

JFK ASSASSINATION 33 YEARS LATER

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A third of a century has passed since President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and yet no adequate government investigation of the murder has ever been undertaken. The laughable Warren Commission investigation of 1963-64, which found that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed JFK, was hurried and superficial. The more reliable U. S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations investigation of 1977-78, which found that the JFK slaying resulted from a conspiracy of persons whose identities were unknown, was hampered by political bickering, missing documents, fading memories, and unavailable witnesses.

The enigmas surrounding the death of JFK have, therefore, never been cleared up.

Journalists, scholars, and assassination buffs continue, however, to write books which throw new light on the JFK assassination. Harold Weisberg's *Never Again!* (1995) is one of these books. It is the tenth book on the JFK murder by Weisberg, who is one of the leading authorities on the subject and a caustic critic of the Warren Report. The most interesting part of *Never Again!* is the chapter which provides additional information concerning the grave doubts Sen. Richard B. Russell (the only Georgian on the Warren Commission) had about the work and findings of the Warren Commission.

Another leading critic of the Warren Commission, Robert Groden, served as Staff Photographic Consultant for the House Select Committee on Assassinations. His latest book, *The Search for Lee Harvey Oswald* (1995), is a comprehensive photographic biography of Oswald. The text accompanying the numerous photographs (several of which have never before been published) is extremely helpful. As Groden shows, a careful examination of the pictures of Oswald taken immediately before he was shot dead in the basement of the Dallas police station suggests that he recognized his killer, Jack Ruby.

Claudia Furati's *ZR Rifle: The Plot to Kill Kennedy and Castro* (1994) is, in the words of the author, based on "information supplied by the Cuban State Security Department," and reproduces several important documents in the files of Fidel Castro's secret police. The CIA-Mafia plots to kill Castro in the 1960's, first disclosed in the 1970's, have long been thought to be connected to the JFK assassination, with some authors contending that the assassination was committed by pro-Castro elements in retaliation for the plots against Castro, and other authorities claiming that CIA-Mafia plotters who tried to kill Castro also murdered JFK. Furati's book is one of the few in English on the JFK assassination that gives the point of view of Castro's Cuba. She shows that according to Castro's secret police, those responsible for the assassination were David Atlee Phillips (a CIA official involved in ZR Rifle, a plot to kill Castro), Santos Trafficante (a Mafia mobster), and the actual triggermen (anti-Castro Cuban exiles).

The most publicized new book on the JFK assassination is *Oswald Talked: The New Evidence in the JFK Assassination* (1996), written by two Texas journalists, Ray and Mary La Fontaine. This book contains new, important information on the 1977 suicide of George de Mohrenschildt, a

mysterious right-wing intelligence operative who befriended Oswald two years before the assassination and who killed himself when he was about to be served a subpoena to appear before the House Assassinations Committee. What has made this book a sensation, however, is that it discloses evidence from a man named John Franklin Elrod, who as a fellow prisoner occupied a jail cell near Oswald's in the Dallas police station on Nov. 22, 1963. According to Elrod, who was interviewed by the La Fontaines, Oswald told Elrod that he had recently attended a meeting at which Jack Ruby was one of those present.