

# The view from the bridge

**Robin Ramsay**

*Thanks to Nick Must (in particular) and Garrick Alder  
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## **SNAFU or FUBAR?**

I glance at the financial pages of some of the newspapers, mainly to see the latest idiocy that has been allowed to happen. Most recently that has been the collapse of Archegos Capital, one of the many companies using borrowed capital to trade on stock market movements.<sup>1</sup> Gambling, in other words. Archegos has gone bust, owing various banks \$10 billion. So far, so rather routine. The author of a piece in the *Telegraph* described what Archegos' boss Bill Hwang had been doing – his 'trading strategy'.

'Hwang was mostly trading through total return swaps. As derivatives go, these are pretty plain vanilla. They give investors exposure to an underlying asset without having to own it (and therefore appear on the regulatory filings that disclose the biggest holders of publicly-listed shares). The other main benefit is that swaps allow you to leverage up the bet.

And here lies the crux to this tale: the sheer extent of the leverage that Hwang was running – up to 20 times on some positions, according to reports. This meant that if the shares he was betting on rose 5pc, he'd make a return of 100pc. On the flip side, if they fell 5pc, his entire stake would be wiped out. Which is more or less precisely what happened.<sup>2</sup>

In other words: gambling, pure and simple. And using other peoples' (banks')

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<sup>1</sup> <<https://www.ft.com/content/8062ef53-790f-4470-99d5-265335a72334>> The FT report on this was honest enough to include a gambling analogy in the very first sentence, referring to Archeos as having made 'soured bets'.

<sup>2</sup> <<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/business-and-sports/20210409/281479279227108>>

money. Further down the account of this (relatively) minor global financial event was this:

'The Archegos saga also carries echoes of the frantic trading at the beginning of the year by retail investors who were organising on social media and buying options in order to take outsized punts on unloved stocks like Gamestop.

Sure enough, statistics released this week show that US investors (both institutional and retail) were borrowing a record \$814bn to make bets as of the end of February, according to data from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. That's up nearly 50pc since the year before.

*The last two times investor leverage spiked so much was in 1999 (just before the dotcom bubble burst) and 2007 (just before the financial crisis).* This, needless to say, is not a good omen.' (emphasis added)

And the financial regulators?

'Fed[eral Reserve] Governor Lael Brainard, the head of the Board's financial stability committee, called for "more granular, higher-frequency disclosures" on Thursday. "The Archegos event illustrates the limited visibility into hedge-fund exposures and serves as a reminder that available measures of hedge-fund leverage may not be capturing important risks," she said.

In other words: we – the Federal Reserve – don't know what is going on.

## Hacked off

One of the recent themes of this column has been the advisability of getting as much as possible of society's infrastructure off-line. The website [itgovernance.co.uk](https://www.itgovernance.co.uk) lists 52 ransomware attacks in April this year.<sup>3</sup> And how many were not reported? A survey last year claimed that 50% of businesses in the US had experienced a ransomware attack.<sup>4</sup>

The conventional response to the problem is to spend money and try to improve security measures for important systems. The UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) announced in March: 'Alert: Further targeted

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<sup>3</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/j8vkmvpz>> or <<https://www.itgovernance.co.uk/blog/list-of-data-breaches-and-cyber-attacks-in-april-2021#ransomware>>

<sup>4</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y27cjaxk> or <<https://www.sophos.com/en-us/medialibrary/Gated-Assets/white-papers/sophos-the-state-of-ransomware-2020-wp.pdf>>

ransomware attacks on the UK education sector by cyber criminals<sup>5</sup>. It then offered many screens worth of entirely good advice on how to avoid ransomware attacks. But it must know that for its advice to be successful, people have to implement it consistently and *for ever*. And that is never going to happen.

As is often the case in our society, the insurance companies may have the final say. The way things presently stand, companies paying a ransom to get their IT systems back in use can claim the money from insurance companies.<sup>6</sup> This may not last much longer.

Time to start moving off-line.

## **Fantasy island**

**S**o the British Army has a new tank. After some months of media speculation that the Army would simply scrap all its tanks, the MoD's PR department announced in April that, *au contraire*, the Army was to get a new one, the Challenger 3. Each of the Challenger 3s will cost nearly £5.5 million; total order £800 million. As part of the launch of this story, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace was reported as saying this tank is better than anything the Russians have.<sup>7</sup> This really is bizarre. Mr Wallace is apparently envisaging a tank battle somewhere in Europe between – presumably – NATO and the Russians. As if tanks were anything but utterly obsolete in the age of drones.

## **Elite management groups**

**A**n occasional contributor to these columns, Will Banyan is probably the leading writer on the elite management groups, Council on Foreign Relations, Bilderberg *et al*.<sup>8</sup> He has a very good new essay on Bilderberg and the origins

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<sup>5</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/swxbk3ks>> or <<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/alert-targeted-ransomware-attacks-on-uk-education-sector>>

<sup>6</sup> See Oscar Williams, "'They will be back': why attacks like the Colonial Pipeline hack keep happening' at <<https://tinyurl.com/543e9sdj>> or <<https://www.newstatesman.com/business/sectors/2021/05/they-will-be-back-why-attacks-colonial-pipeline-hack-keep-happening>>.

<sup>7</sup> See <<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/14888760/army-66-ton-challenger-tank-most-lethal-nato/>>.

<sup>8</sup> See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster76/lob76-bilderberg-myths.pdf>>. There is a 2012 interview-cum-discussion-of-his-work with Banyan at <[http://www.rolfkenneth.no/NWO\\_interview\\_Will\\_Banyan.html](http://www.rolfkenneth.no/NWO_interview_Will_Banyan.html)>.

of the Trilateral Commission, for those interested in these groups' history.<sup>9</sup>

## Huh?

**M**any years ago, back in the early days of the Net, Tony Gosling was best known for a serious interest in the Bilderberg group. His site on the group, [bilderberg.org](http://bilderberg.org), was the place to go. It remains that but these days, to get to the Bilderberg material you have to wade through an extraordinary *melange* of other, less empirically-based material. I was prompted to look at it for the first time in a while by seeing the headline on Gosling's latest email collection:

'Wife-Killer Prince Charles Flexes Orwellian BBC Mind-Control Muscle, Eyes Global Great Reset & Peace Antichrist Roles'.

## Yesterday's men

**T**wo of yesterday's men, Conservative MPs Philip Hammond, former Chancellor the Exchequer, and Alan Duncan, former number two at the FCO until recently, have given us their views of the political world in which they lived. Hammond did one of those for-the-record interviews on 'UK In A Changing Europe' in 2020<sup>10</sup> – essentially about the politics and personalities of Brexit. This is a significant contribution to our understanding of the events of the period. I was particularly struck by his comments about the economic illiteracy of Conservative MP colleagues.

'... most colleagues – political colleagues – frankly, have only a really rather tenuous grip on, or interest in, how the economy works ...

Part of Theresa May's challenge – she's not going to like me saying this, but if we're doing a historical record – was that her experience was exclusively in the Home Office. She was the world's leading expert on everything to do with security and immigration. You couldn't touch her on it. There was no point even arguing with her on it, but she didn't have a well-rounded view of the economy.

You're absolutely right: she will have seen this [Brexit] through the prism of immigration and security. For her, the economy would have been very much a secondary thing. She didn't really have a deep interest in how the

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<sup>9</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y46xkbfk>> or <<https://www.conspiracyarchive.com/2021/05/10/historical-note-the-seal-of-approval-bilderberg-and-the-origins-of-the-trilateral-commission/>>

<sup>10</sup> <<https://www.policy-making.org.uk/library/2020-brexit-interview-philip-hammond.pdf>>

economy worked.'

Extracts from Alan Duncan's diary were published in the *Daily Mail*.<sup>11</sup> Duncan will be reviewed in these columns by someone else but let me note two things about it. First, on page one he complains about the influence in the Tory Party of the Conservative Friends of Israel – a recurring theme in the volume.<sup>12</sup> Second, he has nothing but contempt for many of his colleagues in the Conservative Party. In this aspect, Duncan's diary is quite unlike the Labour Party equivalents I have read. In those there are policy disagreements but personal abuse is largely absent. I can't decide if this says something about Duncan, about the contemporary Tory Party – or both.

## Covidia

There was a big spread on the *Daily Mail* website at the end of May about two scientists, Professor Angus Dalgleish and Dr. Birger Sørensen, and the difficulties they had experienced getting published a paper they had written on the origins of Covid.<sup>13</sup> In their paper they show that the virus displays signs of being man-made.<sup>14</sup> In the *Mail* piece the phrase 'gain of function' was used and a little bell went off: I had seen that phrase before. In the previous *Lobster* I

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<sup>11</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yjkafh2f>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9431437/Oh-no-minister-ALAN-DUNCANs-gloriously-wicked-diary-spills-vitriol-Boris-buffoon.html>>

<sup>12</sup> As shown in the Al Jazeera documentaries, Duncan was one of the people targeted by the Israel lobby. See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/38weh383>> or <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/1/8/israels-parliamentary-plot-against-uk-politicians>>.

Related to which see the research by Matt Kennard, 'Revealed: Third of British cabinet, including Boris Johnson, has been funded by Israel or pro-Israel lobby groups' at <<https://tinyurl.com/ukb9huex>> or <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-05-22-revealed-third-of-british-cabinet-including-boris-johnson-has-been-funded-by-israel-or-pro-israel-lobby-groups/>>.

<sup>13</sup> The *Mail* spread was subsequently followed-up by rehashes in *The Sun* and the *Telegraph*. In the latter Dalgleish is quoted as saying that, as the man-made theory had been expounded by Mike Pompeo, Donald Trump's Secretary of State, 'No scientist was willing to get into bed and agree with Trump.' <<https://tinyurl.com/9b8jz3x2>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/05/28/wuhan-lab-leak-always-credible-theory-did-scientists-dismiss/>>.

<sup>14</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yas5c8tc>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9629563/Chinese-scientists-created-COVID-19-lab-tried-cover-tracks-new-study-claims.html>>

A detailed account of the difficulties the authors had in getting the paper published is at <<https://tinyurl.com/4jt2k77r>> or <<https://www.minervanett.no/angus-dalgleish-birger-sorensen-coronavirus/the-fight-for-a-controversial-article/362519>>.

The paper is discussed at <<https://tinyurl.com/tz5e75ds>> or <<https://www.minervanett.no/angus-dalgleish-birger-sorensen-coronavirus/the-evidence-which-suggests-that-this-is-no-naturally-evolved-virus/362529>>.

reported it in this column, under subhead 'Is COVID-19 man-made?'.<sup>15</sup> In February 2020, the same feature, 'gain of function', had been identified in a report in *Biological Weapons News* which began:

'We now have bombshell, smoking gun evidence that the CoVid-19 "Wuhan" coronavirus was specifically engineered as an offensive biological warfare weapon, designed to target to exterminate human beings.'<sup>16</sup>

The new paper by Dalglish and Sørensen includes this:

'In 2015 scientists from the 'Special Viruses' section of the Wuhan Institute of Virology were engaged in "gain of function" experiments jointly with a majority team from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Together, they manipulated bat viruses to create a mouse adapted chimeric virus SHC014-MA15 which binds to and can proliferate on human upper airway cells (2B4 Calu-3 – a cell line contributed by Chapel Hill).'

## **Even the Masons ain't what they used to be**

**I** received an email from Livia Ferreira, public relations manager, United Grand Lodge of England, which begins:

'Dear Robin,

The UGLE, governing body of Freemasonry, is launching its first annual report, in its 300 year history, marking another major step forward in its commitment to modernisation, transparency and normalization.'

'Normalization'? What next? Can 'woke' Masons be far away?

## **Meanwhile, back on Dealey Plaza**

**R**esearchers into the Kennedy assassination and the Watergate affair are currently involved in an exchange of ideas on-line,<sup>17</sup> looking into connections between the two events. John Simkin – who initiated the whole thing – wrote a very good summary of the case for the CIA-dunnit scenario of Kennedy's death. In this, the CIA organised the assassination because Kennedy was

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<sup>15</sup> <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>>

<sup>16</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/8nwjuuw3>> or <[www.biologicalweapons.news/2020-02-19-covid-19-coronavirus-found-to-contain-gain-of-function-for-efficient-spreading-human-population.html](http://www.biologicalweapons.news/2020-02-19-covid-19-coronavirus-found-to-contain-gain-of-function-for-efficient-spreading-human-population.html)>

That evidence was a study published in *Antiviral Research*. See

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166354220300528>>.

<sup>17</sup> See below under subhead **UfOs over Watergate?**

getting too friendly with Castro. Simkin recounts some of the informal contacts between Castro's people and various deniable Americans, notably the TV journalist Lisa Howard and the ambassador/journalist William Attwood. In reply to which, David Kaiser – who knew Attwood – responded that these contacts had been misrepresented as much more substantial than they really were and that Kennedy was not, in fact, on the brink of normalising reactions with Cuba. This is all very interesting but in this version of the CIA-dunnit scenario – as in all the others I can remember – no CIA people have been identified as having been on Dealey Plaza<sup>18</sup> and the two CIA people from the period who confessed to roles in the event, Chauncey Holt and E. Howard Hunt, are omitted.

Your guess is as good as mine as to why Hunt's confession has been rubbished and ignored by the research community. My guess would be that Hunt was blanked because he named LBJ as being part of the conspiracy and LBJ-dunnit remains unthinkable for most of the JFK researchers.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Holt, in so far as they are aware of Holt at all, JFK researchers believe that Holt's claims were refuted by the release of the Dallas Police records of the three hoboes, Gedney, Doyle and Abrams, who were arrested just after the shooting.<sup>20</sup> Thus Holt's claim to have been the oldest 'tramp' in the famous photographs of the 'three tramps' was apparently false and, after initial interest, the research community has ignored him.

However, the Gedney, Doyle and Abrams trio were arrested *immediately after* the shooting; and the length of the shadows in the photograph of the 'tramps' show this event to have taken place an *hour and a half later*.<sup>21</sup> So Holt's claim to be the oldest 'tramp' was *not* destroyed – at any rate not by the arrest of Gedney, Doyle and Abrams. (There must be a decent chance that those Dallas Police arrest records were released precisely to discredit Holt.)

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<sup>18</sup> There is a necessary caveat there. Two American soldiers, Colonel Fletcher Prouty and General Victor Krulak, identified CIA officer Edward Lansdale as being in one of the shots of the 'tramps', passing them, going in the opposite direction. See <<https://tinyurl.com/227x3x2a>> or <<https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/sites/library.uta.edu.digitalgallery-beta/files/10000000-10009999new/10005175.jpg>>.

Prouty's comment is at <<http://www.prouty.org/letter.html>> and Krulak's comment at <<https://ratical.org/ratville/JFK/USO/appD.html>>.

I am uncertain about this. The photograph shows part of the side and rear of the figure. Can you identify someone without seeing their face?

<sup>19</sup> This situation is made infinitely worse by Trump ally Roger Stone writing a book advocating LBJ-dunnit. See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster66/lob66-man-who-killed-jfk.pdf>>.

<sup>20</sup> Details at <<https://www.oocities.org/capitolhill/senate/5439/Documents.html>>.

<sup>21</sup> See my 'JFK, Chauncey Holt and the three "tramps" redux' at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster71/lob71-jfk-three-tramps.pdf>>.

Nonetheless the research community mostly ignored – and continues to ignore – the only ‘walk-in’ from the CIA end of the conspiracy.

## Murray on Skripal (again)

On his blog Craig Murray has republished his ‘Ten points I just can’t believe about the official Skripal narrative’.<sup>22</sup> So here – again – is the obvious objection that I made in *Lobster* 80 to the ‘false flag’ notion implicit in Murray’s essay.

‘[I]f it was a British false flag, how did it work? To start with the basics: how did its planners know the GRU men would be in Salisbury?’<sup>23</sup> Do they have the kind of penetration of the GRU that would give them knowledge of GRU officers’ travel intentions? That seems profoundly unlikely (not least because, had they this knowledge, the British spooks would not have had to wait for Bellingcat to identify the two GRU officers).<sup>24</sup> So what did the British spooks do in this alternative version? Follow the GRU men around the UK and *improvise* the Skripal events when they turned up in Salisbury? I mean, really?<sup>25</sup>

## The two of us

We’ve had two Lee Harvey Oswalds and may have had two Rudolf Hesses. Now we discover there were two ‘Sidney Gottliebs’. The first one – Sidney with an ‘i’ – was one of the brains behind the CIA’s ‘mind control’ experiments in the 1950s and 60s.<sup>26</sup> The second one, discovered by Simon Matthews – Sydney with a ‘y’ – was a psychiatrist in the UK who was friendly with and helped several jazz musicians, notably the late Ronnie Scott.<sup>27</sup> Until I checked, there

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<sup>22</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/xtecejra>> or <<https://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2021/04/pure-ten-points-i-just-cant-believe-about-the-official-skripal-narrative/>>

<sup>23</sup> Some of the sceptics dispute that it was the two named GRU men. But they were interviewed and acknowledged being at Salisbury – on a tourist trip, they said.

<sup>24</sup> See – one of many – <<https://tinyurl.com/yyoeunub>> or <<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/10/14/averyanov-chepiga/>>

<sup>25</sup> See under subhead **Skripal** at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>>.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/2f6hdf3j>> or <<https://www.npr.org/2019/09/09/758989641/the-cias-secret-quest-for-mind-control-torture-ld-and-a-poisoner-in-chief?t=1620463122435>>.

<sup>27</sup> <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1121823/>>



were a few moments when I wrestled with the notion of the CIA's Sidney Gottlieb hanging out at Scott's and sharing a joint with Ronnie . . . .<sup>28</sup>

## Compare and contrast

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard (*Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 2021):

'Joe Biden is right: America has always had a socialist soul. The US may be undergoing a lurch towards the left with the President's \$6 trillion spending plans – but this not uncharted territory.

Joe Biden has embraced Nordic socialism with breathtaking speed and more than a hint of pietistic fervour, but there is nothing "un-American" about this Leftward lurch.

America has always had its socialist side, a communitarian idealism that began with the New England Puritans and the Pennsylvania Quakers. This ethic has been in a 400-year struggle against the primacy of property, the rival ideology of the planter oligarchy in the antebellum South. You could say that the two sides fought a civil war over the matter.'<sup>29</sup>

Chris Hedges (Consortiumnews):

'Don't be fooled by Joe Biden. He knows his infrastructure and education bills have as much chance at becoming law as the \$15-dollar minimum wage or the \$2,000 stimulus checks he promised us as a candidate. He knows his American Jobs Plan will never create "millions of good paying jobs – jobs Americans can raise their families on" any more than NAFTA, which he supported, would, as was also promised, create millions of good paying jobs.

His mantra of "buy American" is worthless. He knows the vast majority of our consumer electronics, apparel, furniture and industrial supplies are made in China by workers who earn an average of one or two dollars an hour and lack unions and basic labor rights.'<sup>30</sup>

## Noteriety

Jonathan Marshall has a new book, *Dark Quadrant*, which I am reading and will review here. It has 383 pages, of which 120 pages are his notes. So the

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<sup>28</sup> I know someone who was friendly with Scott. She said that Scott smoked dope all day.

<sup>29</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/kbm5n8cn>> or <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2021/05/05/joe-biden-right-america-has-always-had-socialist-soul/>>

<sup>30</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2021/05/04/chris-hedges-dont-be-fooled-by-joe-biden/>>

ratio of text to notes is almost exactly 2:1. Is this some kind of record? Don't get me wrong: this is not a complaint. Tony Frewin once quoted his boss, the late Stanley Kubrick, as saying, 'Footnotes is where the action is.' I am reminded of a 1977 pamphlet by Peter Dale Scott, *Crime and Cover-up*. It had a similar ratio between notes and text and someone distributed an index to those notes. It was that which gave Steve Dorril and I the idea of indexing the notes as well as the text of *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State*.

## UFOs over Watergate?

At the beginning of April, John Simkin<sup>31</sup> e-mailed dozens of JFK/Watergate writers the draft of an essay he was writing on the links between the Kennedy assassination and Watergate, seeking their comments. Douglas Caddy was among the first to respond. Anyone who reads Simkin's Education Forum site on JFK's assassination<sup>32</sup> will have seen Caddy's regular contributions. Caddy was a young Republican lawyer in Washington when Watergate happened. He had done some work for White House Counsel John Dean, and briefly represented some of the White House 'plumbers'.<sup>33</sup> In the 1980s Caddy represented Billie Sol Estes in negotiations with the Justice Department. Mr Caddy is the only person I can think of, still alive, who has had legal involvement with both Dallas and Watergate.

On 5 April Caddy responded to Simkins' draft essay on Watergate-JFK with a long piece about Robert Merritt. A gay police informer/provocateur in Washington in the 1970s, Merritt wrote a memoir which was reviewed by me<sup>34</sup> and, at much greater length, by Jim Hougan.<sup>35</sup> In his piece Caddy reported that *after* the publication of Merritt's memoir – to which Caddy contributed a foreword and afterword – Merritt claimed that he had met with President Nixon in the White House. This is the key section:

'Nixon then produced a letter-size briefcase and withdrew a handwritten letter of three pages. He told Merritt that this was the most important document he had ever prepared. He stated that he alone had written with assistance from no one. He said it was addressed to Henry Kissinger. He

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<sup>31</sup> On Simkin see <<https://spartacus-educational.com/author.htm>>.

<sup>32</sup> <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/forum/126-jfk-assassination-debate/>>

<sup>33</sup> See <<https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKcaddyD.htm>>.

<sup>34</sup> <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster62/lob62-watergate.pdf>>

<sup>35</sup> <<http://jimhougan.com/wordpress/?p=230>>

told Merritt that he was going to give the letter to Merritt to deliver to Kissinger in person or by mail. He told Merritt to remain quiet and not say a word as he read the letter out loud. Merritt wondered if Nixon was secretly taping what he was reading out loud.

In essence, Nixon talked about "life as we do not know it." He said that during the previous twenty years "Knowledge" had been obtained that could make the human race on Earth "the supreme beings in the universe." This Knowledge also came in part from helpful information provided from an extra-terrestrial being from Planet X, Nibiro, who was in a secure location in a building in the U.S. Nixon said the Knowledge came as the result of discovery made by scientists working at the Los Alamos Laboratories in New Mexico who studied the extraterrestrial being's information. Nixon said, "This all important Knowledge that we possess came from our discovery."

[ . . . ] Nixon said this ultimate Knowledge was contained in two lines in the letter.

In his letter Nixon instructed Kissinger to deliver his letter only to a president of the U.S. who succeeded him whom Kissinger believed could be trusted with the Knowledge. He also instructed Kissinger to devise a precautionary means for trusted persons to deliver the letter to such a successive president should Kissinger die naturally or unexpectedly.'

Quite why Mr Caddy thinks this ridiculous tosh is worth reporting is unclear to me.<sup>36</sup> However, out of curiosity I googled Merritt's 'Planet X, Nibiro' and found not Nibiro, but Nibiru:

'The story began in 1976, when Zecharia Sitchin wrote "The Twelfth Planet," a book which used Sitchin's own unique translation of Sumerian cuneiform to identify a planet, Nibiru, orbiting the sun every 3,600 years.'<sup>37</sup>

Evidently Mr Merritt reads books.

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In the response to John Simkin's request for JFK/Watergate experts to discuss the links between Watergate and Dallas, a deal of other interesting material has appeared.

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<sup>36</sup> Caddy has posted thousands of words on this and related areas on the Education Forum site at <<https://tinyurl.com/ykahu59h>> or <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/25917-watergate-trump%E2%80%99s-space-force-and-2020/>>. Most of his contributions to that forum aren't as loopy as this material.

<sup>37</sup> <<https://www.space.com/15551-nibiru.html>>

JFK buffs can be a fractious bunch. So much so that one of them, Dan Storper, is proposing to create a Truth and Reconciliation Committee on the subject. (Good luck with that!) If you want to get a flavour of the rancour that can be generated by this ancient subject, Fred Litwin, author a recent book critical of Jim Garrison<sup>38</sup> – which I haven't read – has recently provided us with a splendid example.<sup>39</sup>

Robert Kennedy Jnr, son of JFK's brother, who was assassinated in 1968, has contributed to the discussion. One Stu Wexler posted this addressed to him:

'So my understanding is that [in relation to JFK's assassination] your father had the following individuals examine the following people/groups  
Julius Draznin: Giancana and the Chicago Mob  
Walter Sheridan: Carlos Marcello and New Orleans Mob  
Pat Moynihan: Jimmy Hoffa and the Secret Service  
French Intelligence: HL Hunt and the rightwing'

Who's not on that list? The most obvious candidate of all, the man who benefited most from the assassination, vice president Lyndon Johnson.

## **Spycops and psycops**

**I** presume readers of the this column are following the Spycops story. Recent news is that the Special Demonstration Squad – which infiltrated every political/social group worth mentioning on the left in London – was not being run by the Special Branch but, rather, by MI5. This is not really surprising, though: who else would have the resources to run such a gigantic operation?

If you are not following this story, there is a very good summary of it written by Asa Winstanley (he of the Electronic Intifada) on Consortiumnews.<sup>40</sup>

If any members of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition have commented on the fact that this vast surveillance/penetration operation was operating under Labour Home Secretaries, I have missed it. Think anyone bothered to tell Merlyn Rees (Home Secretary 1976-79), for example?

And outside London? Was there some equivalent? Not that I have heard

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<sup>38</sup> The 2020 *On The Trail of Delusion: Jim Garrison: The Great Accuser*.

See <<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Trail-Delusion-Garrison-Great-Accuser/dp/0994863047>>.

<sup>39</sup> See <<https://www.onthetrailofdelusion.com/post/fred-litwin-s-follies>>.

<sup>40</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2021/03/17/britains-secret-political-police/links>>. For more details see <<https://undercoverresearch.net/spycops-targets-a-whos-who/>>.

of. As far as I am aware, outside London surveillance/penetration was generally left to local Special Branches. As for my experience of the secret state, since it might be of interest to new(ish) readers, it happened in 1987 when I was engaged in explaining the Colin Wallace story to the major media. That's when MI5 got interested. Below is what I wrote about that in *Lobster* 41.

'What they did was really quite subtle. I was a fairly serious runner then and used to regularly run round the grass perimeter of the University of Hull playing fields. There were three of us running round this field at lunch-times and eventually we got to talking in the changing rooms, and then went for a beer afterwards; and I became friends with one of them, a post-doc physics researcher, a man called . . . let's call him John. Nice guy: on a similar wavelength to me politically; interesting life; good stories; good drinking companion – and, of course, he was really interested in the little magazine I was publishing and what I was working on. At that point nobody in Hull was interested in what I was doing and I was happy to talk to him. I had no secrets.

About 6 months after I met him I got a call from an American writer I know called Jim Hougan. Hougan had been chatting to a friend, who had a contact in the FBI, and somehow this little magazine produced in Hull, England, came up. Don't worry about *Lobster*, was the message, *Lobster* has been penetrated. That seemed absolutely hilarious to Hougan and me. Typical spook bullshit, we thought, claiming to have penetrated an organisation consisting of one man. We had a good laugh down the transatlantic phone line and I forgot about it.

About a month later, as I was cycling through Hull city centre, out of a clear blue sky, without any conscious musings on my part, I thought: "It must be John" – and about six months experience suddenly reorganised itself in my head. Yes, it was my new running, drinking, talking, buddy John. He'd been pretty clever about it but I knew it was him. Through his girlfriend I let him know I had sussed him and I never saw him again.

That, you might think, would be the end of it. Not so. A few weeks went by and another person tried to attach himself to me, this time claiming to be to be a former MI5 agent who would spill the beans. But he was ill, so ill, and the NHS in London was so bad . . . This goes on for some weeks and I initially take him seriously and begin badgering doctors in London . . . Then one day he says, "What's the NHS like in Hull?" Maybe he could move to Hull and get treatment . . . then he would tell me wonderful tales of MI5 . . .

At “moving to Hull” I put the phone down on him. He called himself Sammy. He had been an actor and claimed that MI5 and Special Branches used him to penetrate left organisations.

Somewhere in Whitehall there must still be files on that operation – a brilliant example of the way our secret state wastes money. Because there was nothing to find out. I had no secret sources: with my mail opened and my phone tapped they knew as much as there was to know.’

I should add that I *presumed* my mail was being opened and that my phone was tapped. I never had any evidence of either. If anything, the sound quality on my telephone calls *improved* in this period. As Nick Must pointed out, it has been reported before that the state tapping your line results in the sound quality improving.

## More on Bellingcat

**Below** under subheads **Bellingcat** and **Bellingcat’s funding** I did some limited speculating about Bellingcat’s status. On the last page of his book, *We Are Bellingcat* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), Bellingcat founder Eliot Higgins writes this:

‘Today, Bellingcat finds itself in an unusual position. We are not exactly journalists, nor human-rights activists, nor computer scientists, nor archivists, nor academic researchers, nor criminal investigators, but at the nexus of all those disciplines.’

Listing things Bellingcat *isn’t* is a nice way of avoiding the nature of some of Bellingcat’s current personnel. This is detailed in an excellent piece by Alan Macloud, ‘How Bellingcat Launders National Security State Talking Points Into The Press’.<sup>41</sup> Among its current personnel we have a former British Army officer, a former employee of GCHQ, former members of the US Department of Defense, the US Secret Service, the US Army and the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Higgins subtitles his book ‘An Intelligence Agency for the People’ (whatever that might mean). This may be how it began but Macloud’s comment looks apposite: ‘For a self-proclaimed citizen journalism outfit, an alarming number of Bellingcat’s staff and contributors come from highly suspect backgrounds, including high-level positions in military and intelligence agencies.’

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<sup>41</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/57xrtvny>> or <<https://www.mintpressnews.com/bellingcat-intelligence-agencies-launders-talking-points-media/276603/>>

## **Vox pop**

The *New Statesman*'s Stephen Bush had a piece recently<sup>42</sup> in which he pointed out that the Conservatives were currently more trusted by the electorate on the economy than Labour.<sup>43</sup> The lack of confidence in Labour is apparently the result of the economic crash of 2007/8. But the then NuLab government of Gordon Brown was following Conservative policies at the time of the crash: the market is magic, we need no regulation of the City and the domestic manufacturing economy can be ignored. Messrs Brown and Blair had persuaded themselves in the early 1990s that it was necessary to follow the neo-con (and Conservative Party) line on economic policy to get elected because the electorate didn't trust Labour with the economy because of the great inflation of the 1970s. But that inflation was caused by the Conservative Heath government of the 1970-74 period (and the rise in oil prices) and Labour inherited it on taking office in 1974.

The evidence further suggests that the electorate was strikingly uninfluenced by the great Conservative recession of 1980-3 but did register the 1992/3 recession caused by the government of John Major being forced to take the pound out of the European exchange rate mechanism.<sup>44</sup> After that recession Blair and Brown had no need to embrace Thatcherism: the electorate were going to vote for them whatever they proposed.

The three big economic messes which the electorate took notice of between 1970 and 2007/8 were caused by Conservative governments; and the 2007/8 event was the result of NuLab following Conservative policies. Why is this history never articulated by Labour spokespeople?<sup>45</sup> Is it that they simply don't understand it?

## **LBJ-dunnit**

The idea that people working for LBJ organised the assassination of JFK is

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<sup>42</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/ayy37hsx>> or <<https://inews.co.uk/opinion/keir-starmers-greatest-challenge-lies-in-rebuilding-labours-economic-credibility-773917>>

<sup>43</sup> The most recent data I could see was from June 2020 See <<https://tinyurl.com/r65c7kve>> or <<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/06/17/conservatives-still-more-trusted-economy-can-they->>>.

<sup>44</sup> See for example <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Wednesday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Wednesday)>.

<sup>45</sup> Or the fact that the population does better under Labour governments. On which see, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/xftx9rxs>> or <<https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-qa-which-party-has-a-better-track-record-on-the-economy>>.

believed by very few of the JFK buffs. But Robert Morrow has dug up a 2017 Economist/YouGov poll in which some of the questions put to the 1,500 US adults were about the assassination. To my surprise – and I suspect Morrow’s – 28% of those asked believed LBJ was involved.<sup>46</sup> Since there were then only a couple of books and a handful of articles online arguing the LBJ-dunnit case, whence this interest in the LBJ-dunnit thesis?

Among that handful of articles was one I have just come across by Professor David Denton – that rarity, an American academic writing about the Kennedy assassination. His ‘The JFK Assassination’s Place in History and a New Witness’<sup>47</sup> is a long, careful analysis of the event followed by an assembly of most of the evidence suggesting LBJ’s role. It included this nice and very American point.

‘It is not hard for the everyday person to see the illegitimacy of the single-bullet theory. I teach a college class in southern Illinois, where deer hunting is popular, and many of my students participate in that activity. I ask those students whether they have ever seen a bullet recovered from an animal carcass that looked like a CE399 bullet, and the answer is always no, the bullet is always badly distorted. Deer hunters aren’t trained in forensics, but it doesn’t take an expert to see the fallacy of the single-bullet theory.’

A more recent essay by Denton, ‘Joan Mellen did *not* debunk the idea of LBJ’s complicity in the murder of JFK’ does what its title suggests it will and includes this:

‘Gordon Ferrie <sup>48</sup> spoke of the conspiracy against Kennedy as a “nexus”, a series of connecting links formulated into a central place. When looking backward from 2017, with the preponderance of facts we now have pointing toward conspiracy, one can arrive at the rational conclusion that powerful forces coalesced around a common objective; to remove a President that was threatening their very survival.

If one arrives at this conclusion, how can he or she honestly leave out the individual who not only had the most to gain or lose, but also happened to be so deeply connected with these same powerful forces? The answer as to why both [David] Talbot and [Joan] Mellen choose to

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<sup>46</sup> See p. 95 of the survey at <<https://tinyurl.com/cb7fdmzr>> or <[https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/yxb47290m9/econTabReport.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/yxb47290m9/econTabReport.pdf)>.

<sup>47</sup> <[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B\\_I9QjzWCfIIQ1hiTXMwT2V6MVU/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_I9QjzWCfIIQ1hiTXMwT2V6MVU/view)>

<sup>48</sup> Former member of the US Secret Service who has commented on the assassination in the first of the Denton pieces.



stay away from Johnson's potential involvement in the Kennedy murder is easy to understand. Both writers want to maintain credibility in their field while delving into a topic that often times gets one marginalized. Accusing Johnson would make them appear even more "fringe".<sup>49</sup>

That *might* be the reason why Talbot, Mellen and so many other writers on the subject exclude the LBJ-dunnit thesis; but there are other reasons, the most important of which is this: people just find changing their minds difficult. And when it is in a field to which they have voted much of their intellectual lives, it can be very difficult indeed. What's striking at this distance is not that JFK buffs are reluctant to consider the LBJ-dunnit thesis, but rather how did LBJ – the obvious candidate – slip off their agenda in the first place?

## UFOs are UAPs

UFOs are so last century. Now that they have become 'respectable' and no longer of interest only to loons, they are now called UAPs, unidentified aerial phenomena. Even so, reporting on recent comments on their existence by former US Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe, *Popular Mechanics* had this as its headline: 'Government Reports Say UFOs Broke Sound Barrier Without Sonic Boom'.<sup>50</sup>

As someone who had been keeping half an eye open on the subject of UFOs (and the rest of the fringe/paranormal) for about 40 years, I never thought I would see UFOs/UAPs being acknowledged as real by the powers-that-be. But here we are. Two points suggest themselves. The first is that it would be difficult to exaggerate the potential significance of this – not least its impact on organised religions. The second is to wonder if anyone is going to apologise to all the writers/witnesses over the past sixty years who were ridiculed for taking the subject seriously or reporting what they saw.

## A clarification

Below, under subhead **Shorts**, I commented on Perry Anderson's use of the word integument. I received this comment from John Kozak.

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<sup>49</sup> <[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B\\_I9QjzWCfIcml2RHdwZHRnZ1E/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_I9QjzWCfIcml2RHdwZHRnZ1E/view)>  
I reviewed Mellen's book at  
<<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster73/lob73-faustian-bargains.pdf>>.

<sup>50</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/6b4zu7a5>> or <<https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/research/a35904670/pentagon-ufo-reports-objects-breaking-sound-barrier-without-sonic-boom/>>

'Can't believe I'll be the only person to point this out (what has the academy become?), but Anderson's use of "integument" is surely an allusion to a well-known passage from *Das Kapital* (Vol I, Ch 32):

"The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."

So far Mr Kozak, you are indeed the only one.

## Follow the cover-up

**I**n this column below, under subhead **Covidia**, I noted a report that an American group called EcoHealth Alliance, led by one Peter Daszak, had been working with the Wuhan Institute of Virology prior to the Covid outbreak. Daszak is referred to in a very good article about the debate over the origins of the Covid virus. Viz:

'Perhaps no one played a greater role in galvanizing scientific opinions in support of natural origins than Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, a New York-based environmental health nonprofit. A long-time Wuhan Institute of Virology collaborator, Daszak — who in what many sources described as a conflict of interest was a member of the WHO-led team that visited China earlier this year — received grant funding from the National Institutes of Health to collaborate on research at the Chinese lab. (The Trump administration abruptly cut off this funding in April 2020 before it was later reinstated with new restrictions.) Daszak is purported to have written a first draft of the *Lancet* statement condemning hypotheses other than natural origins as conspiracy theories. After repeated requests for an interview, the EcoHealth Alliance and Daszak declined to comment for this story.'<sup>51</sup>

This article did not refer to the report that EcoHealth Alliance had received nearly \$40 million from the Pentagon which it had tried to 'bury' in its accounts.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Charles Schmidt, 'Lab Leak: A Scientific Debate Mired in Politics — and Unresolved' at <<https://undark.org/2021/03/17/lab-leak-science-lost-in-politics/>>.

<sup>52</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/cnh5bm83>> or <<https://www.independentsciencenews.org/news/peter-daszaks-ecohealth-alliance-has-hidden-almost-40-million-in-pentagon-funding/?fbclid=IwAR3aQPuzXjkxtj33aWfSDnZvFlkPBujnzKkdrhpJD12-oP-SCDmsLrx78IA>>

So: the man whose organisation is funded by the US military and who has been working with the Chinese in Wuhan is keen to have us believe that the outbreak was not a lab-leak. *Quelle surprise!*

## **Intelligence bullshit**

**I**n *The Times* of 20 March there was an obituary of British intelligence official and historian of intelligence Michael Herman. It began thus:

'Michael Herman's career in British intelligence began just after the start of the Cold War and ended just before the thaw. Liberated by retirement to study and lecture on the thrust and counter-thrust of spying, Herman came to the conclusion that western intelligence agencies had largely done their job.

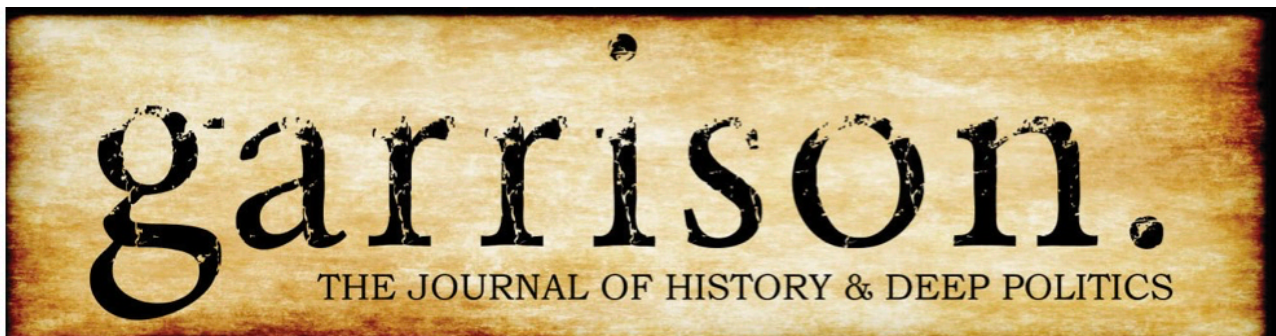
London and Washington built up an accurate picture of where Soviet and Chinese troops, weaponry and naval vessels were, he said, greatly reducing the possibility of a Pearl Harbour-like surprise attack, and allowing some relaxation in western capitals of their trigger grip on the weapons of nuclear deterrence.

However, failures included the conclusion that the Soviet Army had 170 divisions, but without realising that only one third were combat-ready. the West also over-estimated the number of Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles. In reality the "missile gap" in favour of the Soviet Union never existed; the West had more long-range nuclear missiles than the Soviets.'

This is ridiculous. A 'Pearl Harbour-like surprise attack' by China or the Soviets? Boy, am I glad we headed that off! The spooks had 'largely done their job', apparently, but had got the two biggest things – Soviet missile numbers and Soviet Army numbers – completely wrong. Curiously, those mistakes meant that the WW2 economy in the US, which was providing jobs, generating nice careers for military personnel and enriching the arms corporations – and the politicians they bribed – could roll on after the war. At the end of WW2 a military 'threat' was required and one was duly found. All the rest is just flim-flam. Intelligence estimates were subservient to the needs of the American political system – and still are. And this is apparently still unmentionable in respectable circles.

## ***garrison***

There is a new issue, no. 6, of *garrison*.



This is the editor's account of it.

'232 pages. In the sixth issue of *garrison: The Journal of History & Deep Politics*, we counted on our friends across the Atlantic to take us into the deep politics of the UK. We look at 17 of the most popular Jack the Ripper suspects (Ricard Jones, Richard C. Cobb, Michael Hawley), as well as the theory that there is no one "Jack" at all (Simon Wood). JFK assassination historian Malcolm Blunt looks at LBJ and George H.W. Bush, Jonathan Cook looks at the dubious fall of Jeremy Corbyn, Robin Ramsay takes us inside *Lobster* magazine and looks at Carroll Quigley, Bill Beadle questions the hanging of Mahmood Mattan, and we have Allan Johnson on Richard III, Corinne Souza on Spook PR, Tom Easton on the Social Democrats, and Scott Reid on William McEwan Duff. Returning with U.S. coverage is Richard Booth (OKC), Walt Brown (Oswald), Ed Curtin (Trump/Biden), James DiEugenio (Salandria Tribute), Don Jeffries (Trumpenstein), Caitlin Johnstone, Mark Crispin Miller (Masking), Phil Nelson (Harold Holt), Kevin Ryan (Gitmo), the late Vincent Salandria (Ruth & Michael Paine), and Ed Tatro (LBJ).'

The magazine's editor/producer asked me to write a short history of *Lobster* and give him three articles from the back catalogue. What material not about America would be of interest to a predominantly American readership? I chose my almost 40 year old essay on Carroll Quigley, Tom Easton on the SDP and the Americans and the late Corinne Souza on Spook PR.

You can get *garrison* here:

<<https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/MidnightWriterNews>>.

## Bellingcat

Following my item on the source of funding for Bellingcat,<sup>53</sup> Kit Klarenberg – who writes for Russia’s Sputnik News, and is thus not a disinterested party – sent me this about Bellingcat.<sup>54</sup>

‘Bellingcat’s funding by Western governments extends far farther than NED. They are a key partner in Open Information Partnership, a British state information warfare endeavour (and an outgrowth of Integrity Initiative – I wrote about it [here](#)).

They are extremely keen to downplay if not outright conceal this. Their website’s “About” section merely states Bellingcat is a “partner in the Open Information Partnership”, without any detail on what OIP is, and how it’s wholly funded by the UK FCO.

At first, founder Eliot Higgins sought to characterise their involvement in it as being “subcontracted” by OIP leader Zinc Network (aka Breakthrough Media) – ie, Zinc gets the money from the FCO and distributes it independently, so Bellingcat isn’t *directly* funded by the FCO. If that wasn’t already slippery enough, he subsequently deleted all his tweets on the matter.

A recently leaked Zinc Network document makes clear OIP’s activities is explicitly directed by the FCO. It references how the company, along with Bellingcat and Atlantic Council’s DFR Lab, was dispatched to an FCO “priority country” to “respond” to an election there, “within three days” of the FCO’s request. So, whether Bellingcat themselves know it or not, they’re Whitehall agents.’

However, the document to which Klarenberg links in the final paragraph is this:

### Example – Redeploying staff to respond to the 2019 North Macedonia Elections

EXPOSE programme: The FCO identified North Macedonia as a priority country early on in the project. Zinc identified a large media outlet within the country, the *MOST Network*, and deployed a team which included a Network Manager and Security Consultant within three days of the client request. Over 2 weeks, our team and consortium partners, including DFR Lab and Bellingcat, provided cyber security training, mentoring on digital forensics, open source investigation and media ethics.

Which doesn’t quite say what he reports it as saying. Bellingcat wasn’t dispatched ‘within three days’ of the FCO’s request. In the fortnight following those initial arrivals in country, Bellingcat were involved at some level – although the depth of that involvement is unclear.

In an interview/profile in the *Guardian* on the occasion of the publication

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<sup>53</sup> See below under subhead **Bellingcat’s funding**.

<sup>54</sup> For Klarenberg’s output via Sputnik News, see [https://sputniknews.com/authors/kit\\_klarenberg/](https://sputniknews.com/authors/kit_klarenberg/).

of his book, Bellingcat's founder Eliot Higgins is quoted as saying this:

'As a teenager I read people who wrote from a leftist perspective. Naomi Klein's *No Logo*, Robert Fisk's book on Lebanon, *Pity the Nation*, Noam Chomsky, etc. I was reading a lot of John Pilger and Seymour Hersh. Later, most of them turned out to hate me. They seem to think I'm part of a global conspiracy against Syria to re-run the invasion of Iraq. It's a funny old world [. . .] Liberal leftists of a certain age often suffer from horrible bigotry. It robs Muslims in the Middle East of agency and authenticity, as victims or as perpetrators.'<sup>55</sup>

This last is undoubtedly a serious point: looking at the Middle East as merely the battleground for others – Americans, Israelis, Russians – may indeed rob 'Muslims in the Middle East of agency and authenticity'. But the Middle East will not be left to its own devices until (1) oil ceases to be the world's leading energy source and (2) the state of Israel – as it is presently constructed – ceases to exist. Until these two things happen, people who have spent most of their careers trying to detect Western covert ops and disinformation will continue to view events there with suspicion.

In another profile of Higgins,<sup>56</sup> Rob Hastings quotes him as saying: 'We proved that the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad fired chemical weapons at his own people.' I believe this to be true. But in at least one other instance the evidence for this appears to have been faked and this he has ignored.<sup>57</sup>

Higgins 'finds it frustrating to hear arguments that Bellingcat focuses purely on Russia', and cites that fact that it is investigating the UK's arms deals in Yemen and the QAnon nonsense. But their website shows that while Bellingcat doesn't focus *entirely* on Russia, that is its major focus. And researching QAnon hardly equates to exposing the Russian state's assassination squad. As for accusations that Bellingcat is CIA, what does he expect if he accepts money from the National Endowment for Democracy and takes a position as a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council?<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/xxbnsqwj>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/feb/20/eliot-higgins-people-accuse-me-of-working-for-the-cia>>

<sup>56</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/1pkayqte>> or <<https://inews.co.uk/news/long-reads/bellingcat-eliot-higgins-interview-russia-alexei-navalny-vladimir-putin-853205>>

<sup>57</sup> Check the material on this Twitter stream from Piers Robinson from the Working Group on Syria, Propaganda and Media at <<https://twitter.com/PiersRobinson1/status/1357568131636613126>>.

With everybody and their cousin trying to disinform us, this is about as 'sticky' an area as exists at the moment. Higgins does discuss the Douma event in his book but not the Robinson evidence as far as I can see on first look.

<sup>58</sup> Which he did in 2014/15. This is discussed on p. 101 of his *We Are Bellingcat*.

## **'Astonishing old cack'**

That was the reaction of Garrick Alder on seeing the story from the *Daily Mail* website on 23 February, whose headline was 'Lee Harvey Oswald was instructed by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to assassinate JFK, ex-CIA chief and former head of Romania's spy service claim in new book'.<sup>59</sup>

The former Romanian spook is Ion Pacepa. His co-author is R. James Woolsey, head of the CIA from 1993-1995. As a quick google shows, Pacepa – who died in February 2021<sup>60</sup> – first offered this ridiculous nonsense in 2007 in his *Programmed to Kill: Lee Harvey Oswald, the Soviet KGB, and the Kennedy Assassination*.

This is a summary of that book's thesis.<sup>61</sup>

'Pacepa contends that the Soviet PGU (the first chief directorate of the KGB) recruited Oswald in 1957 while he was serving as a marine in Japan. Brought back to Moscow in 1959 to be debriefed and readied for a new intelligence assignment in Europe, Oswald provided information that enabled the Soviets to shoot down an American U-2 spy plane on May 1, 1960. With prodding from the Soviets, Oswald was persuaded to leave Japan to return to the United States on a temporary mission to assassinate President Kennedy, whom Nikita Khrushchev had come to despise. Oswald was taken over by the PGU component for assassination abroad (the Thirteenth Department), given a Russian wife, and sent back to the United States in June 1962. The Thirteenth Department also dispatched Oswald's case officer, Valery Kostikov, as a diplomat to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, to be available for secret meetings with Oswald. At the time, Mexico was the most desirable place for contact with the Soviet Bloc's important agents in the United States. Pacepa documents that Oswald and case officer Kostikov met there at least once, and probably twice.

In the fall of 1962, after a public trial in West Germany accused Khrushchev of personally ordering two political killings there, all foreign assassinations throughout the Soviet Bloc were called off. Oswald proved obstinate and determined to kill Kennedy despite the PGU's frantic efforts to deprogram him, including at least two direct and clear orders to stand-down and abort his mission. Oswald then stubbornly proceeded on his own

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<sup>59</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yLhj2u9e>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9289315/Lee-Harvey-Oswald-told-Soviet-leader-Nikita-Khrushchev-kill-JFK-ex-CIA-chief-claims.html>>

<sup>60</sup> See <https://mbncnews.com/ion-mihai-pacepa-1928-2021/>

<sup>61</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/1dc8qpzt>> or <<https://networks.h-net.org/node/19474/reviews/20027/weeber-pacepa-programmed-kill-lee-harvey-oswald-soviet-kgb-and-kennedy>>

– as a lone gunman – believing that afterward he could return to a hero's welcome in Moscow.'

Astonishing old cack indeed! Why did Woolsey – an apparently serious man – put his name to this nonsense?

## **Another 'long march' through institutions**

**M**any people believe nonsense when they are young – I certainly did – and the phenomenon of the political flip-flop, from left when young to right when older, is well known. However the presence of Munira Mirza in Boris Johnson's No. 10 policy unit and Claire Fox<sup>62</sup> in the House of Lords (after being a Brexit Party MEP) is too striking to pass without mention. Both began their political lives as members of the Revolutionary Communist Party, whose remnants went way beyond parody when they accepted funding from the Koch brothers.<sup>63</sup> A detailed account of this strange saga is to be had in a couple of detailed analyses on the blog of Ben Gidley.<sup>64</sup> Top stuff.

## **It's Miller time!**

**S**o: Professor David Miller duly said the unsayable about the Israelis' influence in UK politics and the predictable media assaults followed.<sup>65</sup> I buy *The Times* every morning and I wondered which of their columnists would have the honour of attacking Miller. It was Daniel – Lord Daniel – Finkelstein on 24 February. Finkelstein's political career has run the gamut from the Social Democratic Party in the 1980s, via a number of British and American think tanks/propaganda outfits on the centre-right, advising a couple of Conservative prime ministers, out to the borderline loony Gatestone Institute. He is also a regular columnist on the *Jewish Chronicle* and Vice President of the Jewish Leadership Council. In other words, he's been close to the centres of the power in this country for 40 years.

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<sup>62</sup> See <<http://clairefox.org.uk/about-claire>> for her view of herself.

<sup>63</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/5nswzr94>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/dec/07/us-billionaires-hard-right-britain-spiked-magazine-charles-david-koch-foundation>>

<sup>64</sup> <<https://brockley.blogspot.com/2019/07/the-rcps-long-march-from-anti.html>> and <<https://brockley.blogspot.com/2020/06/spiked-footnotes.html>>

<sup>65</sup> What he said – including footage of him saying it – is at <<https://tinyurl.com/f5772ms7>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9265627/Bristol-University-sociology-professor-calls-end-Zionism.html>>.



Finkel began his assault with this statement:

'Miller has a longstanding interest in conspiracy theories that is not confined to those involving Jews but he has, shall we say, a particular interest in those that do.'

We can ignore the 'conspiracy theorist' charge; like many others on the right, Finkelstein is inclined to label any political proposition he finds difficult as 'a conspiracy theory'. He continued:

'[Miller's] recent argument that "Britain is in the grip of an assault on its public sphere by the state of Israel and is advocates" is obviously hysterical.' <sup>66</sup>

'Hysterical', please note, not false. To his credit, really, Finkelstein is unable to write that this is false. Which is not really a surprise since he knows better than most that the statement is true – and, thanks to the three part Al Jazeera documentary on the Israel lobby in this country, easy to demonstrate.<sup>67</sup>

## **Angleton, Wilson, KGB again**

Scrolling through the Cryptome website I noticed the text of a book by David Omand, former director of GCHQ, *How Spies Think*,<sup>68</sup> published last year. I confess: I'd never heard of it. Flipping through it I saw this section:

'Golitsyn made the extraordinary claim that he knew the former Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell, who had been a strong supporter of NATO and the US/UK relationship, to have been assassinated in 1963 by the KGB in order to pave the way for Gaitskell to be replaced as party leader by Harold Wilson. According to Golitsyn's way of thinking, this must have been because his successor, Harold Wilson, had already been recruited by the KGB. The only evidence claimed for this was that Wilson had had official contacts with the Soviet government during the war and had continued to be in contact with some of the senior wartime leaders he had dealt with in Moscow.

Unsurprisingly, when elected Prime Minister in 1964, Harold Wilson became aware of rumours that some in his own security service, MI5,

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<sup>66</sup> 'University should sack conspiracist professor', *Times*, 24 February 2021.

<sup>67</sup> The first part of those documentaries is at <<https://tinyurl.com/4ef358ym>> or <<https://www.aljazeera.com/program/investigations/2017/1/10/the-lobby-young-friends-of-israel-part-1/>>.

<sup>68</sup> <<https://cryptome.org/2020/10/How-Spies-Think.pdf>>

believed he was a traitor and were conspiring to undermine him. In an increasingly fervid atmosphere in London, Peter Wright and a small group of counter-intelligence officers, under the influence of Angleton, now not only believed their Prime Minister was a Soviet agent but that their own MI5 bosses must be in on the conspiracy and covering it up.’<sup>69</sup>

Alas, Mr Omand didn’t have anybody read his text who knew the period’s literature very well. Golitsyn *didn’t* say Gaitskell has been assassinated.<sup>70</sup> He said he had heard that a Western political leader had been assassinated by the KGB.<sup>71</sup> The CIA’s counter-intelligence people, led by James Angleton, decided that Gaitskell’s death fitted the bill. Further, there is no evidence that Harold Wilson became aware of those rumours in 1964; or, indeed, that such rumours were circulating then. The anti-Wilson machinations were in the 1970s. Nonetheless Omand’s version – inaccurate though it is – makes a striking contrast to the official MI5 line, which denies it all.<sup>72</sup>

## Innocents abroad

‘In an important new interview with The Grayzone’s Aaron Maté, the first Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has revealed [. . . ] that while the US was orchestrating his 2002 ouster due to the risk he posed of derailing the Iraq war agenda with successful negotiations, his office was packed with hidden surveillance equipment and that his American head of security vanished immediately after this was discovered.[. . . ]

“The fact was that the wall behind my desk, the wall behind the desk of the Director-General was full of equipment, listening equipment,” Bustani reported “. . . there were bugs in the drawer, my desk, phone. I was shocked I must say.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Pages 110/111 of the PDF.

<sup>70</sup> Gaitskell’s name does not appear in the text of Golitsyn’s book *New Lies for Old*, on-line at <<https://archive.org/details/GolitsynAnatoleTheNewLiesForOldOnes>>, or in his *The Perestroika Deception*, on-line at <<https://archive.org/details/AnatoliyGolitsyn>>.

<sup>71</sup> Nick Must commented: the Wikipedia page ‘List of heads of state and government who died in office’ <[tinyurl.com/1wwg30tf](https://tinyurl.com/1wwg30tf)> or <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_heads\\_of\\_state\\_and\\_government\\_who\\_died\\_in\\_office#1950 %E2%80%93 1999](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_heads_of_state_and_government_who_died_in_office#1950_%E2%80%93_1999)> shows that, in the 1960s, world leaders were dropping like flies!

<sup>72</sup> <<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/the-wilson-plot>>

<sup>73</sup> <[tinyurl.com/wwfmpncc](https://tinyurl.com/wwfmpncc)> or <<https://caitlinjohnstone.com/2020/10/19/former-opcw-chief-says-us-bugged-his-office-while-pushing-iraq-war/>>

The striking thing to me is not that the Americans bugged his office but that it didn't occur to him that they would.

## **Dr. T. P. Wilkinson**

**I** have run a number of Dr Wilkinson's essay over the years. They're not really in *Lobster* country but they are so interesting and so original – why not? He sent me a new one, 'The Ends of Whiteness', which I began editing. Then I discovered that it has been published in Globalresearch.ca.<sup>74</sup> Didn't mind that, especially, as per usual, GlobalResearch posted the original copy unedited. Then I learned it was also on Dissident Voice,<sup>75</sup> one of Dr Wilkinson's main publishers, and couldn't see much point in making *Lobster* a third source. Incidentally, twenty three of his recent essays for Dissident Voice have been collected in one place.<sup>76</sup>

## **Bellingcat's funding**

**T**wice in a week *The Times* told its readers that Bellingcat, the 'private' intelligence agency, received its funding from non-governments sources. In an editorial 'Citizen Investigator', on 29 January, it stated that 'Bellingcat wisely refuses money from governments, relying on grants and cash raised from workshops where it teaches its research techniques'. A week later, in a review of the recent book by Bellingcat's founder, Eliot Higgins, Hugo Rifkind told us that Bellingcat's '[f]unding comes from charities, journalism organisations and workshops.'<sup>77</sup> However the Bellingcat site shows that the situation is a little more complex. There it is stated:

'Bellingcat currently receives grants from the following organisations:

- Adessium
- The National Endowment for Democracy
- The Dutch Postcode Lottery
- Zandstorm CV
- Sigrid Rausing Trust

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<sup>74</sup> <<https://www.globalresearch.ca/ends-whiteness/5733926>>

<sup>75</sup> <<https://dissidentvoice.org/2021/01/the-ends-of-whiteness/>>

<sup>76</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y5m4wtldr>> or <<https://chinarising.puntopress.com/2021/01/21/the-corona-papers-online-library-by-t-p-wilkinson-dissident-voice/>>

<sup>77</sup> 'The rise of the "intelligence agency for the people"' *The Times*, 6 February 2021.

- Stichting Saxum Volutum'<sup>78</sup>

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a front for the US government.<sup>79</sup> It would be interesting to know what proportion of the Bellingcat's funding is from the NED.<sup>80</sup>

## Russiagate and comrade Trumpski

So here's one side. This is David Corn, a left-leaning writer, in the left-leaning *Mother Jones*:

'Here are the indisputable basics. Russian leader Vladimir Putin ordered a covert assault, employing information warfare, on the 2016 US election. A 2017 report of the intelligence community, the 2019 report of Special Counsel Robert Mueller, a 2018 House Intelligence Committee report, and a 2020 Senate Intelligence Committee report all stated that [. . . .] So there's one big incontrovertible fact: Trump won the presidency with Russian assistance. And another: Trump and his lieutenants aided and abetted Putin's attack on the United States.'<sup>81</sup>

And here's Joe Lauria in left-leaning *Consortium News*, on the same subject, three days after Corn:

'Russiagate was an invention to help explain away Hillary Clinton's defeat in 2016 and to undermine the legitimacy of the man who beat her.'<sup>82</sup>

Would reading the reports listed by Corn resolve this conflict? It didn't take long to find out. This is from p. 6 the Mueller report:

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<sup>78</sup> <<https://www.bellingcat.com/about/>>

<sup>79</sup> At <<https://www.ned.org/about/>> the NED claims that it is 'Funded largely by the U.S. Congress'. It claims to be 'an independent, nonprofit foundation' but its funding would vanish in a flash if it didn't follow the US government line. For a critical view see, for example, <<https://www.unz.com/item/national-endowment-for-empire/>>.

<sup>80</sup> Nick Must commented: We will know when the details turn up here: <[tinyurl.com/18p0sha0](https://tinyurl.com/18p0sha0)> or <<https://www.ned.org/wp-content/themes/ned/search/grant-search.php?organizationName=Bellingcat&region=&projectCountry=&amount=&fromDate=&toDate=&projectFocus%5B%5D=&search=&maxCount=25&orderBy=Year&start=1&sbmt=1>>

But, at the moment, it would seem that the NED is a new source of funding as there is no record of a grant from them to Bellingcat for the years 2016-19.

<sup>81</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yy3ao6cc>> or <<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/01/it-all-began-with-russia-donald-trumps-four-great-betrays-of-the-nation/>>

<sup>82</sup> <<https://consortiumnews.com/2021/01/22/russiagate-aint-over/>> which cites <<https://tinyurl.com/y3cglabr>> or <<https://justthenews.com/accountability/russia-and-ukraine-scandals/first-declassified-russia-document-steeles-confessional>>

'2016. Russian outreach to the Trump Campaign continued into the summer of 2016, as candidate Trump was becoming the presumptive Republican nominee for President. On June 9, 2016, for example, a Russian lawyer met with senior Trump Campaign officials Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner, and campaign chairman Paul Manafort to deliver what the email proposing the meeting had described as "official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary." The materials were offered to Trump Jr. as "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump."

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This meeting appears on p viii of volume 5 of the 2020 Senate Committee on Intelligence report thus:

'The Committee found evidence suggesting that it was the intent of the Campaign participants in the June 9, 2016 meeting, particularly Donald Trump Jr., to receive derogatory information that would be of benefit to the Campaign from a source known, at least by Trump Jr., to have connections to the Russian government. The Committee found no reliable evidence that information of benefit to the Campaign was transmitted at the meeting, or that then-candidate Trump had foreknowledge of the meeting. Participants on both sides of the meeting were ultimately disappointed with how it transpired.'

84

Either version contains enough to show that Joe Lauria's statement that 'Russiagate was an *invention*' (emphasis added) is simply false.<sup>85</sup> It could be argued that Russiagate was *exploited* by the Democrats but not that it was invented.

Quite why the writers at Consortium News are so reluctant to acknowledge the reality of Putin's regime in Russia is unclear to me. Are they so determined not to be taken in by American state propaganda about Russia that they assume anything from that source, on that subject, is disinformation?

Craig Unger has a second book out about Donald Trump and the Russians. In a 2018 interview about the first one, this was the final exchange.<sup>86</sup>

**'Which of your findings do you think Americans would find most shocking?**

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<sup>83</sup> <<https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf>>

<sup>84</sup> <[https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/report\\_volume5.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/report_volume5.pdf)>

<sup>85</sup> For a brief comparison of the two reports see James Risen at <<https://theintercept.com/2020/09/03/trump-russia-senate-report-mueller/>>.

<sup>86</sup> <<https://www.newsweek.com/manafort-trump-putin-russia-mafia-strzok-fbi-1076582>>

There is a Russian asset in the White House. He is an asset. I believe he is an agent, but it's hard to prove he is knowledgeable. When you look at the 59 Russians [linked to Trump], some live in Trump Tower. The Russian mafia is a state actor, and it has direct ties to Russian intelligence, and they have been located in the home of the president of the United States!'

In the new book<sup>87</sup> Unger tries to 'prove he [Trump] is knowledgeable', is an honest-to-God Russian agent.

Garrick Alder told me that it was the late Lyndon LaRouche Jnr who first mooted the Trump-KGB angle. This I can't find but in the LaRouche org's *Executive Intelligence Review* in 1987 there is the suggestion that the Soviets were interested in the idea of Trump running for president.<sup>88</sup>

## Fences

Donald Trump flew back to Palm Beach into a dispute with the local authorities there. In 1993 he signed a deal with them agreeing not live at his estate, Mar-a-Lago. Like many other contracts he has signed over the years, this one Trump has been breaking. This entertaining squabble is described in a piece in the *Palm Beach Post*. In that article there are extracts from a letter by a local attorney, Reginald Stambaugh, in which he referred to Trump's grounds having a microwave security fence 'which is known to cause permanent brain trauma and other debilitating injuries'.<sup>89</sup>

*Lobster* readers with long memories may remember that the issue of such microwave security fences arose in the mid 1980s, when one was installed at Greenham Common and made the women who were camped there ill. In the *Guardian* Gareth Parry reported that, 'The American military [at Greenham Common] have an intruder detection system called BISS, Base Installation Security System, which operates on a sufficiently high frequency to bounce radar waves off a human body moving in the vicinity of a perimeter fence.'<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y2ujnh9w>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9194867/New-book-claims-Donald-Trump-KGB-stooge-40-years.html>>

<sup>88</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yy7efspa>> or <[https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1987/eirv14n29-19870724/eirv14n29-19870724\\_067-elephants\\_and\\_donkeys.pdf](https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1987/eirv14n29-19870724/eirv14n29-19870724_067-elephants_and_donkeys.pdf)>

<sup>89</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y39uzeqw>> or <<https://eu.palmbeachpost.com/story/news/2020/12/16/neighbors-say-trump-cant-live-mar-lago-estate-once-presidency-ends/3923305001/>>

<sup>90</sup> 'Peace Women fear electronic zapping at base' 10 March 1986. This was reported in Armen Victorian's 'The military use of electromagnetic, microwave and mind control technology' in *Lobster* 34. See also <<http://www.peacemagazine.org/archive/v03n3p09.htm>>.

Not a millions miles away from which was a piece reporting that Professor John William Frank, from the University of Edinburgh,<sup>91</sup> has said recently that the roll-out of 5G should be halted 'pending more conclusive research' on its safety.<sup>92</sup> Any research on this subject would be welcome – but would be resisted by the tech lobby.

## **All research, no theories**

**G**reg Miller is the author of an interesting survey of psychologists' attempts to find out why some (American) people are more inclined to believe conspiracy theories than others.<sup>93</sup> Among many, he quotes Nancy Rosenblum, coeditor of the *Annual Review of Political Science*, who argues 'that Trump epitomizes a new type of "conspiracy without theory" that relies on sheer assertion and repetition rather than evidence and reason'. Like much of the present discussion – I almost wrote discourse! – about conspiracy theories, this has echoes of much earlier writing on the subject before it was noticed by the academics. It was Kenn Thomas in the late 1980s who, at one point, had as the banner for his journal *Steamshovel*, 'All conspiracy, no theory'.

In the midst of his account Greg Miller has this:

'Such studies reveal a human tendency to attribute events to the intentional actions of others rather than to pure chance, [Karen] Douglas says. Work by others has shown that we also tend to assume that when something huge happens, something huge must have caused it. This also feeds into conspiracy thinking, Douglas says. The assassination of John F. Kennedy was too momentous an event to have been pulled off by a lone gunman, conspiracists argue. Surely the US government was involved — or the KGB, or the Mafia.'

But did any of the JFK buffs ever say or write that the assassination of JFK 'was too momentous an event to have been pulled off by a lone gunman'? If they did, I have forgotten it. Caveated by the fact that I have read less than 10% of the output on the assassination, and less than 1% if I include the various government reports, what I recall is that, *au contraire*, from the get-go, as the American say, the JFK buffs were analysing the available data and finding

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<sup>91</sup> Frank is described on the university's website as 'Lead, Research and Evidence-Based Medicine Module'.

<sup>92</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yye283jl>> or <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-9160241/Global-rollout-5G-networks-halted-thoroughly-tested-expert-claims.html>>

<sup>93</sup> 'The enduring allure of conspiracies' at <[www.niemanlab.org/2021/01/the-enduring-allure-of-conspiracies](http://www.niemanlab.org/2021/01/the-enduring-allure-of-conspiracies)>.

anomalies and contradictions; i.e. they were doing research, not theorising. The banner for the JFK buffs should be 'All research, no theories'.

## **Fuck who?**

In my 'View from the Bridge' in *Lobster* 79 I wrote about Boris Johnson's reported comment 'Fuck business' when told about objections by British firms to Brexit.<sup>94</sup> In that piece I noted:

'The relative insignificance of British national capitalism was illustrated when the leaders of Confederation of British Industry, the British Chambers of Commerce and the Institute of Directors – a.k.a. "the captains of industry" – were not invited to hear PM Johnson's speech on the future of EU trade talks.'

I inferred from this that 'Fuck business' meant British manufacturing – which is in line with my basic assumption that, since the 1980s, the Conservative Party represents the interests of the City of London. But if you google 'the City and Brexit deal', you get headlines like these: 'City of London's Plight Laid Bare as Brexit Deal Hopes Fade';<sup>95</sup> 'The Brexit deal has left the City to fight for its own future';<sup>96</sup> and "'Bad start" for financial services under Brexit deal is "only just beginning", says London Chamber chief'.<sup>97</sup> It would seem by 'Fuck business', Boris didn't just mean domestic manufacturing – he meant almost everybody.

No surprise there, then, would say Simon Matthews. He has been telling me for a while that a little gang of hedgies are apparently running the present government. (They largely funded the 'Leave' campaign during the 2016 referendum on EU membership.)<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> I checked the origins of that comment. According to the *Financial Times*, 'The UK's foreign secretary apparently outlined his new business strategy at a private reception, when challenged about the clamour from Airbus and BMW over the threat to jobs and investment.'  
<<https://www.ft.com/content/8075e68c-7857-11e8-8e67-1e1a0846c475>>

<sup>95</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y334x8nr>> or <<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-11/city-of-london-s-plight-laid-bare-as-hopes-for-brexit-deal-fade>>

<sup>96</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y3xe9235>> or <<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-brexit-deal-has-left-the-city-to-fight-for-its-own-future>>

<sup>97</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y2tvaba7>> or <<https://www.onlondon.co.uk/bad-start-for-financial-services-under-brexit-deal-is-only-just-beginning-says-london-chamber-chief/>>

<sup>98</sup> On the Conservative Party and hedgies see <<https://tinyurl.com/y5n2ph9k>> or <<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/09/23/brexit-disaster-capitalism-are-boris-johnsons-hedge-fund-backers-driving-policy/>> and <<https://www.rt.com/uk/229631-conservative-party-funding-hedge/>>.



## Blur

In the second of his two essays on the EU in the *London Review of Books*, Perry Anderson quoted the late Hugo Young on Tony Blair:

'Tony Blair had such potential. He was a strong leader, a visionary in his way, a figure surpassing all around him at home and on the continent. His rhetorical power was unsurpassed, as was the readiness of the people to listen to him. He had their trust. He brought credibility back to the politics art.'<sup>99</sup>

He did?

## The higher strangeness

It is one of the characteristics of the age we live in that huge chunks of material have to be filed under 'We will probably never know'. This certainly applies to the purported 2002 conversation between Dr Eric Davis, a physicist and UFO-believer, and retired U.S. Admiral Thomas Ray Wilson<sup>100</sup> about various Pentagon 'black' projects to do with UFOs and aliens.<sup>101</sup> Three further things are worth noting. The first is the lengthy denial in 2020 by Admiral Wilson that the meeting took place, or that he ever said any of what was quoted.<sup>102</sup> As Mandy Rice-Davies, famously said in 1963, 'Well he would, wouldn't he?' The second is that Dr Davis has not commented since publication of the apparent conversation. The third is that the existence, if not the content, of the putative Wilson conversation was known about in 2008. If you check the contemporaneous comments in this Above Top Secret thread,<sup>103</sup> especially those by Dolan and Haith, Wilson's denial looks a little

## You couldn't make this up

Under the subheading 'The US has suffered a massive cyberbreach. It's hard

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<sup>99</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v43/n02/perry-anderson/the-breakaway>>.

<sup>100</sup> Nick Must commented:

What is it about unidentified flying objects and retired Admirals who have 'Ray' as a middle name – and – have been involved at a high level in the U.S. intelligence community? C.f. Bobby Ray Inman (Deputy Director of Central Intelligence/Director of the National Security Agency), referred to by Garrick Alder in his 'Roswell, the CIA and Dr Edgar Mitchell' in *Lobster* 77 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster77/lob77-roswell-cia.pdf>>.

<sup>101</sup> Reported in my 'View from the Bridge', under subhead **Ufology**, in *Lobster* 78 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster78/lob78-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>>.

<sup>102</sup> <<http://devoid.blogs.heraldtribune.com/16000/eric-who-the-admiral/>>

<sup>103</sup> <<http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread379087/pg1>>

to overstate how bad it is', a report in the *Guardian* on the big Russia-hacks-US-military story had this:

'Here's what we know: Orion is a network management product from a company named SolarWinds, with over 300,000 customers worldwide. Sometime before March, hackers working for the Russian SVR – previously known as the KGB – hacked into SolarWinds and slipped a backdoor into an Orion software update. (We don't know how, but last year the company's update server was protected by the password "solarwinds123" – something that speaks to a lack of security culture.) Users who downloaded and installed that corrupted update between March and June unwittingly gave SVR hackers access to their networks.'<sup>104</sup>

They used 'solarwinds123' as a password? Yep, that's the kind of password choice with which we are all familiar! At one level it is oddly reassuring to know that the higher techie levels are as sloppy as the rest of us. On the other hand, this is more support for the notion that as much as possible of the vital stuff – i.e. control of national infrastructure, etc. – should get off-line asap.

## **After neo-liberalism . . .**

The Covid crisis is having unexpected repercussions. In the capitalist West some enthusiasts for the free market and the withering away of the state seem to have realised that this may not be such a good idea after all.<sup>105</sup> The website *businessinsider.com* publicised a big study which shows that so-called 'trickle down theory' – the belief that giving the rich tax cuts leads to wealth trickling down to the poor – is simply false. Not only that, as the piece's headline put it: 'A huge study of 50 years of tax cuts for the wealthy suggests "trickle-down" economics makes inequality worse.'<sup>106</sup>

Strewth! Giving money to the rich makes them richer!

Other than hack apologists on the right, whose salaries are paid by Anglo-

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<sup>104</sup> Classed as an 'opinion' piece, it was by Harvard Kennedy School Fellow and CTO of IBM Resilient, Bruce Schneier. See <<https://tinyurl.com/yaxx85lc>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/dec/23/cyber-attack-us-security-protocols>>.

<sup>105</sup> I have only known one enthusiast for capitalism and the withering away of the state: the late Chris Tame, founder of the Libertarian Alliance. Being a good libertarian and not a believer in the collective provision of much, for years Tame paid into BUPA, a private health insurance scheme. When he got cancer he discovered that BUPA wasn't going to treat him. He hadn't read the small print in his contract.

<sup>106</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/ybt7hp9m>> or <[https://www.businessinsider.com/tax-cuts-rich-trickle-down-income-inequality-study-2020-12?utm\\_&r=US&IR=T](https://www.businessinsider.com/tax-cuts-rich-trickle-down-income-inequality-study-2020-12?utm_&r=US&IR=T)>

American corporations in one way or another, who believed in 'trickle down'? A more obvious piece of baloney to justify giving the rich more of the collective pie is hard to imagine. Still, I suppose I should be glad that someone has tested the theory.

Another shibboleth of free market economic thinking was recently dumped by the *Financial Times*' Martin Wolf, who wondered why anyone ever believed Milton Friedman's claim that the only role of the corporation is to make a profit. This was Woolf's version of Friedman:

' . . . there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.'<sup>107</sup>

But who took *this* seriously? Not the corporations themselves. In the business world, Friedman's dictum becomes this:

There is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits. Fraud and deception are entirely acceptable. *Just don't get caught.*

To cite the obvious recent examples: car-making companies fabricating their exhaust figures,<sup>108</sup> Boeing trying to influence The Federal Aviation Administration<sup>109</sup> and, most spectacularly, the behaviour of the companies involved in the Grenfell Tower disaster, who fabricated their product testing results.<sup>110</sup> (Wolf cites other examples.) As the interesting discussion of this at Stumbling and Mumbling points out,<sup>111</sup> it has got worse recently with the demise of countervailing powers, notably the unions and the state.

But 'twas ever thus; and you'd have to be spectacularly ignorant or innocent not to know this. Milton Friedman may have been either or both. After all, one of his series of films (collectively titled *Free to Choose*) which the BBC showed in 1980, used Japan – an outstanding example of state-managed

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<sup>107</sup> <<https://archive.is/K6ckx>>

<sup>108</sup> See <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34324772> and <<https://tinyurl.com/ydx85sg>> or <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterlyon/2018/07/09/nissan-admits-to-falsifying-emissions-tests/>>.

<sup>109</sup> <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-55372499>>

<sup>110</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yxgq9dqu>> or <<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-grenfell-tower-inquiry-is-uncovering-a-major-corporate-scandal>>

<sup>111</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/ycooudkt>> or <[https://stumblingandmumbling.typepad.com/stumbling\\_and\\_mumbling/2020/12/restraining-capital.html](https://stumblingandmumbling.typepad.com/stumbling_and_mumbling/2020/12/restraining-capital.html)>.

capitalism – as an exemplar of the free market.<sup>112</sup>

## Shorts

**A**lastair Campbell has an interesting piece in the blog section of his website on the meaning of the Brexit deal. This is based on reading a 1997 book, one of whose co-authors is former *Times* editor, William Rees-Mogg, father of Conservative Cabinet member and hedge fund owner Jacob.<sup>113</sup> Campbell is shocked to discover that the vision of the UK in the book as a kind of off-shore, tax-sheltered Singapore is that of the dominant faction in the Johnson government.<sup>114</sup>

Nowhere in Campbell's essay is there any comprehension that the groundwork for this vision was laid by the governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, for which he worked. Good Thatcherites that they were, they embraced globalisation, deregulation and privatisation – ignoring the interests of the domestic manufacturing sector, which shrank by almost 50% under their leadership.<sup>115</sup>

**P**erry Anderson contributed a 15,000 word essay on the history of the European Union and the creation of its institutions to the *London Review of Books*.<sup>116</sup> It finished with a word I didn't know: 'Fear of the unknown is the more important *integument*.' (Emphasis added.) Integument means a natural coating or skin; and discovering the word's meaning helped me not at all. (Subs dozing after 15,000 words on the EU?) However, among those 15,258 words Mr Anderson did not find room for reference to the role of the CIA in the creation of a European union. Perhaps he simply doesn't know about it.

**I** am interested that there are some serious-minded people who think that the

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<sup>112</sup> I discussed this under subhead **How the chips fall** at

<<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster72/lob72-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>>.

There is a chapter on Friedman and his influence in Sydney Blumenthal's *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment* (New York: Times Books, 1986)

<sup>113</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y8f84pdr>> or <<http://alastaircampbell.org/2020/12/the-brexit-revolutionaries-have-barely-begun-britain-needs-to-wake-up-fast/>>

<sup>114</sup> A view consistent with those expressed by Simon Matthews and Bartholomew Steer in *Lobster* 80. Matthews at

<<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-long-march-to-freeport.pdf>> and

Steer at

<<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-brexit-cock-up-cconspiracy.pdf>>.

<sup>115</sup> See my 'How our politicians helped to kill UK manufacturing' in *Lobster* 80 at

<<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-uk-manufacturing.pdf>>.

<sup>116</sup> <<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v43/n01/perry-anderson/ever-closer-union>>

election was stolen from Donald Trump – not by phoney ballots but by manipulating the voting machines themselves.<sup>117</sup> What none of the reports I have looked at explain is why, if the machines are so easy to hack, weren't they hacked in 2016 to prevent Trump winning? Why has this particular branch of the 'deep state' sprung into action now?

One of the recurring themes in this column is the fact that most of our politicians feel no need to acquire even basic economic understanding before taking their seats in the Commons. William Keegan provided another wonderful example of the cavalier ignorance of politicians in his *Observer* column.

'Those crazed Brexit cabinet ministers had to have the single market explained to them by our former ambassador to the EU, Sir Ivan Rogers, when they met after the referendum result. They didn't even know the difference between the customs union, with its zero tariffs for intra-EU trade, and the single market, which gradually eliminated non-tariff barriers.'<sup>118</sup>

When a British political journalist leaves the reservation of subjects officially suitable for discussion where does s/he go? Take Peter Osborne. Pursuing the connection between the Manchester arena bombing and the British state's role in the destruction of Libya,<sup>119</sup> Osborne has ended up not in the *Telegraph*, *Spectator* or the *Daily Mail*, whose columns he has regularly graced over the years, but at the Daily Maverick website.<sup>120</sup>

## Uncertainty

At heart of the piece about the British Gladio in this issue is the belief, held by a section of the British political/military/intelligence system, that there was a

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<sup>117</sup> See, for example, <<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/16862/dominion-voting-systems>> and <[tinyurl.com/2su42qdf](https://tinyurl.com/2su42qdf)> or <<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/02/mathematician-edward-solomon-determined-2020-election-results-precinct-level-impossible-cannot-occur-naturally/>>.

And yes, I know where Gatestone is coming from, politically.

<sup>118</sup> 'We may have avoided no-deal, but this is still Brexit tier 3' *The Observer* 10 January, at <<https://tinyurl.com/y3jt5hcf>> or <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/10/brexit-avoided-no-deal-still-tier-3-lockdown>>

<sup>119</sup> Discussed under subhead **Close but no cigar** in The View from the Bridge in *Lobster* 72 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster72/lob72-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>>

<sup>120</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y9ltgjcq>> or <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-12-16-did-the-uks-secret-libya-policy-contribute-to-the-manchester-terror-attack/>>

Soviet threat to Britain in the 1970s and 80s. In fact there never was a Soviet threat to Britain at any time after WW2, except in so far as we were allies of the Americans and were what Duncan Campbell called 'The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier'.<sup>121</sup> Thus, in the unlikely event of a nuclear exchange,<sup>122</sup> the UK would have been targeted by Soviet bombers and missiles.

The origins of this false belief about the Soviet threat are well known. The thirties depression in America had been ended by the WW2 war economy. To keep that economy going the Americans needed a new enemy after the war and there was only one plausible candidate: the Soviets. The 'Red Menace' had the bonus that Anglo-American imperialism could be presented as anti-communism. Those who opposed this fantasy about the Soviets were marginalised (at best). Jobs, careers and social standing in America and, to a lesser extent, in the UK, all depended upon toeing that line.

Through the 1960s this belief system was picked apart. The so-called revisionist historians of the Cold War re-examined the post-war years and showed the received interpretation to be bogus. The Vietnam War generated an anti-imperialist American left which filtered into the Democratic Party. Nuclear weapons became so powerful, and so numerous, that they created a stalemate and came to be perceived by the military themselves as dangerous and useless. Détente with the Soviet Union, however imperfect, followed.

There were those who could not give up the original version. The military-industrial-intelligence-political complex had interests – money, careers, status – invested in it and sang the same old song whatever the context. For example, when the British psy-ops agency, the Information Research Department (IRD), was deployed in Northern Ireland against the IRA, it portrayed that organisation as agents of Moscow, and Ireland as 'the next Cuba'.

After the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989, all this had to change. No longer able to present resistance to their activities as anti-communism, Anglo-American corporations and their media and political hacks and flacks rebadged it as terrorism – and helped to generate the real thing in the Middle East, with so-called Islamic terrorism. The invasion of Iraq was the climax to half a century of lies justifying Anglo-American imperialism and arms production.

So the Soviet regime collapsed and we got Putin's Russia – with nuclear

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<sup>121</sup> Duncan Campbell, *The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier: American Military Power in Britain* (London: Paladin, Grafton Books, 1986)

<sup>122</sup> Unlikely because the American nuclear arsenal vastly outnumbered the Soviet one. And if the Americans couldn't be sure of this until Penkovsky told them just before the Cuban missile crisis, the Soviets knew it.

weapons. Now we have the Russian threat presented to us. The same interests and people who offered us a phoney Communist threat and non-existent Iraqi WMDs are warning us of Russian warships in the Channel! Russian planes above British coastal waters! For some analysts and commentators on the left there is no problem: it was bullshit then and it's bullshit now. They largely ignore Russian disinformation,<sup>123</sup> and tell us that the Russians didn't try to hack the American electoral system (well, not much). Apparently murderous attacks by the Russian state on domestic opponents are not what they seem. Thus the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, for example, was a false flag event as was the recent attack on Alexei Navalny.

A recent formulation of this begins:

'To professional analysts, it has long been clear that the "Russiagate" saga – including the "Russian hacking" claims, the Trump-Russia collusion claims, as well as the "Skripal poisoning incident" and the more recent "Navalny poisoning incident" – has been a US and NATO psychological operation aimed at containing a resurgent Russia and a somewhat unpredictable US President.'<sup>124</sup>

The extension of this line of thought is that the dozen or so prominent Russians killed in the UK were killed by . . . the UK. Finian Cunningham, one of those who think this, wrote:

'Over the past two decades, more than a dozen Russian dissidents have met untimely deaths while residing in England, including Alexander Litvinenko and Boris Berezovsky. Their deaths provide propaganda fodder for the British to accuse Moscow of carrying out "revenge killings".

However, the suspicious circumstances surrounding each death could more conceivably point to the British liquidating the Russian exiles as propaganda assets.'<sup>125</sup>

While that is *possible*, it is very unlikely that there have been such killings which have been kept quiet. There is no evidence that the British state has done assassinations on mainland UK.<sup>126</sup> In any case, what would be the point of such killings? To demonize Russia? But the deaths of most of those Russians in the UK were largely ignored by the British media. There was no apparent

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<sup>123</sup> There is an on-going summary of this at <<https://euvsdisinfo.eu>>.

<sup>124</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/yykgxwvw>> or <<https://off-guardian.org/2021/01/04/the-russian-hacking-nato-psyop-has-finally-been-solved/>>

<sup>125</sup> See note 109.

<sup>126</sup> Northern Ireland is a different story. There British state forces collaborated in the murder of many people.

impetus from the state that they should be publicised as part of a deliberate and co-ordinated effort to smear Putin's regime. It was left to the pop culture website BuzzFeed to take the story seriously.<sup>127</sup> Was the intention to drive Russian exiles out of the UK? I doubt it. The City of London profits from laundering Russian money, London-based legal and property firms enjoy the business that it brings and the Conservative Party receives Russian donations.<sup>128</sup> It is also striking that President Putin didn't deny that the Russian state was involved. His reported comment that if Russian agents had wanted to kill Navalny 'they would have probably finished the job', was a classic non-denial denial.

For me the evidence<sup>129</sup> suggests that the current Russia *is* the murderous kleptocracy that is presented to us in the mainstream media. Just because the *Daily Mail* publishes something doesn't mean it is *per se* disinformation. Should we not pay attention to those with experience of the current Russian state, such as Gary Kasparov? He wrote recently:

'Russia, under strongman Vladimir Putin's watch, has become a rogue regime apparently responsible, despite its loud denials, for a growing list of egregious crimes. Add assassinations of political targets at home and abroad – some with banned chemical weapons – to Russia's ongoing invasion of neighboring Ukraine and a hacking campaign of unprecedented scope against the United States, and it's clear that Putin has become bolder and more dangerous than ever.'<sup>130</sup>

But here's the wrinkle: is there a 'hacking campaign of unprecedented scope against the United States'? I have read many reports of said campaign but seen little evidence. The original 13 December report on the subject by Reuters had this:

'This is a much bigger story than one single agency,' said one of the people familiar with the matter. 'This is a huge cyber espionage campaign

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<sup>127</sup> See part one of their investigation at <<https://tinyurl.com/y7k4hjun>> or <<https://www.buzzfeed.com/heidiblake/poison-in-the-system>>.

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, <<https://tinyurl.com/y8emuzyr>> or <<https://www.thedailybeast.com/viktor-fedotov-major-conservative-party-donor-linked-to-russian-corruption-scandal?ref=home?ref=home>>.

<sup>129</sup> A recent summary of apparent Russian activity is at <<https://tinyurl.com/y8g4d3pv>> or <<https://www.thedailybeast.com/poisoner-hacker-meddler-spy-how-russian-agents-ran-wild-in-2020?ref=home>>

<sup>130</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y87xlxd7>> or <<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/25/opinions/putin-russia-navalny-poisoning-cyberattack-kasparov/index.html>>



targeting the U.S. government and its interests.’<sup>131</sup>

One unnamed source ‘familiar with the matter’ . . . is that all they have?

Retired US Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff to United States Secretary of State Colin Powell, is sceptical:

‘ . . . there’s absolutely nothing in the public domain, nor that I’ve heard in the back channels, that would indicate that the gravity of this situation is such that the press, including The Guardian today, is making of it.’ <sup>132</sup>

Wilkerson might well be sceptical: his boss at the time, Colin Powell, was sent to the UN to present the ‘intelligence’ on Iraqi WMDs.

## Covidia

**I** noted the novelist Nicholson Baker’s interest in US biological warfare in *Lobster* 80.<sup>133</sup> In a 12,500 word essay in the *New York Magazine* Baker displays a striking level of knowledge about viruses and research into them and takes the reader through the possible causes of the Covid pandemic in great detail.<sup>134</sup> There are only three possibilities. The first – that it was made in a lab and released deliberately – he doesn’t discuss. The second is that it emerged in another species and transferred to humans. The third is that it was developed in a lab and escaped. About a quarter of the way through the piece Baker mentions the American company, EcoHealth Alliance, which had been collaborating with the lab in Wuhan, China, from which the virus is thought to have originated. Elsewhere it had been reported that EcoHealth Alliance was receiving much of its funding from the US Department of Defense.<sup>135</sup>

Which brings us back to Professor Francis Boyle. I quoted him in *Lobster* 80<sup>136</sup> as saying last October that Covid was a bio-warfare lab escapee. In that

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<sup>131</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y69z77gp>> or <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-cyber-treasury-exclsuive/exclusive-u-s-treasury-breached-by-hackers-backed-by-foreign-government-sources-idUSKBN28N0PG>>

<sup>132</sup> <<https://theanalysis.news/interviews/no-evidence-of-massive-russian-hack-larry-wilkerson/>> Thanks to John Booth for this reference.

<sup>133</sup> At <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>> under subhead **Baseless**.

<sup>134</sup> <<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/coronavirus-lab-escape-theory.html>>

<sup>135</sup> <<https://tinyurl.com/y4tzs975>> or <<https://www.independentsciencenews.org/news/peter-daszaks-ecohealth-alliance-has-hidden-almost-40-million-in-pentagon-funding/>>.

<sup>136</sup> At <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster80/lob80-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>> under subhead **Is COVID-19 man-made?**.

talk, he described the Wuhan-US Defence Department relationship.<sup>137</sup> EcoHealth Alliance is part of that. To me it looks very likely that the American and Chinese biowarfare people cooked this up and it has escaped. Boyle's point is that these things *a/ways* escape and that is why he wants all the bio-warfare labs closed. There is a group of scientists who are aware of this risk, who have been grumbling off-stage for decades about the hazards generated by virus research and experimentation.

Baker ends his essay with this:

'Could a world full of scientists do all kinds of reckless recombinant things with viral diseases for many years and successfully avoid a serious outbreak? The hypothesis was that, yes, it was doable. The risk was worth taking. There would be no pandemic.

I hope the vaccine works.'

It is already pretty clear that the vaccines won't work in the way that other vaccines – e.g. polio – have worked in the past, creating life-long immunity; and that Covid probably means the end of the world as we knew it. But even if it is established that it was the result of military experiments, carried out despite all the warnings about lab escapes, this will never be *officially* admitted, either by the US or its Chinese partners. In China, where the state's control of society and the internet means the evidence can be destroyed, the cover-up may work. In America this will be impossible.

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<sup>137</sup> The text of Boyle's October talk is at <<https://tinyurl.com/y5bbd3m7>> or <<https://www.thehansindia.com/my-voice/basically-humanity-is-fighting-world-war-iii-against-covid-19-649426>>