

*Betrayal in Dallas: LBJ, the Pearl Street Mafia, and the Murder of President Kennedy*

Mark North

New York: Skyhorse, 2011; 300 pages, notes, h/b,  
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This book is 300 pages long but the text is 159 pages; the rest is mostly reproductions of documents (as if the author thinks the reader would not believe his account of them?); and although the book is massively documented, it has no index, which is bizarre.

North states at the beginning of his concluding chapter:

'And now we know the truth. President Kennedy and Lee Oswald were murdered by Joe Civello's Pearl Street Mafia and the Carlos Marcello mob with the help of the Paul Mondolini heroin cartel because of the Kennedy administration's efforts to destroy those organizations' illegal narcotics and gambling operations in the south-western United States.'

Of course, he has demonstrated no such thing. What he has done is document in some detail (a) organised crime in Dallas and its links to local law enforcement and local politics; and (b) using new documents obtained by FOIA requests, the US Justice Department's activities against organised crime in Texas. This is very interesting in itself and does again suggest that the Kennedys used the Justice Department to attack the financial base of their political opponents – in this case LBJ; though how significant organised crime funds were to LBJ's political rise, or to the Johnson-supporting faction of the Texas Democrats, has not been documented.

He does link Jack Ruby to the Dallas Civello gang, but there is nothing in this book linking the shooting of JFK to Civello/Marcello/Mondolini. North would have us conclude that this inference is inescapable. But it isn't.

Pursuing this thesis North has to ignore much of the extant evidence. For example, while in his first book, *Act of Treason* (New York 1991), there is much about the Oswald lookalike, all this disappears and Oswald becomes one-dimensional again, a 'leftist' supporter of Castro. Even if we ignore the John Armstrong 'two Oswalds' thesis, this really won't do.

As a contribution to our understanding of organised crime and its relationship with the local justice system in the area, this is major. He shows that a large section of Dallas law enforcement knew about, socialised with, turned a blind eye

fto, and sometimes bent the legal system for the mob in Dallas, one of whose members was Jack Ruby. When Ruby shot Oswald, the Dallas law enforcement system knew *precisely* who Ruby was, and how much damage an honest investigation of the man would do to them. What the author has *not* done is connect that crime/law enforcement/politics nexus to the shooting of Kennedy. He assumes that Ruby was killing Oswald on behalf of the Dallas mob, who (the author believes) had shot Kennedy. But this is only an assumption; and when Ruby did drop hints about the Kennedy killing while in prison, he pointed people not at Civello and the Dallas gambling-drugs network, but at LBJ.

*Robin Ramsay*