

# Critique of *Oswald and the CIA* and A Challenge To Its Author

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A Belated Book Review Followed by a Challenge to Professor John Newman author of *Oswald and the CIA* (Carroll & Graf, 1995).

On the History Channel, Professor John Newman, in late November, 1999, stated: “The idea of a high level, institutional plot with the CIA to kill John Kennedy is crazy.” That statement of Professor Newman succinctly sums up the thrust of Professor Newman’s Book, *Oswald and the CIA* From this review, I trust that the reader will conclude that Mr. Newman’s book demonstrates that his thesis is clearly wrong, and that the thesis which he designated as “crazy” is in fact not crazy but lucid.

I will review Professor John Newman’s *Oswald and the CIA* by means of quoting directly from the text and then setting forth what I interpret Professor Newman to be telling his readers. For purposes of providing you with what this reviewer conceives as Professor Newman’s meaning your reviewer chooses to employ the first person singular and purports to be speaking as Professor Newman. However, in the conclusion of this review, the reviewer speaks for himself to Professor Newman.

This reviewer interprets Professor Newman’s book as serving to deny any rationality to the conclusion that there was an institutional-national security state conspiracy to kill President John F. Kennedy. This reviewer reads Professor’s Newman’s book to state that there is no proof that Lee Harvey Oswald was a U.S. intelligent agent. This reviewer deems both of the above-stated propositions as amply proven by prior research and writings. Indeed, this reviewer submits that the very intelligence material supplied by Professor Newman in this book at least compels the conclusion that Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent. I submit that the conclusion is proven by Professor Newman’s setting forth the intelligence material on Oswald—those files which are extant and have been released and by his pointing out the Oswald intelligence files conveniently or more likely necessarily declared by the intelligence agencies to be missing. By seeking to deny Oswald’s obvious U.S. intelligence connection, Professor Newman appears to want to prevent the reader from from drawing the conclusion that the CIA was institutionally involved in the killing of President Kennedy. This conclusion of high-level CIA involvement in Kennedy’s assassination flows naturally from Oswald’s role as a U.S. intelligence operative.

This reviewer will now set forth below verbatim quotes from Professor Newman's book with the pertinent page references. These excerpts are followed by first-person singular commentary. These comments represent the reviewer's assessment of what the passages quoted from Professor Newman's book are designed to convey to the reader.

[Dedication] To the men and women who served the CIA with distinction and made possible the Agency's greatest accomplishments; and to the courageous citizens who dared to investigate the Agency's greatest failures.

I am John Newman. I have spent 20 years in military intelligence. I do not have to explain why I who spent so many years in U.S. intelligence work am undertaking to explore the Kennedy assassination which around the globe is commonly thought by many to be the work of U.S. intelligence. I won't explain to you whether, as is common to intelligence work, I am duty bound by an oath to be loyal to U.S. intelligence. I am now an academic. As an academic steeped in the craft of intelligence, you can trust me to be able to interpret accurately intelligence documents and to assess the work of intelligence agencies with far more expertise than the reader.

The CIA has accomplished great things. Of course, it has had failures. Failures do not constitute deliberate, premeditated killings of innocents throughout the world. If you choose to investigate the CIA, and restrict yourself to its mistakes or failures, I consider you a courageous citizen. On the other hand, should you dare to explore evidence and interpret it as demonstrating that the CIA is a covert organization which deliberately kills innocents here and abroad, including governmental and civic leaders, then we have little to say to one another.

Acknowledgements: [p. vii-ix]; ... Paul Hoch, Bernard Fensterwald, Jr. ... Richard Helms ... Priscilla Johnson ... Gerry Hemming, James Hosty ... Nicholas Anikeeff ... with whom I conducted formal interviews or background discussions.

Please note that I acknowledge the assistance in writing my book of the following persons: CIA personnel, an FBI agent who destroyed a communication sent to the FBI by Oswald prior to the assassination, a critic who has sought to sanitize mounds of data which incriminate the national security state, and a deceased critic who created a suspect committee, the Committee to Investigate Assassinations (CIA).

### **Thanks for the Support of Friends in Our Intelligence Agencies**

(p. x) To my many friends and former colleagues in the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and

the Army Intelligence and Security Command, and you know who you are: Thanks for your words of encouragement or constructive criticism, whatever they happened to be.

I still have many friends and former colleagues in the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Army Intelligence and Security Command. I thank them for encouraging me and offering constructive criticism. I trust these people. If I thought that the agencies which they serve, and to which they are sworn to be loyal might have been involved in the killing of President John F. Kennedy, I would not have had them assist me in this work. Therefore, I stand behind these friends and their intelligence agencies as necessarily innocent of any roles in the killing of Kennedy and its cover-up. Those persons who believe that U.S. intelligence was actively and institutionally involved in the killing of JFK and in covering up their role in the killing are not to be found in my acknowledgements, because such a concept is crazy. As a careful academic researcher I have stated most recently that the evidence to date does not convince me that there was or was not any conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. Therefore, insofar as we cannot know whether there was or was not a conspiracy, how can anyone rationally conclude that the killing of JFK was the conspiratorial work of the national security state?

Most of the people who work in CIA operations are decent and honorable Americans. The Agency has made mistakes not because covert actions are the very antithesis of democracy which posits an informed citizenry, but because some bad apples are to be found among them. I make mention of mistakes that our intelligence agencies may have made. I make no mention and do not concede the plausibility of premeditated and deliberate slaughter of hundreds of thousands by the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies in overthrowing governments, in training and assisting death squads, and in designing our entry into and expansion of the Vietnam War. The CIA and other intelligence institutions worked well during the period when JFK was killed, but they made mistakes. Perhaps we can require of them now that they be somewhat more open to public scrutiny. But that is not to say our intelligence agencies are systemically flawed and have not in the past, do not in the present, and will not in the future well serve our nation in maintaining our superpower status.

### **My Purpose—Restoring Faith in Our Institutions**

(p. xiii) The purpose of the JFK Assassination Records Act was to take a step in the direction of restoring faith. The premise underlying this step is simple: Opening up all the government's files will demonstrate that our institutions work today.

The JFK Assassination Records Act was designed to restore faith in our government. Please

note that I make no mention of truth seeking as one of its purposes. Let me assure you that the U.S. government, by revealing all the data of the killing of JFK, will demonstrate that its intelligence agencies, could not have been institutionally involved in a design to kill the President. I can also assure you that a full disclosure of Kennedy assassination data could never accomplish a purpose counterposed to restoring faith in our government. Needless to say full disclosure of all the documents related to the Kennedy assassination could never result in proving that our national security state institutions killed Kennedy to usurp foreign-policy functions which they today continue to exercise autonomously. Attributing institutional blame to the CIA in the killing of JFK is, I say again, crazy. For example, to point up the recent bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade—a CIA mistake—could not and should not be viewed as an example demonstrating that the CIA is capable of mendacious usurpation of foreign policy. The CIA in its role in the Chinese Embassy bombing cannot rationally be viewed as deliberately punishing the Chinese for conducting surveillance activities for the Serbs. This conclusion would be crazy. Although we have conceded that we ascertained that the Chinese were providing surveillance from their embassy, this was not why we bombed their embassy. The rational explanation for the bombing was that the CIA mistakenly used old maps for targeting its missiles. Any other explanation, as I have said, is irrational.

We must protect ourselves from entertaining irrational thoughts. My book is designed to accomplish effective and benign censorship so that we may regain our faith in our institutions. As Erich Fromm said in his book *On Disobedience* (The Seabury Press, N.Y., N.Y. 1961) to the “social unconscious”:

This concept refers to that repression of inner reality which is common to large groups. Every society must make every effort not to permit its members, or those of a particular class, to be aware of impulses which if they were conscious, could lead to socially “dangerous” thoughts or actions. Effective censorship occurs, not at the level of the printed or spoken word, but by preventing thoughts from even becoming conscious, that is, by repression of dangerous awareness. (p. 34)

So, I have called crazy the very concept which some isolated people maintain explain the Kennedy assassination. This is out of concern for maintaining our people’s faith in our institutions and to prevent socially dangerous thoughts or actions evolving from the analysis of the killing of President Kennedy. I call the explanation of an institutional conspiracy crazy in order to warn the reader that to embrace such an understanding of the data will isolate the person who holds and expresses such a belief. And Erich Fromm tells us that

... individually and socially, man’s greatest fear is that of complete isolation from

his fellow men, of complete ostracism. Even fear of death is easier to bear. Society enforces its demands for repression by the threat of ostracism. If you do not deny the presence of certain experiences, you do not belong, you belong nowhere, your are in danger of becoming insane. (Insanity is, in fact, the illness characterized by total absence of relatedness to the world outside.) (Ibid. p. 35)

So, I am saving the reader from this fate worse than death by advising you of what are crazy thoughts which are not to be entertained. You are free to believe absent adequate proof that the assassination of President Kennedy was a conspiracy. But I will not allow you to be declared rational, if you state that you can lucidly establish that President Kennedy was killed by an institutional conspiracy of our national security state.

### **CIA Had Operational Interest in Oswald**

(p. xv) The thesis of this work holds that the CIA had a keen operational interest in Lee Harvey Oswald from the day he defected to the Soviet Union in 1959 until the day he was murdered in the basement of the Dallas city jail.... Secondly, whether witting or not, Oswald became involved in CIA operations.

I offered in my book hundreds or even thousands of items of evidence derived from official government documents which demonstrate that Oswald, from the time he was in the Marines, was a U.S. intelligence operative. From this evidence, you may feel that, in any courtroom, one could prove to the satisfaction of any disinterested judge or jury that Oswald was a U.S. intelligence operative. But I do not arrive at such a conclusion. And I am the keeper and interpreter of the intelligence documents and have been so acknowledged by the mainstream media. I am the quintessential expert who is most skilled in interpreting intelligence documents. Only I, and not you, can tell which conclusions you can draw from the massive evidence that I in my book paraded before you as to whether Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent. I instruct you that I have not concluded, and therefore that you cannot conclude, from the data that I have presented that Oswald was a U.S. intelligence operative. Again, I remind you that I am the expert in this area of deciphering Oswald-related intelligence reports. Therefore, I know. You don't know. You can't know until or unless I tell you I know.

### **This Book Concludes Nothing Regarding Conspiracy in JFK's Killing**

(p. xv) We will not address the assassination of President Kennedy. We will not discuss Dealey Plaza. This book is content to explore the subject of Oswald and the CIA without regard to who is right and who is wrong in the larger debate about the Kennedy assassination.

I wrote a book about Oswald and the CIA. But, I did not directly address the assassination of President Kennedy. I will not discuss Dealey Plaza. The book does not discuss who is right and who is wrong in the debate about whether the assassination was the work of a conspiracy. But I will tell you later that the CIA as an institution could not have been involved in planning and executing the Kennedy assassination. Later I will also tell you that I, an intelligent intelligence expert, do not have the necessary credentials to determine what happened in Dealey Plaza. And of course you don't even approach having the equal of my impressive credentials. Therefore, by necessary negative inference, you cannot pretend to know whether the killing of the President in Dealey Plaza was the work of a lone assassin or the consequence of a conspiratorial cross fire. Most certainly, you cannot rationally pretend to know who killed Kennedy and why.

Consequently, after thirty-six years you may feel that the research on the Kennedy killing demonstrates to you that the single-bullet-lone-assassin concept is a deus ex machina designed to provide a fig leaf for a guilty national security state which wore no clothes. But I am instructing you that, irrespective of your conviction about the non-tenability of the single-bullet theory, the question of whether or not there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy is still deemed by me as debatable. If conspiracy is an open question for me, perforce it must be for you. And just so long as you consider the issue of conspiracy to kill Kennedy as open, and the high-level institutional killing of Kennedy as closed, you can safely be included in the privileged herd. Reason with me, and you will be safely identified with that herd of good citizens of an unquestionably democratic and constitutionally guided superpower.

### **After thirty-six Years of Painstaking Research We Cannot Know Who Killed Kennedy and Why**

(pp. 429-430) Of the many riddles we have attempted to solve in this book, the Dealey Plaza puzzle is not among them. The author lacks the requisite skills in ballistics, forensic pathology, photo and imagery interpretation, and criminal psychology, to name but a few. We need fewer studies that claim to have all the answers and more that focus on specific areas and are built on firm robust evidentiary foundations. The fact that the public has made several inaccurate guesses does not mean that their suspicions about the Warren commission conclusions are not justified.

To know what happened in Dealey Place you cannot rely on your experience as a hunter or a soldier or your familiarity with firing rifles. You cannot rely on what you know about whether a custom-made shirt and coat can ride up a back five inches when the wearer of the garments is waving his hand no higher than his shoulder height. You cannot infer anything

from the fact that the shirt and coat holes are more than five inches down from the collars of the Kennedy garments. You cannot rely on secret service and independent observers in Dealey Plaza whose affidavits and testimony about the location of the wounds and the direction of the shots appeared to compel a conclusion of a multiple-assassin crossfire having killed the President.

Nor can you rely on the Zapruder film showing the President's body being snapped leftward and backward by a bullet impact delivered from the right front. You cannot rely on the Zapruder film which shows the President and Governor John Connolly being struck at separate times by separate bullets. You cannot rely on the bullet hits on the chrome of the President's limousine. You cannot rely on James T. Tague having been hit by a bullet strike when there were according to the government's theory no more than three bullets which caused all of the Dealey Plaza impacts. You cannot rely on the bullet designated by the Warren Commission as CE-399, which was found in Parkland Hospital, as having been most obviously planted by conspirators to implicate Oswald as the shooter. You cannot rely on the Parkland Hospital doctors having reported an entry wound in the neck of the President who had never turned his head so as to allow him to receive a frontal neck wound from a bullet fired from the rear of the President. You cannot rely on the Parkland Hospital doctor and nurses all having reported seeing a massive occipital wound in the President's head. You cannot rely on the fact that no one at Parkland Hospital had observed the necessary and the then-absent small hole in the back of the President's head. You cannot rely on FBI agents, Seibert and O'Neil, having reported that the autopsy demonstrated that the hit in President's back had not exited.

You cannot rely on the thousands of items of evidence, any one of which proves a conspiracy, notwithstanding that, scientifically, probability theory requires that at least one of those items proving conspiracy is correct. Why cannot you rely on the science of probability theory? Because, notwithstanding the scientific constraints of probability theory, I refuse to rely on these data as conclusive of anything. I am an academic expert. Most certainly, you who are not an expert, cannot be so presumptuous as to rely on science which runs counter to my conclusions.

Forget probability theory. To know what happened in Dealey Place you must have the requisite skills in ballistics, forensic pathology, photo and imagery interpretation, and criminal psychology, to name but a few. We need fewer studies that claim to have all the answers. The truth of who killed Kennedy and why is not knowable thirty-six years after the event.

We need more studies on specific areas. There must be the same kind of division of labor as

was employed in the Warren Commission so that you can point this way and that way to determine who has the responsibility for drawing any and which inferences from which particular fact. Should anyone claim that the data drove us logically to the conclusion that the U.S. warfare state killed President Kennedy for Cold War purposes, that person must be declared irresponsible, unscientific, unschooled, and/or just plain crazy.

In fact, the data are overwhelming in driving us to just such a Cold War conclusion, but if you want access in this society you must never state that. After all, we have an establishment that can marginalize you should you wish to jump to compelling conclusions which will tend to embarrass our establishment.

Oh, it is true that scientists, in arriving at conclusions, do not endlessly gather facts. Rather, they conceive a model of explanation to make sense of the available data. Scientists then examine the data to see whether the model comports with the facts. If the model does not comport with the facts, then scientists revise or reject the model of explanation and fashion another model repeating the process of determining whether the new model adequately explains the data. When they come across a model which explains the facts, they speak of having arrived at scientific truth. That remains the truth until or unless the available data no longer confirm the validity of the model. Scientists do not just endlessly gather and examine facts independent of a model of explanation.

But I am directing you, if you wish to be responsible, to abandon science. Bury yourselves in “specific areas” of the research. Learn to love the individual facts. Proclaim that you deserve credit for having made the first discovery of a fact or group of facts. Dispute those who contest your priority of credit for being the first discoverer of a fact. But don’t try to give meaning to a fact in the context of an overall model of explanation.

As I have said, we need fewer studies that claim to have all the answers, even if a model of explanation such as explaining the Kennedy assassination on a national security state institutional model explains all the data. It may explain the data, but you are not free to espouse such a model of scientific explanation. Should you do so, we will declare you to be crazy, and thereby marginalize you, and deny you access to the mainstream media.

The fact is that the public has made several inaccurate guesses about the assassination. It is a fact that the vast majority of the public, which in every public opinion poll has declared the Kennedy assassination to be a conspiracy, is involved in inaccurate guessing. It is a fact that the vast majority of the public has held such a view from the time of the Kennedy killing to the present. Yet our government, which purports to be democratic, and which has the most effective and best-funded investigation agencies in the world, has never been able to solve the great mystery of who killed him and why. But if the public could not know, and if the



government and distinguished professors such as I cannot know, then the public is making inaccurate guesses. The public, after all, does not number among it a substantial proportion of many professors. Until the full academic community thoroughly explores the assassination, the public cannot claim to know the truth about the Kennedy assassination. While we treat the Kennedy killing as a great mystery, we can all remain safely encapsulated in the herd's hunt for details of a murder mystery, and not have to rethink as responsible individuals the horrors committed by our national security state in its pursuit of its Cold War ends. Nor do we have to feel responsible for the crimes which our warfare state is now and will in the future be committing.

Oh, the public may have been accidentally right in having suspicions about the Warren Commission's conclusion. So, we are leaving open the possibility that there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy. But, if there were a conspiracy, it had as its source some force below the highest levels of U.S. national security state power.

Possibly at some future date, if it is necessary for the government to retreat from the long-assassin myth, we will deal with the second line of defense of the warfare state. That defense will be that rogue elements committed the assassination while operating outside the scope of their governmental authority. This is a line of defense to be explicated when and if the Warren Commission Report loses its value as a means of concealing state guilt in the killing of Kennedy. If this line of defense becomes necessary, then I will be prepared to leave writhing on the barbed wire those shock troops such as Posner who threw away their intellectual integrity on the phony-debate war which raged in defense of the Warren Commission's single-bullet myth.

### **It Is Highly Speculative at Best that the CIA Agents Around Oswald Were Conspirators in the Killing of Kennedy**

(p. 277) Could deMorhenschildt have been a CIA "control" for Oswald, with Moore as the reporting channel?... For his part, deMorhenschildt explicitly denied that Oswald would have been suited for intelligence work. "I never would believe that any government would be stupid enough to trust Lee with anything important," deMorhenschildt testified, "even the government of Ghana would not give him any job of any type." Of course this judgment would be untrustworthy if Moore and deMorhenschildt were pawns in a plot to murder the president, a highly circumstantial and speculative possibility at best.

DeMorhenschildt denied that he was a CIA "control" for Oswald. Further, deMorhenschildt informed us that no government "would have been stupid enough to trust Lee with anything important." You say that a question immediately presents itself to you? Your question is, if

Oswald were such a low-level person, of such low intelligence, then why did George deMorchenschildt, an intelligence agent, squire him around Dallas, if not for intelligence reasons?

I choose not to deal with the issue of why deMorchenschildt, a world traveler, who was multi-lingual, socially connected and who had obvious intelligence connections, would have had any reasons other than intelligence considerations to associate so closely with Oswald. You say that it is obvious that deMorchenschildt was Oswald's CIA control? But I instruct you that as the single most sophisticated expert on Oswald that such a conclusion is not obvious to me. Therefore, you as a non-expert cannot so conclude. As an expert I tell you that it is a highly circumstantial and speculative at best to conclude that Moore and deMorchenschildt were pawns in a plot to murder the President. Do you want at best to be highly circumstantial and speculative in your conclusions? Of course you do not.

### **The CIA Anti-Castro Covert Actions were Directed by the White House Were Not Part of the Institutional Structure**

(p. 121) Allen Dulles lost no time in orchestrating the new covert Cuban policy within the Special Group. The first discussion at a Special Group meeting about a plan to overthrow Fidel Castro took place on January 13, 1960. This was a landmark meeting, in which CIA Director Allen Dulles laid down a chain of command that excluded the State Department for how the new covert war would be waged. That chain ran directly from the White House to the Special Group... A chain of command running from the president to a committee outside the regular institutions of government was unusual even novel... It was also a power move to exclude the State Department from U.S. Cuban policy in Cuba. That policy was now the "elimination" of Castro and the overthrow of the Cuban government.

So, now you see that I have carefully described rogue elements within the structure of U.S. government. But the important thing for you to focus upon is that all of this is "outside the regular institutions of government." So, if governmentally-employed individuals in this set up ran amok and killed the President, that unfortunate killing had nothing to do with the question of the merits of our governmental institutions. So, if these rogue elements were involved in killing the President, then this does not speak to the guilt of the U.S. intelligence community. Those rogue elements were, to be sure, bad apples. If such a rogue-element killing happened, and I should reach the conclusion that I have evidence which supports such a killing, I will then advise you that it is responsible to expose those elements. They have probably all passed over the great divide by now. We are all mortal, aren't we?

Exposure of such a conspiracy will prove that we have an open society. The U.S. can then

continue its super power role in our world freed from any imputation of guilt in killing President Kennedy. If you are responsible, and don't jump the gun and make wild charges of institutional U.S. intelligence guilt, we may even ultimately throw into the pot as sharing in the blame a blundering Dulles. Perhaps Robert Kennedy who interloped into CIA operations against Castro—which operations went awry and killed the President—will also have to share some of the blame for the tragic mistakes which contributed to the killing of President Kennedy.

### **Oswald Had Secret Clearance While in the Marines**

(p. 26) Actually, Oswald had access, at a minimum, to secret information while stationed at Atsugi as a consequence of his radar duties there. This much could have been ascertained by no more than a simple phone call to Oswald's former commander at Atsugi, John E. Donovan. "He [Oswald] must have had [a] secret clearance to work in the radar center," Donovan testified to the Warren Commission in 1964, "because that was a minimum requirement for all of us."

Oswald had secret clearance to work at Atsugi. Therefore, his studying of Russian while in the Marines would have had to be with the approval of the Marine Corps. Therefore, some might be driven to the hasty conclusion that Oswald was being trained by the U.S. military for his "defection" to the Soviet Union. But that does not mean that he went to Soviet Russia as a phony defector intelligence agent.

Oswald knew a lot about the CIA's U-2 program. This means he was trusted by U.S. intelligence services even though the government of Ghana would not have trusted him with anything. But, this also does not mean he was an intelligent agent. Right?

### **CIA's Failure to Open a 201 File on Oswald**

(p. 47) According to the February 1960 Agency *Clandestine Services Handbook*, 201 files were then opened on persons "of active operational interest at any given point in time..." In addition, the *Handbook* added a fourth category of individual: "It has become apparent that the 201 machine listings should include the identities of persons of operational interest because of their connection with a target group or organization even though there may not be sufficient information or specific interest to warrant opening a file." Oswald fit these criteria, but the fact is that Oswald's CIA 201 file was not opened for over a year after his defection.

Oswald's qualifications required a CIA 201 file, but such a file was not opened for over a

year after his defection. I am therefore telling you that no files could have been opened and destroyed, because they demonstrated that Oswald was a fake defector and was really a CIA agent sent to the Soviet Union on assignment. Why is that not probably the case? Because I am the intelligence expert, and I am not going to draw any such conclusion; nor should you.

### **Oswald's Defection and Abnormalities in his CIA Files**

(p. 48) Because no 201 file followed Oswald's defection, it seems reasonable to wonder how the Agency interpreted his defection. Abnormalities in Oswald's files like this one raise questions about his possible role in U.S. intelligence operations.

We can over and over again raise the question of Oswald's possible role in U.S. intelligence. But we never can conclude that Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent. Because, I am an academic, I require proof before I draw any conclusion from evidence. I deem that the only reliable proof of Oswald's U.S. intelligence connection would be records found in intelligence files demonstrating such a relationship. But we know that if Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent, the agency to which he was connected would never admit that fact and would never maintain an extant record of that relationship. Therefore, we will never have proof. As a good academic and as an expert in intelligence, it would be a gross error to draw conclusions from evidence of his actions, his income, his movements, his associations with intelligence agents, and his political activities that he was an agent. We must maintain our objectivity and keep looking for the documentary proof of his U.S. agency connection, which proof we know does not exist, and without which we cannot pronounce him as a U.S. intelligence agent. Remember that we must protect against this thought that he was a U.S. intelligence agent becoming conscious.

Yes, I am aware that Professor Philip H. Melanson concluded his book *Spy Saga: Lee Harvey Oswald and U.S. Intelligence* Praeger, New York, Westport, Connecticut London, 1990 with the following paragraph:

Finally, if some cabal successfully conspired to subvert the democratic process by disenfranchising citizens' ballots with bullets, this fact must be confronted. Doing so will serve history and democracy well, even if criminal justice cannot now be achieved. We can begin to comprehend a great deal more about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, about the sources of violence that threaten our political system, and about the nature of covert power and politics when we know the truth about Lee Harvey Oswald: U.S. intelligence agent-provocateur.

But I have been the beneficiary of so much more data in terms of government intelligence documents than was available to Professor Melanson. All of my data, as I have shown, proves that the CIA had an intense and protracted interest in Oswald. Yet, I, who am the expert on which our media rely on for commentary about news releases about the Kennedy assassination, have not concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent-provocateur. Then, how can Professor Melanson be so speculative in his thinking so as to jump to such an unwarranted conclusion about Oswald and the CIA? No doubt, it is precisely because Professor Melanson is given to such speculative leaps of reasoning that the media are not interested in providing him access. That man risks being called crazy.

### **The CIA's Breakdown of Security Functions with Respect to Oswald's "Defection"**

(p. 50) Thus, unless there is more to the CIA's relationship with Oswald than we are being told, one can argue that the failure of the CIA's mole-hunting experts to open a 201 file in 1959—when they knew that Oswald had defected and offered to give up radar secrets along with “something of special interest”—was a conspicuous breakdown of the Agency's security and counterintelligence functions.

You cannot conclude from the above that the Agency's security and counterintelligence functions were being performed perfectly, and a future assassin was being groomed and being put in place in the Agency's computer bank until needed. You cannot so conclude, because I have not so concluded.

### **Helms Is Amazed**

(pp. 50-51) The following exchange between HSCA questioner Michael Goldsmith and Mr. Helms took place:

MR. GOLDSMITH; Why did it take more than one year to open a 201 file on Oswald? I might add, this is an issue which is somewhat controversial in the case.

MR. HELMS: I can't imagine why it would have taken an entire year. I am amazed. Defect to the USSR (in) October 1959. This [201 opening] in December 1960. There wasn't a 201 file already in existence. I am amazed. Are you sure there wasn't... I can't explain that.

Mr. Goldsmith was extremely curious as to why a 201 file was not opened on Oswald until more than one year after his “defection.” Mr. Helms was amazed and could not imagine why a 201 had not been timely opened on Oswald. I do not suggest to the reader that he/she can infer that such a file was in fact opened and was destroyed. Nor do I suggest that there are

extant hidden files regarding this “defection.” But if Messrs. Goldsmith and Helms and I, Newman, with our expertise, cannot explain this curiosity, then you the reader, a mere subject of the national security state, have no right to try to make sense of this curious malfeasance on the part of the Agency. Should you wish to draw a conclusion from this datum that Oswald was a CIA agent and the CIA’s designated JFK-assassination patsy, then I have decided that your conclusions are based on an impossible premise of CIA institutional involvement in shaping Oswald as a patsy in the JFK killing. Your conclusions, as I have previously proclaimed, are crazy.

### **Priscilla Johnson and her Oswald Interview**

(p. 61) ... Priscilla Johnson, the only journalist besides Aline Mosby who succeeded in getting an interview with Lee Harvey Oswald.

Priscilla Johnson got an interview with Oswald in Moscow when he “defected.” More below on Priscilla Johnson. But dare you ask whether she was assigned by the CIA to interview Oswald? I am the expert. I do not ask such a question. Why should you?

### **Priscilla Johnson and the CIA**

(p. 61) “Screwball,” said a CIA employee who had known Priscilla Johnson at Harvard. “Goofy,” and “mixed up,” said an April 1958 CIA message characterizing Johnson at the time she had applied for CIA employment in 1952.

(p. 62) CIA interest in Priscilla Johnson was reopened in 1956... On August 23—and in spite of the 1953 security disapproval—a CIA Security Office and FBI records check was completed without adverse comment.

(p. 62) We may surmise that..SR/10 sent a standard form to Chief CI/OA asking for cancellation of the approval for Johnson’s operation use.

(p. 63) The 1928 birth date carried in Priscilla Johnson’s CIA records for the preceding four years could not be reconciled with this new data unless a fifteen-year-old girl, not yet out of high school, had been working for the Office of Special Operations during World War Two.

(p. 64) Historians now have the unenviable task of trying to figure out whether the CIA was inventing a false Priscilla Johnson or whether it was incapable of telling the difference between two people born five years and three thousand miles apart—not to mention possessing different middle names. The Central Intelligence Agency owes the American public an explanation for the case of two

Priscillas, if for no other reason than because a Priscilla Johnson—whom we know to be real—did in fact conduct the longest interview on record with the accused assassin of President Kennedy.

The above material proves that the CIA had a very intense interest in Priscilla Johnson dating from her application for employment with the Agency in 1952. The CIA records seem to indicate the existence of two Priscilla Johnsons. The Central Intelligence Agency owes the American public an explanation for the case of two Priscillas.

But you as a member of that public cannot conclude that Priscilla Johnson was a CIA agent. Why cannot you so conclude? Well, if you were to conclude that Priscilla Johnson was a CIA agent when she interviewed Oswald in Moscow, then this would raise the issue of whether Oswald's "defection" was really a "defection" or was a fake defection to place Oswald in the Soviet Union on assignment for the CIA. If Priscilla Johnson was a CIA agent, then her interview would appear to be a device through which the Agency sought to receive a progress report on how Oswald was doing in his assignment to spy on the Soviets. If Oswald was a phony defector, and was in his Soviet sojourn under the control of the CIA, then this would lend weight to the belief that Oswald was in the control of the same Agency in Dealey Plaza. This would support Oswald's contention on the night of the assassination that he was a patsy. But, we have proclaimed that a high-level involvement of the CIA in the killing of Kennedy is not a rational concept. If you choose to believe from the above evidence that Priscilla Johnson was a CIA agent, then you are well on the way to declaring yourself irrational. You don't want to do that, do you?

### **CIA's Anti-Castro Operations**

(p. 91) The Warren Commission's 1964 investigation into the Kennedy assassination failed to consider the CIA's anti-Castro operations in any capacity at all... There could be no more profound omission to any study of Oswald's activities in the months before the murder of Kennedy than that of the CIA's anti-Cuban operations.

The Warren Commission's failure to consider the CIA's anti-Castro operations is a most profound omission. We have set forth above that the White House was directly responsible for the anti-Castro team. Robert Kennedy was responsible for the CIA's anti-Cuban operations. It may well turn out after future critical research that Robert Kennedy's anti-Castro team got out of control and killed his brother. That might explain why the Warren Commission, out of respect for the Kennedy family, decided to overlook this ugly aspect of Robert Kennedy's role in the unfortunate and unwitting killing of his brother. It may turn out that the Warren commission proved to be a compassionate and responsible body by covering

the sins of Robert Kennedy by arriving at conclusions which constituted Epsteinian political truth. Right?

### **Richard M. Bissell**

(p. 116) Richard M. Bissell agreed with King's recommendation to consider assassinating Castro. Bissell was a powerful man in the CIA's covert world: He was in charge of all the Agency's clandestine services, then called the "Directorate of Plans."

Over the years, we have gradually learned of Bissell's role in the CIA's original planning to assassinate Castro. First, there is the CIA's own Inspector General's Report, written in 1967 after a Jack Anderson broadcast leaking details of CIA's links to the Mafia and assassination plots.

So, the CIA employed the Mafia in these anti-Castro plans. As you well know, sometimes the Mafia seems because of its clumsiness involved not in organized but rather disorganized crime. The Mafia is a dirty-dealing-double-crossing outfit that tends to get out of hand. It was clearly a mistake, a big mistake, for the CIA to have employed these duplicitous Italian gangsters in the anti-Castro operations. It may well turn out that the Mafia, because of its connections with Jimmie Hoffa and because of Hoffa's hatred of Robert Kennedy, turned around from its assignment to kill Castro and killed the President.

If this blowback assassination is what happened, then the CIA should not be protected from criticism for having made a very serious mistake in employing those Italian gangsters. If this proves to be the case, the CIA should be forbidden in the future from employing the Mafia for any purpose. Out of respect for Robert Kennedy and the Kennedy family we should probably underplay somewhat Robert Kennedy's role in heading up this operation. Don't you feel that this disclosure of the CIA's mistake, and the reason for the Warren Commission's overlooking the anti-Castro evidence out of excessive concern for the Kennedy family's feelings, would go far towards renewing our faith in our open society? Of course, I anticipated your assent. This would strip the assassination of Cold War aspects and make irrelevant all the historical material recently released by our State Department to which I will make further reference below. Those documents show that President Kennedy was, in his efforts to mollify the Cold War, involved in a lonely and unequal struggle against a national security state apparatus which opposed and hated him.

### **Living with Castro**

(p. 119) The Vice President [Nixon] recalled that some State Department officials



had earlier taken the position that we would be able to live with Castro.

Here we see this fixation on disposing of Castro was a Kennedy family problem. But for the Kennedy family, all that fuss over Cuba might have been avoided. It now turns out that we have proof that President Kennedy opposed the bombing and invasion of Cuba in the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis. He opposed crushing Cuba when the Joint Chiefs, the CIA, and all of the Congress were for it. It now turns out that President Kennedy at the time of his assassination was seeking to normalize relations with Cuba. But the U.S. media refuses to reveal the proof of these Kennedy peace-making efforts to our citizens. That proof is found in documents issued by the Department of State in its *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath* U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington provided as proof. So, don't expect me to focus on the proof. Now that we have this rich new historical source, I as an historian will not change a word of what I said in my book. Rather I choose to accept Jack Anderson and his Mafia story as my source for historical truth. For after all, the rogue element scenario is rational. The thesis of a national security state Cold War killing of President Kennedy is totally irrational.

### **Covert Side of the CIA—Semi-Autonomous Operation**

(p. 128) “This was a radical departure from standard Agency procedure,” Hunt observed, “but the system had been foreshadowed by the semi-autonomous status of our Guatemalan operation.” the entire covert side of the CIA was becoming a semi-autonomous operation.

So, if it turns out that elements of the CIA had a role in the assassination, we will be able to designate that role as outside of its systemic organizational structure. At some future date we may decide to concede the immaculate invalidity of the well-intentioned and responsible Warren Commission and its Report. If we decide to admit to the fallibility of the single-assassin scenario, then we will be able to characterize those bad apples who killed Kennedy in a blow-back intelligence situation as semi-autonomous to the CIA's charter functions and therefore rogue elements. Right?

### **The FBI and Oswald Documents**

(p. 153) When the FBI sent a list of Oswald documents—purporting to be its entire pre-assassination holdings—to the Warren Commission, the February 26, 1960, memo was missing. So was the entire story of what was in the FBI's 1960 Dallas field office filed on Oswald.

The FBI failed to divulge all of its files on Oswald to the Warren Commission. This

indicates that Oswald may have had FBI agency connections which the FBI was too embarrassed to reveal. But, the CIA had similar problems with its Oswald files, and yet we could not arrive at the conclusion that Oswald was a CIA agent. So, quod erat demonstrandum, we cannot arrive at the conclusion that Oswald was an FBI agent. Solid reasoning is so easy among people of good will when we are freed from the irritation of the fruitcakes who are always jumping to conspiratorial judgments for which there is no rational basis.

### **Church Committee, Castro and Cuba**

(p. 202) The Church Committee report states how the idea of using the mob to kill Castro grew from Edwards' idea of "contacting members of a gambling syndicate operating in Cuba."

We cannot reiterate enough the connection of the mob's efforts to kill Castro and the Kennedy assassination. You see, if we embrace this idea, then all we have to do to accomplish our purpose of restoring faith in our governmental institutions is to point out that the killing of Kennedy was an unfortunate mistake of the CIA and Robert Kennedy who were victimized by the Mafia. Is this not the work of fine citizens in a society which we are seeking through our work to make more open?

### **More on deMorhenschildt and the CIA**

(p. 278) Did deMorhenschildt have other contacts with the CIA? ... "Yes, I talked with deMorhenschildt," [CIA case officer Mike] Anikeeff concedes, "and may have spoken with him about Oswald." However, Anikeeff is adamant he "never had said anything to the Agency" about these discussions.

CIA case officer Mike Anikeeff spoke to Oswald and deMorhenschildt. But he adamantly denied speaking to the CIA about Oswald. As I have told you, I have friends who are CIA agents. I believe CIA officers when they speak. Why shouldn't you? This does not mean that Oswald or deMorhenschildt worked for the Agency or that deMorhenschildt was reporting to Anikeeff about Oswald's activities. This is one of "the already large and growing pile of interesting coincidences in this case." (p. 279) I am really very proud to acknowledge constructive help in writing this book from case Officer, Mike Anikeeff.

### **deMorhenschildt and the Soviet Russia CIA Division**

(p. 279) That deMorhenschildt had a close contact in the Soviet Russia Division of 1962-1953 is newsworthy. It does not, however, prove that Oswald or deMorhenschildt worked for the Agency or that deMorhenschildt was reporting

to Anikeeff about Oswald's activities. For the time being, we will add this to the already large and growing pile of interesting coincidences in this case.

Proof of Agency employment of Oswald and deMorhenschildt will await a paper trail which will prove or disprove that. The Agency of course would never destroy or conceal such a paper trail. For the time being, we will add this to the already large and growing pile of interesting coincidences in this case. You will recall, I am sure, that the Warren Commission ascribed to "happenstance" a curious situation regarding deMorhenschildt being in Guatemala on a walking tour while the Bay of Pigs invaders were being trained to attack Cuba. Similarly, we choose to ascribe these many curiosities to "coincidences." If there is a choice between being an irresponsible nut or joining a responsible historian in believing in a mountain of coincidences, probability theory notwithstanding, you know where you will come down on that no-brainer decision. Correct?

### **Unfortunately, the CIA has Made Misleading Statements about Oswald**

(p. 284) ... it was a distinction to be put on the CIA's illegal mail intercept program once, let alone twice, like Oswald had been. But then, Oswald's mail was opened even after he was taken off the list.

Just as anomalous was having mail opened before one is even on the list. This is what happened to Marina.

... Unfortunately, over the years the CIA has made misleading statements about the Oswald letters they opened.

From the above admittedly extraordinary and illegal mail intercept program which the CIA put into place with Oswald, it would be wrong to conclude that the CIA was keeping careful track of their agent who was to have a starring role as their patsy lone assassin of President Kennedy. You are wrong to see in this elaborate intercept program the eye of our Big Brother observing every move of this star future patsy. I use the word "unfortunately" to characterize the CIA's "misleading statements" about this intercept program. Please do not be strident and substitute for "unfortunately" the words, deliberately, premeditatedly, and ominously. Don't be frenzied and substitute for the studied term "misleading statements" the words lies, prevarications, falsehoods. We are involved in polite and academic discourse. Right?

### **The CIA was Spinning a False Yarn About Oswald Before the Assassination**

(p. 392) Within the labyrinth of Oswald's intelligence files at CIA headquarters is a set of papers which, together, demonstrate that the Agency had a keen

operational interest in Oswald's activities during the eight weeks before the murder of President Kennedy... The Agency has long claimed, falsely, that it did not know of his visits there (Mexico City Cuban Consulate) until after the assassination. As we will see, this story was concocted as a cover to protect the Agency's sources in Mexico City. In addition, newly released documents prove that the CIA was spinning a false yard about Oswald before the assassination.

I employ the term "operational interest" to describe the CIA's surveillance of Oswald during the eight weeks before the assassination. You are not to conclude that the interest was in the nature of the CIA directing its employee-patsy to visit the Cuban Consulate and thereby leave a trail of the Kennedy "assassin" which would appear to implicate Cuba in the assassination. You cannot conclude that the purpose of this Mexico City excursion of Oswald was designed to provide our national security state with some leverage against Fidel Castro and to offer our warfare state the possible option of invading Cuba. For you to jump to such conclusions demonstrates that you are unable to think in an organized fashion.

### **U.S. Intelligence Agencies were Most Interested in Oswald**

(p. 421) It is safe to state now, however, that American intelligence agencies were far more interested in Oswald than the public has been led to believe.

So, the American intelligence agencies lied to the public about the intensity of their interest in Oswald. But, you cannot conclude from this that this great interest in Oswald by U.S. intelligence agencies would include an interest in slipping him a few bucks and making him an employee who could be observed legally. We cannot conclude from any of this material that Oswald was an employee of U.S. intelligence, because if we do, then under the concept of respondeat superior, the principals can be deemed legally liable for the crimes of their agents. And since we know that U.S. intelligence involvement in the assassination at some high level is crazy, you do not want to be marginalized and viewed as crazy. Do you?

### **CIA Use of Oswald's "Defection"**

(p. 422) There is limited evidence that suggests that an Agency counterintelligence operation made use of Oswald's defection.

If Oswald went to the Soviet Union not as a defector but as a CIA infiltrator, and Oswald was used as a patsy in the killing of Kennedy, we would expect the CIA to maintain a careful paper trail to reveal that he was our man in Minsk. Right?

### **CIA Agents Swarmed Around Oswald in New Orleans as Bees Swarm Around Honey**

(p. 427) A surprising number [of] characters in Oswald's New Orleans episode turned out to be informants or contract agents of the CIA. The FBI jailhouse interview with Oswald, which focused on the FPCC, was suppressed until after Oswald returned from Mexico.

Now, you cannot judge Oswald by the company he kept in New Orleans. In little Old New Orleans birds of a feather did not flock together. The people around Oswald in New Orleans were CIA agents. He reported to the FBI while incarcerated for his activities as the only Fair Play for Cuba member of his group of one. From all of this, if you conclude that Oswald was a double agent for the CIA and the FBI, you are jumping to an illogical conclusion. Right?

### **Oswald's Mexico City Escapades Had Nothing to Do with Setting Up Castro**

(pp. 427-428) What about the Cuban Consulate cover story? Why was it considered so sensitive if the CIA knew, before November 22, that Oswald had visited the consulate in Mexico City? We noted Helms' explanation that it was to cover the Agency's sources there. Was it erected to cover something more troubling that the CIA knew about Oswald?... there have long been rumors in the media that during his Cuban Consulate visit Oswald had threatened to kill Kennedy. FBI director Hoover informed the Warren Commission that Castro told this privately to the Bureau's "Solo" source, but this was withheld from the public... Hoover's replacement as FBI director, Clarence Kelley, believed that Oswald made such a threat.

So, the CIA knew that Oswald had gone to the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City and threatened to kill Kennedy. Please do not conclude from this that our CIA which had bitterly opposed Kennedy's refusal to back up the Bay of Pigs invasion with U.S. forces, and which joined with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in proposing the bombing and invasion of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, was trying to set up Castro for the killing of Kennedy. I know that there has been a flood of historical documents recently which support the idea that President Kennedy was alone in his opposition to a Cuban invasion during the Cuban Missile Crisis. But please, let us not provide Cold War historical documents which provide a motive for the national security state to kill President Kennedy. We have already decided that such a thesis is crazy. Right?

### **(p. 430) WHAT DOES THIS DO FOR THE CASE?**

The CIA was far more interested in Oswald than they have ever admitted to publicly. At some time before the Kennedy assassination, the Cuban affairs offices of the CIA developed a keen operational interest in him. Oswald's visit to

Mexico City may have had some connection to the CIA or FBI. It appears that the Mexico City station wrapped its own operation around Oswald's consular visits there. Whether or not Oswald understood what was going on is less clear than the probability that something operational was happening in conjunction with his visit.

The CIA developed a keen operational interest in Oswald. "Oswald's visit to Mexico City may have had some connection to the CIA or FBI." You say that the word "may" is too tenuous, because I have said that: "It appears that the Mexico City station wrapped its own operation around Oswald's consular visits there." If the Mexico City CIA station had wrapped its own operation around Oswald's consular visit, then you tell me that perforce, Oswald's visit to Mexico City was definitely connected with the CIA and perhaps also with the FBI.

You say that something operational could not have been going on without Oswald having known that he was part of it. You say that no CIA operation could have been put into place which would have depended on Oswald serendipitously showing up at the Cuban Mexico City Embassy. You say that Oswald would have had to have been a witting agent of the CIA operation. You say that you have just demonstrated that Oswald was a CIA agent on assignment in Mexico. If you so conclude you are guilty of the same kind of irresponsible stretch of speculative reasoning in which Professor Philip H. Melanson indulged. You don't want to be irresponsibly speculative.

### **The Renegade Faction Hypothesis and this Reviewer's Counter**

(p. 430) While we are unclear on the precise reasons for the CIA's pre-assassination withholding of information on Oswald, we have yet to find documentary evidence for an institutional plot in the CIA to murder the president. The facts do not compel such a conclusion. If there had been such a plot, many of the documents we are reading—such as the CIA cables to Mexico City, the FBI, State, and Navy—would never have been created. However, the facts may well fit into other scenarios, such as the "renegade faction" hypothesis. Oswald appears—from the perspective of a potential conspirator with access—to have been a tempting target for involvement because of the sensitivity of his files.

... On the other hand, we can finally say with some authority that the CIA was spawning a web of deception about Oswald weeks before the president's murder, a fact that may have directly contributed to the outcome in Dallas. Is it possible that when Oswald turned up with a rifle on the president's motorcade route, the CIA found itself living in an unthinkable nightmare of its own making?

## **This Reviewer Feels Constrained to Address Professor Newman**

At this juncture, this reviewer choose to drop the first person singular address as applied to Professor Newman's presumed thoughts. I now speak to Professor Newman in my voice. This reviewer, Professor Newman, is convinced that the renegade faction hypothesis, which you appear to be so willing to embrace, is in fact irrational. Irrespective of your designation of the view, this reviewer is convinced that the thesis of an institutional plot in the CIA to murder the President is the only rational explanation for the data which you discuss in your book. The explanations that there was a high-level plot to kill President Kennedy had long been declared by Professor Noam Chomsky to be irrational. On November 20, 1998, this reviewer [delivered a two-hour speech in Dallas](#) espousing the thesis of a high-level national security state plot to kill President Kennedy, and that any concept of a renegade conspiratorial killing was irrational. On November 23, 1998, this reviewer sent a copy of that speech to Professor Chomsky with the following request: "I have that kind of perverse nature that only benefits from negative criticism. Could you find time to provide some?"

On February 16, 1999, Professor Chomsky replied: "It's (the speech) a lucid presentation of the conclusions that you and others have reached." "Lucid" in dictionaries is defined as rational. Therefore, Professor Chomsky no longer shares your view that a high-level institutional conspiracy explanation of the assassination is irrational.

This reviewer, Professor Newman, wishes to excerpt one concept from that speech which compels the conclusion of a high-level national security conspiracy to kill President Kennedy. You will no doubt recall the 18½-minute gap in the Watergate tapes which served to prove the institutional guilt of and brought down President Richard N. Nixon and his cohorts. This reviewer will demonstrate how the U.S. national security state destroyed not 18½ minutes of tape, but about 5½ hours of three tapes which proved their guilt in the killing of President Kennedy.

In November of 1966, this reviewer read Theodore H. White's *The Making of the President, 1964*. On page 20 of the book I came across the following:

There is a tape recording in the archives of the government which best recaptures the sound of the hours as it waited for leadership. It is a recording of all the conversations in the air, monitored by the Signal Corps Midwestern center "Liberty," between Air Force One in Dallas, the Cabinet plane over the Pacific, and the Joint Chiefs' Communications Center in Washington.

Then on page 48 this reviewer read the following about the flight back to Washington, D.C. from Dallas:

On the flight the party learned that there was no conspiracy, learned of the identity of Oswald and his arrest; and the President's mind turned to the duties of consoling the stricken and guiding the quick.

Now, this reviewer knew that on November 23, 1963, *The Dallas Morning News* had informed its readers that the Dallas District Attorney, Henry Wade, stated:

Preliminary reports indicated more than one person was involved in the shooting ... the electric chair is too good for the killers.

Despite the evidence of conspiracy of which Dealey Plaza wreaked, the White House Situation Room had informed President Johnson and the other occupants of Air Force One, that notwithstanding what they may have smelled, seen and felt in Dealey Plaza which spoke of a conspiratorial cross fire, that Oswald was to be designated as the lone assassin.

This reviewer wrote to Mr. White. Mr. White replied informing him by letter that the communications to Air Force One and the Cabinet Plane were:

By government radio—all relays go through a big Signal Corps center in the Midwest—and the White House was in constant communications with the plane.

This reviewer then wrote to Dr. Robert Bahmer, Archivist of the United States, requesting access to the tape. Dr. Bahmer replied:

We have no knowledge of the existence or location of the tape recording mentioned by Mr. White, despite having made some efforts since the receipt of your letter to obtain some information about it.

This reviewer then noted that Pierre Salinger in his book, *With Kennedy* reported that the party on the Cabinet Plane heard:

The message kept coming off the wire service machine and finally one started grinding out the story of Lee Harvey Oswald and his previous life, in Russia...

So, this reviewer wrote to Pierre Salinger on December 3, 1966:

In your fine work, *With Kennedy*, you make mention of radio communications with the White House and the cabinet plane over the Pacific on November 22, 1963 (pp. 4-8) You identify "Stranger" as Major Harold R. Patterson.

Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1964*, also refers to these



conversations but particularly related to those dialogues with the Presidential plane, Air Fore One.

I have asked the National Archives for a copy of this tape. Dr. Bahmer, the excellent Archivist of the United States, cannot locate it, although Mr. White states on page 21 of his book: "There is a tape recording in the archives of the government." I enclose Dr. Bahmer's letter, Mr. White will not provide any further information.

Specifically what I am about is the verification of what Mr. White states was on the tape, to wit: "On the flight the party learned that there was no conspiracy; learned of the identity of Oswald and his arrest; and the President's mind turned to the duties of consoling the stricken and guiding the quick." If such was said, before there was any evidence against Lee Harvey Oswald as the assassin, and while there was overwhelming evidence of a conspiracy, then the White House is in the interesting position of being the first to designate Oswald as the assassin and the first to have ruled out in the face of impressive evidence to the contrary, that there could have been a conspiracy.

Now, Mr. Salinger ... That tape is being denied only to the American public ... Will you render this service to civilian rule and democracy for which President Kennedy gave his life?

Respectfully yours,  
Vincent J. Salandria

Mr. Salinger replied on December 26. He was most willing to serve civilian rule and democracy:

The section of my book dealing with the conversations between the White House and the Cabinet plane were taken from a transcript of the tape of those conversations made by the White House Communication Agency. I have never either read or heard the tape to which Mr. White refers, i.e. the conversations with Air Force One. Since the tape with which I worked was provided by the White House Communication Agency, it would seem to me that the tape of the conversation to which you refer would emanate from the same source, if such a tape, in fact, exists.

As to the conversation with the cabinet plane, the transcript of that conversation is in my personal files which have been turned over to the National Archives for

placement in the Kennedy Library.

I certainly have no objection to your seeing that transcript, although the National Archives will undoubtedly write and ask my permission since it is included in my personal papers.

Sincerely yours,  
Pierre Salinger

This reviewer then wrote to Dr. Bahmer who replied:

After receipt of your letter of December 28, a careful examination was made of the papers that Mr. Salinger has sent to us for storage. We have not, however, been able to find anything in the nature of a transcript of the tape recording that you are searching for.

This reviewer then wrote directly to the [White House Communication Agency](#) requesting access to the tape recording: James U. Cross, Armed Forces Aide to the President, replied:

I have been asked to respond to your letter, addressed to the White House Communication Agency, concerning a tape recording to Air Force One, November 22, 1963.

Logs and tapes of the radio transmissions of military aircraft, including those of Air Force One, are kept for official use only. These tapes are not releasable, nor are they obtainable from commercial sources.

I am sorry my response cannot be more favorable.

Of course, Cross lied. They were obtainable by Theodore H. White and Pierre Salinger for non-official use.

The contents of this message to Air Force One was confirmed in 1993 by Robert Manning, Kennedy's Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, who on November 22, 1963 was aboard the cabinet plane with Pierre Salinger. He reported having heard the same account of Oswald being designated as the presumed assassin:

We took off from Honolulu in one of the presidential aircraft and were several hundred miles west of there. Several cabinet secretaries were with us, as was Pierre Salinger. I had been in the press, so I knew by the sound that there was a flash on the news ticker. I walked toward the communications area, and the sergeant had a piece of wire copy in his hand. He said, "The secretary [Rusk] will have to see this." It was a flash saying: Dallas. President Kennedy shot." Then a bulletin: "Perhaps shot fatally." we took it to Rusk and he asked me

to bring the cabinet secretaries to his compartment.

We immediately got on the phone with the White House Situation Room. They confirmed that something had happened and that the President had been rushed to the hospital. Rusk got on the public address system and told everybody we had some bad, unclear news: President Kennedy had been wounded, and we were going to turn back. Salinger got in touch with the White House and used his code name. He said, "This is Wayside. What word do you have on Lancer?" At the other end the fellow said, "Lancer is dead." Rusk then went back on the PA system and said, "I am sorry to have to bring you this grievous news, but President Kennedy has been killed. We now have a new president. May God bless our president and the United States of America."

The news then came in that someone named Oswald who had been in the Soviet Union had done this.

(from: Gerald S. and Deborah H. Strober, *Let Us Begin Anew, An Oral History of the Kennedy Presidency*, Harper Collins, 1993, pp. 450-51.)

Mr. Douglas P. Horne, a staff member of the Assassination Records Review Board, spoke at the Lancer conference in Dallas in November, 1999. He spoke at length of the Review Board's fruitless attempts to locate the audio taped communications to Air Force One. He informed the audience that it was a shame that the 6 or 7 hours of three separate tapes appear to be gone from this world. 18½-minutes of missing tapes was a fatal matter which caused the Nixon Presidency to unravel. A 90 minute edited tape is extant. The disappearance of some 5½ hours of this vital tape which was made to disappear by the U.S. military leaves our national security state, the force behind the assassination of a peace-seeking President John F. Kennedy, undisturbed and still the preeminent power extending U.S. military hegemony throughout the globe.

We know from the three sources which we have supplied what is contained on that tape and what that tape proves with respect to the institutional involvement of our national security state in the killing of President Kennedy.

Professor Newman, I respectfully invite you to debate with me the issue of whether Oswald was a U.S. intelligence agent and whether the killing of Kennedy was the work of the national security state at its very highest level? I put to you the thought that no free and open society, thirty-six years after the killing of our head of state can deny airing such a debate. I submit to you that such a debate will serve to reaffirm and expand free speech and democracy in our nation.