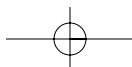
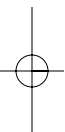
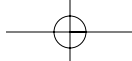


BOOK TWO

Delusions of Conspiracy
—
What Did Not Happen



Introduction to Conspiracy

One never speaks of this assassination without making reckless judgments . . . The absurdity of the accusations, the total lack of evidence, nothing stops them . . . One must read everything with mistrust.

—Voltaire, speaking about the incredible stories and conspiracy theories surrounding the assassination of King Henri IV of France¹

Populus vult decipi—“The public is ready to be deceived.”

The following was posted on the Internet on June 22, 2002:

How can Mr. Bugliosi possibly prove the preposterous negative* that a conspiracy did not exist in the murder of J.F.K. and that one doesn't continue to exist in the cover up? I don't feel that his work, long in progress, whether it is two volumes or twenty-six volumes, can successfully navigate the mire of evidence and controversial evidence which confronts him. It seems to me that the evidence is conspiracy and the controversial evidence is the Warren Report. Perhaps we will never see this work! I have very much been an admirer of Mr. B's previous work and have purchased and read everything to date that he has published. Perhaps also Mr. Bugliosi's ego cannot tolerate the forthcoming mass of criticism which he must acknowledge will arise. Had he, on the other hand, decided to take the opposite tack in this study, his book would have long since been published and probably given conspiracy an even greater impetus than Oliver Stone's movie.

*One frequently hears that “it is impossible to prove a negative.” But this, of course, is pure myth. In some situations, as in the murder of President Kennedy, it is impossible, but in many situations in life it is very easy. For instance, in a criminal case where a defendant says he did not commit the robbery or burglary, or what have you, because he was somewhere else at the time, the prosecution routinely proves the negative (that he was not somewhere else) by establishing through witnesses, fingerprints, DNA, or sometimes even film, that he did commit the crime and was not where he said he was at the time it happened.

On an even more obvious level, if someone were to say, “I have [or do not have] pancreatic cancer,” medical tests can disprove this (i.e., prove the negative), if such be the case.

In the Kennedy case, I believe the absence of a conspiracy can be proved to a virtual certainty.

James Fetzer, PhD, is the editor of the only exclusively scientific books (three) on the assassination. David Mantik, MD, PhD, is among the leading conspiracy researchers and writers in the current conspiracy community. They are both good and sincere men. Dr. Fetzer wrote me on January 23, 2001: “*What Would It Take*, David Mantik has asked me to inquire of you. What would it take to convince you of the existence of a conspiracy and cover-up in the death of JFK? What would it take to persuade you of Oswald’s innocence, which is not necessarily the same thing? Are none of our major discoveries—our ‘16 smoking guns,’ for example—convincing? And, if not, why? And, if not, then *what would it take?*”

Only evidence, Drs. Fetzer and Mantik. Only evidence.

Over the past forty-four years, close to one thousand books have been published on the assassination. What follows is the first anti-conspiracy *book*. Lest there be any confusion, several books have taken an anti-conspiracy *position*, but the mere taking of the position with very little supporting text does not make the book an anti-conspiracy *book*. Let me illustrate this (as I must do to support what would seem to be an otherwise incredible assertion—that this is the *first* anti-conspiracy book) with reference to the two best-known books with an anti-conspiracy position. In his book *Conspiracy of One*, Jim Moore devotes one *sentence* (not one page) to rebut the main argument of the conspiracy theorists that the CIA was behind Kennedy’s murder; nothing to the FBI, or Castro, or anti-Castro Cuban exiles; two sentences to organized crime; nothing to the military-industrial complex or KGB; and so on. In all deference to Mr. Moore, who wrote a fine book, if you title it *Conspiracy of One*, meaning you believe Oswald acted alone and there was no conspiracy, you have to set forth the various conspiracy theories (e.g., CIA, organized crime, KGB, etc.) and then attempt to refute them. Three sentences (I may have missed a few others) in an entire book just won’t do.

Gerald Posner, in *Case Closed*, does much better than Moore, but again, his book cannot be considered an anti-conspiracy *book* (except in the sense of maintaining throughout, as Posner’s and Moore’s books and several others do, that Oswald killed Kennedy and had no confederates, and seeking to show the fallacy of many contentions made by the conspiracy community). Posner devotes only approximately 50 pages of his 607-page book (again, I may be off by a few pages) to refuting the various conspiracy theories. But at least half of those pages are spent on rebutting New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison’s charges; Posner does not address and try to disprove the theories of right-wing, military-industrial complex, or anti-Castro Cuban exile involvement in the assassination, and though he makes several passing references to the CIA (“CIA domestic spying,” “CIA received information,” etc.), I could not collectively find more than two or three full pages in his entire book, if that, where it could inferentially be said he was attacking one of the very most important allegations of all, that of CIA complicity in the assassination. Devoting approximately 8 percent of one’s book, as Posner does, to presenting evidence and arguments to refute the many conspiracy theories in the murder of John F. Kennedy would not seem to qualify it as an anti-conspiracy *book*.

So the curious and rather remarkable fact remains that with the majority of Americans believing there was a conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy, and with hundreds upon hundreds of books having been written on the president’s murder, no

previous author has seen fit to tackle the issue head-on and knock down all the various alleged conspiracies. That clearly is not a boast, just a plain fact that I believe is worth noting about the Kennedy case.

Before going any further, I should define just what a conspiracy is, something that virtually all readers already have a general sense of. The main element of a criminal conspiracy is simply two or more people getting together (they don't have to physically meet or utter any magic words—all that is required is a "meeting of the minds," which can be proved by the circumstantial evidence of their words and/or conduct) and *agreeing to commit a crime*. (To the ever suspicious conspiracy theorists, the definition of a conspiracy is two people talking to each other on a street corner.) For a conspiracy to exist under the law, the prosecutor has to prove one additional element of the crime of conspiracy: that at least one member of the conspiracy committed some "overt act" to carry out the object of the conspiracy (the overt act doesn't have to be unlawful; e.g., in a conspiracy to commit a bank robbery, buying gas for the getaway car would suffice). The purpose of this requirement is to allow the individuals who have agreed to commit the crime an opportunity to terminate the agreement before any decisive action is taken in furtherance of it. Once a conspiracy is formed, under the vicarious liability theory of conspiracy each member of the conspiracy is criminally responsible for all crimes committed by the co-conspirators to further the object of the conspiracy, whether or not they themselves committed the crimes. Hence, if A and B conspire to rob a bank or burglarize a home or murder John Jones, and A commits the robbery or burglary or murder while B is in Madagascar playing volleyball, B is equally criminally responsible for the robbery, burglary, or murder. And if, for instance, A and B conspire to rob a bank, and A kills the bank teller who resists the robbery, B (whether driving the getaway car or playing in Madagascar) is responsible not just for the robbery, the only thing B agreed to, but also the murder, since the murder was committed by A "to further the object of the conspiracy," which was robbery.

The belief in conspiracy (derived from the Latin word *conspirare*, "to breathe together") has appealed to those of liberal as well as conservative mind, to the uneducated as well as the intellectual elite,* and has been with humanity—if not in name, then in the sensing of it—since the beginning of time. Witness, for example, the title of a 1798 book by one John Robison, a professor of natural philosophy who was the secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh: *Proofs Of A Conspiracy Against All The Religions And Governments Of Europe, Carried On In The Secret Meetings Of Free Masons, Illuminati, And Reading Societies*.

When the term *conspiracy* is applied by one group of people to another (e.g., by Hitler's regime to those in the Third Reich trying to kill him and thereby end the Second World War), the emphasis is always on the hidden, the concealed, not that which is in the open. No one would have said that the Ku Klux Klan was "conspiring" against blacks, or that today's political parties (Democrat and Republican) are "conspiring" against each other.

*For instance, in the Kennedy case, if a brilliant man like Great Britain's Bertrand Russell, a towering figure in the field of mathematical philosophy and intellectual thought (whose fourth wife, Lady Russell, never forgave a friend who said on television that Russell did not outshine Plato), can say with conviction that "an innocent man [referring to Oswald] was framed and gunned down" (Lewis, "Tragedy of Bertrand Russell," pp.30, 32), you know the idiocy over this case has not discriminated against any mental category of people.

Thus, with the Kennedy case, the main belief is that *hidden* elements in the CIA, military-industrial complex, organized crime, and so forth, got together for the purpose of killing Kennedy. And it has been the objective of thousands of assassination researchers since 1963—in most cases their *raison d'être*—to bring these hidden conspirators out into the open so they can face justice.

What causes such a ready suspicion of conspiracy? This has been the subject of several books, which generally conclude that its genesis is in such realities as innate human paranoia and cultural dispositions toward paranoia.* With respect to the latter, many of the conspiracy allegations in the Kennedy case (accepted by millions of Americans far outside the conspiracy community) may be influenced by a distrust of those in power that arguably has deep roots in the thinking that gave birth to this nation. The Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, asserts, in its Bill of Indictment, that the “history of the present King of Great Britain [King George III] is a history of repeated injuries . . . abuses and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.” In the Kennedy case, the belief in conspiracy has certainly been aided and abetted by the confluence of other historical events, such as the cold war intrigue of spies and secret agents, as well as the Watergate and Iran-Contra scandals, the latter two generating an increased distrust of the federal government.²

In his book *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, Richard Hofstadter writes that “the typical procedure of the higher paranoid scholarship is to start with defensible assumptions.” He goes on to say, in an observation tailor-made for the conspiracy theorists in the Kennedy case, that “the paranoid mentality is far more coherent than the real world, since it leaves no room for mistakes, failures or ambiguities . . . It believes it is up against an enemy who is as infallibly rational as he is totally evil, and it seeks to match his imputed total competence with its own, leaving nothing unexplained and comprehending all of reality in one overreaching, consistent theory.” Hofstadter says the “qualities” of the paranoid style are “heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy,” and a “heroic striving for ‘evidence’ to prove that the unbelievable is the only thing that can be believed.”³

Author Mark Fenster feels that one reason for the success of major conspiracy theories is that they tell a “gripping, dramatic story . . . The conspiracy narrative is compelling in its . . . focus on the actions of the perpetrators of the evil conspiracy and [on] the defender of the moral order.”⁴

Warren Commission staff member Richard M. Mosk, in his article “Conspiracy Theories and the JFK Assassination: Cashing in on Political Paranoia,” adds that the Kennedy conspiracy theories “allow full scope for the exploitation of political prejudices. No target could be more welcome to the intellectual left than the Texas oil plutocracy, the radical right, the FBI and the CIA. [Likewise], the [political] right could not dream of better suspects than Castro or Russia.”⁵ Also, it is the view of many liberals and not a few moderates that a moral degeneration of American government started with Kennedy’s death (e.g., Vietnam, Cambodia, Watergate, etc.). The continuing angst of these believers requires something large in the body politic against whom they can apply their a priori reasoning.

* A far more mundane reason may simply be that the masses, trying to make some sense out of events that are not to their liking, find that a conspiracy theory they can easily understand or adopt, and which fits a bias of theirs, often explains things very well.

An emotionally disturbed misfit and non-entity like Oswald inherently lacks gravitas. But dark, powerful, sinister forces like the CIA and military-industrial complex, out to destroy our individual freedoms and American way of life, fit just fine. Thus, these people were (and are) much more receptive, even eager, to buy the conspiracy theory of the assassination. Indeed, apart from the belief in a conspiracy in the Kennedy case being literally forced on people by the one-sided bombardment of allegations, there is the natural sense among nearly all humans that great events have to have great causes. A lone nut just doesn't work in the calculus of the Kennedy assassination. Or, as Boston University historian Robert Dallek put it, "It's been very difficult to believe that someone as inconsequential as Oswald could have killed someone as consequential as Kennedy."⁶

None of the above is to suggest that there aren't such things as conspiracies. They happen all the time, and in very serious crimes. John Wilkes Booth was the leader of the conspiracy to kill Abraham Lincoln. The CIA conspired with organized crime to kill Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. In the famous Dreyfus affair at the end of the nineteenth century in France (the case that most Kennedy assassination conspiracy theorists so often compare to the Kennedy case), several high-ranking French military officers conspired to frame Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer, for "high treason" in revealing French military secrets to Germany. (The French Supreme Court ultimately declared Dreyfus innocent in 1906.) I could name a great number of other conspiracies. So actual conspiracies are common. I myself have convicted criminal defendants of the crime of conspiracy to commit murder.

This book thus far has conclusively established one point, that Oswald killed Kennedy, and inferentially established another, that he acted alone. I say *inferentially* because if our thoughts are going to be governed by common sense on this issue, we would agree that no group of top-level conspirators would ever employ someone as unstable and unreliable as Oswald to commit the biggest murder in history, no such group would ever provide its hit man with, or allow him to use, a twelve-dollar rifle to get the job done, and any such group would help its hit man escape or have a car waiting for him to drive him to his death, not allow him to be wandering out in the street, catching cabs and buses to get away, as we know Oswald did.

Because of this reality, no matter what some person or group did or said before or after the assassination that might be deemed suspicious and indicative of a conspiracy, we know there is an innocent explanation for it that is unconnected to any conspiracy. And anyone who thinks it is connected, and that it points to some group as being the conspirators behind the assassination, necessarily has to be willing to also conclude that the subject conspiratorial group *would* get Oswald to murder Kennedy for them, and *would* only provide him with a cheap, mail-order rifle to get the job done, and *would* make no effort to immediately kill him or help him escape so he wouldn't be arrested and interrogated by law enforcement, as Oswald was. For example, anyone who believes that the Secret Service's spiriting Kennedy's body away from Dallas in violation of Texas law (thereby preventing Texas authorities from examining it) is suspicious and points to a conspiracy (as so many conspiracy theorists do) has to be willing to also conclude that the Secret Service, Kennedy's bodyguards, decided to murder Kennedy, hired Oswald to kill Kennedy, provided him with, or allowed him to use, the cheap rifle he had, and did not make any effort to help him escape. And anyone who is *not* willing to draw all of those inferences

should immediately put out of his or her mind any suspicious notion about the Secret Service's conduct in removing Kennedy's body from Texas.

What I am saying is that one of the principal frailties in the thinking processes of the theorists is that they rarely ever carry their suspicions, which are based on some discrepancy, anomaly, or contradiction they find, to their logical conclusion. If they did, they'd see the *reductio ad absurdum* of their position. But for them, if something looks suspicious, that's enough. Instead of asking, "Where does this go?"—that is, where does the discrepancy, contradiction, or whatever, lead them?—they immediately give their minds a breather and conclude that what they find is itself proof of a conspiracy (or proof that Oswald is innocent). The discrepancy or contradiction is the *entire* story. And being the entire story, it by itself discredits the entire twenty-six volumes of the Warren Commission. Nothing else has to be shown or even argued.*

A few examples: If conspiracy theorists are told that Oswald's Carcano rifle was a poor and inaccurate rifle and could not have been the murder weapon, they immediately conclude Oswald must be innocent, and hence, was framed. What they don't bother to think about is that if they say this, what they are necessarily also saying is that one of the conspirators must have tapped each of the firearm experts for the Warren Commission and HSCA (a total of nine) on the shoulder and said, "Listen, this weapon [the Carcano] is not the murder weapon, but we want you to say it is," and that all of these experts who were approached agreed to go along with this. But since this absurdity would never have happened, the argument that the Carcano was a poor and inaccurate rifle doesn't, as they say in trial practice, "go anywhere."

The rifle found on the sixth floor was originally identified as a 7.65 Mauser. Over and over again, conspiracy theorists who believe Oswald was framed actually cite this fact as part of their proof—that is, it wasn't Oswald's rifle so he's innocent and was framed. But one moment's reflection (one moment more than almost all conspiracy theorists are willing to give) would cause you to ask, If he was framed, why would the framers place a rifle

*For conspiracy theorists, all discrepancies, contradictions, anomalies, et cetera, are suspicious, and are the heart and soul of the conspiracy movement. In their universe, everything proceeds perfectly and there is no such thing as human error, incompetence, coincidence, or failure of memory. There are no innocent, benign explanations for anything.

With respect to contradictions, a godsend to all conspiracy researchers, eyewitness authority Elizabeth Loftus writes, "If a hundred people were to see the same automobile accident, no two reports [of this] would be identical" on all the details (Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony*, p.153). This reality of human cognition, that different people see and hear the same event differently, has proved to be the richest of troves for the scavenging Warren Commission critics and conspiracy theorists. Author Quentin Reynolds writes in his book *Courtroom*, "No two persons will give the same account of an incident they both witnessed. They will paint a door black, blue and green, and give more varieties of weather for the same day than the weather bureau does for all the days of the year. They vary the time of the day by minutes or hours. They differ in their measurement of space by inches, feet and miles" (Reynolds, *Courtroom*, p.186). As psychologist and philosopher William James said, "Whilst part of what we perceive comes from the object before us, another part always comes out of our mind."

Warren Commission counsel David Belin points out that because our eyes are not perfect cameras that can recall exactly what took place in a matter of seconds, "if you get two conflicting stories with two witnesses, you can imagine how many arise when there are hundreds of witnesses to a sudden event, as there were in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963. Almost anyone who wants to concoct a theory can find one or two witnesses who might support his theory" (Belin, *Final Disclosure*, p.14).

A substantial majority of the conspiracy community is also extremely gullible, believing every story they hear without bothering to check it to see if it is accurate or makes any sense. As long as the story helps their theory, they buy it. They would improve the quality of their research appreciably by simply embracing rule number one of the journalistic profession: "If your mama says she loves you, check it out."

on the sixth floor that was not Oswald's, one that no one could ever connect him to? And if they didn't place or plant it there, how could they possibly think they could successfully frame him if they knew a rifle belonging to someone else was found on the sixth floor? Conspiracy theorists never bother to ask and attempt to answer such obvious questions. Instead, they find it so much easier to make a silly allegation and then simply move on—to their next silly observation.

Another example among countless others: To say, as conspiracy theorists do, that the backyard photo of Oswald, dressed in black with a rifle and revolver, is a composite photo is to also say that Marina Oswald was part of the conspiracy to frame her husband, since Marina says she took the photo. But the notion that Marina was part of any conspiracy to frame her husband for Kennedy's murder is absurd on its face, so the argument that the backyard photo is a composite "doesn't go anywhere"—that is, unless you are willing to say that Marina was, indeed, part of said conspiracy. If people want to use such absurdity and illogic as their guide in analyzing the assassination, I submit that they should not have a ticket into the theater of serious debate on the assassination. The price of admission to the debate, as it were, should be sense, not nonsense.

Not only do the considerable number of conspiracy theories in the Kennedy assassination do violence to the facts and the evidence, but conspiracy theorists, in welcoming as many people and groups as they can get under their tent, are rarely troubled by the fact that many of their theories are incompatible with each other. For instance, if the KGB did it, doesn't that eliminate the theory that the CIA (sworn enemies of the KGB during the cold war) or America's military-industrial complex did it? If organized crime did it, doesn't that eliminate the theory that the Secret Service or LBJ was behind the assassination? I mean, the Secret Service (which is *not* the CIA) is sitting down with the Mafia to kill Kennedy? Please.

Indeed, in addition to conspiracy theories being incompatible with each other, conspiracy theorists are so immediately taken by and enamored of events they can't explain that they blindly find no problem drawing a conclusion of conspiracy that inherently contradicts some other conclusion of theirs. One example among a great many: In his book *"They've Killed the President!"* Robert Anson tries hard to convince the reader that the CIA was not alarmed when Oswald, arriving in Moscow, offered to furnish the Soviets information on U.S. radar, because Oswald was probably working for the CIA (i.e., whatever information he gave the Soviets would be incorrect or valueless). But then, in the very next paragraph, he asks the reader to entertain the possibility that since the Russians had never shot down a U-2 before May 1, 1960, which was seven months after Oswald arrived in Moscow, there may have been a "connection between Oswald, the purveyor of radar secrets, and the Russians' unaccustomed accuracy." In other words, Oswald is now working with the KGB. But then remarkably, Anson goes back to suggesting that Oswald was working for the CIA when he says, "The U-2 incident was all the more reason [for the CIA] to question Oswald [which the CIA did not do] on his return to the United States . . . There would have been no need for the Agency to interview Oswald, of course, if they knew . . . why he had gone to the Soviet Union, and what he had done there—the things they would have known if he had been one of their agents."⁷ So does Anson, then, want us to believe that the CIA had Oswald give the KGB radar information that enabled the Russians to shoot down a CIA agent's U-2? Not really. Anson, in his eagerness to go on to his next discrepancy, coincidence, unexplained event, et cetera, wouldn't have taken the time to ask himself that question.

An absolute staple of the conspiracy community—no, a *sine qua non*, that without which they could not survive—is the interesting but ultimately unproductive and ridiculous notion that if A knows B and B knows C, then A is meaningfully connected to C, which of course is a non sequitur. In fact, the theorists go beyond the above equation. Not only is A connected to C, but whatever nefarious deed C has done (all the more so with B), A must have done also. (Actually, conspiracy theorists frequently go beyond A-B-C into D, E, and F.) So if Jack Ruby is a friend of Dallas mobster Joe Campisi, and Campisi has underworld connections to New Orleans Mafia chieftain Carlos Marcello, then if they posit that Marcello was behind the assassination, it becomes irresistible to the theorists that Ruby must have been involved with Marcello in the assassination or the cover-up.

Here are just two examples representative of literally thousands of A-B-C (and D, E, and F) situations that the conspiracy theorists set forth in their books: Conspiracy author Peter Dale Scott believes that Dallas oilmen, Jack Ruby, and J. Edgar Hoover, along with many others, may have been part of a conspiracy to murder Kennedy. In support of this, he writes, “A businessman told the FBI that Ruby had once introduced him to Dallas businessman E. E. Fogelson and his wife, Greer Garson. Fogelson was a member of the ‘Del Charro set.’ This was a group of Texas millionaires who frequented [Texas oilman] Clint Murchison’s resort, the Hotel Del Charro, near Murchison’s racetrack, the Del Mar, in La Jolla, California. Clint Murchison and some of his associates would pay for the annual racing holidays of their good friend J. Edgar Hoover.”⁸

Clay Shaw (like thousands of American businessmen who traveled to foreign countries and agreed to submit reports once they returned providing information that might be of interest to the CIA’s nonclandestine Domestic Contact Service) wrote in reports dated June 14, 1949, and June 29, 1951, that while in Nicaragua he “heard General Somoza’s cattle monopoly bitterly criticized by businessmen in Managua,” and while in Buenos Aires he was told that “Juan Peron and Evita are each jealous of the other’s power and that they maintain separate and independent political organizations.” Conspiracy author William Davy, who believes Clay Shaw was involved in Kennedy’s assassination, writes, “*Curiously*, both Somoza and Juan Peron were patients and friends of Shaw’s close associate, Dr. Alton Ochsner . . . Ochsner is best known for his association with Ed Butler and the Information Council of the Americas, or INCA . . . INCA was composed of several members of the New Orleans elite. These included . . . Eustis and William B. Reily. The Reily family owned William B. Reily & Co., makers of Luzianne coffee. It was at Reily’s where Oswald found work as a machine greaser in the summer of 1963.”⁹

Under this infantile reasoning in which guilt by association is elevated to an art form, one should watch whom one has dinner with. If A, a surgeon, is friendly and has frequent dinners with B, the president of a major corporation, then if B ends up embezzling millions from his corporation, A must have been involved too.

Just for example, Dallas police officer Joe Cody, a friend of Jack Ruby’s, said, “Yes, Jack knew the Campisis [Joe, whom some believed to be a Dallas organized-crime figure, and his brother Sam], and I’d seen them together on numerous occasions. Jack ate out there at the Egyptian Lounge [owned by the Campisis]. Sometimes Joe Campisi would sit with him. If I came in, I’d sit with Jack Ruby and Joe Campisi. We all knew each other well.” So since Cody was friendly with Campisi and it turns out Campisi with Marcello, if Marcello had Kennedy killed, I suppose Officer Cody must have also been involved, right? Better yet, a friend of Ruby’s, Pat Morgan, told a Ruby biographer that one night Ruby

took him to a big “Italian Night” party “that all the important people of Dallas attended. He took me over and introduced me to [Dallas] Mayor [Earle] Cabell and to Judge Joe B. Brown, who later tried his case. They [Cabell and Brown] were sitting with Joe Campisi.”^{10*} So now, apparently, since we’ve connected Cabell and Brown with Campisi, and Campisi with Marcello, they must have also been in on the plot to kill Kennedy.

And if you want an even closer connection to Marcello, Dallas County deputy sheriff Al Maddox says, “One day I was in Joe Campisi’s office and he called Carlos [Marcello] on the phone and I talked to Carlos on the phone.” I reckon that makes Maddox just dead in the water guilty, along with Marcello, of Kennedy’s murder.¹¹

How about this: Although there is no credible evidence that Campisi was a mobster (see section on Jack Ruby and organized crime later in text), it is known that Joe Civello (not Joe Campisi) was head of the Dallas Mafia, whatever there was of it. Indeed, Civello, who knew Ruby, was present at the Mafia summit meeting in Apalachin, New York, in November of 1957, which was also attended by Florida Mafia chieftain Santo Trafficante, whom a considerable number of conspiracy theorists believe was behind the assassination. Yet Dallas police sergeant Patrick Dean *volunteered* to HSCA investigators that even though he knew of Civello’s background, he was a dinner guest one night of Civello’s “at one of them Italian get-togethers when they have, you know, a big dinner.”¹² Since Civello was connected to Trafficante, and Dean was a friend of Civello’s, maybe Dean was in on the alleged plot to murder JFK, right?

Remarkably, even sensible, intelligent people, such as HSCA chief counsel Robert Blakey, who personally believes Marcello was behind Kennedy’s assassination, unthinkingly invoke the buffs’ A-B-C reasoning to support their position. On *Frontline*’s 1993 show “Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?” Blakey said, “When you find David Ferrie, who is an investigator for Carlos Marcello, being a boyhood friend to Lee Harvey Oswald, and with him that summer, and with Carlos Marcello at that very point in time, you have an immediate connection between a man [Marcello] who had the motive, opportunity, and means to kill Kennedy and the man [Oswald] who killed Kennedy.”¹³ What?!?†

Although common sense alone should tell conspiracy theorists that knowing someone or even being friendly with him is no evidence of a connection to his criminal activity, that you have to show the two were involved with each other in the same enterprise, there is another fascinating phenomenon that the conspiracy theorists must be aware of but seem determined not to acknowledge. I’m referring to the curious but undeniable reality that virtually any two people chosen at random can be connected to each other by the interposition of a very small number of mutual friends or acquaintances. For instance, although most readers of this book don’t know and haven’t ever met President Bush, they might very well know someone who knows him, or know someone who knows someone who knows him. Hence, most of us are only two, three, or four intermediaries removed from the president of the United States. This reality is the reason why most of us, at one time or another,

*Morgan added, “I don’t think he knew these people [Cabell and Brown] except to shake hands with—but he knew them all at least that far. He used to say to me, ‘You know, Pat, considering my background, it’s really amazing I have come so far’” (Wills and Demaris, *Jack Ruby*, p.43).

†To dilute the connection even further, Ferrie was not an investigator for Carlos Marcello. He was an investigator for lawyer G. Wray Gill, and Gill had Ferrie work on an immigration lawsuit against Marcello in which Gill was representing Marcello. Also, there is no credible evidence that Ferrie was ever a boyhood friend of Oswald’s or was with Oswald in the summer of 1963. But even if these assertions were true, so what? They certainly don’t add up to a conspiracy to commit murder.

meet someone new in a distant city or country and discover we have mutual friends or acquaintances. And what do we all say at these moments? "It's a small world."*

Indeed, a Harvard-sponsored study in 1967 exploring the theory that all of us are connected by no more than a few people (the so-called six-degrees-of-separation theory) asked this question: "Given any two people in the world, person X and person Z, how many intermediate acquaintance links are needed before X and Z are connected?" Although the study never answered that question definitively with reference to the entire world, the implied answer was "not very many," the Harvard study citing another study by a group of workers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its finding that although there is "only about one chance in 200,000 that any two Americans chosen at random will know each other, amazingly, there is better than a 50-50 chance that any two Americans can be linked up with two intermediate acquaintances." The Harvard empirical study found that on the average, only five intermediate friends or acquaintances were needed to link up any two Americans chosen at random.¹⁴

I have frequently told juries in cases I prosecuted that they should take their human experience with them into the jury room when they deliberate on the issue of the defendant's guilt, that they didn't have to leave these experiences at the door. Likewise, conspiracy theorists should use their human experience and common sense in addressing the issues in the Kennedy case rather than their pet A-B-C theory.

There are several other ways in which the conspiracy community operates in defiance of logic and common sense. A few: Warren Commission critics and conspiracy theorists are constantly scavenging for something, whether in the eighteen thousand pages of the Warren Commission volumes or anywhere else, that supports their theory. If they find it, they embrace it as the absolute truth even if it is inconsistent with the overwhelming weight of the evidence, including physical, scientific evidence—indeed, even if there are twenty other pieces of evidence showing that their point is wrong. And if someone rejects their "truth" as being erroneous or fraudulent, they simply accuse them of being part of the cover-up or groveling apologists for the Warren Commission.

Also, as former Warren Commission assistant counsel W. David Slawson put it, they love to "prove" their version of events occurred by "showing that it *could* have happened that way, without offering any evidence that it actually did."

The dreadful illogic and superficiality of the conspiracy theorists' modus operandi has inevitably resulted in the following situation: Though they have dedicated their existence to trying to poke holes in the Warren Commission's findings, akin to a defense attorney in a criminal trial trying to raise a reasonable doubt of the defendant's guilt in the jury's mind, they have failed abysmally to tell us (if the Warren Commission was wrong) what actually did happen. In other words, other than blithely tossing out names, they have failed to offer any credible *evidence* of who, if not Oswald, killed Kennedy. Nor have they offered any credible *evidence* at all of who the conspirators behind the assassination were. So after more than forty years, if we were to rely on these silly people, we'd have an assassination without an assassin (since, they assure us, Oswald didn't kill Kennedy), and a conspiracy without conspirators. Not a simple achievement.

*Or we'll say, "What a coincidence," or "What are the odds of this happening?" But in the world of conspiracy theorists, happenstance and coincidences don't exist. What appears to be a random coincidence is really always complicity. Indeed, perhaps the only coincidence they will acknowledge is that the words *coincidence* and *complicity* each start with the letter C and each has four syllables.

To elaborate further on this point, the conspiracy theorists claim to have found a million problems with the Warren Commission's conclusions that Oswald killed Kennedy and acted alone, but not one of them has ever offered a coherent and logical alternative theory as to what did happen. All they can do is point out that such and such a group had a motive; claim that Oswald was a poor shot; allege that Oswald left the Book Depository Building after the shooting in Dealey Plaza because he probably sensed he was being framed; and so on. Their charges, which they have repeated in book after book, usually citing each other as the primary source, could be condensed and put into a thousand-page book titled *Discrepancies, Supposed Coincidences, and Unanswered Questions*. However, the totality of what they have written, with any semblance of credibility, as to what precisely did happen would fill only a page or so of a companion book, if that. And if that is all that the conspiracy community can produce after more than forty years, shouldn't they be finally asking themselves if the reason why they have failed to come up with anything is that nothing exists? Not even Houdini could pull a rabbit out of the hat when there was no rabbit in the hat.

But telling the conspiracy theorists they have failed doesn't phase them at all. In fact, it's like waving a red flag in front of a bull. They are so tenacious and desperate to prove a conspiracy that out of their ranks came a book, published in 2002, that actually contained a purported official CIA internal document in which the CIA confesses to the murder and implicates the FBI and Joint Chiefs of Staff as co-conspirators. In that book, *Regicide*, conspiracy theorist Gregory Douglas claims that Robert T. Crowley, a former CIA assistant deputy director of plans, gave him the document in 1996 with the understanding that it not be published in his lifetime (Crowley died in 2000). Crowley said he was part of the conspiracy, but he apparently had no fear that Douglas would turn on him for fame and fortune, in which case he'd be prosecuted, convicted, and most likely executed. Crowley also apparently didn't mind his surviving family and descendants having to live with the infamy that he had helped orchestrate the murder of Kennedy. After all, it was important to this nation's history that all Americans know what happened. That is why Crowley didn't give the explosive document to publications with a small circulation like the *New York Times*, *Time*, or *Newsweek*, but to Douglas, who had the document published in his book by a giant, international media conglomerate, the Monte Sano Media company of Huntsville, Alabama, which, by the way, isn't listed in the phone directory.

Either Douglas (true name, Peter Stahl) is a fraud, or the person who forged the document is. Apart from the obvious insanity that the CIA would confess in writing to the assassination, the document, dated December 22, 1963, and referenced "Operation Zipper," has no "To" or "From" line, no signature or even signature block, and is not even labeled or stamped "Top Secret" or any other level of confidentiality. You see, the CIA, like Crowley, wanted the world to know its agents had killed Kennedy. One wonders why the agency never called a press conference to announce its having murdered him. Laughably, the forger of the document couldn't even get his grammatical tenses to be consistent. In the first paragraph of the document, he writes, "The removal of the President and the Attorney General from their positions because of high treason *has been* determined"—that is, the assassination hasn't taken place yet. (That murder is contemplated is made clear in paragraph 4, which reads, "Removal by impeachment or other legal means is considered unfeasible [the forger had a spelling problem and no dictionary at his side] and too protracted," and paragraph 5, which reads, "Therefore, an alternative solution has been found to effect this removal.") But paragraph 7 of this very same document

reads, "This operation, codenamed ZIPPER, *was* under the direction of James Angleton of the Agency, assisted by Robert Crowley and William Harvey, also of the Agency." The forged, internal CIA document* is now suddenly in the past tense, speaking about the assassination that has already taken place, and uproariously informing its CIA readers that Angleton, Crowley, and Harvey are members of the CIA.¹⁵ Can you imagine that, folks? The CIA has *confessed* to Kennedy's murder! And in writing!

It couldn't have been more obvious within hours after the assassination that Oswald had murdered Kennedy, and within no more than a day or so thereafter that he had acted alone. And this is precisely the conclusion that virtually all local (Dallas), state (Texas), and federal (FBI and Secret Service) law enforcement agencies came to shortly after the assassination. Nothing has ever changed their conclusion or proved it wrong.

Apart from the fact that no group of conspirators would ever get someone like Oswald to kill for them, no evidence has ever surfaced even linking Oswald to any of the groups the conspiracy theorists believe to be behind the assassination. But remarkably, many in the debate treat this all-important fact as irrelevant and moot. The reason is grounded in a stark misconception. The biggest mistake, by far, that well-intentioned lay people make in concluding there was a conspiracy in the Kennedy assassination, and the biggest argument, by far, that conspiracy theorists use in their books to support their position of a conspiracy, is to maintain that such and such a group "had a motive" to kill Kennedy and, therefore, must have done it. For instance, one hears that organized crime killed Kennedy out of anger because, after they helped finance his 1960 presidential campaign, he betrayed them by allowing his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, to continue his crusade to destroy them; or that they killed the president "to get Bobby Kennedy off their back." Or, Castro had Kennedy killed to get even with him for the Bay of Pigs invasion or before Kennedy had him killed. Or, the military-industrial complex and the CIA killed Kennedy because he intended to withdraw American troops from Vietnam, and they were fiercely opposed to it.[†] You know, if the president of our country is doing some-

*It has to be noted that along with the allegation of planted evidence, the other main conspiracy argument conspiracy theorists have made over and over again is that much of the evidence against Oswald was forged or tampered with by the authorities. But not once have the theorists ever proved this allegation. Yet, the very group always shouting forgery and tampering has been caught on many occasions forging documents to make its point in the assassination debate. (See endnote discussion.)

[†]Millions of Americans through the years have mouthed these or similar beliefs. Here's just one example, from President Kennedy's own longtime personal secretary, no less: In an October 7, 1994, letter to Richard Duncan, a high school teacher in Roanoke, Virginia, who had inquired of her state of mind vis-à-vis the assassination, Evelyn Lincoln wrote, "It is my belief that there was a conspiracy because there were those that disliked him and felt the only way to get rid of him was to assassinate him. These five conspirators, in my opinion, were Lyndon B. Johnson, J. Edgar Hoover, the mafia, the CIA, and the Cubans in Florida" (Duncan sent me a copy of the letter on January 23, 1997).

This mind-numbing phenomenon is actually more the rule than the exception with everyday people who watch events from afar. At a reception following a speech I gave around the time of Princess Diana's fatal car crash in Paris, a fifty-ish, well-coiffed woman with a doctorate in psychology told me, without batting an eye, that the Royal Family was behind Princess Di's death. How, I inquired, had she come to this rather startling conclusion? "If Di married Dodi and had a son, the son would be half Arab and might someday become king, something they couldn't abide." "Oh, I see," I said, fighting back a smile. I certainly had no difficulty picturing the Queen Mother and her family, aghast at such a possibility, deciding that "Di had to go," and Prince Philip, perhaps, making the arrangements by calling in someone the family normally employs to "take care" of such problems.

thing that a particular group (e.g., Wall Street or unions or environmentalists) doesn't like, the group simply kills him. That's what we routinely do in America, right?

Moreover, for some reason, believers in the conspiracy theory apparently never stop to realize that even assuming, for the sake of argument, that a particular group of people had a motive to kill Kennedy, they also had an even greater motive *not* to do it, namely, that if they did it and got caught, they could be tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. Indeed, they would also know that the probability of their being caught and executed would be increased a hundred times over since their victim was the president of the United States, and his murder would ignite the most massive, dogged, and never-ending pursuit of his killer or killers by local, state, and federal law enforcement that had ever taken place.

But even if this apparently never-considered countervailing motive were treated as if it did not exist, a motive to commit a crime hardly gets one to first base in any criminal prosecution. I mean, if President Bush were assassinated tomorrow, there would be all types of people and groups who one could say would have had a motive to kill him. It is only one of the starting points of the investigation. Irrespective of the presence of motive, prosecutors still have to prove, by solid evidence, that the person or group who had a motive is the same person or group who committed the crime, a little fact that millions of Americans and most conspiracy theorists ignore. Taking the French proverb *Qui en profite du crime en est coupable* ("Whoever profits from the crime is guilty of it") to heart, they are convinced that finding a motive is synonymous with finding the perpetrator. In their mind, finding that a particular group had a motive to kill Kennedy is enough to prove that the group did, in fact, do so—a non sequitur and broad jump of Olympian proportions. For example, Oliver Stone concluded that no fewer than ten separate groups or people had a motive to kill Kennedy, and this is why someone of his intelligence (with his thinking cap turned very tightly to the "off" position) directed a movie (*JFK*) in which, unbelievably, *all ten* were involved in Kennedy's murder, the *reductio ad absurdum* of such an infantile, yet exceedingly prevalent mode of thinking.*

Many conspiracy theorists embellish the motive argument to prove that a particular group killed Kennedy, by saying that it had the "motive, means, and opportunity" to do so. They present this almost as a prosecutorial legal brief, but in my years as a prosecutor I never once used the phrase and personally don't know any seasoned prosecutor who has, although I assume some do and I am aware of this legal colloquialism. Much more so than motive, "means and opportunity" are virtually worthless as evidence of guilt (unless, of course, you can show that no other living human, or very few other living humans, had the means or opportunity).

To illustrate how empty the concept of motive, means, and opportunity is, let's take the Kennedy assassination. Any of the thousands of citizens of Dallas who hated Kennedy with a passion would have had a motive to kill him. And any of them who owned a gun or a rifle had the means. And if they were anywhere along Kennedy's motorcade route, they would have the opportunity. Again, "motive, means, and opportunity" hardly gets

*Fourteen years before Stone's movie came out, another Hollywood director made light of what Stone would take so seriously. In his 1977 picture *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen has his character Alvie ask Allison, "How is it possible for Oswald to have fired from two angles at once? . . . I'll tell you this. He was not marksman enough to hit a moving target at that range. But if there was a second assassin, that's it." Allison responds in exasperation, "Then everybody's in on the conspiracy—the FBI, CIA, J. Edgar Hoover, and the oil companies and the Pentagon and the men's room attendant at the White House?" Alvie: "I would leave out the men's room attendant."

one to first base. As indicated, even if all three are present, a prosecutor still has to show that the person or group who had them committed the crime. Indeed, a prosecutor's focusing heavily on motive, means, and opportunity is almost an implied admission by him that he has very little evidence that the defendant did, in fact, commit the crime. "Yeah, okay," a courthouse wag could say. "He had motive, means, and opportunity. But did he do it?" Motive, means, and opportunity are certainly helpful (and sometimes critical) to a prosecutor in proving his case, but are perhaps more helpful to the police who investigate the case in that the absence of any of them, particularly means and opportunity, enables the police to exclude those who may have otherwise been considered suspects to a crime.

If all the groups and people who Oliver Stone, in his movie, alleges were involved in Kennedy's murder (e.g., FBI, CIA, Secret Service, military-industrial complex, LBJ, etc.) actually *were*, a coup d'état would necessarily have taken place. And, indeed, in Stone's movie New Orleans DA Jim Garrison tells his staff that the assassination of President Kennedy "was a military-style ambush from start to finish, a coup d'état with Lyndon Johnson waiting in the wings." It's a notion that many conspiracy theorists readily subscribe to. In fact, one of their books on the Kennedy assassination, by Alan Weberman and Michael Canfield, is specifically titled *Coup d'État in America*. Kennedy's assassination, writes conspiracy writer James H. Fetzer, could very well have been "the result of a coup d'état involving the CIA, the mob, anti-Castro Cubans, and powerful politicians, such as LBJ, Richard Nixon, and J. Edgar Hoover, fully financed by Texas oil men and elements of the military-industrial complex."¹⁶ "There can be no doubts," conspiracy author L. Fletcher Prouty writes, that the Kennedy assassination "was the result of a coup d'état."¹⁷ Conspiracy icon Vincent Salandria concludes that "the killing of Kennedy represented a *coup d'état*."¹⁸ I suppose that since a coup d'état is defined as a sudden, unconstitutional change of state policy and leadership "by a group of persons in authority," a coup would actually be required in order to pull off the massive conspiracy contemplated by conspiracy theorists; that is, you couldn't even have a coup without the involvement, cooperation, and complicity of groups like the FBI, CIA, and military-industrial complex.

In addition to the fact that the aforementioned groups and people would find it impossible to agree on who should be seated where at a presidential swearing-in ceremony, much less on how, when, and where to murder the president, what the conspiracy theorists fail to realize is that there is absolutely no history of coup d'états in America. They are talking about the United States of America, the most powerful, democratic, and economically stable country in the world, as if it were no different from Nicaragua or Tanzania—in effect, comparing us with banana republics and Third World countries whose weak, vulnerable, undemocratic, and economically unstable conditions lend themselves to, and are fertile soil for, one coup after another. For instance, in the year Kennedy was killed alone, there were attempted but unsuccessful coups in Argentina and Turkey and successful coups in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, South Vietnam, (Republic), Iraq, Syria, Congo (Brazzaville), and Tanzania.¹⁹

Even if a coup against Kennedy by powers in America were feasible (and the very thought is repellant to our minds), what Secretary of State Dean Rusk told the Warren Commission in discounting Russian participation in a conspiracy to kill Kennedy, though not directly applicable, is instructive: "Although there are grave differences between the Communist world and the free world, . . . even from their point of view

there needs to be some shape and form to international relations, that it is not in their interest to have this world structure dissolve into complete anarchy, that great states . . . have to be in a position to deal with each other . . . and that requires the maintenance of correct relations.”²⁰

What Rusk was saying is that with respect to stable foreign nations (as opposed to, say, banana republics or Third World countries), it is in the best interests of even adversaries to accept the “legitimacy” of their opposition. And what Rusk observed between these stable foreign nations is equally applicable internally. Even though, as with every president, our elected leader has many factions in the country opposed to his stewardship of government, these factions would have many more reasons to accept the continued legitimacy invested in the president by our constitutional process than to embrace fascistic principles that would only ultimately promote the insecurity and illegitimacy of their own positions. Why would they want to live in an environment where in the future their political opposition would likely do the same thing to them as they did to Kennedy? The notion that major federal agencies of government (or even one such agency) would decide to murder Kennedy because they didn’t agree with certain policies of his is sufficiently demented to be excluded at the portals of any respectable mental institution short of an insane asylum.

Because conspiracy theorists believe that once they find a motive, they have found a perpetrator, many books of theirs on the Kennedy assassination devote several hundred pages to a specific group’s motive to kill the president, but remarkably never get around to spending any time on whether Oswald, who all the evidence shows to be the triggerman, had any actual and direct connection to the group, or more importantly, even if he did, whether there is any evidence that the group got him to kill Kennedy for them. These conspiracy theorists get so caught up in their fertile delusions that while they spend entire chapters on arcane relationships of groups like the mob and CIA with various people, groups, and events wholly unrelated to the assassination, many don’t even bother to devote *one single sentence* in their long books to scrutinizing Oswald’s activities during the critical days and weeks leading up to the assassination, an exceedingly important source of information from which to infer the existence or nonexistence of a conspiracy. It’s as if these authors believe there’s no need to connect Oswald to the CIA or the mob, or show that they got him to kill Kennedy for them. If, as I say, they can prove that one of these groups had a motive to kill Kennedy, then, *if* Oswald was the assassin, he *must* have killed Kennedy *for* them. This crazy, incredibly childlike reasoning is the mentality that has driven and informed virtually all of the pro-conspiracy sentiment in the Kennedy assassination from the very beginning.

Though many people have not stopped to realize it, the issue of conspiracy in the Kennedy assassination is two-pronged, the first of which can be disposed of in one sentence: since we know Oswald killed Kennedy, we also know that no group of conspirators killed Kennedy and framed Oswald for the murder they committed. You can only frame an innocent person, not a guilty one, so this type of conspiracy has been taken off the table by the conclusive establishment of Oswald’s guilt.

The second issue, and the subject of this Book Two, involves whether Oswald was a part of a conspiracy—that is, did he kill Kennedy for others?

In the following sections on the various groups who have been accused of being

behind the president's murder, the reader will see that none of the conspiracy theories relating to these groups benefit from scrutiny, and that to accept any of them one has to knowingly abandon all conventional notions of logic and common sense. Again, this is not to suggest that there is no such thing as conspiracy to commit murder. It's just that there is no evidence of such a conspiracy in the Kennedy assassination.

I said in the introduction to this book that one of the reasons why everyday Americans believe in a conspiracy in this case is that they find it intellectually incongruous that a peasant can strike down a king, that something more just had to be involved. CBS commentator Eric Sevareid spoke of Americans finding it difficult to believe that "all that power and majesty [could be] wiped out in an instant by one skinny, weak-chinned little character. It was like believing that the Queen Mary had sunk without a trace because of a log floating somewhere in the Atlantic, or that AT&T's stock had fallen to zero because a drunk somewhere tore out his telephone wires."²¹

In explaining that what happened in Dallas was so horrendous, so incredible, so shattering that the American people demanded that the cause or reason for the murder equal the effect, no one, I think, has said it better than William Manchester, the author of the 1967 best seller, *The Death of a President*: "I think I understand why they feel that way. And I think, in a curious way, there is an aesthetic principle involved. If you take the murder of six million Jews in Europe and you put that at one end of the scale, at the other end you can put the Nazis, the greatest gang of criminals ever to seize control of a modern government. So there is a rough balance. Greatest crime, greatest criminals. But if you put the murder of the President of the United States at one end of the scale, and you put that waif Oswald on the other end, it just doesn't balance. And you want to put something on Oswald's side to make it balance. A conspiracy would do that beautifully. Unfortunately, there's no evidence whatever of that."²²

It might be productive for the reader to keep Manchester's words in mind as he or she reads what follows.