

The Man Who Killed Kennedy

The Case Against LBJ

Roger Stone with Mike Colapietro

New York: Skyhorse, \$24.95 (US), h/b

I was wondering how to review this when I received a press release from Stone about it, listing what he thought were the important points in it. Let's have a look at these.

'By late November, 1963, the Kennedys were within days of politically executing and personally destroying Lyndon Johnson via a two track program: 1) a devastating RFK-fed LIFE Magazine expose of LBJ's astounding corruption and 2) an RFK-nurtured Senate Rules Committee investigation into LBJ's habit of taking large bribes and kickbacks.'

This is true and has been discussed in these pages before.

'Roger Stone combines his decades of insider political ken with cutting edge JFK research to let you know what Richard Nixon, Henry Cabot Lodge, Barry Goldwater and the KGB all concluded: Lyndon Johnson orchestrated the assassination of John Kennedy.'

Nixon has not explicitly said this (and doesn't do so here), merely hinted at it. Stone doesn't quote Henry Cabot Lodge: he quotes Lodge's brother's version of Henry's opinion that the Mafia, the CIA and LBJ killed Kennedy (which covers just about all the bases.) The Goldwater story isn't new. Robert Morrow posted this para below on John Simkins' JFK site last year:¹

'When [Jeffrey] Hoff met Sen. Barry Goldwater, Hoff, who had a keen interest in the JFK assassination, brought up that topic. Sen. Barry Goldwater told Hoff in October, 1973, that he (Goldwater) was convinced that Lyndon Johnson was behind the JFK assassination and that the Warren Commission was a complete cover up. Hoff got the impression that Goldwater had told others privately the same thing. I asked Hoff how confident was Goldwater when he was making these statements.

1 <<http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=19697>>

Answer: Goldwater was very confident.'

It is this Stone quotes, but without attributing it. The KGB story is true and well known.² An FBI source within the KGB reported that said agency believed Johnson was behind it.

'Stone ties LBJ to at least seven politically motivated murders prior to the murder of John F. Kennedy. Stone: "LBJ would order up a murder just as you or I would order a ham sandwich."' "

These are the murders listed by Billie (not Billy as Stone has it) Sol Estes in the letter from Estes' lawyer to the Justice Department in 1984. There is, however, a (to me) new snippet on the 1952 murder of one Sam Smithwick who was apparently prepared to talk about LBJ's theft of the Texas senate seat in the election of 1948 (box 13 and all that). Smithwick died in prison.

'Lyndon Johnson's personal hit man Malcolm Wallace (also an employee of military contractor and LBJ insider D.H. Byrd who owned the Texas School Book Depository) was one of a team of shooters assassinating JFK. Stone reveals that a fingerprint matching Wallace and found in the so called sniper's nest ties LBJ directly to the murder of JFK.'

Stone can hardly 'reveal' the fingerprint as this has been known of since 1998; and he has no new evidence on Wallace's role that day in Dallas. On Wallace in Dallas we still have only the print and the testimony of Loy Factor and Billie Sol Estes, both of whom are dead.

'Stone reveals, in a game changing addition to the historical record, that Richard Nixon recognized Lee Harvey Oswald's assassin, strip club owner Jack Ruby, as "one of Lyndon Johnson's boys" who Nixon had arranged to be placed as a paid informant for the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947 as a favor to then Congressman Lyndon Johnson.....Stone reveals that Nick Ruwe (a former top aide to Nixon) said that when Nixon saw Jack Ruby on TV after he

² See <<http://www.indiana.edu/~oah/nl/98feb/jfk.html#d1>>

murdered Oswald, Nixon exclaimed, "I know that man!"

This is new and significant.

'Stone reveals, in yet another eye-opening addition to the historical record, that Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr told Nixon confidante John Mitchell that LBJ was behind the JFK assassination.'

I missed this (but I did rather gallop through the book) and didn't see it on a second skim when I looked for it; Carr is not indexed, and the information is not at any of the Mitchell index references.

'Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno, head of the Genovese crime family who were close business associates with LBJ intimate, Texas oil man Clint Murchison, told Roger Stone, in the presence of Roy Cohn, that Lyndon Johnson and Carlos Marcello were behind the JFK assassination. Roy Cohn nodded his head in agreement as both men laughed.'

This is new, mildly interesting but not significant.

'Stone lays out the connections between the Bay of Pigs invasion fiasco, the JFK assassination and the fall of Richard Nixon in Watergate. Stone outlines how Nixon manoeuvred furiously to obtain CIA records that would shed light on CIA-Mob connections to the JFK assassination as an "insurance policy" against investigation and impeachment in the Watergate scandal.'

This is a restatement of the thesis that Nixon's references to 'the Bay of Pigs' in communication with DCIA Richard Helms during the Watergate events was a code for the events in Dallas. But since Stone has already claimed that Nixon knew that LBJ was behind it – not least through his identification of Ruby as one of LBJ's people – why would the CIA be afraid of being linked to Dallas?

'Roger Stone takes LBJ biographer Robert Caro to task for "cleaning up the blood and burying the bodies" of the murders of Lyndon Johnson that Caro will never tell

you about. For 20 years Robert Caro never interviewed key LBJ mistress Madeleine Brown or Billie Sol Estes who planned murders with LBJ. Caro never mentions the revelations of LBJ lawyer Barr McClellan nor will Caro address the transcendently important issue of Malcolm Wallace, LBJ's personal hit man. Caro never mentions legendary Texas Ranger Clint Peoples who long suspected LBJ in the JFK assassination and a string of murders in Texas. Nor does Caro mention Estes' 1984 letter to the U.S. Justice Dept detailing numerous LBJ-related murders. Caro completely omits the 1984 Texas grand jury, acting on Estes' blockbuster testimony, that changed the ruling in the Henry Marshall case from suicide to homicide.'

This is mostly true. (There is no evidence that Estes planned murders with LBJ.) Stone reports on p. 213 that in 1985 or 1986 he met Caro and said:

'Do you plan to cover the role of Mac Wallace in your biography of LBJ?' Caro looked startled and shaken and grabbed me by the lapels of my business suit, saying, 'Who are you? How can I get in touch with you?' I gave him my business card, which he examined on the spot and pocketed. However I never heard anything more from him.'

As I have pointed out before,³ in the fourth volume of his immense biography of LBJ, covering his years as vice president and the transition to president, Caro omits all reference to Billie Sol Estes and can thus state that he found nothing linking LBJ to the assassination. He flunked the assassination material, in short.

The extensive prepublication publicity for this book suggested to me that Stone was merely going to represent the extant evidence for the LBJ's-people-dunnit thesis which a number of us have already done. And so it proved: there is nothing new about the actual assassination. What is significant is the Nixon identification of Ruby as an 'LBJ man'

³ In 'View from the bridge' at <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster64/lobster64.pdf>>.

from the late 1940s, though what it means and how we proceed with this is unclear to me.

There is one significant conclusion to be drawn from this account. For all that Stone was a political insider, a Republican pol, for the entire period from the late 1960s onwards, he heard almost nothing of significance about the assassination. Which suggests either that political Washington knows little about it – being interested in the assassination is not exactly career-enhancing – or that it has remained close-mouthed about the subject.

Robin Ramsay