

NEW LIGHT ON JFK ASSASSINATION

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It has been 32 years since the most traumatic day of the century for this nation--that stunning Friday, Nov. 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated in broad daylight by sniper fire while being driven in an open car through the streets of downtown Dallas.

The case of the JFK murder is far from closed. Massive quantities of important new information are now being made public on a regular basis by the JFK Assassination Records Review Board, which was established by Congress in 1992. As a result of the end of the Cold War, other important data is emerging from countries such as Russia, formerly behind the Iron Curtain.

Passport to Assassination (1993), by Oleg M. Nechiporenko, a former Soviet KGB officer, furnishes new facts about Lee Harvey Oswald's visits to both the U. S. S. R. and Mexico City. The author demonstrates that the KGB thought Oswald was probably an intelligence agent, although it was unclear for whom he was working; that prior to Nov. 22, 1963, Oswald, whether in other countries or in the U.S., was under far more government surveillance than the CIA, FBI, or other agencies later would admit; that Oswald was not a loner, but rather an operative with numerous connections, frequently in the company or vicinity of known spies; and that many mysteries remain concerning Oswald, including his trip to Mexico City in October 1963, and his stay in New Orleans the previous summer.

Nechiporenko admits he does not know if it was Oswald who killed JFK, although he appears to have doubts. He does claim Oswald once built a bomb in his Minsk apartment.

Norman Mailer's *Oswald's Tale* (1995), claims to prove that Oswald was the only assassin and that he was a Communist, a misfit, and a loner, who killed JFK cleverly but with a deranged mind. Mailer's massive work (nearly 800 pages) is a tour de force, but it fails to do what Mailer intended--to convince that Oswald alone did it all, that he really was a Red, that he shot JFK because he was a misfit, and that the various conspiracy theories have no basis.

No matter what Mailer says about Oswald's remarkable life--which was filled with high adventure, far travels, encounters with bizarre characters, strange coincidences, and breathtaking audacity, but lasted only 24 years--the actual events in Dealey Plaza make it unlikely that there was but one assassin. More than three decades after the Presidential motorcade entered Dealey Plaza, it appears almost certain that shots were fired at JFK's limousine from several different angles, including the right front. The famous Zapruder film plainly shows that immediately after he suffered his fatal skull shot, JFK's head moved backward and to the left, rather than forward, as would have been the case if the shot had come from behind the president (where Oswald was). It is a pity that Mailer would waste his time defending a doomed tale--that there was a single assassin, Oswald.

The best new source of published information on the JFK assassination is John Newman's *Oswald and the CIA* (1995), based on interviews and recently released, declassified documents.

Newman is an honest ex-military intelligence officer who has reproduced, or quoted, documents released by the CIA and other agencies under the 1992 JFK Records Act. Many of these documents previously had been withheld from the Warren Commission and Congressional Committees; indeed, many of the documents previously had been asserted not to exist by the agencies that prepared them.

In the author's words, the book's thesis is that, contrary to repeated official CIA statements, "the CIA had a keen operational interest in Lee Harvey Oswald from the day he defected to the Soviet Union in 1959 until the day he was murdered in the basement of the Dallas city jail [by Jack Ruby]."

Newman, now a college professor, also says that "the CIA was spawning a web of deception about Oswald weeks before the president's murder."

The countless government documents Newman has patiently located, correlated, and analyzed make it extraordinarily likely that beginning as early as 1959, when this alleged Marxist incongruously joined the Marine Corps, Oswald was involved in some sort of undercover activity for the CIA, the FBI, and perhaps other (foreign or domestic) intelligence agencies.

Referring to deplorable efforts of American intelligence agencies to stonewall the Warren Commission, Newman asks: "What legal term should we use to describe the action of a government agency when it lies to a presidentially appointed investigation?"

Incredibly, whereas the Soviet secret police carefully preserved their records concerning Oswald while he was in their country, even noting on his file itself that it was not to be destroyed, back here in the United States the Department of Defense secretly and inexcusably destroyed Oswald's military intelligence file in 1973, under circumstances never made clear. The American public did not find out about the file's destruction until 1977, when Congress, dissatisfied with the Warren Report, reinvestigated the JFK assassination.