

BOOK REVIEWS

Since 1995, DPUK has reviewed a number of books (and novels) associated with John F Kennedy. These have been featured in issues of the "Dealey Plaza Echo" and have mostly been written by Rikky Rooksby

No Case To Answer:

A retired English Detective's essays and articles on the JFK assassination (1993-2005) by Ian Griggs (JFK Lancer Publications, 2005) Buy now from Amazon

Readers of the Echo will welcome this gathering of articles and essays written by the journal's erstwhile editor, some of which were first printed in it. No Case To Answer is an entertaining and informative miscellany, the sort of book you can dip into and find you have half read even before you've consciously decided to read it.

No Case To Answer does not seek to provide a comprehensive overview of the assassination. Instead, the book offers a more selective approach, reflecting particular areas of Ian's interests and research, the whole enlivened with typical humour, admirable restraint, and Sherlockian allusions.

The book opens with a prologue which looks at the structure and organization of the Dallas Police Department in November 1963. Part One features 4 chapters discussing the experiences of three key witnesses – Bill Newman, Beverly Oliver and Ed Hoffman.

Part Two has four articles about lesser-known witnesses – Samuel Paternostro, Ronald Fischer and Robert Edwards, Johnny Calvin Brewer, and a number of British women who have a small part in the story.

Part Three looks at various subterfuges used to pin the crime on Oswald, and Ian's quest to find out information on Oswald's time in Finland.

Part Four deals with 'manufactured evidence'. This has some of the most important articles in the book, including on the rifle and Ian's celebrated

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'The paper bag that never was', a title Conan Doyle would have been proud to use.

Part Five focuses on Jack Ruby, the Carousel Club and strippers such as Shari Angel and Kathy Kay.

Part Six looks further afield at reactions to the assassination in the press, and cites some documents located in the British Public Records Office.

But perhaps its most significant pages are Ian's 23rd chapter, titled 'Kill That Myth!' This should be required reading for everyone thinking of publishing anything about 22.11.63.

One of the besetting problems of assassination research is the uncontrolled accumulation of theory and myth, which confuses the subject, is apt to mislead people, and discourages others from wanting to risk their sanity by venturing into such a jungle of half-light and half-truth. For example, if all the people who are supposed to have fired a gun in Dealey Plaza had actually been present there would hardly have been elbow-room along the entire length of the picket fence!

If you made a list of these names it is clear that a high percentage of them must be not guilty, on the grounds that most researchers haven't suggested there were more than three shooters (or teams) at most. What researchers need to do is to eliminate suspects (and theories) from the enquiry wherever possible, and to do so in a cool, thoughtful manner. This is almost as important a task as seeking new evidence. The quest for the truth must also be a quest for clarity, as Ian's short piece demonstrates.

The book has three sections of photographs and illustrations. Readers of the Echo will want a copy of this on their shelves. I am sure we would all wish to congratulate Ian on the publication of his book.

Friendly Fire on Holy Grounds:

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The Stockpile Conspiracy Friendly Fire on Holy Grounds By Ira Jesse Hemingway (Author House, 2005) Buy now from Amazon

Ira Jesse Hemingway's book offers a new motive for JFK's assassination, his launching of an investigation into the misappropriation of government funds owing to the national policy of stockpiling a variety of raw materials from the Second World War onwards.

Hemingway argues that a group of people well-known in American political life made huge illegal profits from this, and that some were later appointed to the Warren Commission or served in the government which followed Kennedy's death.

Hemingway believes that this stockpile of material and its attendant cash-flow was implicated in foreign policy towards Vietnam. Whatever the merit of this argument, the text has every possible fault designed to make it almost impossible to get a grasp of the material.

Instead, it will encourage any reader who cares about the use of language to simply throw the book aside with exasperation. This is the most poorly written and edited book I have ever reviewed.

Every page is littered with mistakes – spelling, missing hyphens, incorrect apostrophes and commas, words used without a clear grasp of their meaning, mixed metaphors, ungrammatical constructions, incomplete or badly-phrased sentences, incoherent switches of tense, on and on.

I would not accept this standard of English in a student essay, let alone a book. Here's an example: All any good leader could do is reevaluate his subordinates and determine if there was any glaring incompetent personnel beneath him. [glaringly] Johnson was needed on the 1960 ticket to carry the southern vote although, Johnson's political savvy made Kennedy uneasy. [yob's comma]

The United States theoretical allows the most freedoms within their borders especially during this time with their non-coloured citizens ... [?] enlarging the size of the committee would increase the likely hood of a predictable

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outcome. [likely hood!] On November 13, 1963 [missing comma] in the New York Times [missing comma] a caveat was initiated by President Kennedy's secretary ... [initiate a caveat?]

Thus much, and much more. The material has not been organized into a tight and clear argument, so it is repetitious and cliché-ridden. It also lacks any proper referencing and footnotes. If the stockpile conspiracy is an important part of the motive for the assassination, someone else is going to have to present the case. On the back cover we read, 'John F. Kennedy a President, a man, a father, and human being went to his grave trying to tell this story to the American public. [re-punctuate that sentence at your leisure]

You owe it to him to read the forbidden truth.' Fine. But first, actually, writers on the assassination owe it to him to maintain professional standards of argument, evidence, and expression, especially if they want their work to be taken seriously.

Here is a round-up of some other Kennedy books that have come my way since the last review.

It should be noted that Robert Dallek's biography John F. Kennedy: An Unfinished Life 1917-1963 is now available as a paperback. Other books worthy of reading are Barbara Leaming's Mrs Kennedy (Orion, 2001), which looks at JFK from Jackie's perspective, and Sally Bedell Smith's Grace & Power: the private world of the Kennedy White House (Aurum 2004) which is repetitious and long-winded at times but worth persevering with.

Charles Kenney's John F. Kennedy: The Presidential Portfolio (Public Affairs, 2000) is a large format hardback book providing an overview of JFK's life drawing on material in the JFK Library in Boston. It includes an hour-long CD of historic recordings by JFK taken from dictabelts and telephone conversations, touching on civil rights, Cuba, and life in politics generally. Many documents are reproduced as full-page photographs, including Theodore White's notes from a conversation with Jackie one week after the assassination.

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If you want to know more about JFK and the Cuban Missile Crisis there is now a concise paperback edition of *The Kennedy Tapes* (edited by May / Zelikow, Norton, 2002), *One Hell Of A Gamble: Krushchev, Castro and Kennedy 1958-1964* (Fursenko / Naftali, Norton, 1997), and a paperback anthology of documents.

The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962 (Uncovered Editions, 2001). I recently discovered that the scripts of Kennedy's renowned press conferences were published as *The Kennedy Presidential Press Conferences* (Heyden 1978) when I found a second hand copy for £6. The book is A4 size hardback, 640 pages and almost 2 inches thick! It is a useful tool for checking what JFK may have said about a variety of issues on a week-by-week basis.

Assassination Science: Experts Speak out on the Death of JFK Edited by James H Fetzer PhD. (Catfeet Press, Chicago, 1998) Buy now from Amazon

I had seen this one on a recent JFK-Lancer booklist but little dreamed that I would find it sitting on the shelves at Blackwell's, Oxford! The briefest flick through the pages was enough to indicate that this is essential reading for anyone interested in the assassination and that it may have crucial influence on the final demolition of the lone gunman/official version of what happened in Dealey Plaza on 22 November 1963.

Assassination Science is a collection of essays, letters and document covering a wide range of topics relating to the case and some of the media controversies surrounding it in the early 1990's. The title is significant. By using the word 'science' the Editor is asserting for the benefit of sceptics that the evidence herein cannot be dismissed with an impatient wave of the hand and the ritual intoning of the word 'buff'.

This purports to be science and in our culture science is still seen as the best guarantor of the truth (or falsity) of a claim. Whether or not this is true or not is beside the point. As a rhetorical strategy, this is a provocative and timely move.

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The style of the book lives up its title. This is a more academic, more dryly written book than many in assassination literature. James Fetzer is a Professor at the University of Minnesota, Duluth,. The arguments are closely argued and dense with precise detail. The whole feel of the collections is unlike that of most assassination you will have read. I think this is one of it's strongest features. Sceptics are going to have hard time with this.

The dry quality may not make it the easiest read, but the material is sensational enough, so presenting such material as coolly as possible is a good way of handling things and I think more likely to persuade the uncommitted than the bullish, often overheated writing of others.

Part I presents essays by Fetzer, Dr Charles Crenshaw, Brad Kizzia and Dr David Mantik which deal with the JAMA controversy, the general issue of how the American medial has handled the case in recent years, character assassination of witnesses and critics of the official version, and the faked X-Rays.

Part II reports on the Press conference of 18 November 1993 through the comments of some of it's participants, including Dr Robert B Livingstone and Fetzer's correspondence with The New York Times about Gerald Posner's Case Closed.

Part III is entitled Pursuit of Justice in a Democracy and details letters from Fetzer to US Attorney General Janet Reno and replies from Mary C Spearing (US Department of Justice), Robert McNamara (former US Secretary of Defense), President Bill Clinton and the Assassination Records Review Board. With the passing of time, some of this material will probably seem less relevant since it deals with the secondary issue of various conflicts between different parties.

I do, however, sympathise with the frustration of those involved. The most important section is Part IV: Seeing But Not Believing. This features five essays on the Zapruder film by Jack White, Dr Mike Pincher and Roy Schaeffer, Ron Hepler, Chuck Marler and Dr David Mantik. I know of no

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better discussions of the film than this chunk of 140 pages which constitutes a superb critique of the film's authenticity – or lack of it. If you have read Livingstone's *Killing Kennedy*, this will further persuade you of the unreliability of the film.

To Livingstone and Weatherley's remarks, the writers here amass further indications of tampering with the film. However, because of the style of presentation, this material is likely to have more effect in persuading people of the truth of these claims. The sceptic may find it easy to dismiss the critique of the Zapruder film in a book like *Killing Kennedy* because of the style of that book's presentation. Not so with this. This might just be the lasting contribution of *Assassination Science* – which it finally makes the notion of the Zapruder film as being unreliable (and tantamount in itself to evidence of conspiracy) accepted in wider circles. Oliver Stone's film *JFK* was the apotheosis of the use of the Zapruder film as key evidence proving conspiracy because it appeared to show Kennedy shot from the front (the 'headsnap').

It is ironic that we may now be approaching a time when it will be widely accepted that the Zapruder film is key evidence precisely because it does not show us what really happened when in fact it ought to. The collection is rounded off by a theoretical essay called *Assassination Science and the Language of Proof* by Fetzer, an essay by Dr Ronald White and an Appendix of 14 documents and pictures including a CIA advertisement for photographers! In true academic style the book even has an index and notes on contributors. There are diagrams and black-and-white illustrations throughout. This is a 'must-have'. *Assassination Science* – don't leave home without it!

Murder In Dealey Plaza: What we know now that we didn't know then about the Death of JFK Edited by James H Fetzer PhD. (Open Court Publishing Company, 2000) Buy now from Amazon

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If you are familiar with Assassination Science, Professor Fetter's earlier book, then you will know what to expect from this follow-up / companion. Murder In Dealey Plaza is another anthology of detailed essays on various aspects of the case. After Fetter's introductory "Smoking Guns" essay, we get a 100 page chronology of the day which is worth the price of the book alone.

This chronology by Ira David Wood includes a number of pieces of information which I have not seen elsewhere, and usefully focuses problems with the official version of events (and some with the unofficial too). This is followed by essays about the limousine stop and the Secret Service by Vincent Palamara, and a fascinating account of the car and its fate. There is a section on medical evidence, and others on ARRB revelations, the Zapruder film, Jesse Curry's JFK Assassination file, the silence of academic historians, and a welcome reprint of Bertrand Russell's "16 Questions on the Assassination".

The Appendices include verbatim transcripts of phone conversations with, and depositions of, people involved with the autopsy. There are many illustrations throughout and a 16 page colour section to support Jack White's observations about the forgery of the Zapruder film. The cover is an argument in itself: Z335, the frame in which Jackie's shoulder appears visible where Jokes front head should be. Although I personally accept the case for Z-film alteration, and think that some of Jack White's insights are valid, I'm not convinced by all of them. For that reason his section is probably the most uneven in the book.

There is a frustrated creativity at work here, generating more and more "characters" from the raw data of the Plaza, which acts as a distraction from the evidence itself. Researchers lived for years with Badge Man and Black Dog Man. Now White offers us Pickupman, Giant Running Woman, the short Parking Meter People, and the Zapruder Waltz. A little of this goes a long way and detracts from some of the stronger points in the case against film alteration. Even people who accept film alteration will have a problem

with the idea that Zapruder did not shoot it. So, overall, a worthy successor to Assassination Science, and a useful reference book.

Taken together James Fetter's books represent a significant contribution for students of the assassination and a cornerstone for research into the new century. I hope that in the fullness of time, when there is enough new material, that he might consider making it a trilogy with a third volume.

Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam by Lawrence Freedman (Oxford University Press, 2001) Buy now from Amazon

Its title might lead you to suppose that Lawrence Freedman has written an overtly critical account of JFK's foreign policy during his presidency. In fact, Kennedy's Wars is a thoughtful and sympathetic discussion of Kennedy's handling of foreign policy.

This was a president who came to office with an inauguration speech that put the O.K.'s relations with the rest of the world firmly to the fore. Try to recall any famous phrases about domestic policy in that speech. Not easy, is it? Now think of the foreign policy phrases - "let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate", "bear any burden" etc, etc. Of course, within only a few months of entering the White House, Kennedy was plunged into his first major foreign policy issue, the Bay of Pigs.

This is a carefully researched and detailed account that looks not only at Kennedy but the people and the machinery for generating policy around him. It does not (as Freedman himself points out in his preface) give us a close sense of JFK the man in the way that Richard Reeves' book does. Only in fleeting moments do we feel close to the President's reactions and thoughts. Instead we see JFK in the bigger picture. We see the helpful and unhelpful minds around him, and the bureaucratic wheels in which he had to work.

We see not only the U.S. government's foreign policy makers, but also what was going on in Moscow, Havana, and Beijing. What emerges is a vivid

picture of the complexity of policy-making, the difficulties of diplomacy at the height of the Cold War, and the all-too-often out-and-out insanity of superpower thinking, as various nuclear options are considered and discarded. Freedman does a fine job at making the reader see the significance of the Berlin issue in 1961-62, and the way the Cuban Missile Crisis should be seen in the context of that. JFK emerges from this in quite a good light, nowhere more so than when constantly looking for the less aggressive option, and resisting the gung-ho instincts of terrifyingly wrong-headed characters like Curtis LeMay and Major Anderson - both of whom saw the agreement over Cuba as a terrible defeat.

At the end of October 1962 the Joint Chiefs of Staff still wanted to attack Cuba by air and then invade. Freedman writes in a telling passage that JFK commented that the "first advice" he would give his successor was "to watch the generals" and not to think that "just because they were military men their opinions on military matters were worth a damn." (219). Freedman sees the American University speech of June 1963 as "probably the most authentic statement of Kennedy's views on the nuclear arms race." (267) From an assassination perspective, this book inadvertently provides a good deal of background context for why Kennedy made himself very unpopular in certain circles.

There's information here about people like Harvey, Lansdale and Bissell who feature in Noel Twyman's *Bloody Treason*. Of JFK's death itself, Freedman writes, "Whether Kennedy was killed by a lone assassin or as a result of the complex plots involving the mob and Cuban exiles that are explored by conspiracy theorists, one way or another he was probably the victim of the Cuban issue in American politics." (243-44) I know that doesn't seem much, but to find a statement like that in an academic history book is still a (small) step forward.

The bibliography contains a number of titles about JFK published in recent years from the history field which you won't have seen in bookshops. Freedman writes, "The Kennedy that emerges out of this study is more flawed and human than the far-seeing statesman of unusual insight and

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courageous decision of posthumous flattery. He is also more thoughtful, serious, and consistent than the ambitious playboy of the revisionists, who see him as without principle or long-term strategic vision, skilled only in manipulating the media and thereby his future image." (xi). A demanding but recommended read.

Sixty-Three Closure by Anthony Frewin (No Exit, 1998) Buy now from Amazon

I really wanted to like this book; I did try ... honest. It has a splendid cover. "The great JFK conspiracy novel" says the blurb, quoting the New York Post. Ah, well. Perhaps my copy is not the original and has been secretly altered to cover up the gripping narrative I was led to expect. Stranger things have happened.

Talk with anyone who has ever been a judge for an amateur novel-writing competition and they will regale you with tales of how such novels are invariably full of tea-making! Nothing happens, nothing can happen or be said, no vital piece of information can be divulged between characters, until they have gone through the necessary tea-making ritual ... over and over again. Anyone would think that such novel competitions were sponsored by Tetley.

Not even Japan has as frequent tea-rituals as the amateur novel. No change of scene can be achieved without the lead-up of the knock on the door, the greeting, the invitation in, and the settling down which leads (as T S Eliot once said) to the overwhelming question ... "Would you like some tea?" The most that can be said about Anthony Frewin's novel is that there is a lot of metaphorical tea-making in it. The inevitable first-person narrator is also an alcoholic who seems unable to function without consuming huge quantities of vodka ... and this even before he thinks he's caught in a web of conspiracy.

His good fortune is to be saved from a pickled grave by his love of the Angel of Hitchin, Laura, but not before his drinking has become a tedious distraction from the main business. (Hitchin is a town in Hertfordshire,

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England - Ed.) So poor is the narrative organisation that you will have to read almost a third of the novel before getting any sense whatever that this is about JFK.

The plot concerns the discovery of some photos of Lee Harvey Oswald in Hitchin in the early 1960s and mysterious deaths and people being framed to hide the terrible truth about Kennedy's death. It's a terrible truth we never find out about, unfortunately. It ends with a reference to the CIA telegram of 23rd November 1963 which mentions the "Cambridge phone call". This telegram was first mentioned in Michael Eddowes' *The Oswald File* (1977). This should have been the start of the novel, not its end. The experience is akin to being promised a five-course meal and then being shown a picture of one instead.

The problem with writing a novel about the JFK case is that the non-fiction books on the subject are themselves so full of fascinating twists and turns, larger-than-life characters, suspense and appalling implications, that a novelist has to do a lot to better them. The JFK material deployed in *Sixty-Three Closure* would make for hardly more than a paragraph or two in any decent lengthy study of the assassination. If you want to read a novel about it, start with D M Thomas' *Flying In To Love*. *Cover-Up* by Stewart Galanor (Kestrel Books, New York, 1998) Buy now from Amazon

We have become used to books on the assassination being pretty heavy tomes. Here is one that is a little different. Galanor's book is a condensed up-to-date primer of the assassination. He has isolated a number of topic areas and presents versions and counter-versions under various sub-headings in a compressed style.

Cover-Up begins with the medical evidence concerning the throat and head wounds. Information from the FBI enactment, the Warren Report, the Clark Panel and the HSCA are reviewed in turn. We have chapters on the Single Bullet Theory, Jiggle Analysis, the Grassy Knoll, Backyard Photos, the Case Against Oswald, Jack Ruby and so on. Galanor includes some of his own original interviewing of witnesses. The book ends with a bibliography with only ten items in it (which in JFK studies, must be a record) and a list of

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216 witnesses and where they thought the shots originated. There is plenty of illustrative material, including several colour Zapruder Film frames (one of which, electronically sharpened, appears on the front cover) and other pictures in colour and in black-and-white.

Interestingly, one of them shows the TSBD and Elm, some time after the assassination and you can see the replacement Stemmons sign with what appear to be wooden struts across the back of it.

At the time Galanor wrote this text, he still believed in the veracity of the Zapruder Film (I don't know if this is still the case), so he includes statements like the film being "a time-clock" of the assassination (p. 51) which will strike readers who are sympathetic to the alteration list point of view as now odd. This also affects the passage on p. 119 where Galanor quotes Dan Rother's description that JFK "fell forward" and puts this under the heading "Evidence Contrived". As Harry Livingstone has suggested, maybe Rather was telling the truth. From a personal angle, I don't like the inclusion of footnotes within the text in a smaller typeface.

All in all, a useful book, not ground-breaking, but a good text with which to introduce newcomers to the case, and even the experienced will enjoy the illustrations and find the "sharp-focus" of the text a stimulus to their thinking.

Camelot at Dawn by Anne Garside & Orlando Suero (photographer) (John Hopkins University Press, 2001) Buy now from Amazon

The sub-title of this book is "Jacqueline and John Kennedy in Georgetown, May 1954". It is a collection of photographs taken by Orlando Suero, a staff photographer at the Three Lions Picture Agency in New York. It was Suero's suggestion to do a photo-essay on the senator and his wife whose marriage had caused a stir the previous September. Suero spent five days in early May with the couple, had twenty separate photo sessions which produced more than a thousand negatives.

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This selection is their first publication. The editor Anne Garside confesses in her preface that working with the photographs over a long period has caused her to develop "a real empathy for the subjects". Looking at them this is not surprising. The photographs are informal and evocative of time and place. The shots of John trying his hand at oil painting are especially noteworthy, as are the pictures of Jackie gazing in an art materials shop. To give you a flavour of the contents I will describe the first picture: John and Jackie are walking arm in arm along a leafy suburban street deserted of people. They have just passed an ornate streetlamp. Both are dressed casually, she in that 50s style of slacks that only go a short way below the knee, a white blouse and an elegant, short button-up sweater. He is dressed in a white shirt (no tie), a light V-neck jumper, trousers and baseball boots.

They are a newly married couple unencumbered by the history that we, the viewers, know waits for them. This is the dominant emotion of the book. It is especially strong in a picture of John, Jackie, Ethel and Robert larking about with a football in the middle of a street. They could almost be any well-heeled graduates out for a stroll, just killing time. Yet the two men would be central to American politics in the next decade and both would be assassinated. Biographical details are provided by Garside's text. A delightful book.

The Kennedy Obsession: The American Myth of JFK by John Hellmann
(Columbia University Press, 1998) Buy now from Amazon

John Hellmann's book is a useful and interesting academic discussion of "the American myth of JFK". It is an attempt to examine how during his lifetime Kennedy was driven by his own myths and images (some absorbed from his boyhood reading as well as from his family) and shaped his understanding of his experience accordingly. Some of these images then became part of his personal persona and persisted after his death. This is what Hellmann calls "the narrative impulse that drove [his] self-presentation" (ix).

He goes on, "the popular hero known as John F Kennedy was a product, an image designed to both express and elicit desire. This object was constructed through a series of hero tales that, told and retold, produced a politician as the hero unfolding mythology." Hellmann traces this process through Kennedy's life and presidency to his death and Jacqueline Kennedy's role in fostering the Camelot myth. The final chapter is called "An Assassination and its Fictions". This looks at how writers and film-makers have responded to Kennedy's death.

Here Hellmann's psychological/ literary approach becomes inadequate. It is evident that he thinks little of any conspiracy theory. Speaking of what he calls "demonology" in the Kennedy myth, Hellmann describes: ".....the fury of speculation concerning conspiracy swirling around the assassination. Every conceivable agent of the horror has been identified in a theory spun out to fill a book. None are proven, and the vehemence with which a person holds a particular theory to be true reveals more about their fundamental ideology, even their deepest philosophy of life, than about the demonstrated facts of the case." (146)

If this is true, then it applies equally to Warren Commission apologists as it does to anyone else. The passage is revealing in its refusal to engage with factual questions. Instead, Hellmann substitutes metaphor ("fury" ... "swirlin"), ridicule ("every conceivable agent", "spun out") and the question-begging "demonstrated facts of the case". What exactly are the demonstrated facts of the case? Do Hellmann's "demonstrated facts" include James Tague's bloodied cheek? Autopsy photographs and X-rays that don't show the same things? The anomalies of the Zapruder film? Joseph Milteer's tape-recorded prophesy of Kennedy's death? The wind direction in Dallas on 22 November 1963?

Hellmann's book has much to say about the power of Kennedy's image which we need to understand, but also shows the weakness of an approach that cannot recognise historical contingency. It's the cheapest move in the book when it comes to dismissing the possibility that maybe Oswald did not shoot JFK. All you do is point out how many cranky theories there have

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been. But no matter how mad some of the theories have been, that in itself does not constitute a disproof of conspiracy theory or proof of the truth and accuracy of the Warren Commission Report.

The Dark Side of Camelot by Seymour Hersh (Harper Collins, 1998) Buy now from Amazon

With the Hersh book we descend from the cloud-capped misty towers of hagiography to the torrid depths of blasphemy. The title says it all. Hersh is out to destroy a myth and give us the "Dark Side of Camelot" (as if it hadn't been done before).

In his introduction he states, "John Kennedy's policies and his life contained many superb moments". The fundamental flaw to Hersh's work lies in the fact he thinks it is satisfactory to put these to one side, to leave them out of the equation, and solve it simply by presenting the less attractive side of Kennedy. Hersh describes the book as being "about a man whose personal weaknesses limited his ability to carry out his duties as President." He describes Kennedy as "the most charismatic leader in our nation's history". Hersh attempts to show that this charisma may have been real but it had dangerous consequences.

Despite the fact that Hersh had to scrap one of his chapters because the documents on which it was based were proved to be faked, the book mounts an aggressive case about Kennedy's out-of-control womanising and the effect this had on his own security and the morale of the people around him. Anyone prone to idealising Kennedy (and that means a segment of the research community) ought to read this to get things back in perspective.

Apart from the President's legendary sexual appetite, there are also many other issues raised by Hersh which put a question mark against Kennedy's character and judgement. Naturally, Hersh brings up the alleged role of the Mafia in swinging the 1960 election marginally in Kennedy's favour. What Hersh does not do is consider the alternative. This may have been a hijacking of the democratic process by organised crime and big money, but

it may have been (ironically) of benefit to America and the world. Consider what hideous turns world history may have taken if Nixon had been in the White House in the spring of 1961.

How would Nixon have handled the Bay of Pigs? Rather more aggressively, I think, with appalling consequences in terms of escalating the Cold War. Readers of The Dealey Plaza Echo will not be surprised that Hersh is wholly inadequate in his dealing with the assassination. Of course, his book is not intended to be about that but his few comments on it are revealing. At the end of the first chapter Hersh's secret desire that Kennedy should be demonstrated as getting his comeuppance for all his reckless behaviour is exposed in the author's account of what happened in Dallas.

He informs us that in September 1963 Kennedy "severely tore a groin muscle while frolicking poolside with one of his sexual partners during a West Coast trip ... The pain was so intense that the White House medical staff prescribed a stiff canvas shoulder-to-groin brace that locked the body in a rigid upright position. It is far more constraining than his usual back brace, which he also continued to wear ... Those braces also made it impossible for the President to bend in reflex when he was struck in the neck by the bullet fired by Lee Harvey Oswald. Oswald's first shot was not necessarily fatal, but the President remained erect - and an excellent target for the second, fatal blow to the head. Kennedy's groin brace, which is now in the possession of the National Archives in Washington, was not mentioned in the public autopsy report, nor was the injury that had led to his need for it."

I can find no mention of two braces in Dr Charles Crenshaw's 1992 book. Can readers cast any light on this story? Readers of this journal will be fascinated, I am sure, by Hersh's confident description of the wound to the back of the neck, not to mention the idea that in the six or so seconds during which Oswald is alleged to have carried out his marvellous feat of sharp-shooting, John Kennedy might have consciously thought that maybe it might be a good idea to lean over out of harm's way (!). What a universe

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Hersh would have us believe in, where the man of vice is so neatly punished by his own sin!

Even more staggering is Hirsh's statement in the Epilogue that "in five years of reporting for this book" he "found nothing ... to change ... the detailed findings of the Warren Commission - Oswald and Ruby acted alone." To which one can only say that he cannot have looked very far. However, for all its unbalanced nature, *The Dark Side Of Camelot* does add to our understanding of the sort of person John Kennedy was, and is therefore a useful inoculation against too idealistic an image of him. In the previous issue of *The Dealey Plaza Echo* there was a photograph of a Union Jack planted in Dealey Plaza with the message "We Grieve Too". The question is, grieve for what? Hirsh's book requires that we ask this question again.

John F. Kennedy: The Presidential Portfolio Edited by Charles Kenney (2000) Buy now from Amazon

This is the first in a series of books that will profile some of the American presidents. It's a medium-sized hardback with an attractive binding and endpapers (take off the photo jacket and have a look at the embossed signature). The subtitle of this condensed picture biography is "history as told through the collection of the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum". The text is fairly anodyne and generalized, but the illustrations lift it above the average for this type of book. It includes photos and reproduced texts from most periods of JFK's life, from his Harvard grades to the first page of his civil rights TV speech.

There are separate chapters on Robert Kennedy and Jackie. The bonus is an hour-long CD of recordings of JFK on the phone to figures like Eisenhower and Richard Daley. The CD really does enhance the book. DPE readers will be interested but not surprised by the following account of the assassination: "When the president lurched forward in his right rear seat in the Lincoln and was grabbed by his wife, it was clear something was

horribly wrong. The first bullet entered the back of his neck; the second struck the back of his head." (223)

A few pages on we have notes of Theodore H. White's conversation with Jackie on 29.11.63 in which he records her saying: "They were gunning the motorcycles; there were these little backfires; there was one noise like that; I thought it was a backfire. Then next I saw Connolly grabbing his arms and saying no no no nonono, with his fist beating --- then Jack turned and I turned --- all I remember was a blue gray building up ahead; then Jack turned back, so neatly; his last statement was so neat; he had his hand out, I could see a piece of his skull coming off; it was flesh coloured not white --- he was holding out his hand -- and I can see this perfectly clean piece detaching itself from his head; then he slumped in my lap ..." A few phrases on Jackie tells White, "I kept bending over him ... I kept holding the top of his head down trying to keep the" [end of the reproduced page]. It has occurred to me that if his head is in her lap, is the back of his head upward from her perspective, as she looks down? Does this modify her use of the phrase "the top of his head"? This is an attractive book in its own terms and worth buying, especially as this supports the JFK Library.

All Too Human: The Love Story of Jack and Jackie Kennedy by Edward Klein (Pocket Books, 1996) Buy now from Amazon

This is the first volume in a two-part biography of Jackie Kennedy (the second part appeared at the end of 1998). Klein's objective seems to be to take us right through Jackie's life and then focus on the relationship between her and her husband until his death in 1963. The book is a very easy read, written in popular biographical style; the chapters are kept short, as are the individual episodes within the chapters. Klein is keen to use as much specific descriptive detail as he can, which is often evocative.

The book evokes much sympathy and admiration for Jackie, a woman whose breeding and outward charm perhaps led the unwary to underestimate the resourceful and strong character underneath. Her composure and sense of event during the black weekend of 22-25 November 1963 seem even more remarkable in this context after Klein has

made us see more of the private Jackie. Her strength is especially apparent during such incidents as her miscarriage and the death of the couple's second son, Patrick, in 1963.

Most readers will also sympathize with Jackie in respect to her husband's infidelities and the problems they had achieving real intimacy. There are a number of episodes recounted in which John Kennedy does not come over in a very good light, most notably his reluctance to be at Jackie's bedside after one of her hospitalizations on the basis that since there was nothing practical he could do, what was the point? This is in marked contrast to Jackie's attendance during his own brush with death in hospital when he twice underwent back operations in the 1950s.

At the same time, Klein does make us aware of some of the adversity against which Kennedy had to struggle. Occasionally the book provides interesting anecdotes about the human side of some of the crises in the White House as they affected the couple. The chapter on the Cuban Missile Crisis is a case in point. Without overstating, *All Too Human* examines a relationship which was established in difficult circumstances and soon ran into serious trouble, but makes a plausible case that Jack and Jackie's relationship was more than a matter of political convenience and that during the final months they did grow closer.

Their children, including those they lost, as well as some of the political crises of Kennedy's Presidency seem to have played a role in this. One of the touching things Klein mentions after John Kennedy's death is that Jackie invited close friends to her home to give "private seminars" about him to his children. Pierre Salinger is quoted as saying to them that "your father was an extraordinary man. He had many parts, no-one knew him completely. The person who knew him best was your mother." The book is very much written in that spirit, an engaging portrait of two human beings with an extraordinary destiny.

November Patriots: The Murder of John F Kennedy by Constance Kritzberg and Larry Hancock (Undercover Press, Colorado Springs, 1998)

This is an unusual book in that it contains a 349 novel by Constance Kritzberg and a non-fiction section, Full Disclosure, detailing pieces of information which support a conspiracy theory about Jokes death. This includes the reproduction of original documents, plus contributions from Ed Hoffman, Madeleine Brown and Vince Palamara.

There are a few pictures and pencil drawings of well-known photographs whose reproduction fees were probably too high for a project of this nature. The authors explain that the aim of the book is to "speak to the general reader and reveal the complexity of John Kennedy's murder without totally burying the reader in the depths of assassination research." (p. vi). This is laudable, since many potential readers soon draw back from pursuing an interest in the case when they realise just how complicated and detailed it gets. Introducing the novel, Kritzberg writes that she "makes no disclaimer that all events and characters contained in the book are fiction"- contrary to usual practice. Instead, she points out that real people rub shoulders with "fictionalised" ones. A list of both categories is provided.

I suspect that people unfamiliar with the case might find this confusing, leaving the author open to the same accusations as were hurled at Oliver Stone - "he made it up!" etc. Full Disclosure is therefore meant to counter such objections by showing evidence to support what is in the novel. The novel is based on Kritzberg's experiences as a journalist reporting the events of 22nd November 1963 in Dallas. Readers of this journal will recall her memories in an article in Vol.1, No.3. The heroine of the story is a young reporter, Natalie Andersen, whose father is in the FBI.

During the novel, we see the conspiracy taking shape as Andersen tries to alert people to what is going to happen. Both JFK and Oswald meet their expected fates, and the mystery Secret Service man is killed. In a wish-fulfilment ending, Andersen holds a press conference immediately after that weekend, to prime the press with a "kit" comprising proof of the conspiracy, including photographs she took of a shooter on the Grassy Knoll. What

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happens next - in the world and the US government - is left to your imagination.

Those readers of November Patriots with some knowledge of the JFK assassination will enjoy spotting who the "fictionalised" characters are supposed to be, and from where certain incidents are taken. From a literary point of view, the story lacks the sophistication - both in its prose and its perspective - of novels like *Flying In To Love* or *Libra*. This is not surprising, since *November Patriots* is a novel with a clear, instructional intention, and any such intention almost always paralyses a work of fiction and renders it two-dimensional.

In practical terms this results in dialogue which is obviously "staged" to insert information concerning, for example, the motorcade route. As a novel, it is instructive and entertaining, no more, no less. For me, *Full Disclosure* was of more interest. It includes the personal accounts of S. M. Holland, Bill Newman (reprinted from this journal), Ed Hoffman and Emmett Hudson. The six chapters look at threats made against JFK, the "Texas Mafia", the Secret Service connection, and other issues. Some of the documents make fascinating reading and I suspect will be cropping up in many future books as key bits of evidence.

The authors have certainly done the research community a service in publishing them. If the book reprints, I hope the authors will correct typographical errors and change incorrect it's. In assassination research being professional is everything. Sceptics are liable to claim that if we cannot use apostrophes correctly, how can we be trusted to get anything else right?

The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis
By Ernest R May and Philip D Zelikov (Belknap/Harvard University Press,
Cambridge, Mass and London, 1997) Buy now from Amazon

Unbeknown to the people with whom he consulted during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1961 President Kennedy taped the various meetings held during

those tense weeks. These tapes were created by hidden microphones in unused light fittings in the Cabinet Room and one in the President's desk in the Oval Office feeding a reel-to-reel tape machine in the basement. The Editors of this book speculate that when Kennedy was killed there were only three people who knew about the recordings – Evelyn Lincoln and the two members of the Secret Service who had installed and maintained the system.

An effort was made to transcribe the tapes for Robert Kennedy by an Air Force aid called Dalton but this was never completed. The tapes remained secret until July 1973 when a Nixon aide revealed to the Senate Committee investigating the Watergate affair that the White House had a taping system. As a result, the Kennedy tapes were turned over to the John F Kennedy Library in 1975. They comprise 248 hours of meetings and 12 hours of telephone calls. The Editors write of their transcription process: 'the laboriousness ... would be hard to exaggerate'. The tapes are noisy and the voices often indistinct. Several teams worked to produce this text, which remains peppered with annotation '(unclear)'. The end result is a monumental work and a significant contribution to the historical literature on the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Primarily this is a reference book for historians who want to check who said what, when and who else was in the room. Despite what the dust-jacket says about the book reading better than a John le Carré thriller, it is hard going to read from beginning to end – but fascinating to dip into. Since he did a lot of listening to people around the table, Kennedy's own contributions are fairly brief so there is not that much sense of his character emerging from the proceedings, or certainly not directly. The complete text of communications between Kennedy and Khrushchev are included. Even if you do not read the transcripts through, the Editors' commentary is worth reading.

With Malice: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Murder of Officer J D Tippit by Dale K Myers (Oak Cliff Press, Milford, Michigan, 1998) Buy now from Amazon

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Dale Myers nails his colours to the mast from the outset. The opening sentence of Chapter 1 reads, "Lee Harvey Oswald murdered Officer J D Tippit" (p17). Whether you already disagree with that statement, or still disagree with it after you have read this book, does not alter the fact that this work is an impressive achievement. From now on, anyone writing about the events of 22nd November 1963 will have to take Myers' book into account. The virtues of the book are many.

First, the sheer size and detail. Tippit's murder usually occupies 5 - 15 pages in JFK assassination books. Over 700 pages long, *With Malice* has 16 colour plates (those of events outside the Texas Theatre are vivid), 13 maps and illustrations, 157 photographs in the text (some of which are impressive composites to give wide-angle street scenes), and a fine dust jacket.

The appendices include Tippit's autopsy, 182 documents, 80 pages of footnotes, a helpful glossary of principal characters, and a chronology. This alone makes it a key research text even for those who disagree with the author's conclusions. Successive chapters give us a short biography of Tippit, mentioning details like his avoidance of eye-contact which Myers thinks may have played a part in his death. Chapter 3 touches on events in Dealey Plaza from a different perspective than usual, looking from the view of people like Tippit who were elsewhere in Dallas at the time.

Not surprisingly, of all the people who could have been chosen, Howard Leslie Brennan is selected as a star witness. Chapter 4 details Tippit's death, with William W Scoggins, Domingo Benavides and Mrs Helen Louise Markham introduced as key witnesses. Scoggins is quoted as saying "I noticed smoke around the police cruiser" shortly after the shots. It would appear that modern ammunition is obviously smokeless in certain streets but not in others.

Myers has conducted some new interviews for the book. He also makes extensive use of police radio reports on both available channels during the central hours of the shootings and arrest. These short, code-laden bursts of speech between the Dispatcher and various officers drive the narrative

along. Myers has a good discussion of whether the gun was automatic or not, and why the DPD surrounded the Jefferson Branch Library. One of the memorable moments is 19-year-old Adrian Hamby's fortunate escape after he panicked and shut the library's doors when confronted by a bunch of jumpy, armed police who thought they had their man.

With Malice is not just a reference book. It constitutes a memorial to Tippit himself. The combined effect of the narrative and the immediacy of the photographs is both expressive and elegiac. We can muse on the human details of the crime scene; the squad car parked with its front end pointing away from the kerb, the clipboard wedged on the front seat, the jacket hanging up in the back, the shadows of the trees across the black bodywork and the asphalt road, people standing around one sunny afternoon in an unremarkable Texan suburb, where Tippit's life abruptly ended as the course of history changed. During the evaluation of Mrs Earlene Roberts' report of seeing a patrol car come up to Oswald's rooming house just before he left, Myers concentrates on her poor eyesight and inability to provide the correct car number.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing, however, is the double toot of the car horn. She may not have had good eyesight but nobody has questioned her hearing, and there was certainly enough time for the driver to have got off a double toot in the time allowed. The stories of Mrs Acquilla Clemmons, who thought she saw two men at the scene, and Frank Wright are regarded as "not credible". The station wagon story comes up several times (pages 119, 132-133) but is unresolved. Roger Craig's story is also dismissed, which means a discrediting of an important Oswald quote, namely "Now everyone will know who I am".

There are other telling quotes which caught my eye. For example, Oswald's "Why should I hide my face? I haven't done anything to be ashamed of" and "If you want me to admit that I hit a cop in the mouth at the theatre, I'll admit that. But I'm not going to admit shooting one." When James Hosty jumps to the conclusion that a communist killed JFK, DPD Lieutenant Jack Revill, a staunch right-winger is "stunned" and replies, "What did you say?"

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A communist killed Kennedy! I can't believe that!" Myers makes no comment on the fact that the DPD did not keep notes on their interrogation of Oswald.

With Malice is a book with two agendas, one surface and one, to borrow a metaphor from Peter Dale Scott, "deep". The surface argument is to establish that Oswald killed Tippit. The deep agenda is to persuade us that his motive for doing this was to avoid arrest for the JFK assassination. Early on, Myers quotes David Belin as saying, "once the hypothesis is admitted that Oswald killed Patrolman J D Tippit there can be no doubt that the overall evidence shows that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin of John F Kennedy". The apparent logic of this sentence "once...that [x] then [y]" is fallacious. A hypothesis is not a proof, and a hypothesis "admitted" remains a hypothesis. "Admitted" is ambiguous here. Belin wants it to mean "conceded as true". Something conceded as true is no longer a hypothesis; it would be proven. Using the word "proven" would expose this as an assertion, not a proof. Next, the phrase "overall evidence" - overall evidence of what? Tippit's killing or Jokes killing?

In Myers' view, Oswald's shooting of Tippit becomes an admission of guilt. The basic weakness of the book's argument is that even if it were proven that Oswald shot Tippit, that does not in itself prove that Oswald killed JFK, either alone or with others. Even if we agree to the surface argument, the deep one is highly questionable for reasons intrinsic and extrinsic to the Tippit killing. From the extrinsic angle, the lone assassin theory can only be claimed as demonstrated beyond doubt if a mountain of contrary evidence and loose ends is excluded. A convincing argument must include or explain as much of the evidence as possible; it cannot be selective. In this specific sense, the "deep agenda" of With Malice is flawed by the very fact that it excludes conflicting evidence about what happened in Dealey Plaza, whether eye-witness, medical or whatever, etc. This is not to criticise Dale Myers. He was not writing a book about the Kennedy assassination per se; he was writing about Tippit, and he has done a superb job of marshalling information. However, the book does try to overstep this remit. The weakest parts are where this is most flagrant.

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There is an absurd passage (page 346) of the kind of cod-psychological profiling which has been used retrospectively to make Oswald fit the signs of a killer. We are told that he used public transport "religiously", did not own a car, did not have a driver's license, did menial jobs (like radar operative at a top-secret US air base?), exhibited "a voracious appetite for reading", and was dyslexic. How many people in a population fit this description? It's a wonder that JFK managed to get even a few hundred yards out of Love Field before being met by a hail of bullets fired from a crowd with as many guns as spines on a hedgehog. Myers asserts that Oswald was below average intelligence and in this text he is a significantly depoliticised figure - the irrational lone nut. There is no mention of his involvement with intelligence agencies or the initiative it took to get to the USSR and how he got back.

After the psychological detail of Mailer's Oswald's Tale (another book with much important research, even if you disagree with the end), this will not do. Just as pro-conspiracy writers will from now on have to take *With Malice* into account, so Myers himself should not really have put forward a version of Oswald that gives no hint that Melanson's *Spy Saga* exists. Of course Oswald's past and background are not part of the narrative of the shooting of Tippit but potentially they could completely change the context of that narrative. Myers here asks a valid question: "What threat? What is Tippit's killer afraid of?" His implied answer is: arrest. Maybe, however, Oswald was already scared of being shot as a patsy.

Whatever you think about these issues does not change the fact that Dale Myers has made a significant contribution to the literature of the events of 22 November 1963, providing us with a reference tool on a par with Richard Trask's *Pictures of the Pain*.

A Necessary End by Allen Peppitt (Citron Press, 1998)

If there isn't already a sub-genre of novels about JFK, there soon will be at this rate. Allen Pipit's "take" on events in Dallas is partly science-fiction: a

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time-traveller from the future comes back and inadvertently changes events. JFK is still assassinated (by Jimmy Brodin) but Ruby's attempt on Oswald's life fails because Oswald is wearing a bullet-proof vest. Oswald goes to trial but is still found guilty and dies in prison before he can be executed.

The lawyer who defended him (one of the novels main characters) is shot and murdered. But events take a different course at the end when the time-traveller returns. Pipit's style is aggressive and crude, as befits some of the characters, with short clipped sentences, a colourful vocabulary and some amusing images and bits of dialogue. It's a pity the book doesn't have a better cover. The present design is not effective in its own terms and it doesn't give any idea of the subject matter. *A Necessary End* does not have the depth of Thomas's *Flying In To Love*, but is an entertaining read with plenty of detail about the assassination, allusions to some of the people who have written about it, and it touches on some key issues, all of which will be enjoyed by readers of this journal.

John F Kennedy, Commander In Chief: A Profile In Leadership by Pierre Salinger [Buy now from Amazon](#)

Pierre Salinger's offering is a large format book which includes many photographs of Kennedy "inspecting the troops" which have apparently only just come to light, so may be unfamiliar even to those of you who have looked at most of the Kennedy "picture books" published over the years. The text deals with Kennedy's handling of military matters before and during his presidency, picking up the story in 1956. This is of course a work of hagiography, pretty much as you would expect from a Camelot insider like Salinger, supported by a foreword from Arthur Schlesinger. These men still believe in their lost leader and no adjustments to the historical record seem likely to change their minds.

For this reason the book has a shockingly anachronistic feel. The layout, graphics and presentation are 1990s, but the whole tone of the book is pre-

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revisionist. Even the title pays allusive homage to Profiles In Courage. You won't be surprised to learn that the final photograph is of Kennedy with his two children in the Oval Office. The book tries to have it both ways. On the one hand, it asserts that John Kennedy was a "man of peace" (no word here about the authorisation of assassination attempts on foreign political leaders the US happened not to like) but was on good terms with the military and therefore (runs the subtext) was not one of your wimpy "men of peace" but a true patriot.

This attempt to re-frame Kennedy as a quasi-Churchillian Leader of the Troops will not convince anyone who has read Richard Reeves' account of the Presidency. Even Schlesinger admits "military pomp and circumstance bored and irritated him". Salinger writes, "Kennedy was a man of peace but he was also a Second World War hero who became President at the height of the Cold War in a time of what he called "maximum danger"". There is no sense here that Salinger has considered whether Kennedy's habitual method of dealing with life and politics by provoking crises (discussed by Hellmann) was in fact a contributory factor to this time of "maximum danger", not to mention the massive increase in US arms spending during the Kennedy Presidency.

It has been argued that the USSR might never have put missiles into Cuba if they had not thought - as a consequence of US foreign policy - that the US was planning to invade Cuba in the first place. One striking photograph is on page 93. The text blandly informs us that Kennedy is here watching a group of F-100s give a display of precision napalm bombing. There is no reflection of the morality of such a terrible weapon and the consequences of its use in Vietnam.

Say Goodbye to America By Matthew Smith (Mainstream Publishing, 2001)
Buy now from Amazon

Readers of this journal will probably know Matthew Smith's name in connection with a book called The Second Plot (1992) which I warmly

recommend. I can also recommend this new volume, with a few reservations. It comes with the subtitle "The sensational and untold story behind the Assassination of John F. Kennedy" which suggests the publishers are hoping to appeal to a general audience as well as those who may have a shelf of JFK books.

As an introduction to the subject this book works quite well. There is plenty here to whet the appetite of those with a passing curiosity in the subject. More experienced readers will naturally find much that they already know, though even for them there will be some fresh nuggets of information. Few subjects raise such Everest-sized challenges of organisation as the JFK assassination. Anyone who has given a moment's thought to writing a book about it will have surely felt that creeping sense of panic at the idea of trying to find a structure that will balance the competing demands of narrative, detail, argument, exposition, and intelligibility which the enormity of the material requires. Smith's approach has been selective. He has obviously tried to build a book by highlighting what he feels are the crucial elements in 32 chapters, given colourful titles rather than dry factual ones (i.e. "They Do It With Mirrors").

The book is readable even though the chapters sometimes have disconcerting "jumps" from one subject area to another. There are a small number of reproduced documents and letters throughout, with 16 pages of photos. Say Goodbye To America's chapter 11 presents the results of a computer analysis, conducted by Smith with Joachim Markus, to determine the direction of shots. This analysis is used to disprove the Warren trajectories. The authors believe it demonstrates that the throat wound was caused by a shooter in the corner of the picket fence, the character known as Badge Man (of whom more in a second). They believe this shot exited from Jokes back and claim that the jacket has two holes, not one (can anyone verify this?). The shot that caused the rear-to-front back wound they think came from the Dal-Tex building.

The fatal headshot they attribute to somewhere a little further down the picket fence. They argue that this computer study in itself demonstrates

Oswald's innocence. I found this section interesting but not convincing because I am sceptical that data about the positions of cars and their occupants can be accurate enough for a computer study to do more than suggest possibilities. For example, it appears that the book does not question the authenticity of the Zapruder film. Perhaps Smith decided that this was a controversy worth avoiding at present. It is interesting that the names of Fetzer and Livingstone are missing from the bibliography, though Twyman is present. Other interesting chapters include those on the goings-on at Red Bird airport, Smith's account of material from a pilot there, and the chapter dealing with notes taken at Oswald's interrogation. Smith believes that there was a proper record made during those 12 hours and that one day it will come to light. This seems almost too much to hope for. If I have a small reservation it is only that some of the writing and argumentation could be tighter.

If the assassination community wishes to get academic history and politics interested writers will have to be very careful about footnotes, sources, and so on. I mentioned Badge Man earlier. On p.76 the text informs us that he is so named because in the Mary Moorman Polaroid "there was the semblance of a uniform about the shadowy figure". When I first encountered the "colourized" Badge Man in Groden's *The Killing Of A President* (p.200) I was impressed – until I realized how small a Polaroid is and how much the picture had been enlarged! So to say "semblance of a uniform" really is pushing credibility. One other point concerns Jim Marrs' introduction, Smith's final chapter and the book's title. In previous issues I have alluded to the way in which sentiment causes people to exaggerate the political significance of the assassination and give it a quasi-religious dimension in which JFK's death represents America's fall from "innocence", with the American people driven out of a seeming paradise.

This book is touched in parts by that myth. There never was a glorious, innocent America to say goodbye to. America's tragedy is not the loss of some past Eden but the fact that as yet it has not realized the ideals to which, at its best, it gives voice. Assassination writers would do well to read

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the relevant parts of a book like *The Culture Of Complaint and The Politics of Moral Capital* in this regard.

Bloody Treason: The Assassination of John F Kennedy By Noel Twyman
(Laurel Publishing, United States of America, 1997)

There is no doubt that Noel Twyman's book will be seen as an important contribution to assassination literature. It has some of faults of presentation but is strong on its own ground, namely probing who have been responsible for the conspiracy which killed Kennedy. It is not as strong on what actually occurred in Dallas during those fateful days in November 1963.

It does not give the kind of overview of witness testimony provided by a book like say *Crossfire* for example. I would not recommend this book to anyone who is relatively new familiar with the basic material and speculations. I would, however, recommend it to experienced readers who know the subject well. Whoever next writes on the assassination have to take Twyman's book into account. In his prologue, Twyman explains that he is writing from the viewpoint of 'a prosecutor who is convinced of the guilt of the accused but must present a case to the jury and be challenged by an extremely powerful defence'. Twyman mentions that he rebuts Posner's arguments along the way. The book divided into five sections: the Prelude, looking at 'the obvious' "big picture" plus what was widely available to the interested public within ten months after the President was murdered'. Murder and Cover-Up on the forensic and medical evidence' Gangsters, Cops and Spies; Right-Wing Extremists and Power Politics, and Conspiracy and Cover-Up in Washington.

There are various black-and-white photographs and diagrams throughout the text and a sections of colour plates, including twenty-six Zapruder frames. One of the most interesting parts of the book is the discussion of the Zapruder film, which Twyman feels has been altered. He discusses frames 302 and 303 in the light of the first being blurred and the second

not, and William Greer's two impossibly fast head-turns. There is of course more material than just this in its forging which should have been included. Twyman does not comment on the fact that in frame 335 you can clearly see Mrs Kennedy's shoulder as though the entire top of the President's head is missing (something on which Robert Groden failed to comment in his photo book). Harry Livingstone talks about this in Killing Kennedy. Twyman should have cross-referenced Livingstone's work in this area. It is important that assassination writers create a sense of a body of work, of how evidence and theories presented by various people build up to make a case.

One long book can always be dismissed a crackpot but a whole group making a common point is less easy to dismiss. As far as the medical evidence is concerned Twyman broadly agrees with David Lifton's theory that the body was altered. Twyman makes an interesting observation on the Mary Moorman photographs and what it shows about John Connolly's position in the car. Beyond page 250 Twyman moves away from the specific events in Dallas and more into the organisation of the conspiracy. The phrase 'involved with' starts to crop up more regularly and tantalisingly through the remainder of the book.

I could not begin to list the number of people said by Twyman to 'be involved with' the conspiracy. The Corsican assassin Lucien Sarti (who figured in the British TV documentary The Men Who Killed Kennedy is cited once more as the Grassy Knoll marksman who fired the fatal shot. Twyman is forceful in his suggestions that Hoover and Johnson were heavily implicated in the plot. There is a whole chapter on Interpen and Gerald Patrick Hemmings for those who are interested. Hemmings is only a name to me, aside from the piece in a recent issue of The Assassination Chronicles. The book would certainly have been better with some rigorous editing. The same amount of information could have been conveyed in a shorter space.

This problem is partly created by Twyman's well-intended inclusion of point-summaries at the end of each section and chapter. However, other

irrelevant material does intrude, sometime of an autobiographical nature. There are a number of books in JFK assassination literature in which the authors tell the story of how they stumbled upon such-and-such a witness or piece of evidence. This style is incompatible with the legal approach which Twyman invokes at the beginning. For example, in Appendix A he prints an interview with Madeleine Brown. He gives us the date, time, place (and floor) of the meeting, tells us that the restaurant had a spectacular view of Dallas and that Brown arrived late 'because her taxicab had run out of gas'! do we really need to know that?

An early chapter gets sidetracked into a discussion of the Psychologist Maslow. The chapter on Hemming is also full of autobiographical references. Given the sensational nature of the subject (the JFK assassination), the drier and more objective the presentation the better. I think most of the literary allusions could go as well. They add a factitious note of drama to something which is dramatic enough as it is. To his credit, Twyman does not idealise Kennedy, something which many JFK books are prone to do. At one point he describes the Kennedy brothers as 'young, ruthless, cavalier and naïve in believing that they could accomplish anything they set out do' (p12). All too often, writer on the assassination give the impression that America was a wonderful place until Kennedy died and they everything went to rack and ruin.

In fact, one of the things which Twyman's book powerfully demonstrates I that American society and politics were already corrupted by the various conspiratorial factions who made the assassination happen. The assassination brings not the end of a golden era – but rather, shows that that golden era never existed. Noel Twyman's book is rewarding and frustrating by turns. In the end, it , doesn't 'solve' the crime, as the blurb promises – but then seasoned assassination readers will take that with enough to pack a TSBD book carton! I just wish that the material had been more rigorously compressed. There's a much better 600 page book struggling to get out of this one.