

The Lincoln-Kennedy Psyop

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Abstract

As the title suggests, this essay exposes a psychological operation that began in 1963, the effects of which are still in play more than fifty years later. The present work is in three sections. The first section is a parapolitical portrait of the prominent American conservative Clare Boothe Luce, who was a CIA asset and helped shape the Lincoln-Kennedy psyop. The second section concerns the psyop's designer, ex-CIA Director Allen Welsh Dulles. Dulles's inspiration for the psyop is identified, as is the background material he used, along with the ways in which he exploited his position on the Warren Commission in order to execute the first and most important phase of the psyop. The third section focuses solely upon the psyop's final iteration, the list of so-called 'Lincoln-Kennedy Coincidences'. This section identifies the time and the place that Dulles began creating the list, the ways in which Clare Boothe Luce assisted him, and how their finished product was imposed on an unsuspecting posterity.

Part One: Clare Versus the Communists

Clare Boothe Luce (1903-1987) loved intrigue. Even into her late 70s she still read voraciously about America's foreign and domestic policies, and regularly entertained former CIA counter-intelligence chief James Angleton, for what the two called 'Spy chat'.¹ A dedicated anti-communist and dyed-in-the-wool Republican, she had served as a Representative for Connecticut between 1943 and 1947, becoming acquainted with the up-and-coming Lyndon Johnson who was a Texas Representative from 1937 to 1949. Their friendship endured into Johnson's 1963-1968 presidency. It was to Clare that Johnson whispered his explanation for accepting the vice-presidency in 1960, often dismissed as apocryphal: 'One out of every four presidents has died in office. I'm a gamblin' man darlin', and this is the only one chance I got.'²

Clare kept a portrait of Abraham Lincoln on the wall of her Congressional office, doubtless intended to emphasise her personal patriotism and loyalty to

¹ Sylvia Jukes Morris, *Price of Fame – The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce* (New York: Random House, 2014) p. 593.

² Morris (see note 1) p. 519.

American institutions, it being widely believed that she was related (at a distance of just one generation) to the family of Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth. Whether or not that belief was accurate, the 'e' had been added to the surname by Clare's father, William Boothe, precisely to avoid the association.³

Clare had been appointed US Ambassador to Italy in 1953, by the newly-elected President Eisenhower. This was partly in recognition of her unquestionable intellect and talent; but mainly a favour being returned. Clare's husband, Henry ('Harry') Robinson Luce, had thrown the full weight of his media empire behind Eisenhower's election campaign in 1952. The result had been the cancellation of thousands of subscriptions to *Time* and *Life* magazines, with readers protesting against the undisguised favouritism shown to Eisenhower. Harry (1898-1967) was undaunted, telling his staff: 'A political campaign is not a sporting event requiring polite neutrality.'⁴ This freelance propagandising paid off handsomely, providing access to the grateful Eisenhower himself. Clare's political progress had stalled in 1947, when she failed to win re-election to her Congressional seat. In 1952 the Luces had therefore made a huge breakthrough. Having backed the unsuccessful Thomas Dewey in 1948 (and consequently been shunned by President Truman), Clare and Harry were now 'in a position to try to influence policy as well as comment on it'.⁵ This was an entirely natural progression, because, as William Swanberg,⁶ one of Harry's harshest critics, later wrote:

'Since the war, Luce, the eternal seeker of power, had achieved it more and more by the cleverness of his concealment of increasing amounts of propaganda in his publications, which were not generally known to be propagandist. The manipulative corruption of the Lucepress⁷ worked on two levels – the readership which was deprived of honest information, and the politicians of the administration who were well aware of the manipulation and knew themselves to be in debt to Luce [. . .] When a democratic majority votes or acts on a basis of manipulated information, it

³ The entry on Clare Boothe Luce in the *Dictionary of World Biography* (volume 8), states the Booth/Boothe family connection as factual. Many other sources dispute it.

⁴ Morris (see note 1) pp. 294-296.

⁵ Morris (see note 1) p. 311.

⁶ Better known as W. A. Swanberg (1907-1992), a respected American author of warts-and-all biographies. His scathing and best-selling 1972 biography *Luce and His Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972) which won the 1973 Pulitzer Prize for biography, is cited throughout this essay.

⁷ An appellation that deliberately evokes the famous 19th Century German term '*Die Lügenpresse*' ('The Lying Press').

necessarily becomes a manipulated majority and a manipulated government. The Lucepress threat would have been mitigated had there been equal propaganda exerted by the opposition. But the Lucepress had *no hidden-propaganda opposition*. The influence exerted on its 40 million weekly readers had no counterpart on the other side.' (Emphasis in original.)⁸

One key outcome of the Luce's pro-Eisenhower campaign was Eisenhower's employment of Luce employee Charles Douglas ('C. D.') Jackson, Managing Director of Time-Life International. Jackson (1902-1964) had been a member of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, predecessor to the CIA) during the Second World War, and (US Army General) Eisenhower's special advisor on psychological warfare. Between 1953 and 1954, Jackson was President Eisenhower's special liaison between the Pentagon and the recently-created CIA. On one fundamental principle, Jackson and Eisenhower were likeminded: psychological warfare was preferable to physical warfare, and decisively so in the age of nuclear weapons. If fought carefully enough, a cold war could be won without turning into a hot one. America's lofty notions of 'Freedom' were to be packaged and exported around the world as 'Liberation', overwhelmingly destined for European nations under the umbrella of the Soviet Union. By inspiring those nations to rise up, the Soviet Union could be fatally undermined and the US would win a world war without fighting one. In a 1949 letter to the US Ambassador in Yugoslavia, C.D. Jackson had set out his thoughts on the publications he oversaw:

' . . . these American publications, particularly *TIME* and *LIFE* international, become immediately suspect if the overseas reader gets the impression that they are being carefully edited to or for him. Their entire usefulness, propaganda-wise, depends on the credibility, and they achieve maximum credibility if the foreign reader *thinks* that he is . . . seeing the news of the world and the U.S. freely presented with no punches pulled, instead of seeing what is "good for him".' (Caps in original, Emphasis added.)⁹

Behind Jackson's words lay a behaviouralist's mindset. As Jackson saw it, America was up against a global Soviet propaganda machine that could act instantly and did so monolithically. He believed that this was only possible

⁸ Swanberg (see note 6) p. 383.

⁹ Jackson, letter to George V. Allen, 29 August 1949. Cited in Ned O'Gorman, "'The One Word the Kremlin Fears": C. D. Jackson, Cold War "Liberation", and American Political-Economic Adventurism' in *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2009, pp. 389-427. *JSTOR*, <www.jstor.org/stable/41940447>. (Free sign-up required)

because all parts of the machine, in every communist nation, shared a clear ideology and therefore precisely the same dogma-dictated views of world events. It led Jackson to a very cynical idea of western freedom. Populations could be inculcated with commercial and political propaganda and, since the propaganda was designed to create specific reactions, mass social reactions could be anticipated and planned for. Such indoctrinated citizenries would also become unwitting proselytisers for this new concept of freedom.

Safely embedded within the Eisenhower administration, Jackson set about steering the president along a path that he believed would lead to world peace and prosperity, guided by a beneficent and paternal USA. This entailed a degree of psychological warfare directed at the bureaucratic deep state of Washington DC, which would be flooded by new thinking emanating from within its own ranks. To trigger this wave, Jackson, a Princeton alumnus himself, set up the secret and off-the-record Princeton Economic Conference of 1954. That conference's conclusions were put into a proposal for a transnational Partnership for Economic Growth. The new partnership's underlying principle would be to increase the prosperity of poorer nations. This (Jackson believed) would both inoculate against communist infiltration and set a shining example to those nations already in Soviet orbits. The conference was all a charade, the outcome having been predetermined by Jackson, who guided the attendees into believing that they had arrived at that outcome of their own accords. A month before the conference began, Jackson had written to Harry Luce:

' . . . the actual Plan could be written in 48 hours out of the heads of two or three of us, without the conference stage setting. On the other hand, I feel that this little bit of theatre has a certain importance, and, on the basis of previous experience, will make a definite contribution.'¹⁰

Jackson's attempt to beguile Eisenhower via this simulacrum of spontaneity was unsuccessful, which Jackson blamed on Eisenhower's passivity and lack of vision. Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say that Eisenhower refused to act on the conference's proposals because he did not share Jackson's enthusiasm for commodifying a substitute form of freedom. But by and large, the relationship between the Eisenhower administration and the

¹⁰ Jackson letter dated 9 April 1954, cited in O'Gorman (see note 9). O'Gorman lists the following as among the conference's 24 attendees: Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell (both CIA); Robert Bowie (State Department); H. Chapman Rose (Treasury Department); Robert Garner (International Bank); Thomas McKittrick (Chase National Bank); and two of Jackson's fellow Time Inc, executives, John Jessup and Charles Stillman. Given Jackson's role in establishing the annual Bilderberg conference, one has to wonder about attitudes to psychological warfare among members of the Bilderberg steering committee.

Luce empire was a harmonious one. 'I am a Protestant, a Republican and a free-enterpriser', Harry declared, 'which means I am biased in favor of God, Eisenhower and the stockholders of Time Inc. – and if anybody who objects doesn't know this by now, why the hell are they still spending 35 cents for the magazine?'¹¹

In a celebrated 1941 *Life* editorial, 'The American Century'¹² Harry had rhapsodised about the USA's moral imperative to determine human destiny. In the midst of describing the way in which America could reinvigorate the devastated nations of Europe with lost classical values (currently, he proclaimed, in the generous custody of the United States), Harry set out a remarkably specific vision.

'We must undertake now to be the Good Samaritan of the entire world. It is the manifest duty of this country to undertake to feed all the people of the world who as a result of this worldwide collapse of civilization are hungry and destitute – all of them, that is, whom we can from time to time reach consistently with a very tough attitude toward all hostile governments. *For every dollar we spend on armaments, we should spend at least a dime in a gigantic effort to feed the world* – and all the world should know that we have dedicated ourselves to this task.' (Emphasis added)

Twelve years later, this inspiring vision would rise again. Following the death of Stalin in March 1953, and (from a US perspective) surprisingly conciliatory remarks from his successor Georgi Malenkov, Eisenhower delivered a cautiously optimistic speech at a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. The 'Chance for Peace' speech was widely acclaimed as the best of Eisenhower's career, and it included the memorable line: 'Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.' Eisenhower's speech had been worked on by several hands, including that of C. D. Jackson.¹³

Clare Boothe Luce had been confirmed as Ambassador to Italy on 3 March 1953, two days before Stalin's death. While Eisenhower was delivering his 'Chance for Peace' speech, she was sailing across the Atlantic aboard Italy's symbol of post-war national pride, the *SS Andrea Doria*, on her way to take up

¹¹ Swanberg (see note 6) p. 383.

¹² In the 17 February 1941 issue.

¹³ 'The Chance for Peace', 16 April 1953. Transcript at http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches/ike_chance_for_peace.html.

her new role in Rome at the Palazzo Margherita. Italian media coverage concentrated on the novelty of a female and non-elderly Ambassador. Clare did little to discourage the chauvinism of the local press, because her ostentatiously-flaunted glamour and sharp repartee served as a convenient mask for her political agenda – preventing Italy from going communist.

As Ambassador, Clare was responsible for a 12-man CIA team. It was led by no lesser person than the chief of the Western European Division of the Directorate of Plans, ex-OSS man Gerald Miller. He was in Italy to stave off Soviet subversion by acting as the conduit for millions of dollars that were secretly being poured into 'democratic center parties, non-Communist labor unions, Catholic youth groups, and other anti-Red organizations'.¹⁴ Naturally, as an Ambassador, Clare dealt regularly with Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John (Foster) Dulles, and with the director of the CIA, Foster's brother Allen. Foster and Allen had been thrown into confusion by Stalin's death, neither the State Department nor the CIA having made any contingency plans for this inevitable situation. So Clare had been sent into her new role without any real guidance, not that it discomfited her for long.

Clare arrived in Rome six weeks before the Italian general election, which, she told the Overseas Press Club, would have 'tremendous significance'.¹⁵ To Clare and to the Dulles brothers, its significance lay in Italy's geographical position. If communism gained power in Italy, it could dominate the Mediterranean. At the time of her confirmation as Ambassador, Clare had told reporters that she would not comment on the forthcoming Italian election, because 'We don't like people or other nations to interfere in our elections . . . Why should they?'¹⁶ But soon after arriving in Italy, and just a week before the election in question, Ambassador Boothe Luce delivered a speech that contained a sharp warning about the future of US-Italian relations.

' . . . if – I am required in all honesty to say this – though it cannot happen – the Italian people should fall unhappy victim to the wiles of totalitarianism, totalitarianism of the right or the left, there would follow – logically and tragically – grave consequences for this intimate and warm

¹⁴ Morris (see note 1) p. 338. Working under Gerald Miller in Rome during Clare's tenure as Ambassador was a young CIA officer called William Egan Colby. Much later, in 1973, Colby became CIA Director and Clare acquired yet another of her invaluable private backchannels with the intelligence community.

¹⁵ Morris (see note 1) p. 321.

¹⁶ Ronald D. Landa: "'Shots from a Luce Cannon": Combating Communism in Italy, 1953-1956'; draft chapter prepared for the Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense (2012, released 2017). <<https://tinyurl.com/2acn2489>> or <<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/dc.html?doc=3456983-01-Shots-from-a-Luce-Cannon-Combating-Communism>>.

cooperation we now enjoy.’¹⁷

Italy’s political parties unanimously condemned Clare’s words as US interference in their country’s domestic affairs. The *Washington Post* called the remarks ‘an inexplicable breach of diplomatic propriety’, and said that they would damage the prospect of a US-friendly Italian government being formed. Less attention was paid to the fact that Clare had pulled influence with Harry to make sure that a portrait of Italian Prime Minister Alcide de Gasperi graced *Time* magazine’s cover on 25 April, with inside coverage none-too-subtly playing up his anti-communist credentials by describing him as ‘the bulwark of Italian morality and religion’.¹⁸

In the event, de Gasperi’s centrist Christian Democrats narrowly retained power at the election, their majority reduced from 160 to 15. Clare’s Milan speech was widely blamed in the international press. Frank Wisner, the CIA’s Deputy Director of Plans, wrote that without covert American funding of the Christian Democrats, ‘the reverse suffered by De Gasperi and the center parties would have been a rout’. Never one to let a crisis go to waste, Clare took the opportunity to redouble her anti-communist crusading anyway.

‘[W]ithin two years’, Clare warned Eisenhower, ‘Italy will be the first Western Democratic nation, by legal democratic procedures, to get a Communist government’.¹⁹ She urged that the CIA and State Department should draw up plans for dealing with such an eventuality, thinly disguising her ideas as a request for guidance in three scenarios which she had thoughtfully listed: a communist-governed Italy; the restoration of the Savoy monarchy; and a right-wing dictatorship. Doubtless, this was intended as a stinging reminder to Eisenhower that the Dulles brothers had failed to foresee Stalin’s death and that there was a need to be prepared. On a more practical level, Clare decided that lucrative US government contracts would only go to Italian companies ‘that took decisive action to reduce Communist strength in their labor forces’. She called this ‘armtwisting’, rather than outright interference.²⁰

¹⁷ For the text of the Luce speech, see page 14 of <<https://tinyurl.com/ye9eh435>> or <<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1954-pt5/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1954-pt5-2.pdf>>. Morris (see note 1) p. 343, claims that Clare wanted to excise this passage and was told she should keep it. Landa (see note 16), on the other hand, examined the original notes of this speech and found that Clare had written it herself, without anyone in Washington advising her, let alone ‘requiring’ her, to do so.

¹⁸ Swanberg (see note 6) p. 346. *Time* had already put de Gasperi on its cover on 19 April 1948, against a backdrop that depicted a menacing red octopus looming over a map of Italy. See <<http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19480419,00.html>>.

¹⁹ Landa (see note 16) p. 14.

²⁰ Landa (see note 16) p. 18.

And she wasn't bluffing, cancelling a \$7.5m warship construction in Palermo and a munitions contract in Milan worth \$18m, both on the basis that their unions had elected communist leaders.²¹ By and large, Clare was useful to the Italian government, for her propaganda-producing connections as much as her Washington connections. One official from the Italian government's Foreign Affairs Ministry observed:

'[She] is a member of your politburo. If there is anything we really want done we persuade her – she circumvents the State Department and telephones the White House. *Time* and *Life* are more valuable to us than [Clare's] experience.'²²

Allen Dulles visited Rome in mid-August 1953, ostensibly for a holiday, but really so that he could study cable traffic concerning the ongoing Iranian coup. He spent that time in the US Embassy's operations room with Clare and Gerald Miller, leaving his wife, Clover, to drift around the Italian capital on her own. Dulles's CIA-approved biographer remarks that Dulles 'always found it refreshing to spend time with Clare Boothe Luce'.²³ That's one way of putting it. The two had been conducting an extra-marital affair for some years. There was a nice symmetry in this arrangement, because Harry Luce was conducting an affair of his own, with Mary Bancroft, an ex-OSS officer who had also had an affair with Dulles.²⁴

CIA penetration of the Luce media empire itself had reached something of a height during Clare's Rome mission. Harry's own espionage entrée came in 1953, when he assisted the CIA by helping to bail out the cash-strapped *Partisan Review* with a donation of \$10,000. With Harry's approval, *Time* magazine knowingly provided CIA officers with cover in the form of journalistic

²¹ Morris (see note 1) p. 398.

²² Cited in Landa (see note 16) pp. 53-54. Clare's contact within the White House was of course C. D. Jackson, who had transferred from Time Inc. to Eisenhower's transitional team immediately following the 1952 election. In December that year, Jackson had leaked to Clare the news that she was president-elect Eisenhower's pick for his Italian Ambassador. That decision was not made public until 7 February 1953, weeks after Eisenhower's inauguration. See Morris (see note 1) pp. 311 and 315.

²³ Peter Grose, *Spymaster – The Life and Times of the First Civilian Director of the CIA* (London: Carlton, 2006), p. 367.

²⁴ Grose (see note 23) p. 430 ambiguously calls Harry's liaison with Bancroft a 'relationship'. Morris (see note 1) p. 502 recounts that a drunken Harry confronted Clare by asking her whether she knew about him and Mary Bancroft. Clare responded: 'I didn't.' Having established Clare's total ignorance, Harry then felt empowered to launch into a rambling hour-long monologue about his relationship with Bancroft, which left Clare 'utterly baffled'. At the end of this harangue Harry claimed, as an afterthought, that the affair (which had been going on for 12 years) was purely platonic.

credentials for overseas missions. Allen Dulles gave regular dinners for those of *Time's* foreign correspondents who were not already working for him, which served as an alibi for gathering intelligence from them anyway. Hugh Wilford describes the CIA-Luce symbiosis as 'extraordinarily successful, so much so [that] it was difficult to tell precisely where the Luce empire's overseas intelligence network ended and the CIA's began'.²⁵

During Eisenhower's second term, *Time* magazine's cover had featured vice-president Richard Nixon no fewer than five times. There was no doubt about where this was heading, and in October 1960 the Luces' endorsement of presidential candidate Nixon was duly announced. As they had done with Dewey in 1948, Clare and Harry had backed the wrong horse. But they weren't entirely locked out of the White House. First and foremost, the newly-elected President Kennedy understood the scale and power of the Luces' propaganda outfit and maintained careful relations with Harry and Clare. The other reason was very mundane: both the Luces knew and liked Kennedy's father, Joseph (1888-1969), whom they had known since he was the USA's Ambassador to the United Kingdom in the run-up to the Second World War. Clare, in particular, had a soft spot for the Kennedy patriarch. Quite apart from her conversion to Catholicism, which was also Joe's denomination, she had conducted an extra-marital affair with him in 1940.²⁶

The Luces' relationship with the Kennedy clan is neatly encapsulated in a scene that took place on the night of 15 July 1960. In Harry's apartment at the Waldorf Hotel in New York, he and Joe Kennedy watched on television as Joe's son received the Democratic Party's nomination for presidential candidate. Harry remarked that he assumed Kennedy would take a liberal stance on domestic matters if elected president. Joe told him: 'Harry, you know goddamn well that no son of mine could ever be a goddamn liberal.' Harry reassured Joe that he wasn't bothered by the prospect of liberalism in domestic policy, adding: 'But if Jack shows any signs of going soft on Communism [in foreign policy] – then we would clobber him.'²⁷

In earnest of this threat, and following Kennedy's victory over Nixon, Harry told a 15 May 1961 conference of *Time* executives: '. . . I propose to you that we of Time Inc. now register in our minds and wills that from here on out the dominant aim of Time Inc. shall be the defeat of the Communist movement

²⁵ Hugh Wilford, *The Mighty Wurlitzer – How the CIA Played America*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008) pp. 231-232.

²⁶ Morris (see note 1) p. 18.

²⁷ Swanberg (see note 6) p. 410.

throughout the world.²⁸ As President, Kennedy had courted favour with the Luces by appointing Clare to his newly-formed Advisory Committee on the Arts,²⁹ but with Harry's declaration of *Time's* journalistic war on communism this proved to be insufficient appeasement.

In September 1962, Clare received a summons from Letitia Baldrige, White House social secretary, who told her that Kennedy wished to see her privately on the 26th of that month. Baldrige warned: 'I think he's unhappy about some of the things *Time* has been publishing.'³⁰ As Clare discovered, the subject occupying Kennedy's mind was Cuba.

Face-to-face with Kennedy, Clare told him that she could not understand why communism in Vietnam was such a pressing problem for his administration, when communism 90 miles off the coast of Florida was not. Kennedy pointed out that *Time* had urged him to take action in Vietnam but had ignored Cuba. Clare said she did not speak for or edit *Time*, and claimed she had 'very little' influence over the magazine. Although he did not say so, Kennedy must have believed Clare's protestations to be false. Quite apart from anything else, Clare's chauffeur for the White House meeting was Hugh Sidey, *Time's* presidential correspondent, who dropped her off outside the White House and would no doubt be fully briefed by Clare during the drive home. Kennedy pointedly asked Clare: 'Assuming Cuba *is* a threat, what is *your* policy?' (Second emphasis added.) Despite her full awareness of the disastrous 1961 Bay of Pigs landings, Clare urged Kennedy to invade.

Given the Luces' by now entrenched collaboration with the CIA, it seems unlikely that Clare's proselytising for one of the CIA's lost causes was unintentional. Quite apart from anything else, Clare was donating money to the 'Flying Tigers', better known to posterity as Alpha 66 – a fleet of anti-Castro Cubans who (despite their nickname) used private boats to make information-gathering trips to Cuba on behalf of the CIA, not to mention committing occasional acts of terrorism.³¹ When Hugh Sidey drove up to the White House

²⁸ Swanberg (see note 6) p. 414.

²⁹ Morris (see note 1) p. 523.

This committee had been created specifically to plan a National Cultural Centre in Washington DC, which was a very good fit with Clare's personal interests and an appropriate way to deploy her knowledge and experience.

³⁰ Unless stated otherwise, information about this Kennedy-Luce meeting comes from Morris (see note 1) pp. 527 to 535.

³¹ The ringleader of this ongoing escapade was William Pawley (1896-1977), founder of the original Flying Tigers and a close friend of Allen Dulles. Clare became acquainted with Pawley while covering the South Pacific for *Life* magazine in 1942. Stephen Shadegg, *Clare Boothe Luce – A Biography* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1973), pp. 145-146.

steps to collect Clare after lunch, Kennedy personally told Sidey that he disliked having Clare tell him 'how to run the world'.

During the meeting, Clare had asked Kennedy about how he viewed his place in history. Her theory, she explained, was that the greater a person was, the easier it was to sum them up in one sentence. As examples, she had rattled off: 'He died to save us He discovered America He preserved the Union and freed the slaves. He lifted us out of a Depression and won a great World War.' Kennedy had brushed this away, saying 'I am not interested in my place in history.' Shortly after meeting with Clare, Kennedy had to send federal troops to Mississippi to ensure the enrolment of black student James Meredith in a segregated university, and to restore public order because the ensuing political stand-off had led to rioting. In an overtly mollifying letter to the President, thanking him for the meeting and mailed shortly after the Mississippi incident, Clare flattered Kennedy by reiterating her belief in the power of 'single sentence' historical verdicts.

'He upheld and enforced the law of the land against segregation in Mississippi. A noble sentence! A sentence for all the world to read and applaud. A sentence which describes not only the act but the actor. We know him, not because of what he said but because of what he did.' (Emphasis in original.)

That letter was dated 4 October 1962. Just two days later, an article of Clare's appeared in *Life* magazine, warning the President that he must recognise that to accept a communist Cuba would raise 'the question not only of American prestige but of American survival'.³² The Cuban Missile Crisis began its most dangerous phase later that month, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff echoing Clare's invasion policy.³³ After the Cuban crisis had receded, Allen Dulles phoned Clare and told her that she would have to stop giving money to Alpha 66 in view of Kennedy's pledge to leave Cuba unmolested. Clare contented herself thereafter by heckling Kennedy in newspaper interviews and editorial columns, as well as the occasional private letter. Her jibes and barbs only increased as Kennedy's prosecution of the Vietnam war seemed to falter. In the eyes of Harry and Clare, President Kennedy had gone 'soft on communism' and Harry's promised 'clobbering' (see p. 9 above) had commenced. The onslaught gradually intensified and only ceased when Kennedy was assassinated in November the

³² Swanberg (see note 6) p. 431.

³³ On the long-running allegations that Clare Boothe Luce helped spark the Cuban Missile Crisis by leaking classified information, see Max Holland, 'A Luce Connection: Senator Keating, William Pawley, and the Cuban Missile Crisis', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1999, pp. 139–167. *JSTOR*, at <www.jstor.org/stable/26925031> (free sign-up required).

following year.

After Kennedy's death, Harry brought *Time* and *Life* magazines into the LBJ camp. This was partly out of pragmatism (the Luces still had personal connections to the new president), and partly because Johnson seemed likely to reinvigorate the Vietnam War, a cause dear to the ultra-conservative hearts of both Luces. One of the first things Johnson did after arriving in the White House was to call Harry to 'pay his respects', which helped reassure Harry that their relationship would continue. In the words of the Luce-averse W. A. Swanberg, Johnson's personal schmoozing of the Luces became 'an important ingredient in [Harry] Luce's general approval of Johnson despite the Texan's obnoxious [Democratic] party affiliation.'³⁴ The informal endorsement of Johnson by *Time* and *Life* became official in 1964, when Senator Barry Goldwater – one of the most divisive Republican candidates in modern history – emerged as Johnson's electoral challenger. Clare, on the other hand, threw her weight behind Goldwater, joining his campaign team, donating money, and making rousing speeches in his support. They were almost neighbours anyway, and had been since 1957 when the Luces had acquired a villa in Goldwater's home state, Arizona.³⁵ It's hard to resist inferring that the Luces, as a couple, were deliberately playing both sides of the 1964 election.

In 1963, Clare's last few denunciations of the living John F. Kennedy were published. They included four nationally-syndicated opinion pieces rubbishing the 'lunatic' Apollo programme, and another blaming the Kennedy administration for the assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem. 48 hours after Kennedy was shot, a subdued Clare began drafting an essay, in which she concluded Kennedy's life 'may have been the price he paid for the Bay of Pigs.' The essay was never published.³⁶

Part Two: Lincoln and the Lone Nuts

'It's a book written about ten years ago giving the background of seven attempts on the lives of the President [sic] [. . .] It's a fascinating book, but you'll find a pattern running through here that I think we'll find in this present case. I hate to give you a paperback, but that's all there is.'³⁷

³⁴ Swanberg (see note 6) p. 441.

³⁵ Shadegg (see note 31) pp. 273-274. Before writing his biography of Clare Booth Luce, Stephen Shadegg was Goldwater's campaign manager.

³⁶ Morris (see note 1) p. 537.

³⁷ Warren Commission Executive Session 16 December 1963, pages 54 *et seq.* See <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=1325#relPageId=54>>.

With these words, on 16 December 1963, former CIA Director Allen Welsh Dulles (1893-1969) handed a copy of a book to each member of The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. Commissioner Gerald Ford asked when the book was published, to which Dulles replied: '1952. The last one is the attack on Truman. There you have a plot, but these other cases are all habitual, going back to the attack on Jackson in 1835. I found it very interesting.'

It was left to Commissioner John McCloy to point out the obvious, which led to a truly extraordinary assertion from Dulles:

McCLOY: 'The Lincoln assassination was a plot.'

DULLES: 'Yes, but one man was so dominant that it almost wasn't a plot.'³⁸

To set out clearly the scale of Dulles's falsehood: the Lincoln assassination was most definitely a plot, involving four would-be assassins, only one of whom – John Wilkes Booth – managed to kill his intended target. Booth's unsuccessful co-conspirators were: George Atzerodt (who was meant to kill Vice-President Andrew Johnson) and Lewis Powell and David Herold (who were meant to murder Secretary of State William H Seward). Of them all, Herold was the key accomplice. He not only acted as Powell's guide to Seward's home, but later helped the injured and fugitive Booth reach the rural practice of a sympathetic medic.

Booth's surviving co-conspirators were all tried and hanged in 1865, after a trial that lasted nearly two months and involved over 350 witnesses. For good measure, Mary Surratt, landlady of a Washington boarding-house, was also hanged. She had supposedly harboured the conspiracy while it was being hatched, and Booth had tried to recruit her son into it. The Lincoln plotters' objective was to somehow overthrow the Union government in the final days of the US Civil War. How the plotters thought the Confederacy would automatically emerge triumphant, after Lincoln and his colleagues had been murdered, remains a matter of some mystery. The suspicion has to be that the plot had far deeper roots, and that those roots have remained buried ever since.

Dulles's CIA-approved biographer, Peter Grose, defends Dulles's non-plot

³⁸ Any inference of tension in this exchange between Dulles and McCloy is mistaken. The two men had been friends since the early days of the Second World War. During McCloy's time as Assistant Secretary of War (1941-1945) he had helped establish the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the 'first draft' of what became the Central Intelligence Agency. The first OSS Director, William Donovan, immediately recruited Dulles, who until then had been a practising Wall Street attorney and part of Donovan's unofficial intelligence network of lawyers and businessmen.

interpretation of the Lincoln assassination by avowing that:

'Allen's point was not vapid at the time he made it. In the immediate aftermath of Lincoln's death, dark suspicions spread that John Wilkes Booth had acted in collusion with partisans of the Southern Confederacy. They were quickly discredited. [. . .] Allen's rebuttal to McCloy reflected the consensus academic judgments of his day.'³⁹

But Grose has distorted Dulles's words so that Dulles appears to be making a point that he did not make. That distortion reframes the proven Lincoln assassination conspiracy in terms of a hypothetical grand conspiracy, more powerful than John Wilkes Booth and his henchmen – perhaps even controlling them. Grose then suggests that when Dulles said there wasn't a plot, he was really dismissing the possibility of this more powerful plot's existence. Grose's attempt to reframe Dulles's remarks does not survive even a moment's attention to the transcript of the exchange in question.

Notwithstanding Grose's later embellishments, 98 years after the Lincoln plot, Allen Dulles seemed very sure of his ground, given the sheer magnitude of the historical facts ranged against him. During the same 1963 session of the Warren Commission's executive, he proposed calling the Secret Service to give evidence to the Commission, and eagerly named someone specific that he had in mind.

DULLES: 'I wonder if we couldn't, with the Chairman's approval, get one or two members of the Committee [sic] together, if some of us have time, perhaps the Counsel and one member of the Committee, and sit down with Bauman, and a few others, and just talk to them and get information for the benefit of the full Committee. [. . .] I would be very glad to get Bauman to come in and get all of his views, and if the Committee wants to see him to make a report to the Committee then they can do it.'

'Bauman' was the Commission stenographer's approximation of the surname of Urbanus Edmund Baughman (1905-1978). Baughman had been Director of the US Secret Service for 12 years, taking retirement in 1961. Why was Dulles so keen to drag Baughman before the Commission, to give evidence concerning an assassination that had happened two years after Baughman had stepped down?⁴⁰ The truth of the matter is that Dulles and Baughman held remarkable, and remarkably similar, views about presidential assassins and would-be

³⁹ Grose (see note 23) p. 545.

⁴⁰ James Rowley, Baughman's successor as chief of the US Secret Service, gave testimony to the Warren Commission on 18 June 1964. Hearings, Volume V, p. 449 *et seq.* See <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=40#relPageId=459>>.

assassins.

In his 1961 memoir, *Secret Service Chief*, Baughman had written urgently of the 'fact that every Secret Service man learns at once':

' . . . the life of the President of the United States is in very real and constant danger. This danger has grown in recent years and will grow even more in the future.

That is no melodramatic statement. Nor is it the slightest bit exaggerated. You know that three of our Presidents have already been assassinated – and that the assassins were insane. But did you know that five others have come within a hair's-breadth of being murdered by mad individuals?' (Emphasis in original.)⁴¹

Baughman elaborated on his theme by adding: 'Who makes these attempts, the successful ones, the near-successful ones, and the complete failures? They are all made by mentally-disturbed people.'

'As individuals they are sometimes capable of the most cunning kind of planning. Sometimes they are intellectuals. Sometimes their mental condition is cloaked in the disguise of a political philosophy. But whatever mask he uses, the assassin, underneath, is insane. In the Secret Service, we have found this to be unfailingly true.'⁴²

How had Baughman come to this patently untrue conclusion? It simply defies belief that a director of the Secret Service would be ignorant of the historical veracity of the Lincoln plot. The Secret Service was founded in 1865 – the year of Lincoln's murder. Baughman was well-aware of this, writing of his Secret Service induction:

'I was made to study the history of the Secret Service too, to learn its traditions, its glories and achievements, its nationwide duties, the instructive experiences of its agents in the past. The government had launched the organisation in 1865 in response to a wave of counterfeiting But in 1901 after President McKinley had been assassinated by the insane Polish worker, Leon Czolgosz, Congress had added the protection of the President to our duties. None too soon either, for this was our third president to be killed by madmen who should have been in mental institutions.'⁴³

Furthermore, Baughman's unflinching adherence to the 'lone nut' dogma

⁴¹ U. E. Baughman, *Secret Service Chief*. (London: Heinmann, 1961) p. 37.

⁴² Baughman (see note 41) p. 38.

⁴³ Baughman (see note 41) p. 19.

creates irresolvable conflict in his own memoir. During a discussion of a 1950 attempt on the life of then President Harry Truman, Baughman inevitably has to detail how it involved two Puerto Rican nationalists shooting in concert. By Baughman's own reasoning, this turns the 1950 plot into a two 'lone nuts' scenario. If this absurdity was pointed out to Baughman by his publisher (and the absurdity is so glaring that it is hard to believe that no-one pointed it out), then Baughman had evidently insisted on including it anyway.

In passing, Baughman named his inspiration for the 'lone nut' dogma. During the 1950s there had been a tourist observation tower that overlooked the golf course on President Dwight Eisenhower's farmstead on the historic battlefields surrounding Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. While recounting the unease he felt about this potential sniper's nest, Baughman recalled:

'For several years the President tended to take security measures a little too lightly for my personal taste. But by a kind of wordless proselytizing I had gradually gotten him to change his mind slightly. His conversion became complete, however, when he finally read a book called *The Assassins*, a terrifying account of seven attempts that have been made on the lives of our Presidents throughout history – three, as you know, successful. After Mr Eisenhower had read that book he agreed readily that the tower be shut when the family was in residence.'⁴⁴

With the title given by Baughman, the publication date given by Allen Dulles, and the matching descriptions of its contents given by the two men, three years apart, we can identify the single source of the Dulles and Baughman 'lone nut' myth. It was *The Assassins*, by Robert J. Donovan, published in 1952 by Harper and Brothers of New York.⁴⁵ Any lingering doubt about whether Dulles and Baughman really were referring to the same book by the same author is dispelled by a remark in Donovan's opening chapter:

'[T]he assaults on our Presidents have been undertaken entirely at the whim and on the initiation of the individual assassins. This was true even in the Lincoln assassination in which, though other conspirators were involved, *Booth was the moving spirit and dominated his accomplices to such an extent that the plot was the product of one man's will.*

By and large the true story behind the assassinations and attempted assassinations of American Presidents is that the assassins not only were lone operators, but were, most of them, men suffering from mental

⁴⁴ Baughman (see note 41) p. 187.

⁴⁵ The 1956 edition by Elek Books, London, has been consulted here.

disease, who pulled the trigger while in the grip of delusion.⁴⁶ (Emphasis added.)

Donovan's words are immediately recognisable as the origin of Allen Dulles's rejoinder to John McCloy that the Lincoln assassination was a plot in which 'one man was so dominant that it almost wasn't a plot'.

In embroidering his subject's remarks about the Lincoln plot-that-wasn't-a-plot, Dulles biographer Peter Grose does not identify Donovan's book, but refers to it as 'an academic study of seven attempts on the lives of American Presidents'.⁴⁷ Again, Grose is improving Dulles's thinking for him. Robert J. Donovan (1912-2003) was no academic. An obituary in the *New York Times* described him as 'a "shoe leather" newspaper reporter without a college education who became a Washington correspondent, best-selling author and presidential historian'.⁴⁸

The accolade of 'Presidential historian' is overdoing it. Donovan wrote a two-volume biography of President Harry Truman, and – most interestingly, for current purposes – *PT109: John F. Kennedy in World War II*, the now well-known tale of heroics on the high seas that served as Kennedy's political 'origin myth'. The book so pleased Kennedy's father Joseph that he used some of his famous personal connections to engineer a Hollywood movie adaptation. President Kennedy himself had a great deal of control over the production, which included his personal choice of Cliff Robertson as the actor who portrayed him.⁴⁹ The film version of Donovan's derring-do bestseller was released in June 1963, undoubtedly timed to boost JFK's reputation for his forthcoming re-election campaign in 1964.

In *The Assassins*, Donovan was fairly open about his novel re-interpretation of Abraham Lincoln's murder, explaining: 'It seems to me that Booth takes on an altogether new interest and that his life is seen from a different perspective when he is viewed, for the first time, in the company of all the other Presidential assassins.'⁵⁰ Which is to say that Donovan has a 'lone nut' thesis, and Booth is going to be forced to fit into it.

Donovan's evidence for Booth's insanity is slender. His hypothesis relies on an implied genetic legacy from Booth's father, the actor

⁴⁶ Donovan (see note 45) p. 9.

⁴⁷ Grose (see note 23) p. 545.

⁴⁸ <<https://tinyurl.com/s7zrsrsh>> or <<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/10/us/robert-j-donovan-90-the-author-of-pt-109.html>>

⁴⁹ <https://cliff.impactfulmedia.com/?page_id=5>

⁵⁰ Donovan (see note 45) p. 12.

Junius Brutus Booth, whose behaviour at times would stretch anyone's definition of 'eccentric'. An 1828 incident in which Junius broke down in the middle of a performance and had to be led off-stage wailing 'I'm a charity boy. I can't read. Take me to the lunatic hospital.' might be generously interpreted as a severe case of stage-fright. It is harder to explain away an 1838 incident in which Junius played the titular role in *Hamlet*, failed to appear on stage for Act V, and was discovered sitting in the rafters of the theatre, crowing like a rooster.⁵¹ Be that as it may, Donovan's sole evidence for the insanity of John Wilkes Booth is the supposed insanity of his father, and a remark made by the actor Edwin Forrest who, on hearing the news that John Wilkes Booth had shot Lincoln, exclaimed: 'All those goddamn Booths are crazy.'⁵²

Donovan's retelling of the Lincoln assassination is the climax of his 1952 book, meriting two chapters. Yet it consists of little more than an ad lib on the accepted history of the plot. All Booth's co-conspirators are edged out of Donovan's narrative, in order to focus upon the supposed insanity of its most infamous participant. Having established his thesis as strongly as his evidence permitted, and arguably a bit more than that, Donovan's conclusion declared:

'Indeed it is a tribute to American democracy that through generations of political clash and controversy there has been sufficient stability, restraint and morality to shun assassination as a political device. While three of our Presidents have been murdered and four others shot at, Americans can take satisfaction in the fact that in *nearly* all cases the assassinations were the acts of lone psychopaths and not the product of palace intrigue, secret societies and political power struggles.' (Emphasis added)⁵³

Yet Donovan's own book contains material that contradicts his 'lone nut' interpretation of the Lincoln assassination. In particular, he summarises the work of one Otto Eisenschiml,⁵⁴ who 'calls up the evil specter of possible connivance within the government at Lincoln's assassination, the implication

⁵¹ Although it must be observed that the crowing of the rooster is a key moment at the very start of *Hamlet*, and Ophelia uses the phrase 'By cock' in the last scene of Act IV. Since Hamlet does not appear on stage immediately in Act V, perhaps Booth had simply missed his cue by drifting off while privately amusing himself on the theme of roosters crowing.

⁵² Donovan (see note 45) page 219.

⁵³ Donovan (see note 45) pages 294-295. This passage must be viewed in its historical context: a nation then just under 180 years old, whose citizens are free to own firearms.

⁵⁴ Eisenschiml (1880-1963) is not formally credited in Donovan's book. He was an oil company executive and a respected writer on topics pertaining to the American Civil War. In his *Why Was Lincoln Murdered?* (published 1937) Eisenschiml set out the first respectable version of the 'palace coup' theory of Lincoln's assassination.

being that high officials – he looks suspiciously at Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton – either actively aided Booth or deliberately stood aside and let him work his will [. . .] Eienschimi dwells on

`[. . .] the negligence of Lincoln's guard at Ford's theatre, the breakdown of the commercial telegraph out of Washington after the shooting, and Stanton's orders for the pursuit of Booth in every direction except the one – the rather logical one – that the assassin took. As for motive, Eienschimi suggests that the Republican radicals who desired harsh terms for the defeated South had compelling reason to want to be rid of Lincoln and his policy of conciliation. Yet Eienschimi himself arrives, finally, at the dead end of absolute lack of direct evidence to support this sinister theory.'⁵⁵

What is most interesting about Donovan's reference material, however, is this formal acknowledgement of gratitude:

'To U. E. Baughman, Chief of the United States Secret Service, who kindly gave me access to official files on the attempted assassinations of Harry S. Truman and Franklin D. Roosevelt and whose advice was most valuable in the preparation of the chapter on the Secret Service.'⁵⁶

Quite rightly, Baughman was never called before the Warren Commission, but – in a final layer of repetition – the Commission received a specially-prepared Secret Service booklet entitled *Historical Information on Past Attacks and Assassinations Relating to American Presidents, Requested by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy*.⁵⁷ This document, which became Commission document 907, was compiled mainly (and without credit) from standard books on the subject, and relied heavily on Donovan's *The Assassins*. A 'core sample' of the most obvious relationships between the two texts is provided in appendix one at the end of this essay.

It's worth pausing to take stock of this near-incestuous intertextuality. In propounding the 'lone nut' theory of assassinations, Baughman's 1961 memoir relied heavily on Donovan's earlier work. Donovan's 1952 study in turn relied on Baughman's personal guidance for two of its key chapters – not to mention

⁵⁵ Donovan (see note 45) pp. 263-264. The last sentence in this excerpted passage is striking, given the paucity of evidence supporting Donovan's own contention that Booth was a 'lone nut', and the overwhelming evidence that contradicts it.

⁵⁶ Donovan (see note 45) p. xi

⁵⁷ <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=11303>>

Donovan's privileged access to still-classified Secret Service files.⁵⁸ Furthermore, as we have seen, in the 1950s, after 'several years' of fruitless persuasion, Baughman had used Donovan's book to finally convince the reluctant President Eisenhower to accept greater Secret Service intrusion into his private life. It would be natural to infer that Baughman's extraordinary (and even excessive) generosity toward Donovan was motivated at least in part by Baughman's professional concerns about Presidential security.

What conclusions can we draw from this sequence of events? It seems that Donovan's book served as a convenient vehicle for Baughman to continue his campaign to get Eisenhower to accept more security. Years later, having observed the success of Baughman's strategy, Allen Dulles adapted it and implemented it on a far more ambitious scale to promote his 'lone nut' interpretation of Kennedy's assassination.

In recommending Donovan's book to the Warren Commission, retired CIA Director Allen Dulles had knowingly promoted a work that was highly misleading. In addition, it was one that had been effectively co-authored by a Director of the Secret Service (Baughman) who may have had an ulterior motive for his collaboration with Donovan in the first place

Not content with that, Dulles urged that this Secret Service ex-director should be dragged out of retirement to give evidence to the Warren Commission – in full awareness of the firm and authoritative opinions that he would express. When that attempt at jury-rigging failed, the Secret Service obligingly produced a booklet that promoted Donovan's 'lone nut' thesis anyway.

After Dulles had handed out copies of Donovan's *The Assassins* in December 1963, the next meeting of the Commission's executive was in January 1964. 'Direct evidence of sinister theories' was precisely the worry playing upon their collective minds at that session.

Item H.ii on the agenda that afternoon was the fate of the corpse of JFK's accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, whose public and unguarded grave was causing anxiety. Strangely (or perhaps not, given their Dulles-gifted reading material), the Commission displayed considerable unease over precedents set by the controversies surrounding the Lincoln assassination. Representative Hale Boggs introduced the theme by remarking:

BOGGS: 'I am a little concerned about moving [Oswald]. You remember when, it is funny how history repeats itself, but all the controversy about the body ultimately of Lincoln.'

⁵⁸ The USA's Freedom of Information Act was not passed until 1966, which was 14 years after Donovan's book came out.

CHAIRMAN: 'Lincoln?'

RUSSELL: 'Not only that, John Wilkes Booth, the people swore at the last that wasn't Booth they killed down here at that barn in Virginia. You remember the Navy put that his body way down here in the Navy Yard and you have been having people claiming to be John Wilkes Booth since then all over the United States.'⁵⁹

Russell's remarks demonstrate a more than casual interest in the Lincoln assassination controversies. The US government of 1865 had buried Booth in an obscure grave, and then, to prevent people from seeking out that grave, falsely claimed that Booth's corpse had been weighted with lead shot and unceremoniously dumped in the Potomac. The 'disappearance' of Booth's corpse had the unintended consequence of encouraging a theory that there was in fact no corpse because Booth had escaped, and officials were simply trying to cover up their own failure to capture him.⁶⁰ Two years after Booth's death, there were reports of him hiding out in India, or somewhere unspecified in the South Seas. In 1907, a book entitled *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth* asserted that Lincoln's killer had changed his name to John St. Helen and moved to Texas, before disappearing and then reappearing in Oklahoma, where he was using the name 'David E. George' when he killed himself in 1903.⁶¹ Boggs's remarks about Lincoln's own corpse were likewise based on rumours about phoney funerals and disappearing cadavers. Those rumours were still circulating in 1901 during exhumation of Lincoln's body and its subsequent reburial in a secured grave.⁶² Having brought up the theories that swirled after Lincoln's death, Boggs set out his concerns about the corpse of Kennedy's accused killer:

⁵⁹ Warren Commission Executive Session, 21 January 1964. See <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=1326#relPageId=76>>.

⁶⁰ During the January 1964 meeting Warren Commissioner John McCloy remarked: 'When I was in the War Department, they opened up these records, this record of the burial of John Wilkes Booth's body. It is the most dramatic thing you ever read. It told about how they took him with a lantern in some fort down here and dumped him in the water, I think it was.' But in the many years after McCloy spoke those words, it was established that the 'watery grave' story was a cover-up. McCloy's recollection, if accurate, therefore indicates that the US Federal Government had at some point created fake documentary records, presumably in case they should ever be needed to bolster the cover-up.

⁶¹ Unbelievably, David E. George's undertaker permitted the book's author to take ownership of the embalmed corpse, which ended up as an exhibit in travelling carnivals. See <https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1838&context=br_rev>.

⁶² <<https://rogerjnorton.com/Lincoln13.html>> Note that Lincoln's reburial took place six years before the publication of *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth*.

'I don't care if you move [Oswald's] body 20 feet over to somewhere else[,] somebody is going to say that is not the body and you are going to have somebody go down there and pull it out of that mausoleum [sic] and have X-rays made and prove it is his body. It may cost a little to have a cop or two around there but it is worth it.'⁶³

Boggs's forebodings were justified. Three years after Kennedy's murder, the first book on the possibility of an Oswald doppelganger appeared – *The Second Oswald*, by Richard H Popkin. By 1981, the controversy about an Oswald doppelganger had become so well-known that Oswald's corpse was finally exhumed for forensic examination. This proved that the corpse was that of the Lee Harvey Oswald who went to the Soviet Union.

Throughout this Warren Commission executive discussion of possible doppelganger assassins, and despite his eagerness to have Lee Harvey Oswald portrayed as a latter-day John Wilkes Booth, Allen Dulles said nothing at all. This is significant because Dulles was fully aware of, and keenly interested in, the potential uses of doppelgangers in intelligence work. In 1954, Dulles had commissioned an analyst to determine whether Korean propaganda photographs of a captured American general showed the officer himself or a convincing doppelganger. The analyst determined that the photos really did show the general, a conclusion that was vindicated when the prisoner was eventually released. 'Allen was convinced that he had a valuable new tool of intelligence analysis.'⁶⁴

As Dulles was handing out copies of the Donovan book to his fellow Commissioners, a Dallas journalist was putting forward theories of his own. Dale E. Basye was a reporter for the *Dallas Morning News* at the time when Kennedy was killed, and he had been reflecting upon what he regarded as some suspicious anomalies about the case. He had written a long and detailed letter to renowned American psychologist Dr. Milton H. Erickson, which began:

'Was Lee Harvey Oswald under hypnosis when he shot President Kennedy? Was he subjected to intensive psychological brain-washing techniques in Russia – perfected even further than in Korean war days? Was he given a post-hypnotic suggestion that he would shoot the president at the first feasible opportunity and upon being given a certain signal, which would set him in motion?'

Basye drew particular attention to Oswald's actions following the assassination,

⁶³ It is not clear why Boggs was worried that someone might 'prove it is his body'. This may be a stenographer's error, or perhaps Boggs was simply appealing to the decency of his fellow Commissioners.

⁶⁴ Grose (see note 23) p. 403.

noting: 'When the Texas Theatre was flooded with police and it was obvious that escape was impossible, Oswald put up a suicidal-type resistance. He leaped to his feet and shouted, "It's all over!"' This led Basye to speculate:

'Had [Oswald] been given a post-hypnotic suggestion that when his capture seemed inevitable he was to shout "It's all over", and then forget all about his crimes? Despite overwhelming evidence against him and intense questioning, Oswald steadfastly maintained that he was innocent and knew nothing about either crime.'

Demonstrating a wholly unsurprising lack of hard evidence to support his ideas, Basye relied upon a well-known thriller for parallels: 'In *The Manchurian Candidate*, a psychologically disturbed young man was brain-washed in a Manchurian POW camp to such an extent that he would obey unquestioningly any orders given him by the Reds.' Basye concluded by putting twelve questions to Erickson, regarding the feasibility of hypnotising, drugging, and brainwashing someone into becoming an unsuspecting assassin. Although he didn't know it, Basye was close to an important truth. The CIA's Project Artichoke (precursor to the infamous Project MKUltra) had successfully produced exactly such a 'zombie assassin'. On 19 February 1954, Morse Allen had hypnotised one CIA secretary into firing a gun at another, with the stated aim of killing her target.⁶⁵ When she was brought round after performing her task, the secretary had complete amnesia about what she had done.

In his reply to Basye, dated 13 December 1963, Dr Erickson gave Basye very short shrift indeed, stating: 'I must express a complete disagreement with your theory from beginning to end' and 'In answer to your suggested questions the answers are completely in the negative.' For good measure, Erickson called both the novel and the film of *The Manchurian Candidate* 'complete, utter, and pernicious nonsense from beginning to end'.

But Erickson wasn't completely unhelpful to Basye. Having seemingly scotched Basye's theory of Oswald as a mind-controlled killer sent by the USSR, Erickson firmly attempted to steer Basye onto a very different line of research, overtly reprimanding Basye as he did so.

'Now regarding his disorganized behavior after the assassination; it is absolutely typical of the psychopathic personality. They will plan a course of action to the tiniest detail, rehearsing, checking, taking endless precautions, and the plan will end completely at a climactic point. The planner then proceeds to act at random and irrationally, exactly as Oswald did after the shots were fired.'

⁶⁵ Fortunately for all involved, the gun had been loaded with blanks, although this was not revealed to the hypnotised subject.

You could make a parallel with John Wilkes Booth, and you could make an informative and reliable instructive account that would do you more credit as a writer if you developed that story as the "Climactic End of a Psychopathic Personality's Life Long Egocentric Career".' (Emphasis added.)

The intriguing thing about this correspondence is that Milton H. Erickson had worked for the OSS during the Second World War, researching the use of hypnosis during the interrogations of captive German soldiers and officers. Although it's never been officially confirmed, Erickson almost certainly went on to work for the CIA after the OSS was formally dissolved in 1947. Whether or not Dr Erickson really transferred to the CIA, he had worked for the OSS in the same region of Europe where Allen Dulles was stationed, and at the same time. The two men almost certainly knew each other. Erickson's letter replying to Basye was sent just three days before the executive meeting of the Warren Commission at which Dulles would hand out his copies of Donovan's *The Assassins*. What unmasks Erickson's letter as a concerted attempt to divert Basye onto a CIA-approved course is the fact that – like Dulles – Erickson was promoting the demonstrably false idea that John Wilkes Booth had been a 'lone nut'. There is no other reason that explains Erickson's attempt to make Basye abandon his mind-control theories, when he could have just ignored Basye's letter, or summarily dismissed Basye's hypothesis and left it at that.⁶⁶

Part Three: The Lincoln-Kennedy List

On 21 August 1964, a few weeks before the Warren Commission's report was published, a strange piece graced the inner pages of *Life* magazine. Entitled 'A Compendium of Curious Coincidences', it listed a number of detailed parallels between the lives of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy and instantly attained the status of a classic urban legend. In the nearly 60 years since the list of so-called 'Lincoln-Kennedy Coincidences' first appeared, it has been republished innumerable times, in books, magazines and newspapers, and has proliferated across the internet. Even Allen Dulles's CIA-sanctioned biographer, Peter Grose, backhandedly acknowledged the phantasmal historical connections: 'The Lincoln precedent . . . offers titillating parallels for all who go on seeking for a conspiracy against Kennedy.'⁶⁷

It has been debunked many times, but phantom things die phantom deaths, and the list keeps marching on. In 1999, Snopes, the most famous

⁶⁶ Basye handed his letter, and Erickson's response, to the FBI on 18 December 1963. See <<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=112172>>.

⁶⁷ Grose (see note 23) p. 545

website devoted to fact-checking online disinformation, hoaxes, and rumours, set out to debunk the list once and for all. It didn't succeed. Although the Snopes author tried his hardest, the attempted point-by-point debunking of the Lincoln-Kennedy list⁶⁸ chiefly consists of repeating 'But what's meant to be so special about that?' over and over again. Which is to say that although later versions of the list have certainly acquired inaccuracies, most of the core elements of the original list are accurate. This strong component of factuality is what gives the list its enduring fascination. But although the classic list consists of facts, they are overwhelmingly facts that have been taken out of context.

Who wrote the *Life* article? No-one has ever claimed authorship, despite the fact that the Lincoln-Kennedy list is one of the most widely-circulated pieces of research ever published. The *Life* author opens by saying:

'Wherever collectors of odd facts congregate these days, the conversation almost invariably turns to the uncanny parallels in the lives – and deaths – of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. However it started, it has added up to a compendium of curious coincidences. Last week, even the G.O.P. *Congressional Committee Newsletter*, with a circulation among 15,000 Republicans, joined in the game with its own list. There were no political motives, explained *Newsletter* Editor Edward Neff. "We just thought of them as interesting.'" (See appendix 2.)

This indicates that *Life's* author had been aware of the list's unofficial circulation, but (what with having editorial standards to maintain) had chosen to ignore the list until it had gained a degree of respectability in political circles. As it happens, *Life* had been narrowly beaten to the punch by its competitor, *Newsweek* magazine, which was then owned by the *Washington Post*. On 10 August 1964, *Newsweek's* pages included a brief article headlined 'Coincidences'. It began: 'A list of curious coincidences on [sic] the assassinations of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John Fitzgerald Kennedy was making the office duplicating machines hum in New York last week', before going on to enumerate the 15 core elements of the classic list.

This means that the Lincoln-Kennedy list was one of the earliest instances of what later became known as 'Xerox-lore', the most efficient means of transmitting counter-cultural 'memes' in the pre-internet era.⁶⁹ The first commercial photocopier machines had appeared just five years earlier, in 1959,

⁶⁸ <<https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/linkin-kennedy/>>

⁶⁹ To this author's knowledge, there are no surviving copies of the hand-circulated list. This is surprising, given its wide circulation, its subject matter, and its importance to historians of modern folklore.

and while they were still expensive and uncommon, they afforded white-collar subversives secure anonymity, mass reproduction, and total accuracy. Whoever drew up the original Lincoln-Kennedy *samizdat* was an innovator in their exploitation of this new device.⁷⁰ It was effectively psychological warfare, a peacetime version of the OSS's 1945 'Operation Cornflakes' in which black propaganda had been bulk-inserted into the German postal system, which then unknowingly distributed it across the nation.⁷¹ Decades later, folklorist Alan Dundes (1934-2005) acknowledged the incredible advantages the advent of office technology offered to storytellers:

'Partly because folklore was wrongly tied to illiteracy, it was wrongly assumed that as literacy increased, folklore would decrease. Technology, especially as it impinged upon communication techniques, was thought to be a factor contributing to the demise of folklore. Not true! The technology of the telephone, radio, television, Xerox machine, etc., has increased the speed of the transmission of folklore.'⁷²

From *Newsweek's* 1964 coverage of the *samizdat* Lincoln-Kennedy list, we can ascertain that the original version of the list was created in New York City and then set loose among the city's office workers during the first week of August 1964. Whoever it was who drew up the original list, there was unquestionably a single original copy. The precise and pedantic details must have taken the author considerable time and effort, as they worked on what would become one of the most contagious pieces of viral information in history. It fluttered untraceably through the in-trays and pigeon-holes of an anxious urban America that was still baffled by the mysteries surrounding Kennedy's murder. It offered them a ready-made legend and it made Kennedy's murder meaningful: he was a noble martyr for a cause greater than himself. The very first item on the New York list was: 'Both Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy were concerned with the issue of civil rights.'

The list's opening statement was a carefully-worded fudge, to be sure, since Kennedy had done nothing comparable to what Lincoln had accomplished with emancipation, but there was an element of truth in it. It also reflected the

⁷⁰ The term *samizdat* will be used from here onward to denote the physical nature of the pre-publication list, and thereby avoid potential confusion with the contents of the epistemological 'list'.

⁷¹ <<https://tinyurl.com/4j5dru8m>> or <<https://www.cia.gov/static/9e2c204f541c9cb6dafcc83530db7172/Forgeries-in-World-Wars.pdf>>

⁷² Alan Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1980) p. 17. Online excerpt at <<https://lizmontague.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/fl-whoarethefolk.pdf>>.

single-sentence 'verdict of history' with which Clare Boothe Luce had attempted to flatter Kennedy in October 1962.

"He upheld and enforced the law of the land against segregation in Mississippi. A noble sentence! A sentence for all the world to read and applaud. A sentence which describes not only the act but the actor. We know him, not because of what he said but because of what he did." (Emphasis in original.) (See p. 11 above.)⁷³

Why did the anonymous author of the 1964 *samizdat* choose Abraham Lincoln as their source for parallels? Obviously, we cannot find out, but we can take a confident guess because there is a very obvious answer. If anyone can, instantly and without checking, name the other assassinated US Presidents, then they have some special interest that is not shared by the overwhelming majority of other people. McKinley and Garfield are unknowns, not even also-rans, when compared to the grand passions and patriotic mythologising that still surround Abraham Lincoln, who, in 1964 as today, appeared on the familiar penny and five-dollar bill in every American's billfold.⁷⁴ If you want to propagate a legend, the best way to do it is to attach it to an existing one. As is abundantly clear from the wealth of famous quotations that are falsely attributed to him, Lincoln – like Churchill and Einstein – is an ideal vector.⁷⁵ Whoever drew up the original Lincoln-Kennedy list had produced a propaganda masterpiece.

The Lincoln-Kennedy *samizdat* complemented the action that Allen Dulles had executed nine months earlier, when he introduced his fellow Warren Commissioners to Robert J. Donovan's 1952 book, *The Assassins*. As C. D. Jackson had done, when he set out to sway President Eisenhower with the Princeton Economic Conference of 1954, Dulles had set the Warren Commission on a course toward his privately pre-determined conclusion. The information had been poured in 'upstream' and it would inevitably reappear 'downstream' – if the original information was poured in sufficient quantity and concentration. Dulles's presentation of the Donovan book (a copy for each Commissioner, at Dulles's personal expense) took place at the December 1963 meeting of the Warren Commission's executive. The effectiveness of Dulles's strategy is demonstrated by the comments about the Lincoln assassination,

⁷³ Note that among the examples of single-sentence histories that Luce had used to present her theory was 'He preserved the Union and freed the slaves.'

⁷⁴ Lincoln's portrait has appeared on the one-cent coin since 1909, and on the five-dollar bill since 1914.

⁷⁵ On which point, see <https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln#Attributed> and the section immediately below it 'Misattributed'.

offered spontaneously by Commissioners Russell and McCloy, at the Commission executive's very next meeting in January 1964. A unwritten 'final chapter' to Donovan's book was already taking shape in their minds. Dulles had mounted psychological warfare against his colleagues in order to amplify that psychological warfare and launch it on the US public.

Alan Dulles's daily office diary,⁷⁶ maintained by his Washington DC secretary, shows that he was in New York City frequently during the two-month period leading up to the appearance of the anonymous Lincoln-Kennedy *samizdat*. What he was doing there is unclear, and these visits were usually brief, typically lasting just one day.⁷⁷

It also shows that Dulles was in touch with Robert J. Donovan, author of *The Assassins*. Donovan's work on the 'lone nut' mythos had been reissued as a paperback in January 1964, after eight years out of print, and naturally it had a new chapter all about Lee Harvey Oswald.⁷⁸ Dulles met with Donovan at 1pm on 16 January. On 24 April, Donovan called Dulles's office 'Re paperback edition of "The Assassins" and letter written by Oswald to Sen. John Tower.'⁷⁹ He was still in touch in November 1964: on the 23rd, Dulles's secretary noted: 'Robert Donovan called. (Something about page 144?)'⁸⁰

The FBI knew something was going on. A 27 January 1964 memo refers to the paperback edition of Donovan's book as a 'hurry-up job' and remarks that 'Donovan has used considerable artistic license in dramatizing some of the story'. The memo goes on to address six factual inaccuracies in Donovan's account of the Kennedy murder, including: 'Donovan alleges that one of the three bullets fired by Oswald was recovered from the President's body. No bullets were recovered from President Kennedy's body.' A very convenient mistake for the Warren Commission's evolving 'lone nut' narrative, and we can

⁷⁶ Series 4: Correspondence, Memoranda, and Communications; Allen W. Dulles Papers: MC019-09, Public Policy Papers, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

⁷⁷ E.g: Overnight from May 19th to 20th; the afternoon of May 26th (the record of his whereabouts then skips to Washington the next day); and between 12.50am and approximately 10am on July 8th.

⁷⁸ The new chapter began: 'On November 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald, who ten years before had been found by a psychiatrist to have to have symptoms of mental disease that made him potentially dangerous, arose early . . .'

⁷⁹ Discussed on page 30 of the paperback edition of Donovan's book.

⁸⁰ On 14 March 1967, Donovan was back in touch 'to ask Mr. D. for his *ideas* on the New Orleans investigation of the Warren Commission report.' (Emphasis added) On 22 February 1968, Gordon Novel called to warn that Jim Garrison was going to subpoena Dulles himself.

be confident that the authoritative source who slipped Donovan this disinformation was Allen Dulles, since the FBI memo observes: '[P]ossibly [Donovan] has also had access to FBI material in the possession of the Warren Commission.'⁸¹

During August 1964, the month in which the *samizdat* started doing the rounds of New York offices, the appointments diary becomes very patchy. On 3 August, for example, someone from the *Washington Post* called, seeking to make an appointment for columnist Joseph Alsop to meet with Dulles on 7 August. Dulles's secretary minuted: 'I mentioned to her that your calendar indicates that you will be in New York at that time.' In the event, the diary records that Dulles and Alsop lunched in Washington DC on the day of the appointment. On 5 August, Dulles's secretary logged a conversation with someone from the *New York Times*, making an appointment to lunch with Dulles in New York on 17 August, an appointment which Dulles later confirmed. The best we can say is that Dulles was sometimes in New York during the period in which the *samizdat* appeared.

However, on 14 May 1964 – two and a half months before the Lincoln-Kennedy *samizdat* appeared in New York – Dulles's secretary logged something remarkable. His office received a call from a Mr Giacomini of Harper and Brothers, who was Dulles's main contact with the publisher of his *Can We be Neutral?* (first ed. 1936) and *Can America Stay Neutral?* (first ed. 1939). The diary entry for that telephone call reads as follows:⁸²

Mr. Giacomini, Harper's. Will bring about 5 o'clock today books re assassination of Lincoln which AWD requested. Mr. Dulles may take as long as he likes with them; call Mr. G when he wishes to return them.

Bob Donovan. No message

In the left-hand margin beside this entry, someone drew a large question-mark.⁸³ The weekend before 14 May (the 8th to the 9th) Dulles had visited

⁸¹ Inter alia, the FBI memo states that: 'Donovan was investigated at the request of the White House in August 1955.' This must indicate the point at which President Eisenhower had finished reading Donovan's book.

<<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=57762#relPageId=82>>

⁸² AWD is the secretary's abbreviation for Allen Welsh Dulles.

⁸³ Since the diary was typed by Dulles's secretaries, and all the identifiable handwritten annotations are by Dulles himself, the question-mark surely represents an attempt by Dulles to feign ignorance of his own request.

Dallas to inspect Dealey Plaza in his role as a Warren Commissioner.⁸⁴ There is no discussion of the Lincoln assassination in anything Dulles published after May 1964, and that includes the Warren Report itself. What we can say, therefore, is that in the period just before the Lincoln-Kennedy *samizdat* appeared, Dulles had privately arranged to receive several works about the precise topic of that very *samizdat*. He obviously wanted more detailed information than he could have obtained from the familiar work of Robert J. Donovan.⁸⁵ Dulles could have borrowed any number of books about Lincoln from a public library, but that would have left a permanent record.

If Dulles hadn't been temporarily away from his office on 14 May 1964, there would have been no proof of his sudden interest in the 1865 assassination. There is no record of a call to Giacomini about returning the borrowed books, and no other mention of Abraham Lincoln in Dulles's office diary. We don't know for certain what Dulles's sudden interest in Lincoln was all about, but he is the prime suspect in the search for the originator of the list of Lincoln-Kennedy Coincidences. Indeed, Allen Welsh Dulles is the only suspect, and – if we consider the research material that was needed to compile the list – his figurative fingerprints are all over it.⁸⁶

Perhaps, though, he had an accomplice. Throughout the period 1939-1974, Dulles's office diary only contains one mention of Clare Boothe Luce, on 28 December 1961.⁸⁷ But we know that, privately, Allen Dulles was in regular contact with Clare: for example the post-Missile Crisis call in which he told Clare she had to stop funding Alpha 66 operations (see p. 10 above). His office diary reveals that Dulles was familiar with the Luces' villa in Phoenix, Arizona (which he visited at least once, per the diary, in January 1961).⁸⁸ In addition, naturally for people of extreme wealth, the Luces had several New York *pieds-a-terre*: opulent apartments on Fifth Avenue and Fifty-second

⁸⁴ Grose (see note 23) p. 554.

⁸⁵ Coincidentally, following the Giacomini entry, the very next call was logged as: 'Bob Donovan. No message' as can be seen in the excerpt reproduced above.

⁸⁶ Although it is not possible to demonstrate a direct relationship, Dulles's choice of a list of coincidences to create a myth was probably inspired by his brief 1943 encounter with psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), who went on to identify the phenomenon of 'synchronicity' and described its importance in creating subjective meaning from seemingly unconnected events.

⁸⁷ Foster Dulles called his brother on that date, to confirm the delivery of some unspecified 'material' and to request Clare's address and telephone number.

⁸⁸ Coincidentally, one of the Luces' neighbours was Dr Milton H. Erickson, who corresponded with Dale E. Basye about the possibility of a Manchurian Candidate type of hypnotised assassin (discussed above on p. 23).

Street, as well as their personal suite at the Waldorf Astoria on Park Avenue.⁸⁹ *Time* magazine had been based in the city ever since publishing its first edition in March 1923. It would be entirely natural if Dulles had spoken to Clare by telephone during the period May to August 1964 and even – given his known movements – met with his old flame.

The sourcing of the *Life* coverage of the Lincoln-Kennedy Coincidences is meticulously journalistic. Rather than rely on the New York *samizdat*, *Life's* version is sourced to a version that was surfaced in the *Republican Congressional Committee Newsletter*. This gave it a formal imprimatur that made it acceptable to *Life's* editorial bias and conservative readership.⁹⁰ However it was coordinated, the *Life* version of the Lincoln-Kennedy Coincidences bears the personal touch of Clare Boothe Luce, admirer of Abraham Lincoln and suspected descendant of his assassin. Gratuitously and ambiguously, the *Life* article concludes with:

'In the end, there is one fillip that has caused some political eyebrows to swivel: Andrew Johnson, after he filled out the remainder of Lincoln's second term, was followed in the White House by a Republican whose last name began with G.'

The 'Republican whose last name began with G' who succeeded Andrew Johnson as President was Ulysses S. Grant. But the author of the 1964 *Life* article was evidently – and in defiance of the magazine's pro-LBJ stance – promoting Arizona's Barry Goldwater.

Afterword

In the immediate aftermath of President Kennedy's assassination, something troubling happened to Clare Boothe Luce. She received a telephone call from Justin McCarthy, who was the public relations officer for the anti-Castro Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (DRE). It was DRE zealots who had skippered the boats making sorties to Cuba, until the CIA cancelled the funding

⁸⁹ Dulles usually stayed at the Waldorf when visiting New York (his intermittent diary records two stays at the Waldorf, in January and March 1964).

⁹⁰ Why did a Republican newsletter have any interest in mythologising the Democratic President Kennedy anyway? It would have been perfectly understandable if a Democrat newsletter had published the list, but this never happened. So the suspicion has to be that the *samizdat* was circulated as a 'spoiler tactic' against *Life's* rival, *Newsweek*, in the hope that they wouldn't pick up such a lowly rumour. *Life* would then be able to be the first to publish the list, using the Congressional newsletter as a respectable source, after the *samizdat* had muddied the waters to obscure the list's true origins. If that was the originator's expectation, they were wrong. As detailed above, *Newsweek* were not only perfectly happy to reproduce the contents of the *samizdat* list but did so first.

of Alpha 66 shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁹¹

McCarthy had quite the tale to tell. According to the notes Clare took of their conversation, he told her: 'My boys – the 3 young men who are the moving spirits of the DRE⁹² – know all about Mr. Oswald.' Per McCarthy, Lee Harvey Oswald had attempted to join the DRE in New Orleans, shortly after his 1962 return from Russia. The DRE, the story went, were immediately suspicious of Oswald, not least because he spoke no Spanish. The New Orleans DRE therefore turned him down. They had then supposedly mounted surveillance on Oswald and discovered that he was running a New Orleans chapter of the national Fair Play for Cuba Committee.⁹³ During his chapter's meetings (McCarthy told Clare) Oswald had boasted of his Soviet training in subversion and assassination. Clare's notes describe what McCarthy said had happened next:

'When the president was assassinated, [DRE members] began to track Oswald's movement down, and [discovered] that he was in communication with Rubenstein [i.e. Jack Ruby] and that undoubtedly he was silenced by Rubenstein. He was seen by the DRE boys in Rubenstein's nightclub two nights before the assassination. [. . .] The DRE boys said that there was "a piece of paper" – a letter or document that showed that Oswald and Rubenstein had been in touch and that the police of Dallas had been told to pass this over to the FBI and to shut up about it!'⁹⁴

If McCarthy's story sounds suspiciously like a put-up job, that's because a put-up job is exactly what it was. Lee Oswald's chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee never had any members (apart from Lee himself). McCarthy's hair-raising revelations about Oswald's boasts of Soviet training were complete fabrications. The look of McCarthy's story, therefore, is that the DRE's genuine tapes and photographs of Oswald's activities were the factual sugar-coating on a pill of pure disinformation that he was deliberately feeding to Time Inc., via the receptive Clare Boothe Luce.

As for the 'piece of paper' that proved Oswald and Ruby knew each other, absolutely no-one else has ever mentioned seeing this explosive document, let

⁹¹ In English, the 'Student Revolutionary Directorate'. The DRE had been pro-revolution during Batista's regime, and was still pro-revolution after he was overthrown by Castro, neither leader having satisfied the DRE's apparently stratospheric expectations.

⁹² The aside was presumably Clare's own observation.

⁹³ McCarthy added that while in New Orleans Oswald had taken part in a radio debate and handed out pro-Castro leaflets. The DRE had a tape-recording of the former and photographs of the latter. This was genuinely news to Clare at the time of McCarthy's phone call.

⁹⁴ Cited in Morris (see note 1) page 695, note 77.

alone handling it. It could have been the foundation for a sensational scoop – if Clare had followed it up. But she never did. Neither did Harry (to whom she undoubtedly told McCarthy’s yarn), and nor did anyone from either *Time* or *Life* magazines. We naturally have to wonder why McCarthy’s tall tale was kept quiet. One possibility, and a fairly mundane one, is that Clare and Harry looked into it and decided it was bogus. But of this, there is no record whatsoever. Another possibility is that the Luces had the frighteners put on them by the CIA and/or FBI and therefore didn’t dare publish anything so incendiary. Given the elevated social standing and journalistic instincts of Mr and Mrs Luce (to say nothing of their extensive personal connections within US intelligence) this scenario is extremely unlikely, to put it very mildly.

There is, however, a subtler explanation for the way that Clare Boothe Luce kept her mouth shut about what she had been told so soon after the assassination. In 1975, she contacted Senator Richard Schweiker, who was then re-examining the work of the Warren Commission.⁹⁵ Her 1975 version of her November 1963 conversation with Justin McCarthy was pretty much the same as the contemporaneous notes she had taken. Except the date of the conversation had inexplicably changed from 26 November 1963 to the evening of 22 November 1963. This is conspicuously anomalous, especially since Clare would undoubtedly have referred to her notes in order to refresh her recollection. Clare later repeated this altered version of her story to the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), when she was interviewed on 13 December 1978. Again, her own notes were available to her, and they explicitly contradicted what she was saying.

The reason for Clare’s deception becomes unmissably clear as the modified story she gave to HSCA unfolds.⁹⁶ It contains no reference whatsoever to ‘Rubenstein’, AKA Jack Ruby. By dishonestly shunting the conversation back in time by four days (from 26 November to 22 November), Clare had selectively edited Ruby out of the conversation she had with McCarthy. Ruby, of course, shot Oswald to death on Sunday 24 November 1963. So with the revised date 22 November there was no reason for Clare or McCarthy to have discussed Ruby, since they ostensibly hadn’t even heard of

⁹⁵ Schweiker was at that time the chairman of a Congressional subcommittee dedicated to re-examining the Warren Commission’s work. Schweiker’s subcommittee operated under the general umbrella of the United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, mercifully better known as the ‘Church Committee’.

⁹⁶ House Select Committee on Assassinations, Appendix to *Hearings*, Volume X, page 88 et seq. See <<https://tinyurl.com/4u23fte7>> or <https://www.aarclibrary.org/publib/jfk/hasca/reportvols/vol10/html/HSCA_Vol10_0044a.htm>.

him by then.

Prima facie, Clare had covered *something* up when she erased Ruby from her story. But what? The suspicion – and it is no more than that – has to be that Ruby’s personal involvement in gun-running between Texas and Cuba during the late 1950s had somehow become entangled with Clare’s personal involvement with DRE members mounting expeditions between Florida and Cuba during the early 1960s.⁹⁷ To have warranted Clare Luce Booth falsifying her HSCA testimony in order to avoid mentioning Ruby, the two Cuba operations must have had a more substantial link than simply having taken place in the same area of the Caribbean. There does not seem to be any alternative explanation either.

⁹⁷ If it occurred, such entanglement would have probably been in the general flux of CIA activities that occurred in that period, rather than as part of officially-sanctioned actions such as (for example) Operation Mongoose. Volume three of the CIA’s official history of the Bay of Pigs invasion gives a fair idea of the Agency’s clandestine engagements in the Caribbean during that time. See <<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB355/bop-vol3.pdf>>.

Appendix 1

Ten examples of Secret Service reliance on Robert J. Donovan's *The Assassins*, seen in Warren Commission document 907

'Montreal was the headquarters of the "Canada Cabinet" of the Confederacy, but there is no evidence that Booth sought or that Confederate agents lent assistance to him in his plan for capturing the President.'

Donovan, page 250

' . . . he continued on to Montreal, Canada, which was a headquarters for Confederate agents. . . . there is very little evidence to show that these agents promised him any assistance in carrying out the scheme.'

Warren, page 40

' . . . the narrow peninsula of southern Maryland, and it was over this favorite route of the blockade runners that Booth planned to shuttle the captured President.'

Donovan, page 250

' . . . the country of lower Maryland, over which he planned to convey the captured President. . . '

Warren, page 40

' . . . using the Martin letter, he struck up an acquaintance with a Dr. Queen and his son-in-law John C. Thompson, who lived near Bryantown. On Sunday November 13, he accompanied the Queen family to the near-by St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, and before mass Thompson introduced him their neighbor, Dr. Mudd.'

Donovan, pages 250-251

' . . . and proceeded south through Maryland to Bryantown, which is about thirty miles from the capital. Here he located a Dr. Queen and identified himself by presenting one of the letters. The next day, he attended church with his host and was introduced to Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, another physician living in the neighborhood . . . '

Warren pages 40-41

'The next day he bought for eighty dollars an old bay saddle horse, blind in one eye . . .'

Donovan, page 251

'It appears the only thing he purchased was an old dark bay saddle horse, blind in one eye. . .'

Warren, page 41

'To familiarize Paine with the interior of Ford's Theatre Booth engaged the Presidential box that evening and had Surratt take him to the play, along with two girls from the boardinghouse. Between acts Booth dropped in on them, and he and Paine and Surratt went over the layout of the doors, passageways and appointments of the box.'

Donovan, pages 261-262

'During the early part of that evening, Booth was to act at Ford's Theatre, and he wished the newcomer Payne to become familiar with the scene of the projected abduction, so he rented the Presidential box for the use of Payne, Surratt and two young ladies. Between the acts, Booth joined his companions in the box and a careful inspection was made of the box itself, and the passageways leading to it.'

Warren, page 44

'On Thursday, April 13, Booth strolled into Grover's Theatre and during a chat with the manager inquired whether Grover's would participate in the general illumination being planned for the next night in celebration of the raising of the Stars and Stripes at Fort Sumter. Informed that there would be an illumination at the theater, Booth then asked, 'Are you going to invite the President?' His question was a welcome reminder to the manager, who replied that an invitation would be sent to the Lincolns . . .'

Donovan, pages 269-270

During the afternoon of that Day, Booth paid a visit to Grover's Theatre. He walked into the manager's office and chatted for a while about the celebration taking place in the city. The manager informed him that the next day was the anniversary of the fall of Fort Sumpter, and the theater expected to have an exceptionally big night. Booth then asked if the President was to be invited, and the manager replied that he was preparing an invitatory note for the President.'

Warren, page 47

`. . . Booth, handsomely groomed and dressed, entered Ford's Theatre, a box-like, red-brick converted Baptist Church on Tenth Street, between E and F Streets. He had come by to pick up his mail, which he customarily had delivered there.'

Donovan, page 270

'Booth usually had his Washington mail sent in care of Ford's Theatre, and according to custom he came to the theatre box office about eleven-thirty in the forenoon and picked up several letters that had arrived in the morning mail.'

Warren, page 48

'Upon their return to the White House from the War Department, the President said, "Good-bye, Crook." This puzzled the guard, because the President customarily said, "Good night, Crook."'

Donovan, page 279

'Upon their return to the White House door, Lincoln said, 'Good-bye, Crook.' Crook was puzzled. Until then it had always been, "Good night, Crook."'

Warren, page 68

'In the spring of 1863 [Booth] and an actor named T. L. Connor were arrested in St. Louis for publicly denouncing the Lincoln administration. Booth was accused of having said he "wished the whole damned government would go to hell". Connor was sent to prison, but Booth got off with a fine after taking the oath of allegiance to the Union.'

Donovan, page 239

'In the Spring of 1863, while [Booth] was appearing in a St. Louis theatre, he and another actor were arrested for utterances against the Lincoln administration. Booth's companion was sent to military prison, while Booth himself, was found guilty of having stated he "wished the whole damned government would go to hell", and as a result he was fined and forced to take an oath of allegiance to the Union.'

Warren, pages 37-38

'While Booth was in Chicago for an engagement in 1863, he was overheard saying, "What a glorious opportunity there is for a man to immortalize himself by killing Abraham Lincoln!"'

Donovan, pages 239-240

'Booth played in Chicago the same year [1863], and it is reported that he remarked, "What a glorious opportunity there is for a man to immortalize himself by killing Lincoln!"'

Warren, page 38

Appendix 2

The Lincoln-Kennedy Coincidences *Newsweek*, 10 August 1964

Coincidences

A list of curious coincidences on the assassinations of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John Fitzgerald Kennedy was making the office duplicating machines hum in New York last week. Under the title "Strange as It Sounds," the synchronism read:

Both Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy were concerned with the issue of civil rights.

Lincoln was elected in 1860, Kennedy in 1960.

Both Presidents were assassinated on a Friday and both in the presence of their wives.

Both Presidents were shot from behind and in the head.

Their successors, both named Johnson, were Southern Democrats, and both were in the Senate.

Andrew Johnson was born in 1808 and Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908.

John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald were Southerners favoring unpopular ideas.

Booth and Oswald were both assassinated before it was possible for either of them to be brought to trial.

Both Presidents' wives lost children through death while living in the White House.

Lincoln's secretary, whose name was Kennedy, advised him not to go to the theater.

Kennedy's secretary, whose name was Lincoln, advised him not to make the trip to Dallas.

John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln in a theater box and afterward ran to a warehouse.

Oswald shot Kennedy from a warehouse and ran to a theater.

The last names of both Presidents, Lincoln and Kennedy, each contain seven letters.

The names of both Andrew Johnson and Lyndon Johnson each contain thirteen letters.

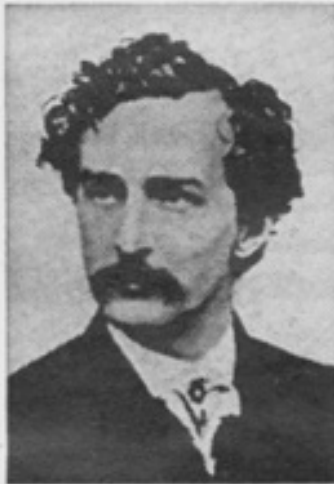
The names of both John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald each contain fifteen letters.

Life, 21 August 1964

HISTORICAL NOTES

A Compendium of Curious Coincidences

Wherever collectors of odd facts congregate these days, the conversation almost invariably turns to the uncanny parallels in the lives—and deaths—of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. However it started, it has added up to a compendium of curious coincidences. Last week even the G.O.P. *Congressional Committee Newsletter*, with



OSWALD

BOOTH

Two assassins, 15 letters each.

a circulation among 15,000 Republicans, joined in the game with its own list. There were no political motives, explained *Newsletter* Editor Edward Neff. "We just thought of them as interesting." Among the fascinating facts:

Lincoln was elected in 1860, Kennedy in 1960. Both were deeply involved in the civil rights struggle. The names of each contain seven letters. The wife of each President lost a son when she was First Lady. Both Presidents were shot on a Friday. Both were shot in the head, from behind, and in the presence of their wives. Both presidential assassins were shot to death before they could be brought to trial. The names John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald each contain 15 letters. Lincoln and Kennedy were succeeded by Southerners named Johnson. Tennessee's Andrew Johnson, who followed Lincoln, was born in 1808; Texan Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908.

As these coincidences have been circulated, the facts have been embellished more than a little to fit. Many of the lists have it that Booth was born in 1839 and Oswald in 1939. Booth, in fact, was born in 1838. Some accounts point out that Lee Oswald shot Kennedy from a warehouse and ran to a theater, while Booth shot Lincoln in a theater and ran to a warehouse. But Booth's refuge, where he was killed twelve days after shooting Lincoln, was in fact a tobacco-curing barn. Beyond this the twists have gotten ridiculous. It has been noted that Kennedy was shot while riding in a Lincoln made by Ford. Lincoln of course was shot in Ford's Theater. In the end there is one fillip that has caused some political eyebrows to swivel: Andrew Johnson, after he filled out the remainder of Lincoln's second term, was followed in the White House by a Republican whose last name began with G.