

REGICIDE:
Are We Closing in on the Whole Truth about JFK?*

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[Editor's Note: *In this fascinating book, Gregory Douglas, who has previously published studies of Hitler's Gestapo Chief, adduces documents purporting to lay the foundation for plans to assassinate JFK at the feet of the CIA, the FBI, and the Joint Chiefs. In this review and discussion in the "Editor's Preface" to this volume, reasons why, in spite of its plausibility, it should not be taken at face value.*]

REGICIDE, subtitled, "The Official Assassination of JFK (2002), by Gregory Douglas, an historian with four books on Hitler's Gestapo Chief, which have been translated into German, Russian, and Japanese, appears to provide a wealth of new documents concerning the assassination of John F. Kennedy:

- (1) an English translation of an (undated) study by the Soviet Union;
- (2) a 20 April 1978 Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) commentary;
- (3) a summary of OPERATION ZIPPER dated 22 December 1963; and
- (4) Gregory Douglas' own critical comments and critique of them all.

These items--documents (1) through (3), where (1) and (2) are two parts of a single continuous DIA report--ostensibly came into his possession through a fortuitous encounter with Robert Trumbull Crowley, a former Deputy Director of Operations for the CIA and an expert on Soviet intelligence. Douglas reports having had extensive conversations with Crowley from 1993 to 1996, when his health took a bad turn. He died in 2000.

According to Douglas, Crowley took numerous documents with him upon his retirement from the CIA and occasionally shared them with various historians. As he came to trust Douglas, he became increasingly forthcoming, especially about the sequence of events that led to the death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. If Douglas' documents are authentic, this has to be one of the most important, if not the most important, developments in the history of the case.

The Soviet assassination summary includes (a) a three shot sequence with the driver slowing the limousine to a virtual stop, where JFK was hit in the throat from in front, John Connally was hit from above and behind, and JFK was hit in the head from behind. According to the Soviet study, (b) Lee Oswald was recruited by ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) and used his pseudo-defection as an occasion to convey valuable information about the U-2 program, which subsequently enabled the Soviets to shoot down a plane piloted by Gary Powers.

It also maintains that (c) Oswald had an extensive history with the CIA and later with the FBI, where, because of his defection and new persona as a pro-Castro communist sympathizer, he became a useful pawn as the designated patsy when the assassination went down.

Remarkably, the DIA study by Vedder B. Discoll, Colonel, US Army, Chief of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact Division of the Directorate for Intelligence Research, arrives at many of the same conclusions. It also finds (a') the driver having slowed the vehicle and endorses a three-shot scenario even while rejecting the notion that JFK was shot from above and behind. (b') The first shot (to the throat) came from the right front, the second (to Connally) from above and behind, and the third (to the right temple) from the front, using a .223 calibre weapon loaded with a mercury-filled bullet. And (c') that a CIA evaluation of Oswald convinced them that he would be the perfect pseudo-defector.

Neither the Soviet nor the DIA study have complete accounts of the shooting sequence, since JFK himself was hit at least four times, including a shot to the throat, a shot to the back, and two shots to the head, as ASSASSINATION SCIENCE (1998) and MURDER IN DEALEY PLAZA (2000) reveal. There appear to have been many more shooters and many more shots. But, even if they are flawed in several important respects, they are incomparably more accurate than THE WARREN REPORT (1964), our government's official account.

The DIA report's author, Colonel Driscoll, is unsparing of THE WARREN REPORT as political propaganda based upon false depictions of the shooters and the shots:

The so-called "magic bullet" theory, i.e., a relative pristine, fired Western Cartridge 6.5 Mannlicher-Carcano projectile produced in evidence, is obviously an official attempt to justify its own thesis. This theory, that a projectile from above and behind struck the President in the upper back, swung up, exited his throat, gained altitude and then angled downwards through the body of Governor Connally, striking bone and passing through muscle mass and emerging in almost undamaged condition, is a complete impossibility.

He concludes that the bullet was secured by firing the alleged weapon into a bucket of water. (A photographic comparison of this bullet with test bullets from the Warren Commission inquiry and the House Select Committee's re-investigation may be found in MURDER IN DEALEY PLAZA (2000), p. 411.)

Both studies maintain that Oswald was homosexual, where the DIA concludes that his intimate relationship with George de Mohrenschild, a CIA operative, infuriated his wife. (A study of connections between Oswald, de Mohrenschild and George H. W. Bush may be found in Bruce Cambell Adamson, OSWALD'S CLOSEST FRIEND: THE GEORGE DE MOHRENSCHILDT STORY 1996). According to the DIA report, the CIA was willing to give Oswald up to insure that his knowledge of CIA activities would be contained.

The DIA study makes it clear that US officials, including James Jesus Angleton,

the Chief of Counterintelligence for the CIA--who appears to have personally played a key role in initiating the sequence of events that culminated in the assassination--never suspected the Soviet Union of any complicity. Angleton, who tended toward paranoia, discovered that JFK was sharing highly classified information with Nikita Krushchev, which he regarded as treason. (I suspect that JFK was using Krushchev to verify or falsify what he was being told by the CIA, which, at least since the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion, he knew he could not trust.)

According to Douglas' reconstruction of the sequence of events, because the CIA and the Mafia both wanted JFK out, it was easy to draw in the mob, which eventually led to the recruitment of French assassins from Marseilles. The FBI was bought on board, then the Vice President, and finally the Joint Chiefs, who were enthusiastic about removing him from office. (This accords with James Bamford, *BODY OF SECRETS* (2001), whose new disclosures about OPERATION NORTHWOODS were discussed in "On the origins of the assassination of JFK", *ASSASSINATION RESEARCH* 1/1 (2002).)

The plan to assassinate JFK was called OPERATION ZIPPER because the target allegedly had trouble keeping his up. According to Douglas, the assassination weapons were two 7.65 surplus Argentine Mausers and a specially constructed .223 calibre rifle, which was supplied with mercury-filled bullets. (In his video, "The Murder of JFK: Confession of an Assassin" (1996), James Files, describes a high-velocity .223 Remington "Fireball" as his weapon, which was a pistol but one that was shoulder-supported and could be misdescribed as a "rifle".)

Serious students of this case will find much here that has the ring of truth. The recruitment of Marseilles shooters, for example, has also been endorsed in the British video series, "The Men Who Killed Kennedy" (1988), first shown in the United States in 1992. My personal opinion is that those who wanted him dead would not have entrusted the shooting to a group of Frenchmen, whom they would have considered to be unreliable, undependable, and even pansies, but would have assigned this mission to men they knew personally and could trust. Additional evidence on this point, however, might cause me to reconsider.

The reconstruction of the shooting itself falls short on all of these accounts, since we now know much more about what happened in Dealey Plaza and how it was covered up. Jack alone was hit four times--once in the throat from in front, once in the back from behind, and twice in the head, once from behind and once from in front--while Connally was hit anywhere from one to three times; another shot missed and injured a distant by-stander; another missed and hit the chrome strip above the limousine windshield and another was retrieved from the dirt opposite the grassy knoll. So there were actually some eight, nine, or ten shots fired from at least six locations. It seems odd that all the studies offer three shot scenarios.

Nevertheless, those familiar with Noel Twyman's *BLOODY TREASON* (1997) and with James Bamford's *BODY OF SECRETS* (2001) will appreciate the extent to which the big picture fits. The very existence of the ZIPPER document is likely to generate the most controversy, since it is difficult to imagine that principals to the assassination would record their meetings about it. But if they were utterly sincere in

their belief that JFK was a traitor and had to be removed to protect the nation, then that becomes more plausible. According to the ZIPPER document:

- (1) the removal of the President and the Attorney General had been determined to be necessary because of acts of high treason;
- (2) removal by impeachment or other legal means had been discussed but was considered to be impractical and too protracted;
- (3) therefore, an alternative solution--presumably, an assassination--had been decided upon to effect this removal;
- (4) this removal was the result of consensus between the official agencies that had been consulted in this matter;
- (5) that this operation was under the direction of James Angleton assisted by Robert Crowley and William Harvey, all of the CIA;
- (6) where the government agencies directly concerned with the assassination were the CIA, the FBI, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and,
- (7) following the assassination, the new President, who had been fully briefed prior to the event, agreed to appoint a special commission chaired by the Chief Justice for the purpose of "setting public concerns to rest".

According to this document, Angleton would be in complete control of all the evidence that would be presented to the commission and work closely with William Sullivan, Deputy Director of the FBI, to make sure that nothing came before the commission's members that they would not want to acknowledge. There is much more here, including LBJ's reluctance to invade Cuba again, even though such a plan was strongly supported by the Joint Chiefs and the CIA, but that he would be supportive of military action in French Indo China (Viet Nam).

The problem is that all of this seems too good to be true. Douglas has advised me that he had had the documents examined by an expert on typewriters and that the Soviet/DIA studies (one record with two parts), an FBI memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover of 29 November 1963, and the ZIPPER document were all typed on different machines of kinds that were in contemporary usage. If this book has been intended as a scam, the point would be to present an essentially correct account of the assassination in a publication that can later be discredited, where the public is then taken in by assuming that, since the book itself is not credible, the account of the assassination that it presents is not credible, either.

If appearances are reality and these documents turn out to be authentic, then the true origins and character of the government's conspiracy to kill its own President will have been established by a documentary record complementing what we already know about the death of JFK. Douglas makes clear that Crowley's willingness to assist him in these ways was largely motivated by a driving desire to attain a sense of exoneration by explaining why he and others who played crucial roles were convinced that JFK had to be removed. It is a chilling scenario.

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