

## **Another Deadline Looms for Remaining JFK Files**

Taking a look back at the Washington D.C. conference, “The Big Event,” and the JFK Files released in the last year.

Having taught a class called “The Political Assassinations of the 1960s” on my Olney Central College campus since 2001, as well as being heavily involved in the pursuit of the truth of what happened in the JFK assassination for much longer than that, it is not surprising that I’m asked the question “So who killed JFK?” quite often.

With the imminent release of many of the JFK files last October, and the corresponding renewed interest that came along with it, it is also not surprising that the frequency of that same question reached a crescendo last fall.

Many Americans, nominally interested but understandably curious about what is arguably the most controversial event in American history, thought perhaps the release of these files might finally give them an answer to what really happened in Dallas. The establishment American media, despite its typically short attention span, also appeared at least temporarily transfixed on the upcoming release, although their interest, in general, seemed to be centered more on the hope that it would finally put to rest any notions of conspiracy in the Kennedy murder.

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horse?”**

Neither the public in general, nor the nation’s media, really obtained the final answer they were looking for, primarily because the simple conclusion to the story does not exist. What has become clear and simple for most Americans to understand over time is that the Kennedy murder was not the act of a lone assassin. They have arrived at that conclusion not because of some national paranoia foisted upon them by conspiracy theorists, but by the incontrovertible facts that have come to light in this case that simply cannot be dismissed or explained away. Most Americans see the impossibility of the single bullet theory, an essential part of any “lone nut” scenario. They are also aware of the numerous witnesses whose stories contradict the official version of what happened in Dallas.

Despite where the public, in general, appears to be regarding the JFK assassination, many conspiracy skeptics in the nation’s media continue to circulate a particularly tiresome narrative that some Americans need to believe that the assassination must be the work of greater forces rather than a victim of a mere lone gunman. This simply has no basis in fact. Americans have not fallen victim to some mass psychosis, at least as far as the JFK murder is concerned. The country as a whole, due to the facts they have been confronted with that contradict the official version of history, has come to realize that November 22, 1963, is an unresolved event in our shared past. Bringing a conclusion to that part of our history has proven to be elusive.

A longtime friend of mine who has been generally interested in this topic asked me a tough question about the recent release of documents and the seeming lack of answers that some hoped for: “At what point does this become beating a dead horse?” It is understandable the frustration many Americans have that there has been no final resolution to this story. In order to find the truth about this murder we have to look through a broader lens and see the numerous revelations and pieces of evidence that have accumulated over a period of time that point toward conspiracy and give us strong clues to who was involved.

As my son, also a history teacher has stated, at what point does coincidence become conspiracy? The large percentage of the American public sees the probability that larger forces were at work in the death of Kennedy, even if they are uncertain as to who they were. However, the problem lies not with the American people’s perception of the event, but with a lack of institutional validation coming from the media, the government, and the academic world in regard to what really happened in Dallas. Until any or all of these institutions come to grips with the reality of conspiracy in this case, there simply isn’t going to be closure.

The nation, as a whole, did become fixated once again on the JFK assassination in October, 2017, as the perceived deadline established by Congress 25 years before for the release of remaining classified documents approached. President Trump, who technically was the only individual who could stand in the way of it, appeared to initially be in favor of a full release. However, in the end he capitulated to last-minute lobbying from the CIA and the FBI. He

**“...potentially irreversible harm” to national security...**

suggested that there would be “potentially irreversible harm” to national security if he allowed all the records out at that time and, instead, put some of the remaining classified and redacted files under a six month review. Trump officials have stated that these remaining files should stay secret after this review “only in the rarest of cases.” With April 26, 2018, quickly approaching, we will find out soon if the President will stick to his promise.

Due to the last-minute intervention, many sensitive documents were redacted in part or completely withheld. It is safe to say that what was withheld is, in all probability, far more significant than that what was released. But what *was* released, redactions notwithstanding,

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adds to the conspiracy argument rather than subtracts from it when we, again, take the time to look at this point in our history through a broader lens.

In our recent conference held in Washington, D.C. on March 9-11 of this year entitled The Big Event: New Revelations in the JFK Assassination and the Forces Behind JFK's Death, many of the important things that have come to light were discussed and examined. Some conclusions can be drawn based upon the recent releases:

**Newly released documents verify, once and for all, that Lee Harvey Oswald was involved in intelligence activities leading up to the assassination.**

According to Judyth Baker, one of the speakers at our Washington, D.C. conference and Lee Harvey Oswald's mistress in New Orleans in the summer of 1963, one of the new documents reveals that Chief of CIA Counterintelligence Jim Angleton's right-hand man, Raymond Rocca, told Warren Commission Attorney David Belin that just weeks before Kennedy's murder Oswald was in Mexico City because he was involved in a plot to kill Fidel Castro. Baker points out that this confirms what she has been suggesting since 1999 about Oswald's trip. This document, in effect, means the CIA knew Oswald went to Mexico City, and why. Although the Warren Commission was interviewing Rocca, at times he appears to be the one asking questions. From the file, it is apparent that Rocca's boss, Angleton, did not want any blame laid on his department. Rocca wasn't sure what Belin and the Warren Commission had been told by Richard Helms, Head of the CIA, who was feeding the Warren Commission what Baker referred to as "the CIA's public version of things."

**...the FBI agent threatened to "get rid of my ass" if [I] talked**

For instance, Rocca asks Belin, "Why did Oswald's lies include a denial to police that he had made the Mexico trip unless there was something important to hide about it? All his other lies concerned key factual elements of his *cover story*."

The most telling thing about this document and its description of Oswald's activities in Mexico City, including the use of a cover story, is that it destroys the notion still out there that he was just a lone nut. It is a clear indication Oswald was involved in intelligence activities leading up to the events in Dallas.

**Oswald was an FBI informant and the agency tried to cover it up.**



**Orest Pena**

At our D.C. conference, researcher Larry Rivera discussed one of the most important document releases to come out so far. It is the sworn testimony given to the House Select Committee on Assassinations by a man named Orest Pena, a New Orleans bar owner, who also happened to be an FBI informant. In this extraordinary interview, Pena comes across as

someone who wants to tell the truth but fears the repercussions of doing so.

Pena was assigned to an FBI agent named Warren de Brueys, who visited Pena's business on a regular basis in order to collect information. Although his English was far from perfect, Pena made some startling statements about de Brueys and his connections to Lee Harvey Oswald to the committee. He claimed "I was never paid a single penny. I thought I was doing good for the United States."



**Warren de Brueys**

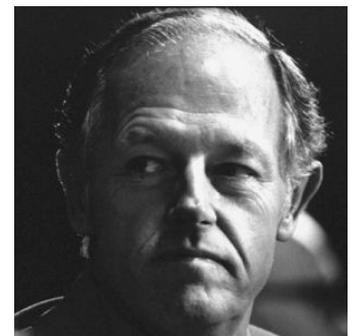
Pena saw a lot of things during his time as an informant from 1960 to 1963. He was aware of the fact de Brueys was meeting with Sergio Arcacha Smith and David (he referred to him as William) Ferrie, two well-known characters in the JFK assassination story. More importantly, he also saw Lee Harvey Oswald frequenting the same restaurant where members of the FBI (including de Brueys) and other government agencies spent time. Pena stated that Oswald interacted on occasion with some of the agents, including the aforementioned de Brueys. Pena stated on the record that he believed de Brueys followed Oswald to Dallas. Prior to the assassination, de Brueys came to Pena and informed him he was no longer needed as an informant because he (de Brueys) was heading to Dallas.

After the assassination, Pena was visited "over and over again" by FBI agents repeating the same questions in regards to what he knew about Oswald. Pena believed the FBI agents feared that he would talk to the Warren Commission about their connections to the alleged assassin.

Pena's most startling revelation was his description of a visit paid by de Brueys after the assassination. At this meeting Pena claims the FBI agent threatened to "*get rid of my ass*" if he talked. Initially in the interview Pena seemed reluctant to make direct accusations against de Brueys, but as time wore on he opened up. He described de Brueys as the "most important person in the Kennedy assassination" and later said "I accuse Warren de Brueys." (of being involved) Pena told his interviewer, "I would get a lie test" to prove he was telling the truth. The House Select Committee was never able to interview de Brueys, who conveniently was stationed outside the country.

**54 years after the assassination the CIA took a machete to the personnel files of some of the most controversial characters in the agency before they were released.**

Before his death in 2007, CIA operative and Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt made some eye-opening assertions to his son, some of which were recorded, about those from the agency, himself included, who were involved in the Kennedy murder. Hunt described himself as merely a "benchwarmer," but pointed the finger at CIA's Cord Meyer, David Atlee Phillips, David Morales, and William Harvey as among those at the center of the plot against the President. There is evidence to indicate



**E. Howard Hunt**

that both Phillips and Morales also made admissions, of sorts, in regard to the assassination. It is, therefore, not hard to understand that researchers were looking forward to viewing the long-classified files associated these men.

Unfortunately, what they ultimately were allowed to see was largely disappointing. The released files included a massive amount of redactions. Out of 358 pages in Phillips' file, 24 pages are completely blank. David Morales' file was found to be 95% gone. The only thing of note left there is a statement suggesting the file was "sanitized" *before* the House Select Committee viewed it in the 1970s. Hunt's file, presented in chronological order, includes one blank page sitting between a document dated 9/17/62 and another document dated 7/9/64, leaving one to wonder what the blank page would've said about Hunt's activities in 1963.

### **Following the release of his file, William Harvey looks even more suspicious.**



**William Harvey**

Likewise, the files of William Harvey also contain many redactions. But what remains is still very intriguing. Harvey has long been considered one of those most likely characters to have participated in the Kennedy murder by many researchers, and his file reveals a man with the perfect profile of someone capable of participating in and carrying out an assassination plot. He's described in it as someone willing to be involved in "highly sensitive" and "extremely political" operations. He comes across as a dangerous, secretive individual, willing to go rogue. He "moved into positions stronger than his superior officers," was also "tenacious and aggressive in the pursuit of his point of view." He "had at his disposal a coterie of officers" loyal to him, referred to as "Harvey men."

A clear example of all this occurred at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis when, in a clear act of insubordination, Harvey didn't bother to wait for the invasion orders that never came from the Kennedys, and sent in his team of Cuban exiles to create havoc in Castro's Cuba. Ed Lansdale, who oversaw Operation Mongoose, confronted Harvey about this, accusing him of acting without Lansdale's knowledge. E. Howard Hunt suggested in his final assertions that he refused to take on any significant role in the plot against Kennedy because an "alcoholic psycho" like Harvey was involved in it.

An internal memo describing the relationship between the CIA and mobster John Roselli gives us more insight into Harvey. It goes into great detail about how Robert Maheu, an agency go-between, contacted Roselli in an attempt to recruit him to be a liaison between the Mafia and the CIA. Among other things, it also demonstrated the agency's amoral behavior and attitude in the pursuit of their goals. They indicated a willingness to partake in "gangster-type actions" as they went after political leaders like



**John Roselli**

Castro, who they brazenly viewed as mere “targets.” The document gives a chronological account of their relationship with Roselli, even reporting that, ironically, the famous mobster was eventually jailed in 1968 for cheating people out of “\$400,000 in a rigged gin rummy game.”

Roselli has long been a mysterious character regarding the JFK assassination. Some put him on the grassy knoll as one of the shooters. Tosh Plumlee, a pilot who flew operations for the CIA and other agencies, suggested that Roselli was in Dealey Plaza as part of an abort team to *stop* the assassination. Roselli ended up dead, cut up in an oil drum found floating in the Gulf of Mexico before he was able to testify before the House Select Committee in 1976.

However, what may be the most telling information in the Roselli document is its reference to Harvey. The agency seems to be delivering a complete account about their connection to Roselli *until* it came time to talk about his relationship with Harvey. It states: “In May 1962, Mr. William Harvey took over as Case Officer, and it is *not known* by this office whether Roselli was used operationally from that point on.” Did the agency truly not know what Harvey and Roselli were up to after May, 1962, or were they unwilling to put it on paper? Either way, it doesn’t look good.

After the Cuban debacle, Harvey was assigned (exiled?) to be Station Chief in Rome. This allowed him to make connections with Corsican mobsters. Having been given the task of setting up an “executive action capability” within the CIA by Richard Bissell in 1961, it seems probable that Harvey could have recruited foreign assassins from that group.

In an interview with the House Select Committee in 1976 shortly before his death, Harvey could be described as evasive, vague, and at times conveniently experiencing a loss of memory. He tried to imply that the executive action program may have originated from the White House. Of particular note was his attempt to downplay the significance of the mysterious asset code named QJWIN. Some researchers have long suspected this figure as a potential foreign assassin involved in JFK’s murder. Harvey claimed he was uncertain as to QJWIN’s potential involvement in the assassination of Lumumba and would claim that “...QJWIN was never involved in any way in the Castro operation -- nor, for example, ever in the United States...” This claim seems dubious because in his own bills there are records of a plane trip ticket from Miami to Chicago charged to QJWIN. When pressed by interviewers about recruiting potential assassins as assets he downplayed the possibility and brashly stated “...the one sure way to do it [assassinate someone], was to simply appoint a single senior officer to do everything: to run the operation, *kill* the person, bury the body, and tell no one.” It’s hard to say if Harvey is being deceptive in this statement or if there are deeper implications in his boldness.

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In truth, Harvey was in a perfect position to participate in a plot against JFK. He had been a part of Operation Mongoose, which allowed him to develop a loyal following among the most extreme Cuban exiles. His relationship to Roselli, whom he referred to as a “patriot,” gave him a connection to the mafia in the United States, and his time as a Station Chief in Rome allowed him to recruit unsavory characters abroad.

A recently released document may give more insight into Harvey’s foreign operation. It describes a center used for operations involved in the recruitment, interrogation, and the collection of intelligence. Even though the location is supposed to be redacted, it can be easily read through the markings that the site was located in Madrid, giving someone like Harvey a center to operate out of.

There is no doubt he held contempt for the Kennedy brothers, especially Bobby. In a 1999 interview, Harvey’s widow suggested “they were really scum” and that her husband and Bobby were “pure enemies.” In light of the new information which has come forth associated with Harvey, it becomes even more difficult to ignore the means, motive, and opportunity he possessed in relation to his potential role in the JFK murder.

**The Johnson administration engaged in a cover up within 48 hours of JFK’s assassination.**

One of the widely reported stories associated with last fall’s release was a secret report in the FBI files which showed that J. Edgar Hoover stated the FBI must “convince the public” that Oswald acted alone and that “there is nothing further on the Oswald case except that he is dead.” It was already a matter of public record that Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach released a memo the same day with virtually an identical message: “The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin and that he did not have confederates who are still at large.” When taken into account that LBJ’s assistant Bill Moyers was also releasing a similar message, it becomes clear that before that fateful weekend was out, the Johnson administration was circulating a narrative that Oswald was the lone assassin.

The release of Hoover’s memo takes on deeper significance in concert with another transcript released in 1993, which researcher Ed Tatro has referred to as “possibly the most important one ever released.” It is a transcript of a phone call between Hoover and Johnson the day after the assassination when the FBI Director tells the President, “We have up here the tape and the photograph of the man who was at the Soviet embassy using Oswald’s name. That

**“We have up here the tape and the photograph of the man who was at the Soviet embassy using Oswald’s name. That picture and the tape do not correspond to this man’s voice, nor to his appearance. In other words, it appears that there is a second person who was at the Soviet embassy down there.” – J. Edgar Hoover**

picture and the tape do not correspond to this man's voice, nor to his appearance. In other words, it appears that there is a second person who was at the Soviet embassy down there."

This conversation was already explosive as it clearly contradicts CIA statements that the tapes were routinely destroyed before the assassination. What makes it even more so now is that at the very time the Johnson administration was promoting the idea of a single assassin, they had clear evidence that Oswald was part of something bigger and was in all probability being set up. It makes it a matter of historical record that they were, in effect, engaging in a cover up within a short period of time after the assassination. Why?

Historians, as well as some JFK assassination researchers, have often viewed Johnson's post-assassination actions as resulting from a fear of potentially starting World War III with the Soviets, suggesting that the new president was confronted with evidence of a potential Soviet/Cuban connection to JFK's murder. In fact, LBJ used that same suggestion to convince Richard Russell and Earl Warren to be part of the Warren Commission. This explanation of Johnson's actions after the assassination makes it appear as if LBJ and his administration were participating in a benign cover-up.



**Dr. Cyril Wecht**

Upon closer scrutiny, however, this author believes that Johnson's post-assassination behavior can't be explained away so innocently. The logical reaction by an administration to the assassination of its head of state would not have been to close the doors on a possible conspiracy, particularly if there was any indication that this same nation's primary adversary may have been involved. Just the opposite, the country should have been on an immediate war footing and the possible perpetrators (the Soviets in this case) should have been confronted. Dr. Cyril Wecht, long one of the nation's preeminent pathologists and major critic of the Warren Commission findings, suggested just that in a passionate keynote address at our D.C. conference, stating that the Johnson administration should've been on the phone within hours after the assassination, "confronting the Soviets to determine if they were involved in any way."

If there was any legitimate evidence of Soviet involvement, it should've been regarded as an act of war, and responding to it should have been a matter of national honor. The fact that the Johnson administration reacted in the exact opposite manner is an indication that they knew there was no real evidence implicating the Russians. It is also an indication that they (the Johnson administration) had other motives for their actions. When the basic explanation of the administration's fear of World War III as explanation for their post-assassination cover-up is set aside, we are left with a very important question: Why would Johnson risk his presidency by covering up the crime of the century if he was completely innocent?

**Newly released information and new discoveries strengthen the argument for the complicity of LBJ and his allies in the JFK assassination.**

One of the major headlines that came out last fall associated with the document release was an FBI memo which stated that sources indicated USSR officials believed LBJ and the “ultra-right” were part of a “well-organized conspiracy” inside the U.S., based on data gathered by the KGB. This can’t be dismissed as just typical Soviet propaganda. They weren’t making public pronouncements about Johnson’s involvement. Rather, it was based on intelligence gathered by the KGB, one of the world’s finest intelligence gathering agencies.

It remains difficult for those who reside within our major institutions to dare consider the possibility of LBJ’s involvement in the Kennedy murder because it simply would be considered far too fringe and conspiratorial. After all, wasn’t it Johnson who brought the nation the Civil Rights Act and the War on Poverty? Historians are willing to hold Johnson in high regard; a group of them ranked him the 8<sup>th</sup> best president in a recent CSPAN poll (a ranking this author finds revolting) despite his corruption, lies, and erratic and awful behavior.

**“...was to end Johnson’s political career, and possibly send him to prison.”**

Preeminent Johnson biographer Robert Caro wrote multiple volumes detailing all of the aforementioned excesses, but chose to stay away from any discussion about his potential involvement in the Kennedy assassination. Historian Robert Dallek was aghast at the mere discussion of it when the History Channel aired

“The Guilty Men,” that pointed the finger at LBJ in 2003. He dismissed the notion that a “sitting President” could be involved in such a thing, perhaps momentarily forgetting that Johnson wasn’t in possession of that high office until Kennedy was dead.

There is no doubt that when it comes to the Kennedy assassination, Lyndon Johnson had both the most to gain by Kennedy’s death and also the most to lose if JFK remained President. Without question he had an enormous, lifelong ambition to be President of the United States, but what also has to be considered was Johnson’s fate had Kennedy remained in office. There were multiple scandals and investigations surrounding Johnson in his time as Vice President, the most significant of which was his connections to Texas “wheeler-dealer” Billie Sol Estes and a young political operative named Bobby Baker. By 1963, these scandals not only had the potential to have Johnson removed from the Presidential ticket in 1964, but possibly put him jail. Johnson’s troubles all disappeared with his ascension to the presidency following Kennedy’s death.

James Wagnvoord was an assistant to LIFE magazine's creative editor in 1963. He has gone on record stating that his magazine was creating a three-part exposé focusing on Johnson’s relationship with Baker. As a Johnson protégé who had become Secretary of the Senate, Baker found himself under investigation for various scandals and corrupt behavior. Wagnvoord made it clear LIFE’s intention was to end “Johnson’s political career, and possibly send him to prison.” The fact that Bobby Kennedy’s Justice Department was feeding LIFE “tremendous info”, according to Wagnvoord, makes clear what was rumored throughout Washington—that the

Kennedys wanted LBJ off the ticket. Indeed, Johnson faced political extinction and possible imprisonment if something didn't happen.

It's also impossible to ignore the fact that Johnson not only controlled the scene in Dallas through his allies, but also had in his possession, from the moment JFK died, both the machinery of government, including his close friend J. Edgar Hoover in the FBI, to control the evidence and the investigation after Kennedy was murdered. In any real investigation of a murder, Johnson would be, at the very least, someone under suspicion. It is clear that he had the means, motive, and opportunity to carry out the assassination. Is there any evidence that he acted on that opportunity?

David Talbot's excellent book, *The Devil's Chessboard*, recounts the secrecy and abuses of Allen Dulles' CIA, as well as the fact that D. H. Byrd, who purchased the Texas Schoolbook Depository two months before the assassination, was a "crony of Lyndon Johnson" who belonged to the Suite 8F Group who "financed the rise of LBJ." Rather than dig deeper into the implications of that fact, Talbot chose to dismiss it as merely one of those "curiosities" in history.

In isolation, Johnson's connection to Byrd can be passed off as a curiosity or coincidence in history. The problem is there is an ever increasing number of curiosities and coincidences that occurred pre-assassination associated with LBJ and his allies that continue to pile up, making it difficult to ignore the possibility that they might add up to something more. Among them:



**John Connally**

➤ It was LBJ who first made a public pronouncement on April 23, 1963, about the Dallas trip *before* the administration agreed to it.

➤ Johnson man Jack Valenti first sent the invitation to JFK to come to Dallas for a dinner in honor of Congressman Albert Thomas' retirement. It was primarily Johnson ally John Connally who pressured the Kennedy administration to come to Dallas. There is no question as to JFK's reluctance to go to what he described as "nut country" (Texas). Earlier that year Ambassador Stevenson had been harassed by right-wing extremists during a trip to Dallas. Once JFK's trip was agreed upon, Connally clashed with JFK advance man Jerry Bruno over whether to have the luncheon at the end of the parade through Dallas at the Trade Mart. According to researcher Ed Tatro, who spoke on this matter at the D.C. conference in March, Connally flatly told Bruno "not to bother coming" if the luncheon would not be held there. Ultimately the Texas Governor managed to go around Bruno and get his way. The luncheon would be at the Trade Mart, thereby ensuring the parade route would pass through Dealey Plaza.

- According to JFK's close friend Congressman George Smathers, LBJ was attempting to manipulate who was actually riding in the car with the President. JFK would tell him, "... you've got Lyndon, who's insisting that Jackie ride with him... Johnson doesn't want to ride with Yarbrough." It should be noted that if LBJ had gotten Yarbrough out of his car it would've almost certainly meant trading places with Connally.
  
- In 2017, author and long-time researcher Gary Shaw revealed documentation about another witness associated with events in Texas leading up to the assassination. Brian Edwards, another JFK researcher, discussed details about this witness at our D.C. conference in March, 2018. A year before his death in 1978, James "Whitey" Odell Estes gave a statement about his time spent working at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club during the summer of 1963. Estes stated that on multiple occasions he saw Lee Harvey Oswald there and even befriended him. In fact, researchers have uncovered numerous people who have claimed that Ruby knew Oswald, but this time someone was willing to make a sworn statement about it. Of greater significance was the fact that Estes also stated he saw a meeting take place between Ruby, Oswald, and *John Connally*, along with three other men. If his testimony is true, it meant one of Lyndon Johnson's closest allies was not only instrumental in getting the Kennedy motorcade routed through Dealey Plaza, but also met the alleged assassin who was employed there *and* the man who eventually silenced him, prior to the assassination.
  
- As significant as anything released was a document highlighted by University of Virginia political analyst Larry Sabato that stated that an FBI informant reported that the morning of the assassination Jack Ruby asked him if he would "like to watch the fireworks." When Sabato posted it on his twitter account Mark Zaid, an attorney who has been known for his lone gunman stance on the Kennedy assassination, responded by posting "What does this mean?" What it should have meant to Zaid and others who cling to the idea Oswald acted alone is that they should rethink their position.
  
- According to Gordon Ferrie, a man with deep ties to the national security state, John Connally attended another meeting with sinister implications prior to the assassination. Ferrie had a Top Secret security clearance for 50+ years, beginning when he was still a teenager assigned to a Marine presidential detail of protection at the end of the Eisenhower administration. Ferrie spent 10 years in the Marine Corps. After obtaining a Master's Degree in business, Ferrie moved into the world of banking, becoming one of the world's leading experts in international finance. This culminated with his contact with one of LBJ's leading financial and political



**Gordon Ferrie**

advisors, Eliot Janeway. In 2015, Ferrie went public with Janeway's revelations about the JFK assassination, which he shared with Ferrie before his death in 1993. Ferrie's most important revelation pertained to a meeting that took place at the Hotel Texas in Fort Worth the night before the assassination between Janeway, Johnson, and John Connally, as well as the wives of the latter two. Ferrie maintains that, because of the investigations closing in on him and his probable removal from the 1964 Democratic ticket, Johnson stated it was necessary to go ahead with the plot against the president. When I asked Ferrie what Janeway's role in the plot was, Ferrie bluntly replied, "Participant". Janeway also engaged in suspicious behavior during the summer of 1963. He went on a tour of investment houses, giving a prepared statement on behalf of LBJ that suggesting that JFK was dangerous to the nation.

- Among those released in October was a document associated with another figure who connected to the planning of the presidential parade route, Dallas mayor Earle Cabell. The document was a "201" file that confirms he was a CIA contract agent. Cabell, whose brother Charles was a Deputy Director in the CIA, has always been a suspicious character in the Kennedy case for a number of reasons. New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, who indicted but failed to convict Clay Shaw in connection with Kennedy's assassination, felt the last-minute change in the parade route in Dallas made Cabell "highly suspicious" and raised serious questions about the mayor of Dallas. This newly found document that links Cabell directly to the CIA makes him appear even more so. Author Phil Nelson describes Earle Cabell as "at the center of a Dallas crowd that was tied directly into LBJ's circle for many years before the assassination." JFK researchers have always been aware of the obvious connection between Earle Cabell and his brother in the CIA. What takes on more significance is the fact that his contract status is an indication that he was actually paid to *do something* by the agency.
- A little over a decade ago E. Howard Hunt, the master spy, drew a simple diagram about the JFK assassination plot called "chain of command" to be given to his son before his death. It included the CIA's Bill Harvey, David Morales, and Cord Meyer with lines connecting them. At the top of the diagram he wrote, "LBJ."

**The CIA withheld many documents past the original October 26th deadline, and it is unclear if President Trump will stick to his stated six month deadline to release them.**

With the evidence and materials already in the public domain, a convincing argument can be made that powerful forces inside and outside our government conspired to remove our democratically elected leader on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1963. More than anything else, releasing the documents withheld stands to reinforce that historical reality. As long as the CIA and other agencies can hide

**"Not to know what happened before you were born is to be a child forever" - Julius Caesar**

behind the idea of national security as a justification for keeping secrets from the American people, even 54 years after the fact, it may be impossible to completely expose the truth of this dark chapter of American history.

The past has proven, however, that exposing former sins always strengthens, instead of weakens, democracy. In 1988, the United States government officially apologized and awarded compensation to Japanese-Americans and their families who were removed from their homes and businesses during World War II by Executive Order 9066. In the 1990s, it was revealed that U.S. troops, predominantly African-American and minority ones, were purposely exposed to mustard gas in experiments done by the U.S. government during World War II.

These immoralities and atrocities speak to the flaws of our leadership but are not black marks against democracy, and we are always better off as a people knowing the truth, no matter how embarrassing it might be. It is important to remember our founding fathers sought a “more perfect union” not a perfect one. Despite the fact that twentieth century Germany spawned the most heinous regime in history, this regime was eventually exposed and laid bare, and less than a lifetime later the country has a thriving democracy.

Some might say so much time has passed that the JFK assassination should be relegated to being just another event on another date in time in American history. After all, 54 years down the road, the reality is most Americans alive today were born after November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1963, and may not see it as a significant event. Caesar would suggest otherwise, stating “Not to know what happened before you were born is to be a child forever.”

**“Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice” - H. L. Mencken**

In truth, the intervening 54 years since the JFK murder matters little. What is important to our democracy is that it remains *unresolved*. Lacking any institutional validation, a clear resolution to the case will continue to be an uphill battle for anyone who wishes to expose the truths that

are already out there or to dig deeper into what we don’t yet know. Ed Tatro describes the struggle as a “tiny, emaciated mouse confronting a menacing eagle with stiletto-like talons.” However, pursuing the truth, no matter how difficult and potentially embarrassing to the nation’s institutions, is essential to a working democracy. H. L. Mencken once wrote, “Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice.”

The Trump administration has an important decision to make. On April 26<sup>th</sup> will they continue to validate secrecy in the name of national security, or will they start a new era of openness in terms of government policy? Is it possible that the time has come for us to finally know the truth about the Kennedy murder?