

Dallas again

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The vast majority of serious JFK researchers think that the CIA was involved in the Kennedy assassination. An apparent difficulty with this is that the plot was leaky. Those with advance knowledge included Rose Cheramie (who heard about it from two minor criminals with whom she was doing a heroin run);¹ right-wing activist, Joseph Milteer, who was bugged talking about it by the Miami police;² John Martino, a mid-level gangster;³ and intelligence officer Richard Case Nagell.⁴ So, we have organised crime, the far right and a spook – the usual suspects; but rather low level.⁵ Would a CIA operation have been gossiped about like this?

Looking for shooters, the CIA-trained and funded anti-Castro Cubans are the leading candidates for many researchers. In the most recent iteration of the study of such groups by Larry Hancock and David Boylan, the closest we get to evidence are comments made by Gene Wheaton.⁶ This is what Hancock and Boylan extracted from an interview with Wheaton.

'Carl Jenkins was a retired high-level paramilitary specialist for the CIA . . . He headed up the largest covert base in Laos during the secret CIA wars over there when the open war was going on in Vietnam . . . [Jenkins] invited me to stay in their home . . . In 1985 he [Jenkins] became my Washington representative when I took over as Vice President for a cargo airline called National Air . . . I was like a brother to Carl . . . Carl was the head recruiter and trainer of the Bay of Pigs invasion for the assassins and saboteurs that were going into Cuba for the pre-invasion to

¹ <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/322>>

² <https://www.maryferrell.org/pages/Predictions_of_Joseph_Milteer.html>

³ <<https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKmartino.htm>>

⁴ <<https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKnagell.htm>>

⁵ And there are others. Among the many lists of putative advance knowledge, see <<https://tinyurl.com/4f65m2xu>> or <<https://j-l-pattison.medium.com/thirteen-people-who-had-foreknowledge-of-jfks-assassination-8681698ef1c8>>.

⁶ <https://www.maryferrell.org/pages/Essay_-_The_Wheaton_Lead.html>. The earlier version is at <<https://tinyurl.com/2p97pjxj>> or <<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14WMnEEy9otCemUh7OHiNCY5iomx5I4002eSr4vzLrGM/edit>>.

lay the groundwork for the Bay of Pigs . . . He trained the 17, 18, 19 year old exiles and became their father figure . . . Chi Chi Quintero became like a son to Carl . . . He [Quintero] and two or three others, Felix Rodriguez, Nestor Pino, all went to Vietnam with him . . . Chi Chi was a shooter. He was trained by I. W. Harper . . . There was a CIA funded program to assassinate Castro and Carl was in charge of training the Cubans from Miami . . . They were the ones that diverted the Castro assassination funds and training for their own agenda to snuff Kennedy . . . They had a thing called a triangulation shooting team . . . [Describing the Bay of Pigs and JFK backing off the air strike] They were furious and still are to this day . . . And there was another clique above them . . . they would reminisce about the past and what went wrong and what went right . . .'

All the accounts derived from Wheaton tell us the same thing: a CIA-trained group of anti-Castro Cubans were rehearsing how to shoot Castro and were diverted to shoot JFK. But who diverted them? Wheaton apparently doesn't know.⁷

My initial response to the Wheaton material was that this is relatively small beer. What does it amount to? Wheaton *said* that about 30 years ago some other guys *said* . . . (In an earlier version of this material Larry Hancock referred to this as 'war stories'.) On the other hand it is striking that some of the files the CIA are still refusing to declassify refer to AMSPELL, a CIA operation involving another group of anti-Castro Cubans, the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (DRE). Jefferson Morley tells us the Agency reports on AMSPELL from December 1962 to May 1964 are missing, presumably 'weeded'.⁸

Wallace and Estes

Not taken seriously by most of the JFK researchers are the two areas which I have written about in these columns over the past 20 years or so: the putative link to LBJ through Billie Sol Estes and 'Mac' Wallace, and Chauncey Holt's account of being an unwitting part of the technical support for the operation.

⁷ Two other serious researchers have worked this Wheaton material: John Simkin at <<https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKwheaton.htm>> and Bill Kelly at <<https://jfkcountercoup.blogspot.com/2021/12/bill-kellys-2021-capa-conference.html>>

⁸ <<https://jfkfacts.org/jfk-most-wanted-three-key-cia-files-that-need-to-be-declassified/>>. 'Weeded' is my word, not Morley's. I don't think American politics uses 'weeded' in this way.

These items could have been weeded for a variety of reasons but it is tempting to infer that the reports referred to Lee Harvey Oswald, who had contact with the DRE, in such a way as to undermine 'the lone nut' story.

Here's Jefferson Morley dismissing the LBJ thread in a sentence:

'The case against President Lyndon Johnson, while popular on the Internet, is contrived and conjectural, relying heavily on a witness who has changed her story often.'⁹

What 'contrived' means for Morley, I don't know. As for 'conjectural', there is good conjecture and bad. The witness to whom Morley refers is the late Madeleine Brown, one of LBJ's mistresses. In fact she is peripheral to the story. She was useful in the beginning, when Glen Sample and Mark Collom kicked off the interest in LBJ in the mid-1990s. They had been given a surname, 'Wallace', by their source, the late Lawrence 'Loy' Factor. He'd been in medical isolation with Collom in 1971, when they both had hepatitis. He confessed to a role in the shooting after being recruited by 'Wallace' in 1962. Madeleine Brown identified 'Wallace' for Collom and Sample as Malcolm 'Mac' Wallace, one of LBJ's entourage. Independently Madeleine Brown suspected Wallace of having a role in the event and said so in her then unpublished memoir, *Texas in the Morning*. In retrospect one of the striking things about Factor's story is how little he offered: a man called Wallace, Christian name unknown, whom he met in Texas.

Professor Joan Mellen looked at the LBJ link story in her book *Faustian Bargains*¹⁰ and dismissed Factor in a couple of sentences. She suggests that Factor learned about the assassination by reading books while in prison. But Factor was in prison in the 1970s and the first public reference to Wallace was in the 1990s – and came from Factor himself. (Did she actually read the Collom and Sample book?) Having thus, she believed, disposed of Factor, she only had two items to deal with: Billy Sol Estes and the fingerprint apparently left by 'Mac' Wallace on the 6th floor of the Texas Book Depository. Estes is dismissed as vague, contradictory and without first-hand knowledge. The fingerprint is dismissed because she hired another fingerprint expert who told her the original match with Wallace was erroneous. But if this is the case – and it is still in dispute – we have an extraordinary coincidence: a fingerprint, that wasn't Wallace's but was close enough to his to fool a couple of fingerprint experts, just happened to turn up on the 6th floor of the Texas Book Depository. Occam's notorious razor tells us that this *was* Wallace's print.¹¹

⁹ <<https://jfkfacts.org/who-was-responsible-for-the-wrongful-death-of-jfk/#more-17194>>

¹⁰ See my review at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster73/lob73-faustian-bargains.pdf>>.

¹¹ Richard Bartholomew has recently written about the history of the Wallace prints, plural – as he tells us, there were four of them. See <<https://tinyurl.com/5cdkk7rs>> or <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/JFKASSASSINATIONCONFERENCE/posts/242888402551613/>>.

Professor Mellen and Jim DiEugenio both treat the reappearance of the LBJ-dunnit theme as the result of the Wallace print and Estes' various accounts. They fail to acknowledge that Loy Factor was the original source for the LBJ-dunnit thesis: he had confessed to Collom in 1971; and had told Collom and Sample about 'Wallace' again in 1993, when they looked him up amidst the renewed interest in the assassination caused by the Oliver Stone movie *JFK* the previous year.¹²

The only major JFK researcher to have a serious look at some of the LBJ-linked material is Larry Hancock. He examined Estes and Wallace in his usual scrupulous manner and concluded that much of what Estes claimed was true; and a substantial part of Wallace's biography could be established, none of which contradicted the allegations about him.¹³ More recently Hancock wrote:

'Bottom line, I believe there are anomalies in Johnson's behavior that suggest he may have had some prior knowledge or guilty knowledge. Going beyond that and connecting the dots to a totally initiated and organized Johnson conspiracy is something else entirely.'¹⁴

As far as I am aware, Mr Hancock's excellent work on the material did not interest any other major researcher; and he has not followed-up his conclusion about LBJ.

You might have thought that Chauncey Holt would be welcomed by those who believed the CIA was involved in the shooting; and he was initially taken seriously – if cautiously.¹⁵ Part of the problem was that almost everything in his story was new and difficult to digest, let alone begin checking out. As evidence of his *bona fides* he said he was 'the old tramp' in the famous photographs of police accompanying three men towards Dallas police station after the shooting. The following year the Dallas police released the arrest records of the 'three tramps' that day and Holt wasn't among them. At which point those

¹² See for example
<<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-reviews/mellen-joan-faustian-bargains>>.

¹³ See his analyses at
<<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/2380-estes-and-jfk-part-1/>>
<<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/2379-estes-and-jfk-part-2/>>
<<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/2321-malcolm-wallace-part-1/>>
<<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/2326-malcolm-wallace-part-2/>>.

¹⁴ <<https://larryhancock.wordpress.com/2017/01/03/afterwards-lbj/>>

¹⁵ See the long interview he gave in 1991 at
<<https://jfkcountercoup.blogspot.com/2009/12/chauncey-holts-execution-of-oswald.html>>.
Also William Kelly's 'Meet Chauncey Holt' at <<https://tinyurl.com/2p9bsjp6>> or
<https://www.maryferrell.org/showDoc.html?docId=48769#relPageId=31&search=Chauncey_Holt>.

researchers who knew of Holt dismissed him as a fantasist.¹⁶

James DiEugenio's site did mention Holt a couple of times. In the first reference DiEugenio wrote this:

'Suffice it to say, other researchers have dug into Holt's story at great length, and have shown great doubt about his claims – for instance, that Holt traveled to New Orleans to deliver pre-printed leaflets to Guy Banister's office for Oswald to pass out, when in fact there is evidence these were printed in New Orleans and Oswald hand-stamped the leaflets with Banister's address.'¹⁷

But nowhere in the two accounts of the leaflets given by Holt does he claim to have printed the leaflets with Banister's address on them;¹⁸ and I don't know who these researchers are who have done all this work on Holt. I certainly haven't come across them.



Chauncey Holt is the figure on the right-hand side of this photograph showing Oswald in New Orleans, pretending to be a pro-Castro activist. The handwriting on the photograph is Holt's.

¹⁶ In those days, before the Internet, JFK information was scattered across different groups and publications and hard (or expensive) to come by on this side of the Atlantic. Thus I didn't hear of Holt when he first appeared.

¹⁷ <<https://tinyurl.com/5n7au5w4>> or <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-articles/the-decline-and-fall-of-jim-fetzer>>

¹⁸ See the second part of the first item, **JFK**, at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster77/lob77-view-from-the-bridge.pdf>>.

In a review of a Jesse Ventura book at DiEugenio's site, one Frank Cassano wrote this:

' . . . the ridiculous theory of the three tramps as championed by Jim Fetzer and Wim Dankbaar. Ugh! We've been over this before. I like both of these men and respect their efforts; but Lois Gibson can put on all the slide presentations she wants, but that will never turn the three tramps into Holt, Rogers, and Harrelson. Ever. They are simply not the same people. The slide presentation in question is so biased and self-serving that it appears Gibson was hired to provide a pre-ordained conclusion. Pardon me, I mean allegedly hired The tramps in the photos are clearly Harold Doyle, Gus Abrams, and John Gedney. It frustrates me that people would continue to place suspicion on these men. It is pointless. It is futile. Might Holt, Rogers, and Harrelson have been involved in the plot in some way? Sure, it's possible. But they're not the men in the photos.'¹⁹

Cassano's criticism of Lois Gibson is absurd in my view but you can see for yourself: her analysis of the photographs is available still on-line.²⁰ As for the 'tramps' identity, this was simply a muddle caused by the presence of *two* trios of 'tramps' near Dealey Plaza that day who were taken into police custody. One trio – Doyle, Abrams and Gedney, who really were hoboes – were formally arrested and thus generated the paper records that were released in 1992.²¹ The other trio, including Holt, who are in the famous 'tramps' photographs, were not arrested and thus generated no official paper. In retrospect it should have been obvious that there were two sets of 'tramps' because the shadows in the photographs show that event to be happening later in the afternoon than the arrest of the first trio of 'tramps' at close to 1pm.²² However this resolution of the 'tramps' question does not seem to have percolated very far, and is rarely if ever mentioned these days.²³ My assumption is that the Dallas

¹⁹ <<https://tinyurl.com/mr4dn5j5>> or <<https://www.kennedysandking.com/john-f-kennedy-reviews/ventura-jesse-they-killed-our-president>>

²⁰ <<https://web.archive.org/web/20191217233356/http://jfkmurdersolved.com/lois1.htm>>

²¹ <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster71/lob71-jfk-three-tramps.pdf>>

²² Recreating the photographs from the shadows on the same day in November, a number of people have shown that the photographs were taken between 2.20 and 2.30 pm. The first trio of tramps were arrested before news of the murder of officer J. D. Tippit reached Dallas police HQ at 1.15. See <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster71/lob71-jfk-three-tramps.pdf>>.

²³ It didn't help that his posthumous memoir was mangled by its publisher. See my review towards the end of the piece at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster71/lob71-jfk-three-tramps.pdf>>.

police records of the 'tramps' who were arrested were 'surfaced' deliberately to undermine Holt. If so, hat-tip to whoever thought of doing it: they completely discredited Holt with the JFK researchers and the single most important source from within the assassination conspiracy was ignored.

But there is an apparent difficulty presented by Holt's account, if we take the LBJ-dunnit thesis seriously: Holt said he was an unwitting part of the conspiracy *for the CIA* and neither vice president Johnson nor any of his entourage is mentioned in his account. However Holt never claimed to be part of the central shooting conspiracy, merely providing support for what he thought was going to be a stunt in Dallas – a phoney assassination attempt presumably, since his unit had had been working on a rifle – to embarrass JFK and change his policy towards Cuba. But as Holt's account doesn't invalidate the LBJ thesis, is there any way to reconcile that thesis with CIA involvement? There is but it involves someone else the major researchers didn't take seriously: E. Howard Hunt.

E. Howard Hunt

In statements he made and notes he wrote towards the end of his life to his son St. John, Hunt stated that he had been asked to join the JFK conspiracy; that LBJ had initiated it and had first approached Cord Meyer, a senior CIA officer.²⁴ James DiEugenio and Larry Hancock have explained that they didn't believe the Hunt story because a third party – 'a solid source' – whom neither felt able to identify for legal reasons, who had been involved with Hunt, had told a JFK conference that what Hunt said in private was different from his public words and writing.²⁵ But even if this third party didn't exist, most of the researchers would not have believed the Hunt tale because *it didn't fit with what they knew already*. DiEugenio commented:

'But as Larry [Hancock] has said, even on its own terms, taken at face value, does what Hunt later said make any sense to anyone who knows

²⁴ Original text is at <<https://freerepublic.com/focus/news/1808231/posts>>. St John Hunt can be seen in one his first subsequent interviews at <<https://tinyurl.com/ymsffp3r>> or <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/26380-howard-hunts-confession/>>.

A sense of why the researchers didn't believe Hunt is conveyed in the comments on Hunt in the discussion at <<https://tinyurl.com/57b2dpzu>> or <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/25434-was-e-howard-hunts-big-event-confession-a-hoax/>>.

A copy of St. John Hunt's subsequent book on all this is at <<https://cryptome.org/2012/07/bond-hunt.pdf>>. My assessment of this is that the sceptics' various claims made in the educationforum discussion above are, to some extent, answered by St John's book.

²⁵ <<https://tinyurl.com/57b2dpzu>> or <<https://educationforum.ipbhost.com/topic/25434-was-e-howard-hunts-big-event-confession-a-hoax/>>

something about him and they way the CIA works and the actual elements of the assassination? To me it does not, and I think Larry concluded the same thing for different reasons. Cord Meyer? He was a newspaper propaganda guy. Hunt obviously threw him in there to spice it up due to the controversy about his ex wife.’²⁶

Putting LBJ on the list of conspirators ensured that no researchers of any significance would take Hunt seriously, even if the manner of his ‘confession’ had been less unsatisfactory. A role for LBJ is just anathema to most of them. This continues to surprise me, for LBJ should have been at the head of the list of obvious candidates. As has been widely reported, in 1963 vice-president Johnson was facing the end of his political career. Investigation of the corruption in which he was involved was being encouraged by the Kennedys, who wanted to get him off the Democratic ‘ticket’ for the 1964 election.²⁷ Even by American standards, a Democratic president using the Justice Department to dig for dirt on his vice-president was a startling piece of political chicanery.

Using material given to it by RFK’s Justice Department, *LIFE* magazine had prepared a big exposé of LBJ and the Bobby Baker affair but this was dropped after the shooting. *LIFE*’s James Wagenvoord wrote to John Simkin about this:

‘I’ve been reading through your web site and believe that I can add one of the final jigsaw puzzle pieces that affect the timing of JFK’s Dallas trip and the nervousness of LBJ during the weeks preceding the killing. At the time I was the 27 year old Editorial business manager and assistant to LIFE Magazines Executive Editor. Beginning in later summer 1963 the magazine, based upon information fed from Bobby Kennedy and the Justice Department, had been developing a major newsbreak piece concerning Johnson and Bobby Baker. On publication Johnson would have been finished and off the ‘64 ticket (reason the material was fed to us) and would probably have been facing prison time. At the time LIFE magazine was arguably the most important general news source in the US . . . The LBJ/Baker piece was in the final editing stages and was scheduled to break in the issue of the magazine due out the week of November 24 (the magazine would have made it to the newsstands on Nov. 26th or 27th). It had been prepared in relative secrecy by a small special editorial team. On Kennedy’s death research files and all numbered copies of the nearly print-ready draft were gathered up by my boss (he had been the

²⁶ See Educationforum discussion at note 24.

²⁷ The Justice department, under Robert Kennedy, was investigating the Billie Sol Estes frauds in Texas.

top editor on the team) and shredded. The issue that was to expose LBJ instead featured the Zapruder film.²⁸

In these circumstances, and given what we know about the corruption and violence around LBJ – most obviously all the deaths which accompanied the threatened exposure of Billie Sol Estes, who was a major financial contributor of LBJ's²⁹ – the idea that LBJ was prepared to try and have Kennedy killed is not that big a step.

Why Cord Meyer? I don't know: very little is known about Meyer's role in the CIA in this period.³⁰ The few reports we have suggest that Meyer was an averagely zealous anti-communist (as were most of the Agency's senior staff) and would have been opposed to JFK's unstated policy of détente with the Soviet bloc.³¹ Meyer's ex-wife was one of JFK's sex partners in 1962/3 in gossipy Washington and Meyer therefore probably knew that a man widely regarded by many of his CIA peers as a threat to the republic was in his ex-wife's bed. That might have been enough motivation to accept an invitation to join an assassination plot.

The rest of the names Hunt mentioned are familiar from previous assassination research, notably CIA officers David Attlee Phillips, David Morales and William Harvey. They all hated JFK, not least for what they saw as his betrayal of the anti-Castro Cubans; all of them would be on most researchers' lists as people of serious interest. Having the vice-president on board was perhaps the factor which made the assassination look doable: becoming president, he would be able to control the investigation which would follow. And LBJ did precisely that.³²

It used to be a commonplace among JFK researchers that we would never find out whodunnit until somebody confessed. We have had confessions from two former CIA employees – one contract agent, Holt, and a senior officer, Hunt – and both were greeted by the Kennedy researchers with near universal disbelief.

²⁸ <<http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=14966&st=0>>

²⁹ On Estes see for example <<https://tinyurl.com/yc28n6pw>> or <<https://lbjthemasterofdeceit.com/2020/12/16/billie-sol-estes-a-sordid-history-atoned-sol-finally-vindicated/>>.

³⁰ For what is known see <<https://spartacus-educational.com/JFKmeyerC.htm>>.

³¹ This is vividly described in chapter 7 of Robert F Kennedy, Jr's *American Values* (New York: Harper's, 2018).

³² This is discussed in chapter 17 of Larry Hancock's *Someone Would Have Talked* (Texas: JFK Lancer, 2006). This was reviewed in *Lobster* 53 at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/online/issue53/lob53-47.htm>>.

There is a way to sort of reconcile all three accounts: Wheaton's tale of a group of anti-Castro Cubans, and the confessions of Chauncey Holt and E. Howard Hunt. Inside the CIA in 1963, a decision was made to change Kennedy's policy of moving towards détente with the Soviet bloc and Cuba.³³ They would run a fake assassination attempt and attribute it to an apparent pro-Castro activist and former defector to the Soviet Union, Lee Harvey Oswald.³⁴ Holt's unit was tasked to modify a rifle, make it smooth-bore, to take cartridges previously fired through the Mannlicher-Carcano without adding any markings when it was fired.³⁵ The LBJ-Meyer-Phillips group knew that CIA involvement in the original, fake assassination attempt would ensure a comprehensive cover-up. They then piggy-backed on that original project – that had merely intended to manipulate the public perception of Cuba – with a real assassination.

The CIA-trained anti-Castro unit did the fatal shooting and LBJ's man, Wallace, was in the Book Depository with Factor, sticking a rifle out of the window and being seen. This ensured that the police would have no difficulty locating 'the sniper's nest' and the rifle left there, which could be linked to Oswald. The CIA members of the conspiracy also ordered some of the Agency's network within the anti-Castro Cubans and organised crime to be on Dealey Plaza. Holt named some of those he saw. Their presence would muddy the waters of any post-shooting investigation. In the event there was no serious investigation.

This essay began with the wide-spread gossip about the assassination before the event. This is now intelligible: a significant number of people who were not intelligence officers knew about something happening in Dallas. And people talk.

³³ The climate of hostility within the US military and CIA towards Kennedy's policy of détente is vividly conveyed in chapter 7 of Robert F. Kennedy Jr's *American Values: Lessons I Learned from My Family* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018).

³⁴ Oswald would have to die for the scheme to work. His initial survival complicated the cover-up enormously.

³⁵ A smooth-bore rifle would have much reduced power and accuracy. Holt suggested that the round from this rifle is the one which fired the first shot, hitting JFK in the back, making a shallow wound, and falling out. Holt thinks this is the famous undamaged 'magic bullet', CE399.