

The JFK Assassination According to the History Textbooks

Part 2

By Paul Bleau

In Part 1, we saw how history books are heavily skewed towards portraying Oswald as the lone assassin of JFK: how their key source is the Warren Report conclusions, and how the few secondary sources used are mostly reflective of the pro-lone assassin scenario. In Part 2 we will cover sources that have gone mostly ignored by history book authors and discuss how they are behaving in a manner that violates the Code of Conduct of their profession. The American Historical Association is the oldest and most recognized professional organization of historians in this country. As an umbrella organization it defines professional standards and best practices.

Let us take a look at the first of those professional practices:

“We honor the historical record.”

- *AHA Statements on Standards of professional conduct (updated 2011)*

Breach of conduct (1): The historical record is not only dishonoured. It is completely ignored!

By using the Warren Report as their key source, historians most certainly do not follow their code of conduct on this issue. None of the authors even considered any of the primary data, government commissioned investigations, newspaper articles and research done by many diligent, independent authors that came in droves after the Warren Commission published its report over fifty years ago. Let us now list some of those prime factors that went unmentioned, but are a major part of the historical record that AHA pretends to honor.

Castro and Truman

Perhaps the first person to remark publicly that something was awry in the JFK case was Cuban leader Fidel Castro. He learned of the assassination on the day it happened while engaging in diplomatic discussions with one of JFK's secret envoys, a French journalist named Jean Daniel. Immediately upon getting the news, Castro remarked to his visitor: "This is an end to your mission of peace. Everything is changed." Later Castro commented: "Now they will have to find the assassin quickly, but very quickly, otherwise, you watch and see, I know them, they will try to put the blame on us for this thing." A day later, after frantically following all the cables about the subject, the early ones linking Oswald to pro- Communist and Cuban interests, he felt it confirmed a plot to blame him so as to give the US the excuse it needed to invade his country. In a [speech](#) he made that day, he talked about how strange it was for Oswald to have been in Russia and then distribute, while in New Orleans, Fair Play for Cuba flyers, wondering openly if Oswald was not involved with intelligence and how strange it was that Kennedy would be assassinated after speaking about the virtues of a more peaceful world.

Suspicions were also omnipresent in the U.S. In an [article](#) written for the *Washington Post*, and published exactly one month after the assassination, former president Harry Truman, who had established the CIA in 1947, opined that the CIA was basically out of control: "For some time I have been disturbed by the way the CIA has been diverted from its original assignment, ... This quiet intelligence arm of the President has been so removed from its intended role that it is being interpreted as a symbol of sinister and mysterious foreign intrigue – and subject for cold war enemy propaganda." He said the CIA's "operational duties" "should be terminated." Allen Dulles, then sitting on the Warren Commission, tried unsuccessfully to get Truman to retract the story. Some have speculated that the timing of the writing of the article is linked to the assassination.

Early Warren Report Critics

Since the Warren Commission delivered its [report](#), many other key events have taken place that helped shed more light on the assassination and cast more doubt on the *lone nut* scenario.

Early researchers like Penn Jones and Mark Lane took it upon themselves to analyze the report and to question actual witnesses, only to find what they believed to be gaping weaknesses in the report. Lane's 1966 *Rush to Judgement*, a critique of the Warren Commission, became a best-seller. He also [filmed many witnesses](#) who contradicted the Warren Commission's version of what happened on November 22nd.

They and a number of other researchers who combed through the Warren Report and the twenty six volumes of evidence, and who have criticized and discredited it, have cited many reasons for its weaknesses. Here we list a number of the more salient ones.

- Its make-up, which included ex-CIA director, Allen Dulles, dismissed by JFK after the failed Bay of Pigs – was seen as biased and handcuffed.

- New president Lyndon Johnson convinced Earl Warren, Chief Justice at the time, to head the commission and advanced to him that it was important that the American public be satisfied that Oswald was a lone assassin. Any links of Oswald to Cuba-friendly conspirators could lead to a nuclear holocaust and should be dismissed. Warren reluctantly took on the mandate. ([See LBJ's phone conversation with Richard Russell, excerpt 3](#))
- The commission was to [rely almost entirely on FBI investigative resources](#), led by Hoover, head of the FBI and a very close friend of President Johnson's.
- Paraffin tests indicated that Oswald had not fired a rifle on November 22, 1963.
- The Warren Commission was selective in the testimonies they chose to hear and to qualify as valid. They omitted or chose to discredit an [important number of witnesses](#) who heard, and in some cases saw, shots being fired from the grassy knoll on the opposite end of Dealey Plaza from the Texas School Book Depository; or said they smelled gunpowder coming from that area; witnesses who placed Oswald away from the sixth floor at the time of the shooting, witnesses who described other shooters of officer Tippit; doctors and nurses at Parkland Hospital who described Kennedy's throat wound as [one of entry](#) and back of the head wound as [one of exit](#), witnesses who had warned in advance of the assassination, witnesses who observed Oswald associate with persons of interest and witnesses who observed suspicious behavior of Oswald doubles.
- The limousine that Kennedy was riding in was hastily repaired despite observance of damage caused by projectiles.
- The commission could find no motive for the crime.
- Ruby's stated motive for shooting Oswald was judged by many to be weak.
- The Warren Commission's reluctance to interview Jack Ruby and [refusal of his request](#) to be moved out of Dallas so that he could speak more safely.
- The Single Bullet theory that purports that a single shot caused seven non-aligned wounds, broke two large bones of Governor Connally and was found in a quasi-pristine condition





- The way Oswald learned Russian while a marine, his manner of entering the Soviet Union during the period in which false defector programs were being conducted, and his re-entering of the U.S., his behavior in New Orleans during the months leading up to the assassination and many of the people he associated with – all these have led many researchers to state that the Warren Commission did not explore links of Oswald to intelligence.
- Ruby's ties to organized crime were not seriously probed.
- The suspiciously weak security measures surrounding the motorcade were not fully investigated.
- The autopsy in Bethesda was controlled by generals and admirals and was seriously flawed.
- The CIA, led by liaison to the Warren Commission James Angleton, who was very close to Dulles, withheld or destroyed information pertinent to the crime.
- The commission failed to seriously investigate the possibility of a conspiracy.

Jim Garrison

In 1966, New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison investigated the assassination, which led to the 1969 trial of Clay Shaw, a well-known local businessman, who was accused of being a conspirator. This event was the subject of the much-talked-about Oliver Stone movie *JFK*. While the jury found Shaw not guilty, some jurors told Mark Lane that they felt there had nevertheless been a conspiracy.

Researchers who support the conspiracy version underscore the following that came out of this phase of assassination analysis:

- Garrison demonstrated that Oswald, in the spring and summer of 1963, while in New Orleans, associated with many suspicious characters involved in right-wing activities directed at the overthrow attempts of Castro, and linked to intelligence and Cuban exile paramilitary operations. During the summer, Oswald was seen handing out Fair Play for Cuba flyers for which he received a lot of negative publicity in highly conservative New Orleans. However, in what seems to have been a blunder, some of these flyers had a Camp Street address on them, placing his supposed office virtually within Guy Bannister's detective office, a CIA-linked hub for organizing Cuban exile paramilitary operations to overthrow Castro and conduct Communist witch-hunts.



- Many witnesses confirmed associations of Oswald with Bannister, David Ferrie and Clay Shaw, whom Garrison accused of being linked with the CIA. He also showed that the right-wing, upper-class white Russian community Oswald was in close contact with after his return from Russia, including George DeMorenschildt – Oswald's probable babysitter who also had links with the CIA – was dissonant with the image of Oswald as the lone communist nut.
- Furthermore, Garrison argued that Oswald's learning of the Russian language while a Marine and his journey into Russia demonstrated his links to intelligence. He also concluded that his Fair Play for Cuba role was an attempt to sheep-dip him as a pro-Castro villain.

- Garrison was also the first to cast doubt on a strange trip Oswald allegedly made to Mexico in September of 1963. Research years later revealed more details around what seemed to be a concoction: that Oswald visited the Cuban and Russian embassies and met with Russian assassination operative Valery Kostikov. The CIA tried to use this later in a clumsy attempt to provide reasons for the U.S. to invade Cuba. But dubious photos and recordings made by the CIA seemed to demonstrate the use of an Oswald impersonator. This combined with LBJ's unwillingness to start a war, forced backpedalling, destruction of evidence and secrecy around this event.

(Photo of "Oswald" CIA provided to Warren Commission)



- During the Shaw trial, Garrison showed the jury the Zapruder film, and demonstrated the weaknesses of the lone shooter claim. His team also brought out obvious flaws in the Bethesda autopsy through the testimony of Doctor Pierre Finck, who agreed that their efforts were hampered by kibitzing generals and admirals who were present in the operating room in Bethesda.
- Garrison was also one of the first to speculate that the assassination conspiracy had to do with Kennedy's foreign policies.

- Though Garrison lost the trial and was unable to convince the jury that Clay Shaw was a CIA asset linked with Oswald, Ferrie and Bannister, some researchers point out that his efforts were sabotaged by adversaries who infiltrated his volunteer team and weakened his efforts; well-orchestrated propaganda attacking both his case and reputation; refusals of his subpoenas for out-of-state witnesses, and the harassment, turning around, and untimely deaths of some of his key witnesses, including the suspicious death of star-witness David Ferrie. Furthermore, after the trial, pictures, additional witnesses and other evidence began to emerge that Clay Shaw, despite his denials, was in fact in association with all of these characters and a CIA asset and part of a CIA organization of interest called Permindex. <http://coverthistory.blogspot.ca/2005/07/cia-document-on-clay-shaw-excerpts.html>

Watergate

The Watergate scandal that exploded after the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and the subsequent cover-up was found by many researchers to have intriguing links to the JFK assassination. It exposed Richard Nixon as a master of dirty tricks who had at his disposal a group of saboteurs and spies in his arsenal called the Plumbers.

This cast of characters burglarized Daniel Ellsberg who had leaked the Pentagon Papers, looked into the Chappaquiddick scandal, and were part of the break-in. Those who were arrested were Bernard Barker, James W. McCord, Frank Sturgis, Virgilio Gonzalez, and Eugenio Martínez. McCord was a former CIA officer, Sturgis a CIA asset; the others were anti-Castro Cuban exiles and had been brought in by former CIA officer E. Howard Hunt who also was arrested, along with Gordon Liddy. As we will see later, some of these names are directly linked by researchers with the JFK assassination.

From White House tapes that were analyzed during the course of an investigation we can hear Nixon worrying about linking the Cubans to the “*whole Bay of Pigs thing*”... his code word, according to his advisor H. R. Haldeman, for the JFK assassination.

An insider opens the doors to a secret world

In 1973, a well-placed insider began revealing highly explosive information. Others would follow.

Leroy Fletcher Prouty had been a tank commander in World War II, the personal pilot of Omar Bradley, part of the Office of Strategic Services, and the leader of the Air Defense Command. In 1955, he became the coordinator of operations between the United States Air Force and the CIA. He worked for the Pentagon for the next nine years. He was Briefing Coordinator for the Secretary of Defense in 1960-61, and for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Special Ops in 1962-63. After retiring from the USAAF in 1964, he received a Commendation medal from the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In his books and interviews he claimed that the CIA worked for corporate interests and that they were involved in the Kennedy assassination in a coup coordinated by someone like Air Force Gen. Edward Lansdale, who was really a CIA operative. Prouty also analysed the deficiencies in security that day, and international propaganda campaigns that followed, and explained how this had to have been intentional and coordinated. Donald Sutherland's character *Mr. X*, in the film *JFK*, is loosely based on him.

William Gaudet, Victor Marchetti and Robert Morrow, all involved with the CIA, have also made incriminating statements with respect to the CIA and the JFK assassination.

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

On March 6, 1975, on the ABC late-night television show *Good Night America*, assassination researcher Robert Groden presented the first-ever network television showing of the Zapruder film. The ensuing public outrage quickly led to the forming of the Hart-Schweiker investigation, part of the Church Committee investigation on Intelligence Activities by the United States Senate. This eventually resulted in the House Select Committee on Assassinations investigation.

Frank Church and his Select Committee on Intelligence launched a probe which confirmed the use of assassinations and alliances with the mob as means by which the CIA pursued its goals. It was also eventually confirmed that mobster John Roselli, with crime bosses Santos Trafficante and Sam Giancana, after holding discussions with former CIA representatives, were involved in assassination attempts on Fidel Castro, in partnership with the CIA and Cuban exiles. In its final report delivered in 1976, it also concluded that *"Domestic intelligence activity has threatened and undermined the Constitutional rights of Americans to free speech, association and privacy. It has done so primarily because the Constitutional system for checking abuse of power has not been applied"*. It also revealed information about the CIA's Operation Mockingbird: a program by which the CIA controlled propaganda, and influenced newspapers and wire agencies. It further underlined that the CIA did in fact withhold information about plots to assassinate Castro from the White House, and the Warren Commission, and that the FBI had led a counter intelligence program against Martin Luther King.

The House Select Committee on Assassinations and Gaeton Fonzi

The House Select Committee on Assassinations began its investigation into the assassinations of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King in 1976 and presented its final report

<http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=800>

in 1979. Its key findings were the following:

- **I.A.** Lee Harvey Oswald fired three shots at President John F. Kennedy. The second and third shots he fired struck the President. The third shot he fired killed the President;
- **I.B.** Scientific acoustical evidence (Note: which was to be both highly attacked and defended in the future by critics) establishes a high probability that two gunmen fired at President John F. Kennedy. Other scientific evidence does not preclude the possibility of two gunmen firing at the President. Scientific evidence negates some specific conspiracy allegations.
- **I.C.** The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that President John F. Kennedy *was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy*. The committee was unable to identify the other gunmen or the extent of the conspiracy.
- **I.D.** Agencies and departments of the U.S. Government performed with varying degrees of competency in the fulfillment of their duties. President John F. Kennedy did not receive adequate protection. A thorough and reliable investigation into the responsibility of Lee Harvey Oswald for the assassination was conducted. *The investigation into the possibility of conspiracy in the assassination was inadequate.*

Another key difference in its findings versus the Warren Commission was the following: The conclusions of the (WC) investigations were arrived at in good faith, but presented in a fashion that was too definitive. Further, the committee's investigation of Oswald and Ruby showed a variety of relationships that may have matured into an assassination conspiracy [author note: one of which was Oswald's relationship with David Ferrie as was alleged by Garrison almost ten years earlier. **Neither Oswald nor Ruby turned out to be "loners," as they had been painted in the 1964 investigation.**]

It advanced ideas that members of the Cuban exile community and the mob may have played a role in the conspiracy, but cleared the CIA of any wrongdoing.

It also concluded that there were four shots fired and that one came from the grassy knoll but had not struck the president (not only because of the acoustical evidence, but also because of witness testimony, according to Robert Blakey who headed the commission).

It also noted that Marina Oswald's testimony to the Warren Commission and answers she gave to the Secret Service and the FBI were at various times incomplete and inconsistent.

The HSCA also found that there was a probable conspiracy in the assassination of Martin Luther King.

Finally, one of the HSCA recommendations was that:

The Department of Justice should review the committee's findings and report in the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and after completion of the recommended investigation enumerated in sections A and B, analyze whether further official investigation is warranted in either case. The Department of Justice should report its analysis to the Judiciary Committee.

While the HSCA absolved the CIA in the conspiracy, information in the aftermath showed that there was dissent on this issue from some of its members and that, as with the Warren Commission and the Garrison investigations, the CIA did not cooperate, and even obstructed.

In 1993 Gaeton Fonzi, a renowned journalist, WC critic and investigator for the HSCA published a book describing his experience with the HSCA called *The Last Investigation*. It is considered by many as one of the best books about the JFK assassination. *The New York Times* wrote this about his work: “*He (Fonzi) chronicled the near-blanket refusal of government intelligence agencies, especially the C.I.A., to provide the committee with documents it requested. And he accused committee leaders of folding under pressure - from Congressional budget hawks, political advisers and the intelligence agencies themselves - just as promising new leads were emerging.*”

In this book, Fonzi presents compelling evidence that Maurice Bishop was the alias of David Phillips, an upper echelon CIA operative highly involved in propaganda and anti-Castro CIA operations, who was seen in the company of Oswald, according to Antonio Veciana. Veciana was the head of Alpha 66 -an important anti-Castro paramilitary group funded and trained by the CIA under the supervision of Bishop. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3i7OidcsB3s> Other researchers found Phillips to be involved with Guy Bannister’s operations in New Orleans and the CIA attempts to sheep-dip Oswald in the colors of a pro-Castro communist.

Fonzi also criticized Robert Blakey, the chief counsel of the HSCA, for being lenient with the CIA – something Blakey later admitted to when he found out George Joannides, a CIA liaison with the Committee, had also overseen the DRE (a group of anti-Castro Cuban exiles) shortly before the assassination at a time when Oswald was also involved with them. This prompted Blakey to state: “*I am no longer confident that the Central Intelligence Agency co-operated with the committee....*”.

The Howard Hunt and King lawsuits

Victor Marchetti, who joined the CIA in 1955, became in 1966 special assistant to Richard Helms (the head of the CIA at the time). He then quit the agency in 1969 in disillusion over its practices. He wrote an article in the Liberty Lobby Organization journal *Spotlight*, claiming that the HSCA had a CIA memo confirming the participation of officer E. Howard Hunt in the assassination of JFK.

In 1981, after suing Liberty Lobby for defamation, E. Howard Hunt was awarded six hundred and fifty thousand dollars in damages. However, on appeal in 1995, using Mark Lane as their attorney, Liberty Lobby was able to provide persuasive arguments concerning CIA involvement in the assassination. A jury reversed the ruling; essentially agreeing that Marchetti had not been guilty of libel when he suggested that JFK had been assassinated by people working for the CIA.

<http://www.libertylobby.org/articles/2000/20000207cia.html>

Four years later, in 1999, a twelve person jury in Memphis, in a civil trial for the wrongful death of Martin Luther King, found Lee Jowers responsible for King's murder, and claimed that the assassination plot contained other "governmental agencies." The Justice Department however did refute the Jowers allegations after conducting an investigation.

Marrs, Stone and the ARRB

In 1989, Jim Marrs' book *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy* was published and became a best-seller.

Sylvia Meagher, author of *Master Index to the JFK Assassination and Accessories After the Fact* and considered to be one of the top Warren Commission critics, described Marrs' work as very accurate when asked by a publisher to evaluate it.

In 1991, the movie *JFK* directed by Oliver Stone was released. Based on the books *On the Trail of the Assassins* by Jim Garrison and *Crossfire*, it earned over two hundred million dollars world-wide and was nominated for eight Oscars, including best picture. Criticized by some in the press as lacking in factual basis, it nevertheless introduced millions to some of the major characters and issues that researchers considered pertinent to the case. It is credited for the passage of the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 and the formation of the U.S. Assassination Records Review Board. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/advisory/arrb98/> The Act was signed into law (some say reluctantly) by President George H. W. Bush in late October 1992, while he was facing a tough battle in the election that pitted him against Bill Clinton.

By ARRB law, all existing assassination-related documents will be made public by 2017. The release of a lot of this information has already provided a number of researchers with material that has pushed their research and analysis to the point where there are more and more precise, footnoted scenarios of the assassination being presented, complete with motives, timelines and names of suspects.

The Most Recent Research

In 2003, John Armstrong, after ten years of research, finished writing *Harvey and Lee*, which presents a case around the CIA having created two different Oswalds through a detailed timeline covering many years, and by documenting conflicting sightings of Oswald that would put him on numerous occasions in different places at the same time. He explains how this helped the CIA, led by E. Howard Hunt and David Atlee Phillips, frame Oswald in 1963 as the assassin of the president.

He notes how Marina Oswald changed to become more compliant with the lone assassin scenario after she received \$135,000 (a large amount in those days) for the rights to her story from a mysterious company with no track record called Tex Italia Films, which quickly closed shop without ever doing anything with the rights they had acquired, and whose owners were untraceable.

He also reveals how Oswald, shortly before the assassination, attempted to buy high-powered rifles from a former gun-runner named Robert McKeown, a man who had been jailed for supplying arms to Fidel Castro, whom he had befriended. McKeown had met Jack Ruby, who was trying to find a way to get a door-opener to meet Castro so as to help mobster friends jailed in Cuba. Armstrong speculates that had Oswald been successful, it would have been one of these Castro-tainted rifles that would have been found on the sixth floor of the book depository after the assassination.

In 2007, James Douglas published *JFK and the Unspeakable*. His work focused on why Kennedy was assassinated. In his well-received book he shows how Kennedy's foreign policies were deemed too peaceful by the military establishment and the CIA. His unwillingness to start a war in Vietnam, to invade Cuba, and his diplomatic overtures to Khrushchev and Castro exacerbated relations with groups like Cuban exiles and right wing extremists. In that time, not so far removed from the McCarthy communist witch-hunts, many members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CIA were beginning to consider Kennedy treasonous and a menace to national security.

Through detailed National Security Action Memorandums (NSAMs), JFK speeches, and statements he made to advisors and close friends, Douglas demonstrates how JFK was taking some American sacred cows head-on. In NSAMs 55 and 57, he removed the CIA's control over military style operations like the Bay of Pigs. Against the advice of his military advisers he signed NSAM 263 on October 11, 1963, a secret order which would have seen a withdrawal from Vietnam and which would never be obeyed because of his murder six weeks later. Johnson reversed this withdrawal policy and would later use the exaggerated Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964 to escalate the war, which would cost America the lives of over fifty thousand young Americans and cause important social, economic and drug problems for the country.

Douglass also wrote a long section on the plot to kill Kennedy in Chicago, which describes an averted assassination attempt that had been planned in Chicago for November 2, 1963 just weeks before the president's doomed trip to Dallas. Tipped off by someone codenamed **Lee**, the Chicago police arrested Thomas Arthur Vallee, a troubled ex-marine who, like Oswald, had been stationed in Japan and who looked like he was being set up to take the fall. Two Cuban Nationals carrying semi-automatic weapons were also stopped for questioning by intelligence services and were later released without ever being identified. The event had striking similarities to what was going to happen in Dallas on November 22nd.

In 2011, Larry Hancock published *Nexus, the CIA and Political Assassination* as a compliment to another of his books: *Someone Would have Talked* (its second edition was published in 2007). In these books readers are introduced to the characters, tactics and the historical background behind the CIA and its assassination activities. He also talks about what James Angleton referred to as the Cadre: a group of like-minded CIA intelligence originals who acted in a group-think manner, and who practiced controversial clandestine activities. This group included Allan Dulles, Tracy Barnes, David Phillips, Rip Robertson, Richard Bissell, David Morales, William Harvey, himself and others.

He chronicles how members of the Cadre organized the illegal removal of democratically elected Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954 and how a model for using assassinations and propaganda in CIA-orchestrated regime changes began to emerge under the code name *ZR Rifle*.

Elements of this model included absence of documented orders, specially-coded verbiage and symbols in exchanges that suggested the green light for a murder without ever spelling it out directly, strict compartmentalization of an operation with information shared on a need-to-know basis only, use of surrogates who would be difficult to link to the CIA at the operational level such as mobsters, exiles, paramilitary mercenaries, and, finally the use of subterfuge and disinformation to pin the crime on a patsy or an enemy – all of which provided the CIA with plausible deniability and a motive to pursue an objective.

Many members of the Cadre went on to try and apply the model in the failed Bay of Pigs debacle which they blamed on Kennedy for not having provided air support. It later was demonstrated that the CIA had been less than forthright in its briefings of the president about how this operation – originated under the supervision of Vice President Nixon during the previous Eisenhower administration – would roll out. They tried to manipulate the young president into an invasion, knowing all along that the people's revolt they had promised was not going to occur. CIA Director Allan Dulles, Director of Plans Richard Bissell and Deputy Director General Charles Cabell all lost their jobs after this disaster. Many of their subordinates, however, remained loyal to them and expressed bitterness towards the Kennedy brothers.

Hancock, in a speculative manner based on circumstantial evidence, paints a scenario that deserves attention because, as we will see, a well-documented confession that became public later adds concreteness to his writings. In *Someone Would have Talked*, Hancock shows how a Cuban exile named John Martino confided to close ones that he had participated in the assassination. In *Nexus* he outlines how meetings, actions and certain documents and links between CIA operatives and surrogates juxtapose themselves in a coordinated manner with the roll out of the assassination. In 1961 dissent among the CIA organizers of the failed Bay of Pigs is at its highest and bitterness against the Kennedy brothers virulent. In late 1961 William Harvey is assigned as a CIA representative to be part of a Cuban sabotage and infiltration project called Operation Mongoose. He was a wild gun-toting heavy drinker. During the Missile Crisis he was accused by Robert Kennedy of being responsible for souring a diplomatic solution to the impasse by sending Cuban exiles on sabotage missions into Cuba at the height of the showdown. He was later to be exiled to Italy.

Many in the Cuban exile community living in the U.S. began seeing the Kennedys as traitors when they learned in 1962, through surrogates, that Kennedy had pledged to Khrushchev that he would not invade Cuba as part of the Missile Crisis resolution deal. There now seemed no hope to liberate Cuba. And, in fact, as Hancock notes, some of the Cuban exiles now understood that Kennedy was establishing a back channel to Castro so as to move toward diplomatic recognition of his government.

In April 1963, as these discussions between Castro and Kennedy were intensifying, Harvey, before heading off to Italy, met with mobster and good friend Johnny Roselli, with James Angleton in the know. Hancock speculates that it is at about this time the ball gets rolling. Later, David Morales and Rip Robertson, two high ranking officers operating out the CIA's JM Wave station in Miami, and who were also a part of the Cadre involved in regime change, would play key roles. They were the ones in the closest position to work with surrogates from the Cuban exiles, including John Martino, whom they knew well.

The author shows how David Phillips and David Morales worked in synchronization: Morales directing military operations and Phillips propaganda: Antonio Veciana, leader of Alpha 66 (a Cuban exile group supervised by Phillips), describes how an assassination attempt on Castro while in Chile (Morales' and Phillips' territory), which included multiple shooters, a place to slow Castro's car down, and a designated Moscow-linked patsy, was "*very similar to the Kennedy assassination*".

Hancock presents more evidence around paramilitary activist Roy Hargraves who admitted to a friend that he was involved in "*something big*" during the days leading up to November 22nd, was in Dallas at the time of the murder, and may have furnished Secret Service credentials to certain operatives in Dealey Plaza.

In 2012, James DiEugenio published the second edition of *Destiny Betrayed*. In this book the author combed through declassified ARRB documents, conducted revealing personal interviews, and analyzed exhibits, new and old, to push the motives, and the evidence of involvement of the conspirators in the JFK assassination to their highest levels so far. He also shows how the CIA and their allies in the FBI, combined with certain media and investigation infiltrators, derailed the Garrison case, and sabotaged the HSCA's efforts. He connects those who undermined the Garrison inquiry to the inner circle of people who manipulated Oswald long before the assassination took place.

In the first part of the book he shows how Kennedy became a nemesis of President Eisenhower, Vice-President Nixon, CIA director Allen Dulles and his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, by being a formidable critic of their foreign policies during the 1950s. And how his policies did not conform with the Domino Theory (of communist expansion) pushed by his predecessors.

Using the most recently declassified materials on Oswald, the author traces him from his youth to his association with Ferrie and the Civil Air Patrol, his enlistment in the Marines, his acquisition of the Russian language, his alleged hardship discharge and his defection to Russia. Along the way he points out all the anomalies which indicate that Oswald was not truly a genuine defector, but most likely was an intelligence asset. With his likely control agent being CIA counter-intelligence chief James Angleton.

Readers get an in depth view of another shadowy character, Sergio Arcacha Smith, who was sprung from Cuba by the CIA, and who is linked with a large number of aforementioned persons of interest, including David Ferrie, E. Howard Hunt, Clay Shaw, Guy Bannister and a host of other suspicious Cuban exiles and right-wingers. Smith was overheard by a witness who brought information to the police ahead of the murder about plans to kill Kennedy, he reportedly had underground maps in his Dallas apartment of the Dealey Plaza sewer system, and yet he escaped virtually all scrutiny through protection from close allies, and thus avoided testifying during the Clay Shaw trial.

DiEugenio also writes about how Ruth Paine, who housed Marina Oswald during the weeks before the assassination and helped find Oswald his job at the TSBD was, along with her husband, surrounded by relatives that were CIA employees (or assets) and that the conveyor belt of timely evidence incriminating Oswald originating in her garage was very suspicious.

The Hancock and DiEugenio books reveal incriminating statements made by CIA persons of interest to their associates during their later years.

- In the late 1960s, Allen Dulles remarked to journalist Willie Morris: *"That little Kennedy ... he thought he was a god"*.
- In 1973 David Morales said to his friend Ruben Carbajal, while in an intoxicated rage, *"Kennedy had been responsible for him having to watch all the men he recruited and trained get wiped out (Bay of Pigs)"*. He added: *"Well, we took care of that SOB, didn't we?"*

- in 1974, James Angleton, dismissed for his role in an illegal mail-intercept program, blurted out: “A mansion has many rooms... I’m not privy to who struck John.”
- In July 1986, David Phillips said to Kevin Walsh, former HSCA staff member: “My private opinion is that JFK was likely done in by a conspiracy, likely including American intelligence officers.” Near his death in 1988, he admitted to his brother that he was in Dallas on the day of the assassination.

In 2015, David Talbot completed writing *The Devil’s Chessboard* after interviewing persons that were close to Allen Dulles, analyzing his day calendar and conducting some of the most in-depth research ever done on the former head of the CIA. He uncovers very suspicious behavior during the months and days leading up to, during, and after the assassination, as well as his lobbying efforts to be selected on the Warren Commission.

A number of researchers analyzed the large number of strange and untimely deaths of witnesses, suspects and people of interest, many of which occurred at strategic moments during the major investigations into the assassination.

Other writers point their suspicions toward Organized Crime which wanted its Cuban casinos back and that hated the Kennedys for ferociously prosecuting the Mafia. Others claim that Vice-President Johnson and his right-wing friends from Texas were behind the assassination, as, even Robert Caro admits, Johnson was being investigated for suspicious activities dealing with personal monetary aggrandizement in 1963. LBJ did not get along with Robert Kennedy and, according to some reports, Robert Kennedy was trying to remove Johnson from the presidential ticket for the upcoming election.

Some researchers-authors provided more narrow insights into the assassination:

Don Adams, an FBI officer involved in the JFK assassination investigation, describes his story around his surveillance of rightwing segregationist Joseph Milteer, and how the FBI pulled strings so as to thwart real fact-finding in his memoir *From an Office Building with a High Powered Rifle*;

Vince Palamara in his book *Survivor’s Guilt* outlines his decades of research into how the Secret Service likely played a role in the assassination. He explains what stimulated ill feelings between the president and many of the agents, and demonstrates how security measures were remarkably weaker for the Dallas presidential motorcade as compared to previous ones. He also goes into the backgrounds of the Secret Service personnel he feels were involved in leaving the president weakly protected. In one of his interviews he gives insight into another plot to kill Kennedy, just three days before the homicide, in Tampa Florida, involving Cuban shooters and a patsy with a high powered rifle who would be placed in a high-rise building overlooking the presidential motorcade. The would-be patsy, like Oswald, was a Fair Play for Cuba “representative” and had also made a trip to Mexico, using the same entry points Oswald did, to visit Cuban and Russian embassies <http://jfkcountercoup.blogspot.ca/2012/07/tampa-plot-in-retrospect.html>.

Another type of analysis focuses on the significant number of characters whose names re-surface around controversial events. For instance, Watergate operatives like Hunt, Frank Sturgis, and some of the Cuban exiles, are also referred to in the JFK assassination conspiracy research.

As we can see from the above survey, the Warren Commission findings and the few pro-lone assassin books that have guided the historians in their writings are extremely light-weight and radically outdated when compared to what detail-conscious, curious, and inspired researchers have accomplished. And much of this comes from the declassified records of the ARRB, which none of these professional historians seemed to even be aware of, let alone did they honor them.

Let us now go to another standard of the American Historical Association:

“Professional integrity in the practice of history requires awareness of one's own biases and a readiness to follow sound method and analysis wherever they may lead.”

- *AHA Statements on Standards of professional conduct (updated 2011)*

Breach of conduct (2): Unsound reasoning and baseless claims

To illustrate this breach, let us look at some of the statements made by some of the authors.

Many assert (see the full exchanges in Part 1) that the evidence of a conspiracy is simply circumstantial or of weak value as in the following:

- a) *... in the 50 years since Kennedy was killed, no one has adduced credible evidence of a conspiracy that is not simply circumstantial.*
- b) *If nothing else, the principle of Occam's razor suggests the likelihood that the simple lone assassin explanation is correct, absent actual evidence to the contrary.*
- c) *With the acoustical evidence discredited, there is no reliable evidence to suggest that there was more than one shooter.*
- d) *Many historians wait until someone produces new and compelling evidence that forces us to revisit key historical topics.*
- e) *There, of course, has been no definitive proof.*
- f) *But it is up to them to produce the evidence. I'm still waiting.*

The flaws in these claims are really quite evident and are a direct result of a lack of knowledge about the subject.

First, as we have seen, there is much evidence, both direct and circumstantial, that convinced the two most recent government commissions (Church and HSCA), and a jury in the case of the Liberty vs. E. H. Hunt civil trial, that the Warren Commission's conclusions were baseless and wrong. The direct evidence considered has subsequently been bolstered by the ARRB declassification and release of highly revealing documents, along with films, audiotapes, numerous witness testimonies from Dealey Plaza, Parkland and Bethesda hospitals, even confessions and demonstrations of fore-knowledge of the plot.

The other flaw is that some seem to consider that circumstantial evidence has no value, whereas in actual fact, there have been many convictions that were based largely on circumstantial evidence.

Other statements also demonstrate lack of knowledge and faulty reasoning:

- a) *The Oswald/lone assassin claim is the widely accepted story within the historical community and there of course has been no definitive proof, or, and this is more important, no plausible counter-narrative produced to overturn it.*
- b) *... lots of possibilities, but I haven't seen anything well-documented that establishes what the nature of the conspiracy actually was.*
- c) *While all your comments make sense, do we now have clear evidence pointing to who else may have been involved? Do we have names?*
- d) *Do we have clear linkages of Oswald to other individuals or organizations? What do you think?*
- e) *But there is still an awful lot of "might have," "could have," "possibly was," and so on. In the end, as I'm sure you'll agree, one cannot prove a negative – no one can prove there was no conspiracy.*
- f) *But I also don't think that the many conspiracies are real.*
- g) *... but they do not propose or even identify alternate counter-narratives.*
- h) *... we are waiting for serious professional historians to come up with plausible alternatives that help explain the case.*
- i) *Until a serious professional historian culls the evidence and proposes not just holes in the current interpretation but a solid counter narrative, I think you're going to find that we'll be slow to alter our textbooks.*
- j) *While I agree with some of the criticism of the Warren Report, especially the single bullet theory, I accept the circumstantial evidence that Oswald killed Kennedy. I also believe that he acted alone.*

The above statements suggest the burden of proof required to persuade authors to modify their pro-Warren Commission accounts is overwhelming. The conclusions about the weakness of the Warren Commission's due diligence investigating whether or not there was a conspiracy is not enough; powerful evidence that there was a conspiracy is not enough; even an acknowledgement that the Single Bullet Theory is not possible does not suffice. The **conspiracy has to be spelled out**: Which is like saying that a crime has to be solved before one can confirm that a crime has been committed!

Finally, the following statements demonstrate problems with faulty premises around certain rationales:

- a) *Was there more than one gunman? Almost certainly not. With the acoustical evidence discredited, there is no reliable evidence to suggest that there was more than one shooter.*
- b) *Was Oswald the instrument of an orchestrated conspiracy who was placed in the book depository to shoot the president? No. When Oswald was hired, no one knew that the President would visit Dallas or what his route might be.*
- c) *It is very difficult for most Americans to imagine that one erratic person could so profoundly shape the course of our nation. But it is hardly the first time: think about Lincoln's assassination and what might have been had he lived to oversee Reconstruction.*

Let us now examine another AHA standard that is violated:

"The preeminent value of such communities is reasoned discourse—the continuous colloquy among historians holding diverse points of view who learn from each other as they pursue topics of mutual interest. A commitment to such discourse—balancing fair and honest criticism with tolerance and openness to different ideas—makes possible the fruitful exchange of views, opinions, and knowledge."

- AHA Statements on Standards of professional conduct (updated 2011)

Breach of conduct (3): Source bias and intolerance to opposing points of view

We have seen how the sources mentioned by the authors are few in number, in many cases outdated, and how almost all support the “Oswald did it” portrayal. This author has read honest criticism of most of the secondary sources cited, by extremely knowledgeable researchers, that clearly sheds doubt on the soundness of their conclusions. On the other hand, works that counter the Warren Commission narrative are almost entirely off the radar. *Despite not having read their writings*, the textbook historians stereotype independent anti-Warren Report authors as not credible, or worse. The following statements underscore these points:

- a) *I find most of the conspiracy mongering to be an avoidance of real history, too much of that “grassy knoll” politics, where we speculate endlessly on what might have been ...*
- b) *... but it certainly has caused me to rethink MY summary sentence on the matter: “There is little solid evidence to suggest that Oswald was part of a wider conspiracy”. I’ve nearly completed my revision of the book for the fifteenth edition (to appear on January 1, 2015), and I am changing this sentence to reflect Shenon’s work. Rather than offer a summary statement, expressing my opinion, I intend to add some of the facts that Shenon has uncovered and let readers draw their own conclusions.*
- c) *The most thorough investigations and evaluations of competing claims are Gerald Posner, Case Closed, and, even more, Vincent Bugliosi, Reclaiming History, which is a massive exploration of the evidence and refutation of conspiracy claims. I find it persuasive. Conspiracy claims, of course, are almost impossible to refute to the satisfaction of believers.*
- d) *Please see the excellent book by Gerald Posner, CASE CLOSED, which I believe definitively lays to rest any conspiracy theory about the Kennedy assassination.*
- e) *Paul – For support of the Oswald-as-lone gunman argument, see Gerald Posner, Case Closed (1993), which many historians view as definitive.*
- f) *I remain skeptical of the motives and perspectives of many of the conspiracy mongers, a dubious line going back to Mark Lane ...*
- g) *I would also venture to guess that serious professional historians are turned off from doing so because there are so many cranks and conspiracy theorists out there using the case to pursue one line of thought or another often using only partial evidence or intuition.*

The logic here is at the root of what is called the [Simmelweis Reflex](#), which is a metaphor for the reflex-like tendency to reject new evidence, or new knowledge, because it contradicts established norms, beliefs or paradigms.

Labeling independent researchers as cranks or conspiracy mongers and selecting only outdated or questionable single-minded sources clearly goes against the professional historian’s code of conduct.

While there is disagreement among the independent researchers and a considerable amount of sloppy and biased work, there is enough well-documented, sound investigation that merits serious consideration by historians.

If authors took the time to simply read the Church Committee and HSCA findings, or to listen to online interviews of the researchers talked about in this article, and many others, and read their books, what would they find? They would find hard-working, serious individuals who put in the effort to review commission findings, visit archives and libraries, go over primary and secondary evidence, question witnesses, attend seminars, present strong arguments while presenting their sources, and keep up to date, thus investing thousands of hours over decades of dedicated research. This is something few others have done with respect to the JFK assassination (including almost all of the professional historians who wrote the textbooks discussed in this article).

Let us now look at one more AHA standard.

“Integrity in teaching means presenting competing interpretations with fairness and intellectual honesty.”

- *AHA Statements on Standards of professional conduct (updated 2011)*

Breach of conduct (4): Misleading captive audiences of students

To govern efficiently and fairly while protecting the interests of all, it is critical that we understand our past. By comparing what is written in most history books with much of the primary and secondary evidence now available concerning the JFK assassination, we can ask ourselves if we have been failed by our historians on this issue.

If so, the failure was not on just any episode but perhaps one of the most important ones in recent times. The Vietnam War, civil unrest, other controversial assassinations, Watergate, Iran-contra followed this tragedy with many of the same characters' names and similar patterns of deceit resurfacing.

Many feel today's terrorism crisis has its roots with regime changes of the past. Trust in our leaders and mainstream media has plummeted, and Western countries' debt levels have skyrocketed with a large percentage of their budgets going to armament and security.

When it comes to covering the JFK assassination, one can see that the community of historians is clearly out of line with their own code of conduct. Most of the history books analyzed seem to rely entirely on the obsolete Warren Report to affirm that Oswald was (or probably was) the lone-nut assassin of the president; and that Jack Ruby, acting entirely on his own, killed Oswald. This breaks their own guidelines by not allowing interpretation to evolve and by displaying a lack of rigor and openness with respect to new evidence and different points of view. Competing interpretations to the lone-nut theory are either not presented or presented in a biased manner.

In further violation, there seems to have been little room for discourse or even acknowledgement of honest criticism of the Warren Report, extending as far as smearing those who do not subscribe to the lone assassin scenario as “conspiracy theorists”, when in fact, the best of their works are largely based on an avalanche of newly declassified facts which make the Warren Report seem today as contemporary as a Model T Ford. The problem is, these facts are not presented in any way because these authors have not read up on them due to their bias.

And while all of society loses out because of this behavior, the most tragic victim is the student who cannot run and hide from his teacher, or the book he is forced to buy and read.

In conclusion, based on:

1. The flaws of the Warren Commission’s make-up, modus operandi, analysis and conclusions;
2. The improbability of the Single Bullet theory;
3. The witnesses who confirmed that shots came from the grassy knoll;
4. The witnesses from Parkland Hospital who indicated at least one bullet entry wound that came from the front;
5. Oswald’s denials of guilt;
6. The fact that Oswald did not have legal representation nor a trial;
7. Oswald’s links to intelligence;
8. Oswald’s compromising associations with persons of interest;
9. The HSCA conclusion that neither Oswald nor Ruby were loners;
10. Oswald’s lack of motive to assassinate the President;
11. Observance of Oswald doubles;
12. Jack Ruby’s compromising associations;
13. Weaknesses in Ruby’s stated motives for killing Oswald;
14. Weaknesses in Marina Oswald’s testimony;
15. Similar assassination attempts (at least one) that shortly preceded November 22, 1963;

16. The Church Commission's conclusion, which casts doubt on the Warren Commission's conclusions in many areas;
17. The Church Commission findings that revealed the use of subcontractors by government agencies to commit assassinations, and the reliance on the use of political assassinations to protect the U. S. security and economic interests;
18. The HSCA's conclusions that there was a probable conspiracy;
19. The suspicious, immoral and/or illegal behavior of certain persons of interest in the JFK assassination related to other activities (such as Watergate), demonstrating repeated disrespect for American laws and/or values;
20. Repeated attempts to influence and sabotage investigations;
21. Evidence coming from the HSCA investigation, court trials, recently declassified ARRB documents and testimonies, and other up-to-date, well-documented research implicating conspirators;
22. Confessions and incriminating allegations made by persons of interest.

the community of historians and history professors should:

1. Refrain from representing the Kennedy assassination as one perpetrated (or probably perpetrated) by Oswald *the lone nut* and present it as unresolved.
2. Be more open to discussing and presenting points of view suggesting conspiracy, and engage and review the findings of the Church and HSCA committees and of researchers like Jim DiEugenio, Larry Hancock, John Armstrong, Jim Douglass, David Talbot, and others.
3. Reopen research into this event.
4. Encourage media and politicians to do the same.

Finally, historians should analyze how complacency on this issue came to be. Was there just a lack of due diligence? Are we witnessing a Semmelweis Reflex towards opposing points of view? Did the writers simply put on their palace historian hats for this issue? Do historians fear reprisals like what may have happened to Jim Garrison, some reporters and witnesses? To what degree did Operation Mockingbird penetrate the community of historians? While this author has not found any evidence pointing to relationships between any of the authors questioned and lone assassins propagandists, one exchange was particularly thought-provoking:

+ an older – even older than my own – generation of professional historians were wary of being accused of engaging in “conspiracy theorizing” and thus tended to line up with the WC rather than the HSCA, let alone with those others who propounded (some, admittedly, truly zany) “conspiracy theories.”

+ the background to this wariness about crediting, or even exploring possible, "conspiracies" is complex, but the consequences have been, in my view, significant – and have seldom operated to produce broadly based understandings about the past.

The allusions to possible influence here are vague. But such efforts to influence historians on the JFK assassination can, for instance, be found in history trade articles:

- http://www.washingtondecoded.com/site/1999/12/after_thirty_ye.html
- http://www.academia.edu/2432552/Why_have_so_many_Americans_refused_to_accept_the_findings_of_the_Warren_Commission_report_that_it_was_Lee_Harvey_Oswald_who_was_solely_responsible_for_the_murder_of_John_F_Kennedy

where Max Holland, seen as a Warren Commission apologist by his critics, and Cherry-Lynne Hopley make the case for the Lone Nut scenario with writings that are as flawed as the rationales discussed earlier. Most of the sources for *Wikipedia* on this issue also have a pro-Warren Commission bias. Although writings about the Church Committee findings and Operation Mockingbird mostly focus on CIA relationships with the media, we know that academia was also targeted.

- http://www.carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php.

Here is what was written about the CIA and academia in Book 1 of the Church report (1976):

The Central Intelligence Agency has long-developed clandestine relationships with the American academic community, which range from academics making introductions for intelligence purposes to intelligence collection while abroad, to academic research and writing where CIA sponsorship is hidden.

The Central Intelligence Agency is now using several hundred American academics ("academics" includes administrators, faculty members and graduate students engaged in teaching), who in addition to providing leads and, on occasion, making introductions for intelligence purposes, occasionally write books and other material to be used for propaganda purposes abroad. Beyond these, an additional few are used in an unwitting manner for minor activities.

These academics are located in over 100 American colleges, universities, and related institutes. At the majority of institutions, no one other than the individual concerned is aware of the CIA link. At the others, at least one university official is aware of the operational use made of academics on his campus. In addition, there are several American academics abroad who serve operational purposes, primarily the collection of intelligence.

Although the numbers are not as great today as in 1966, there are no prohibitions to prevent an increase in the operational use of academics. The size of these operations is determined by the CIA ...

... The Committee is disturbed both by the present practices of operationally using American academics and by the awareness that the restraints on expanding this practice are primarily those of sensitivity to the risks of disclosure and not an appreciation of dangers to the integrity of individuals and institutions. The Committee believes that it is the responsibility of private institutions and particularly the American academic community to set the professional and ethical standards of its members.

It goes on to discuss how the CIA finances certain universities and important foundations.

Discovering how this relationship has evolved over time, and how it now exists, is difficult, and is not the objective of the research conducted for this article. However, whatever the reasons behind historians being so negligent with respect to the landmark event of the JFK murder, they need to try and understand why, and take corrective action for the sake of their own reputations. Not to do so would demonstrate a lack of integrity and honesty towards our students, the surviving relatives of the slain president and Lee Harvey Oswald, and all of us who count on historians to give us the tools we need to learn from the past so that similar tragedies can be prevented from happening in the future. Which is how our values and rights and legacy will be protected. Doing so just may represent a first step in regaining the trust of the people, who have become cynical towards those we used to count on most to know the truth. They should do it quickly; we are now hearing important people say that Donald Trump is a danger to national security. To many who have put their heart and soul into understanding November 22, 1963, this sounds eerily familiar.