives hired photographic experts who examined

the original of the photograph and after scientific tests proclaimed it to be authentic and to have been taken with the very camera used by Oswald's wife. This conclusion by the photographic experts was viewed by many as a confirmation of the Warren Commission and its single assassin theory. However, JFK First Day Evidence reveals that the photograph pronounced by the experts to be an authentic original was in fact not the original but a copy made by the Dallas police with a special crime lab camera!