

THE TEXAS Observer

A JOURNAL OF FREE VOICES

DECEMBER 27, 1991 \$1.50

**MOLLY
IVINS:**
THE FINAL CUT
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The American Coup of 1963



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A JOURNAL OF FREE VOICES

We will serve no group or party but will hew hard to the truth as we find it and the right as we see it. We are dedicated to the whole truth, to human values above all interests, to the rights of human-kind as the foundation of democracy: we will take orders from none but our own conscience, and never will we overlook or misrepresent the truth to serve the interests of the powerful or cater to the ignoble in the human spirit.

Writers are responsible for their own work, but not for anything they have not themselves written, and in publishing them we do not necessarily imply that we agree with them because this is a journal of free voices.

SINCE 1954

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DIALOGUE

Off the Bandwagon

I am a good bit dismayed by the lead editorial on page three of your November 15, 1991 edition ["Democratic Populism: It's About Time"] where you jump on the bandwagon for a middle class tax cut. That's not to say that lower and middle income taxpayers in this country do not deserve consideration for the way they have been plundered over the past 10 years. However, rather than give the middle income folks — and I am one of them — a tax reduction of a few hundred dollars, I believe that it is much more important to plow any decrease in defense spending, or higher taxes on the wealthy, back into domestic programs that were slashed by Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s and have never recovered. I refer to programs to meet the basic needs of all Americans, but particularly people of low income: food assistance, public housing, health care, and education.

Such programs were devastated under Reagan and continue to be ravaged by the Bush administration. If we are ever going to address widespread hunger and homelessness, the absence of health care for 40 million people, astronomical school drop-out rates, etc. we must do it now before the country goes down the tubes. Such activities do not necessarily call for more government spending, just spending on different priorities.

A tax cut at this point, for any income group, will simply compromise our country's future even further in years to come, for such revenue will be much more difficult to replace five or 10 years down the road when it will be needed even more desperately than today. I simply cannot agree that this is a time to cut taxes. Indeed, it may be a time to raise them — on the rich at least — to begin to cure the major social ills that are seriously damaging our country.

Zy Weinberg
Sacramento, CA

American Samizdat

Since I was one of those who urged you to cover the raid on Steve Jackson Games, I naturally want to congratulate you on the coverage. As former southwestern U.S. regional director and chair of the research and advocacy network, the Committee for the Advancement of Role-Playing Games, I have tried to keep up with the case. It is one of the most flagrant of the many attacks on this rather innocuous recreational activity.

However, there are some points that author R.U. Steinberg left out that should be made. [After] the ransacking of SJG offices, a Secret

Service agent [told Jackson] that "modems ought to be banned." The modem is the device that permits computers to talk to one another over phone lines and radio waves. It should be noted and underscored that the principal means by which the democratic movement in the Soviet Union was able to defy and destroy the August coup was that their samizdat system had progressed beyond the Stalinist era typewriter-and-three-carbons level of underground publishing and was utilizing computer modems and fax machines. In light of the almost total control of the "mainstream" mass media by one political philosophy, there is unfortunately reason to believe that the Secret Service's purpose is to shut down any American samizdat system and thus prevent any repeat of the reforms in the USSR in this country.

The second omission was the sad record of high-profile anti-censorship programs over this incident. [For example,] Banned Book Week is a device of the American Booksellers Association and the American Library Association (among others) to call attention to attempts to ban books.... [Although *GURPS Cyberpunk* met the qualifications for the list], there was no mention of this rather major attempt at book banning in the 1990 Banned Book Week.

Although nominated, the story did not even qualify for the 10 most under-covered news stories of 1990 of Project Censored. The first raid in this country's history to prevent the publication of a book by confiscating the printing equipment didn't even make the 15 runners-up.

Obviously, the nation's press, including those organizations who claim to be in favor of the First Amendment, don't really object to censorship if it doesn't directly involve them. Once again, the Texas Observer is an exception to this trend, although a belated one. Let's hope you will keep us informed on the legal action yet to come.

Paul Cardwell
Bonham

Editor's Note: Steinberg responded that Jackson did not tell him about the Secret Service agent's comments on banning modems. Jackson later confirmed that the comment was made to him by an agent after the raid.

WRITE DIALOGUE

The Texas Observer
307 W. 7th St.
Austin, TX 78701

Populists on the March

“WE BELIEVE,” says the Texas Populist Alliance, “that too few people control too much money and power in our country, and that the first priority of our politics is to redress this imbalance of wealth and power.”

With that outcry, the Alliance opened its “declaration of populism” last summer. The statement continued, in part:

“We affirm our faith in a populist democracy, one that gives people real power over economic, education, environmental, and health matters so as to improve their lives and contribute to society....

“We seek to form an alliance of the middle- and working-class people of all races, based on our mutual economic interests....Among the issues that we intend to pursue are:

- Opening up the political process so that the people rather than special interests control the political system....

- The reform of health care, child care, housing and educational systems so that all people have access to these services.

- An economy that works for all people, of all races, with tax equitability and economic conversion from a militarized economy; and,

- The right to a clean and healthy environment.”

The fledgling Texas Populist Alliance now has roughly 300 paid-up members and a mailing list of about 1,000, according to its staff person, Sandra Haverlah. About 400 Texans attended the first meeting of the Alliance in 1990 in Austin, at which Congressmen Craig Washington of Houston and John Bryant of Dallas, Jim Hightower, and Molly Ivins spoke. (See “Populism in Action,” *TO*, 928/90.) Last September about 250 people from around the state attended the second convention, again in Austin, and listened to talks by the historian Lawrence Goodwyn, Hightower, and Ron Hampton, a representative of the National Black Police Officers’ Association.

Setting out to create again a truly Populist movement in the state where Populism took hold dramatically once before, in the late 1880s and early 1890s, who are these folks? Well, here are the identities of their board members.

Les Breeding, the president-elect, with Cindy Breeding used to run the Peace Farm at the Pantex nuclear bombs plant outside Amarillo, but the Breedings are in Austin now, and Les is legislative assistant to State Rep. John Hirschi, D-Wichita Falls (himself the ex-head of the Texas Nuclear Freeze

campaign). Marshall Surratt, of Frisco, the outgoing Alliance president, is a faculty member at North Texas University. The treasurer is Jim Marston, Austin, executive director of the Environmental Defense Fund in Texas and the president of Texas Citizen Action.

Then there are Patrick Barkman, Killeen, a graduate student at Baylor; Ken Chastain, Portland, with the Corpus Christi Housing Authority, and active also in the Native Americans movement; Fredia Dunlap-Dabney, president of the Progressive Democrats of San Antonio, and Paul Pipkin and Denise White from that organization; Domingo Gonzalez, Brownsville, with the Texas Center for Policy Studies and the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras; Drew Brown, Fort Worth, the staffer of the first chapter of the Alliance there; Leslie Jarmon, Corpus, with the South Texas Coalition for Peace in the Middle East and the Ad Hoc Committee for Environmental Concerns of the Free Trade Agreement with Mexico; Jesse Oliver, Dallas, a candidate for the Texas Senate and a former deputy Attorney General; Sam Biscoe, Austin, a Travis County commissioner; Maria Jimenez, Houston, a former labor organizer who is now with the American Friends Service Committee; Paul Sherr, Austin, on the board of the Texas Alliance for Human Needs and CWA’s Texas State Employees’ Union; Eddy Etheredge, San Marcos, a Hays County judge; Eliseo Solis, Lubbock, a Lubbock County commissioner; Diane Wilson, Seadrift, Calhoun County Resource Watch; Christopher Cook, Austin, a former reporter now dealing with the press for the Texas AFL-CIO; Jo McCall, of the San Antonio Democratic League; Jimmy Herrington, Beaumont, of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union; David Brown, president of the Austin Central Labor Council; and David Zwick, Houston, executive director of Clean Water Action.

So far the Alliance’s only funding comes from memberships and individual contributions, although its board meets in a room provided by the Texas AFL-CIO at state union headquarters in Austin. The Alliance hopes to establish a research center. It is also trying to form a Populist Coordinating Council, which is intended to be composed of representatives of interested organizations, but that is going slowly. Fifty organizations were invited to attend the council’s first meeting on Oct. 26, but representatives appeared from only seven, the Texas AFL-CIO, the Texas Alliance for Human Needs, the Texas State Employees Union, the Nuclear

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Cover illustration by Richard Bartholomew.

Responsibility Network, the Texas Campaign for Global Security, and the two San Antonio groups that now have members on the board.

To join the Texas Populist Alliance and receive its quarterly newsletter, send \$10 to the Alliance at 1205 Nueces St., Austin, TX 78705. The telephone number is 512-482-8724.

Feeling Bought... or Disloyal

Glenn Kothmann and I went to high school together in San Antonio. As a state representative and state senator from San Antonio he kept a low profile and worked to be a representative of his fellow citizens in a literal sense. “I sent

post cards through my district and focused on what they thought, and then I voted my district," he told me the other day. "I knew what the people thought and I knew what I was doing."

On the issues Glenn did stay, mostly, with his friends in labor and with the plaintiffs' lawyers. And when it really counted he went into hiding with the Killer Bees. But otherwise he just polled his constituents and voted their opinions. He almost never made a speech. Although Texas Monthly, its ratings guided by that all-knowing maker and destroyer of political reputations, Paul Burka, ranked him among its "Ten Worst" every time, he wasn't.

He was a foxy man whose way to succeed worked. We had run into each other in Alamo Heights, in the parking lot of one of those global banks where there used to be a hometown one. "The secret of a successful man," he told me as I was waiting in a line to get \$5 in quarters for a lot of pay-phone calls, "is to keep his success a secret." Beyond that, his principle of service was not all that bad. It is far better to faithfully represent the public's opinions than the business lobby's. And even beyond that, he told me, "nobody'll ever know how many bad bills I killed without ever making a speech, just by talking to fellow members on the floor, or on a committee."

In 1986 Senator Kothmann decided not to run for re-election. He is subdividing ranches into five- and ten-acre tracts now and looks like a rancher, his face sunburned, his coarse hair white. "Why'd you quit, Glenn?" I asked my old friend from Brackenridge High. People like Burka who sneered at Glenn, listen up. It's not often we hear, from a veteran officeholder, a truthful description of what it's like now to be one of our fellow human beings who sit in a legislative body in our thoroughly corrupted American democracy.

"Politics just wasn't fun anymore," Glenn said. "Why did the press treat me so bad?" When he had first entered the Capitol as a representative in the early 1970s there were no PACs, so by the time the PACs polluted American politics he had established his voting patterns on the issues. "I always voted for horse racing," he said. "Then I took \$5,000 from the horse-racing PAC. The papers said I took it and voted for horse racing. The implication was I was bought, although I wasn't."

"You had to take PAC money—it took half a million dollars to get elected in my district. When I started it took only \$100,000, \$150,000. You can't use your own money! When I took a PAC's money and voted with 'em, I felt bought, even though I knew I wasn't. When I took a

PAC's money and voted against 'em, I felt disloyal."

Rich Man v. Hero

Not to make too much of it, but the richest man in Texas and the red-white-and-bluest patriot in the United States have fallen into a swearing match. Ross Perot, who, according to Texas Monthly, which keeps up with such things, personally possesses three billion dollars (\$3,000,000,000), and Oliver North, he than whom no other is more hero, flatly contradict each other on whether Perot asked North to "clear" President Reagan in the Iran-Contra scandal while also promising to take care of

North's family if Ollie went to jail.

Compare: "I wanted him to tell the whole truth," Perot told the Dallas News. "If that cleared the President, fine. If it involved the President, fine. The American people have the right to know the truth. I never even hinted that he should pro-TECT anybody....I wouldn't try to protect any politician."

Perot was denying what North wrote in his book published in the fall, *Under Fire: An American Story*, written with William Novak. North there expressed his suspicion that the Reagan administration was behind three attempts to get him to clear Reagan of knowing anything about Iran-Contra.

See Observations page 21

EDITOR'S FORUM

Stop the Killing

AS WE APPROACH the holidays, Christmas bells are ringing along with cash registers in every mall. Yet melancholy tinges us here in Central Texas. No sooner had the shock of the Killeen mass murder worn off than Austin was shaken by the news that four teenage girls had been murdered in an apparent attempt to cover up the burglary of a yogurt store. The girls had been closing the store when they were killed — all shot in the back of the head, their bodies and the store set aflame.

Such stories are becoming all too common, especially in larger cities such as Houston and Dallas, which are on course to record an astonishing 1,100 homicides between them this year. It may be that the reverberations from these latest shots rang louder in the Austin media because they occurred in a predominantly white, middle-class area of town. Inner cities have known such violence for years, although the cold brutality of these killings would have been especially appalling no matter where they happened.

The pictures of those four girls, and the Killeen victims, put a human face on some statistics whose gruesomeness is not approached anywhere else in the industrialized world. To add to our other dubious number-ones, we have now become the first state in which more of our citizens died by gunfire — 3,443 — than in car accidents, according to 1990 statistics recently released by the Texas Department of Health and published last month in Texas

Medicine. Even for a state so notorious for violence, it seems that guns and death have been terrorizing us more than ever lately.

If Chainsaws are Outlawed...

Texas, of course, has no gun registration law, nor requires background checks for gun buyers. In fact, the Legislature barely beat back deplorable attempts by Houston Sen. Gene Green and others to permit Texans to carry concealed handguns. And several letters to the editor of the Austin daily paper called for, essentially, arming everyone in Texas, so that the other patrons could have opened a crossfire on the Killeen killer. The ludicrousness of such an argument — do we really want to live in an armed camp where anyone, in a moment of anger, can draw a pistol? — didn't escape one correspondent, who pointed to an October incident in San Antonio in which a patron who had been ejected from a nightclub returned to terrorize the place — with a chainsaw. (Only the door and a couple of tables sustained injury. The power saw was stolen after its wielder was disarmed.) The writer advocated the arming of every Texan with a chainsaw as a deterrent to such incidents.

Gun-control opponents usually point to states with tougher gun laws and high homicide statistics to "prove" that gun control doesn't work. Such figures really demonstrate that what is needed is a national law that would prevent angry or homicidal people from buying guns in more lenient states. Countries with strong nationwide restrictions on firearms ownership have dramatically lower death-by-gunshot rates. But even statewide efforts can help. A study released last month showed that without its tough gun-control laws passed in the late 1970s,

See Guns page 7

Intern Wanted

The Texas Observer could make good use of an editorial intern who is interested in unpaid journalistic experience. Call (512) 477-0746..

The Texas Observer

Thanks our readers for their support this year and extends our best wishes for the holiday season and 1992. — The Staff.

The American Coup of 1963

The federal government tops the suspect list

BY JIM MARRS

Wise County

ACADEMY-AWARD-WINNING director Oliver Stone will soon unveil his \$40-million version of that pivotal point in our recent history, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

No one questions that the murder of our 35th president, our youngest president, the first one born in the 20th century, sent this nation in a direction from which there has been no return. But that is just about the only thing connected to his death has not been questioned.

No event in recent history has been so subjected to scrutiny by government panels — there have been four, the Warren Commission, the Rockefeller Committee, the Church Committee, and the House Select Committee on Assassinations—as well as a host of private citizens who have refused to let Kennedy's murder drop from view.

Hundreds of books have been written on this subject and thousands of articles in periodicals ranging from *Argosy* to *The New Republic* and *Life*. The supermarket tabloids have carried on about the subject, too, some going so far as to claim that JFK is still alive and hidden away somewhere.

Yet here comes Oliver Stone, who already has tackled the raw-nerve subjects of Vietnam horrors, neglected veterans, and drugged-out rock icons, to bring us his version of the greatest murder mystery in memory. And he has already stirred up nearly as much controversy as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison did in the late 1960s by announcing that he had cracked the conspiracy to kill Kennedy and would bring criminal charges against the participants.

George Lardner Jr., of the *Washington Post*, led the attack on the film. Armed with a presumably purloined copy of one of the earliest versions of Stone's script, Lardner claimed that Stone "is chasing fiction" and that Garrison's investigation was a "fraud."

Lardner was making similar statements about Garrison back in the sixties. Yet history has substantiated most, if not all, of Garrison's allegations. Even G. Robert Blakey, the chief counsel of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, was forced to concede that "Garrison might have been on the right track...for evidence of an association between David Ferrie and Oswald...was found by the committee to be credible."

Other mass-media defenders of the status quo quickly took up the refrain that Stone was manipulating facts and twisting history to suit his own purposes. Poor average readers or viewers have been left to ponder for themselves the accuracy of these accusations, especially since the attack on Stone began even before he had begun to assemble his film in the editing suites of Hollywood.

Does Oliver Stone know something about the Kennedy assassination that we don't? The answer to this question is yes. The reason is that Stone did what the four major federal-government investigations and the national news media failed to do in probing Kennedy's death: he followed the evidence.

Whatever preconceived ideas about the assassination Stone brought into his project were quickly altered by the work done by his competent research staff, aided by several of the more credible of the private researchers.

It is true that Stone suffered more than his fair share of flakes and exploitation artists, who naturally gravitate to well-funded projects such



RICHARD BARTOLDMEY

New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison

as his. To his credit, while he gave most of these carriers of "the truth" a fair hearing, he rejected their far-out theories.

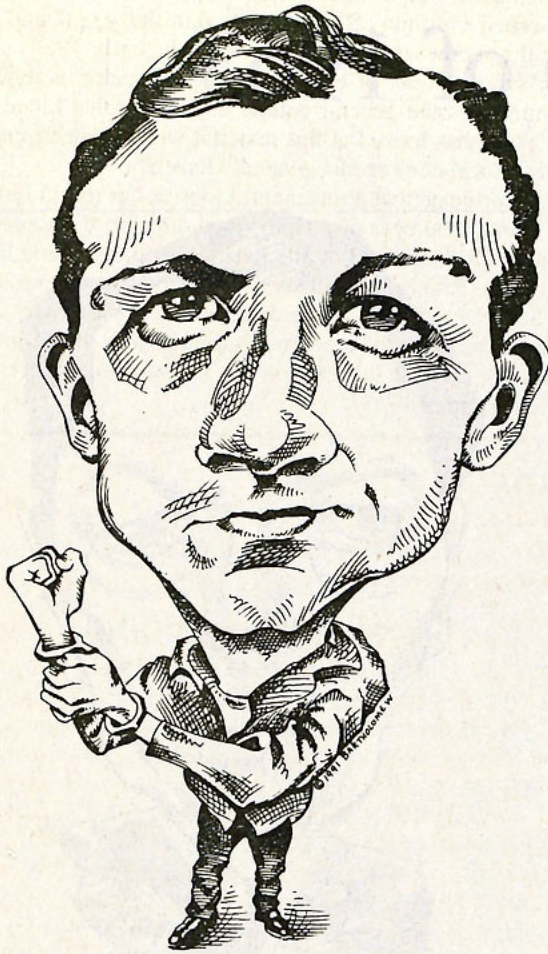
What then has Stone discovered?

Here is a brief overview of the case, with no attention paid to theories or the divergent personalities of the private researchers.

Square One: the death of President Kennedy was not the work of a lone assassin as claimed by Lyndon Johnson's handpicked Warren Commission. There definitely was a conspiracy that resulted in the assassination, as well as a demonstrable conspiracy to prevent the first conspiracy from being revealed. Whether these two conspiracies were one and the same remains to be proven.

The evidence?

The idea that a single assassin perpetrated the assassination rests entirely on the "single-bullet" theory, to wit, that one 6.5-mm copper-jacketed rifle slug fired from a sixth-floor window struck Kennedy in the middle of his back (at the level of his third thoracic vertebra, according to the autopsy report), somehow changed direction and turned upwards coming out of the front of his neck near his Adam's apple, twisted in midair and struck Texas Governor John Connally near his right armpit, entered Connally's chest shattering his fifth rib and sending bullet and bone fragments all over his chest cavity,



Lee Harvey Oswald

came out near his right nipple and somehow managed to strike his right wristbone (one of the densest bones in the body) from the top or anterior side, and shattered the wristbone and came out of the wrist to strike Connally in the left thigh.

Later that afternoon, a bullet was discovered on a Parkland Hospital stretcher which could not be conclusively connected to Kennedy or Connally, but was proclaimed by the federal government to be the bullet which caused the wounds just described. The recovered slug

was "pristine," with 159 of its original 161 grains of weight intact.

To persons even vaguely familiar with ballistics or forensic science, this was and is hogwash. Just one of the facts that put the lie to the theory of the Parkland bullet is this one: with Connally's wrist X-ray available to the public, we find more grains of bullet remain in his wrist today than are missing from the slug the government still claims caused his wrist wound.

If the "single-bullet" theory collapses, so does the "lone-assassin" theory, because a single bolt-action rifle could not have been fired rapidly enough to hit both Kennedy and Connally with-in the time span recorded by the Zapruder film of the assassination.

Further hard evidence of the existence of two or multiple assassins comes from the acoustical tests conducted by two separate groups of scientists commissioned by the House committee in the 1970s. More such hard evidence is provided by the Hughes and Bronson films, which corroborate eyewitness testimony that more than one man was seen on the sixth floor of the Depository both before the assassination and as long as six minutes after the shooting—more than four minutes *after* Oswald was encountered by both a Dallas policeman and his work supervisor in a downstairs lunchroom of the building.

So, now we consider a conspiracy.

It is my opinion, based on considerations that I regard as logical and controlling, that the theory that international communists were behind the plot can be dismissed.

First, communists—whether of the Soviet or Cuban stripe—had nothing to gain and everything to lose from killing President Kennedy. They gained as President Lyndon B. Johnson, a man with far grimmer anti-communist credentials than Kennedy, and thereby they ran the risk of another U.S. invasion of Cuba, or even World War III. It might be reasonable to suspect that the government hid proof of a communist plot in 1963-'64 to avoid war, but if it had such proof it certainly would have leaked it in the early 1970s to regain support for the anti-communist war in Vietnam.

Furthermore, there is no solid evidence that either Oswald or his executioner Jack Ruby had any connection with U.S. communists. Quite the opposite, since both Oswald and Ruby can be connected to CIA-supported anti-Castro Cubans and to the FBI.

So now we, with Oliver Stone, must consider a domestic conspiracy—or conspiracies. Anyone could have hired competent assassins to kill the president, but no one would have dared move against the chief executive officer without firm assurances that there would be no meaningful pursuit of the conspirators. That proposition leads us to a second conspiracy, to block a real investigation of the crime and cover up any traces of the truth of the matter.

Imagine that you are the detective in a homicide case. You arrive at the scene to find that the police have arrested four suspects. You are

Jim Marrs, a Texan who grew up in Dallas-Fort Worth, is the author of Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy (Carroll & Graf, New York), which is now in its fourth printing in both hardbound and softbound editions. In 1990 the rights to the book were purchased by Oliver Stone; the author informs us that Crossfire is one of the two books that were used as the basis for Stone's film, "JFK," the other one being Jim Garrison's On the Trail of the Assassins (Sheridan Square Press, New York, 1988). Crossfire is reviewed at page 19.

After graduating from the University of North Texas with a BA in journalism, Marrs worked for the Denton Record-Chronicle and the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal while attending graduate school at Texas Tech. Returning to the Dallas-Fort Worth area in 1968, he began working as a police reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. By the mid-1970s he was an investigative reporter doing special assignments, some of which entailed trips to Europe and the Middle East. He was president of the Fort Worth Press Club and is a member of Sigma Delta Chi, the journalists' professional organization. Since 1980 he has been a freelance writer and a public relations consultant.

During his military service Marrs served with Fourth Army Intelligence. As a college student, in the fall of 1963, he met Jack Ruby while visiting the Carousel Club in Dallas. As a reporter Marrs interviewed Lee Harvey Oswald's mother Marguerite and his wife Marina; Jeanne DeMohrenschildt, one of Oswald's closest friends; James Tague, the third man wounded in Dealey Plaza; and many police, governmental, and news media people involved in the case. He has followed the work of many of the critics of the government's research and has kept in touch with the critics. Since 1976 he has taught a course on the JFK assassination at UT-Arlington, developing new leads through this work. He has made many presentations of material about the assassination to Texas civic organizations and other groups, including police agencies.

Marrs lives in a log home in Wise County with his wife, their two daughters, and a menagerie.

informed that suspect number four has been discovered fabricating, destroying, and altering evidence in this case as well as intimidating witnesses into silence. Who is going to the top of your suspect list?

In the case of the assassination of President Kennedy, suspect number four is the federal government.

Photographic experts around the world have agreed with assassination researchers that the famous backyard photo of Oswald with a rifle is a sophisticated fabrication. Only government-hired experts have contended that the photo, replete with conflicting shadows, missing fingertips, and an Oswald figure that is not proportional with the known width of the newspaper he is holding, is genuine. Internal CIA documents indicate that this film, vital evidence in the case, was in the hands of the CIA's National Photo Interpretation Center the night of the assassination, but there has been no official explanation of what may have been done to the film or why.

A note that Lee Harvey Oswald delivered to the Dallas FBI office two weeks before the assassination was destroyed on orders of the chief agent in charge three days after Kennedy's death. It is still not known exactly what the note contained.

The CIA claimed to have a tape recording of Oswald in the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, yet FBI agents reported that the voice on the tape was not Oswald's, and the CIA destroyed the tape before the Warren Commission could clear up the matter.

The Dallas Police evidence sheet, as presented to the American public by the Warren Commission, was altered to eliminate any reference to the paraffin test on Oswald's right cheek. The results of that test were negative—strong, although not conclusive proof that he had not fired a rifle that day.

A photograph from Oswald's possessions was mutilated, while in the hands of the feds, so as to obscure a license plate.

Among the American citizens who have said they were intimidated by FBI agents are Jean Hill, Nelson Delgado, Ed Hoffman, Phillip Willis, Roger Craig, Richard Carr, and several others.

Today the chief suspects in Kennedy's murder include the Mafia, the CIA, the FBI, and the U.S. military. These four suspects are known to have, or to have had, working cooperative relationships. It's like the story of the blind man and the elephant. In looking at the mob, the military, or the intelligence agencies, we have been viewing only a part of the whole.

It is now established history that the CIA and the Mafia have worked hand in hand on a number of projects, including the assassination of national leaders. It is also beyond doubt that "military officer" and "CIA officer" are often interchangeable terms. The

Three Decades of the JFK Assassination Inquiry Observed

A compilation of articles originally published in the Texas Observer on President John F. Kennedy and his assassination. Over 90 pages of investigative reports you won't find anywhere else, by such authors as Ronnie Dugger, Earl Goltz, and Sylvia Meagher. Read how the Observer covered the seminal event of the last 30 years. To order, send a check or money order for \$12.00 to The Texas Observer, 307 W. 7th, Austin, Tx., 78701.

FBI has been keeping tabs on all three of the other suspect groups. Lesser known, but well documented, is the fact that some Mafia bosses, such as Johnny Roselli, carried military rank and privileges during the secret war against Castro in the early 1960s.

A massive amount of evidence and information is now available that illuminates the general outline of the plot that killed Kennedy. Oliver Stone has looked at this material with an open mind. The national and local news media generally have not.

It is unfortunate that a meaningful look at our recent history has to occur through the eyes of a Hollywood director, but someone had to pick up the ball dropped by the federal government and the national news media. Rather than attack Oliver Stone as "irresponsible" and sneer at the legion of sincere assassination researchers as "buffs," wouldn't it behoove the news media to look at, evaluate, and then disseminate the credible information that is now available concerning the American coup of 1963? □

Guns

Continued from page 4

Washington, D.C., would have been even more blood-soaked than it already has become.

The Killeen Fields

In the wake of these latest bloodlettings, people who never before considered any limitations on firearm ownership have begun to reconsider. Take freshman U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Waco, who gained national notice when he supported mild gun control amendments in Congress after the worst mass murder in American history occurred in his district, which includes Killeen. Edwards, who had a relatively progressive record in the Texas Senate, didn't attempt to persuade the district's conservative voters to support gun control when he sought election to Congress in 1990. (See "Gramm Strikes Out," TO, 11/22/90.) Instead, he took the path of Leath assistance: In order to obtain the support of his popular predecessor, Tory Democrat Marvin Leath, Edwards completely refabricated his image to match Leath's. A prime plank in Edwards' 1990 election-year facade was unswerving aversion to gun control. The Luby's killings changed that.

The cynical might wonder if the Killeen massacre provided Edwards political cover for returning to his true beliefs, but his brave and heartfelt speech on the floor of the House showed that, for him, gun control had transcended politics and had become an urgent necessity for the nation. Would that his colleagues had proved similarly educable; they voted down the amendments.

This isn't the place or the season to rehash the debates over the Second Amendment and the National Rifle Association and all the other issues. Just a suggestion or two. Killeen police found that, two weeks before Killeen murderer George Hennard used two 9mm pistols to kill 23 people in Luby's, he tried unsuccessfully to sell the guns. At about the same time, the city of St. Louis was feeling unexpected relief from a program in which police gave \$50 to anyone who turned in a working handgun, no questions asked. The buyback succeeded beyond anyone's wildest hopes, with over 7,000 weapons turned in at last count, and the city is trying to expand the program. How many lives were spared because an angry disagreement didn't turn into a shootout? What if such a program had been in place in Bell County, where Hennard lived?

During this seasonal celebration of life, let us send forth one more appeal to our leaders to, for once, set politics aside, accede to the wishes of a solid majority of U.S. citizens (according to recent polls) and re-think just what it means when they vote against gun-control proposals, in Austin or in Washington. They are killing more than a piece of legislation. — B.C.

Five for the Valley

South Texas leaders for peace and social justice

BY GARY MOUNCE

THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY of Texas is a unique part of the state with special problems that demand special responses. Five of the more dynamic leaders who have earned regional "Peace and Social Justice" awards for their activism are the Rev. David Diaz, the husband-and-wife team of the Rev. Edgar Krueger and Ninfa Ochoa Krueger, Ann Williams Cass and Bishop John Joseph Fitzpatrick. In bringing the Valley measurably more social justice, they have brought it many steps closer to peace.

Edinburg

David Diaz

Rev. Diaz, as campus minister for the United Methodist Church at the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) in Edinburg, was a pioneer with "Witness for Peace," the "voluntary hostage" group that helped protect Nicaraguans from attacks by the U.S.-funded Contra rebels in the 1980s. The Valley native was the first Hispanic on the "Witness for Peace" executive board, and he was the recipient of the annual "Peace and Social Justice Award" for 1991 presented by the Forum of UTPA, a coalition of students and faculty.

Diaz raised consciousness about the rights of ethnic groups and of women. He is also a member of the Methodist Committee to Study Homosexuality. He was on the board for Proyecto Libertad, an immigration advocacy group in Harlingen, and he was a member of the board for Casa de la Merced in McAllen, a refugee sanctuary.

Feeling strongly, too, about issues of war and peace, Diaz recently joined students, faculty and other Valley residents in opposition to the war in the Middle East. "I basically criticized Bush's policy on humanitarian grounds; I am a pacifist," he said. He inspired the creation of Valley Volunteers for Peace, one of several groups that challenged U.S. war policy in the Persian Gulf.

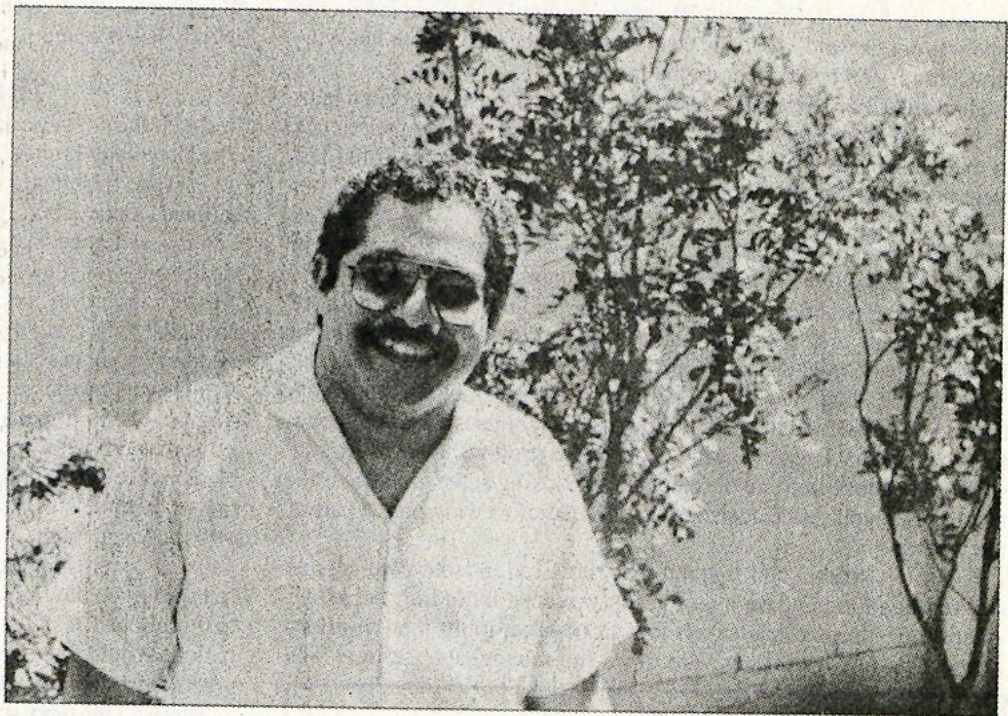
In the midst of Diaz's up-front opposition to the war, the local Methodist board removed him as campus minister, ostensibly for administrative reasons. While Diaz suspected politics behind his removal, he viewed the change philosophically as a chance to move from the campus to the barrios, and he is now working with Latinos in Houston.

Edgar and Ninfa Krueger

Rev. Krueger, an ordained minister with the United Church of Christ, was the first Protestant winner of the "Peace and Justice" award, which

is given annually by the Holy Spirit Catholic Church in McAllen. Krueger's early work was with campesinos in Mexico, supported by the American Friends Service Committee. Afterward he worked with that group's migrant ministry in the United States.

The Indiana native, raised in Kansas and Waco, developed his own practical liberation theology — a commitment to the poor — before it was articulated by theologians. "My theme of life is to confound stereotypes," Krueger said. "I love to beard lions in their den." He is a strong man physically, with an old-fashioned, gentle manner. This combination worked in California, where he specialized in talking to growers resistant to Mexican American needs and union demands. With



GARY MOUNCE

Rev. David Diaz, campus minister, United Methodist Church, University of Texas-Pan American.

Japanese-American growers who had been imprisoned during World War II, he was successful in focusing on their own recollections of injustices. Krueger later worked in Oklahoma before moving to the Texas Valley, organizing farm workers for the Texas Council of Churches. His commitment frequently exposed him to danger. In a 1967 confrontation, he remembers, Texas Rangers pinned him to the ground with his head next to the tracks as a train was speeding past. But he persisted.

One of the catalysts for change turned out to be a devastating hurricane. "Beulah" hit the Valley in September of 1967, and after the Red Cross left, severe deprivations continued. Local officials did not allow participation in the federal food stamp program at that time, and Krueger recalls that the meager county surplus commodities program that was available was misused as a payoff for votes.

Pressure brought by Krueger and others changed the official policy,

Gary Mounce is a professor of political science at Pan American University in Edinburg.

but it did not change hearts. Indeed, it became more difficult to organize, he said, as people were afraid that their food stamps would be cut. But with Susan Law and David Hall of Texas Rural Legal Aid, Krueger began "Colonias del Valle," an effective organization that still addresses the problems of the small settlements of poorer Mexican Americans outside city boundaries. He also helped to establish "Su Clinica Familiar" to deal with growing health problems. Colonias del Valle got federal money to help meet the nutritional needs of elderly citizens.

Krueger moved on, commenting, only half-jokingly: "After organizations become too acceptable, we get out." Personal challenge — not salary — keeps organizers going. Currently Krueger works with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) "Border Communities Project." It is supported with monies from five churches and the binational "Comite de Apoyo." (As his wife, Ninfa, said, "Nothing gets done in the Valley without support by at least one church.") Krueger said he aims to "teach people how to fish." He fishes both sides of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo, linking the more traditional "poverty" issues with environmental concerns. He also helps workers in the maquiladora factories in Mexico.

GARY MOUNCE



Rev. Edgar Krueger and Ninfa Ochoa Krueger

Organizing, Krueger said, "is all about letting go of one's ego ... One prominent leader should not attempt to do the entire job."

One cannot think of Ed Krueger without his wife, and vice versa. A strong personality, she is an important leader in her own right. They met — how else? — through politics; at a conference in Edinburg of PASO, the Political Association of Spanish-speaking Organizations. The Kruegers were the first couple to win the Holy Spirit Peace and Justice Award.

Ninfa Ochoa Krueger said she started questioning authority when she was six years old, when public-school officials "set me back in grade because I had attended what they assumed was an inferior Catholic, Mexican-American kindergarten." Later she witnessed discrimination in the selection of the high-school homecoming queen. As a worker with the state Department of Human Resources, she recalls, "I flirted with La Raza Unida Party and was asked by the director to resign."

She refused. "I didn't know why; I just knew he had no such right."

In the early 1970s she became involved with the National Farm Workers Ministry in Delano, Calif., where she used to get up at 3 a.m. to face authorities on the picket line. "I remember escaping arrest because I was pregnant," she said. "I felt guilty when all the others were arrested." But she had to return home to feed her young boys. She notes wryly, "the most conservative force may not be the Rangers or strike-busters of the growers. The pull of home duties, the need for a paycheck often hamper organizing." Yet, she insists, "children and marriage never stood in the way of my social activity. In fact, they enhanced it."

The family went to post-Allende Chile during the mid-1970s, sponsored by the AFSC. They went to build cooperatives, to work with women and to develop health programs. These were the roughest days of the Pinochet regime, and organizing was illegal. The Kruegers were not endangered, but their oldest son was detained by the secret police on his way to a party at the U.S. Embassy. He was released, but others were not so lucky in those tragic days of "the Missing."

Ninfa Ochoa Krueger said she relied on "a righteous anger that comes from the Holy Spirit." She emphasized that "the type of fight I mean is inspired by my heroes, such as Gandhi, King and Chavez." This soft anger has also led her to become a co-founder of Mujeres Unidas, a much-needed halfway house and counseling center for battered women in the Valley.

In 1981 she helped nurture another organization, the Valley Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America. This educational group sponsored conferences and protests of the U.S. policy in Central America, a policy that she blames for causing the refugee crisis in the first place.

Others may burn out — or never catch fire — but she burns on. She helped found the influential Border Association for Refugees from Central America (BARCA), an ecumenically based organization of churches and individuals. BARCA deals with the plight of Central American refugees through a mixture of old-fashioned charity and new-fashioned negotiation with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. "Some things have changed; reactionary forces are not quite as 'hard core' as they once were," she said.

Organizing has become more acceptable, she added. Fifteen years ago, she said, "Friends would hesitate to be seen with me — an organizer. Now it is probably more acceptable to talk peace and work for social justice."

Ann Williams Cass

Ann Williams Cass is the pastoral administrator of Holy Spirit Catholic Church, which has 1,700 families but no permanent priest. She majored in biochemistry and minored in theology at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa, but her academic and personal priorities came to be reversed in the Valley, partly as a result of her inspiration by the charismatic Sister Carol Messina. Williams Cass helped fill the void left by Sister Carol's death several years ago. "My philosophy today is to fulfill the church's mission to be 'Christ in the world,'" Williams Cass said.

Williams Cass also joined the National Farm Workers Ministry, and a major part of her job is to help implement new laws protecting farm workers. She is involved with the Indigent Health Care Monitoring Commission, which monitors enforcement of spraying and sanitation regulations in Hidalgo County.



*Ann Williams Cass, pastoral administrator,
Holy Spirit Catholic Church*

But her main job is with the young, growing parish, which celebrated ten years of existence on May 19 with a colorful out-door bilingual Mass. Collections have doubled since the founding of the church, but so have divisions within the congregation. There was conflict after Williams Cass removed the U.S. flag from the altar.

Many churches face friction among those who work for social justice and more traditional members who focus on internal church matters, but the problem is especially troublesome at Holy Spirit, whose members include liberals and conservatives, rich and poor, various ethnic groups, U.S. Rep. "Kika" de la Garza, federal attorneys, reform-minded local lawyers, university professors, citrus growers and migrant farm workers. This diverse demography is only partially reconciled within the church. "I see the challenge to heal and compromise as part of my calling," Williams Cass said. But she added, "I must pursue the Catholic Church's 'preferential option for the poor,' as Latin American bishops declared in the landmark 1968 Medellin Bishops' statement, as my main goal."

Williams Cass does all church work except saying Mass and other priestly duties. She even sings in the choir. She may have converted some who did not agree with her social activism. Others, however, resent her active social stance. "She thinks she is the church," one conservative parishioner huffed. She is aware of such criticism, but it does not deter her. Her vision centers on "outreach." She especially relishes her role as the representative of the parish to Valley Interfaith (VI). She attends the caucuses of clergy with leaders and members of the interfaith lobby group for the poor. The church sends 2 percent of its oper-

ating budget to VI, and this support, plus that of other parishes and one valiant Mexican-American Methodist church, helps sustain that crucial Valley-wide organization.

Her other work involves refugees. She was a member of the original Rio Grande Valley Defense Committee, now the Refugee Rights Coalition. She also assists BARCA, coordinating with Ochoa Krueger. "I see a power in being powerless," Williams Cass said. That optimism is reflected in her infectious "can do" attitude. She uses a term frequently heard in VI meetings: "I want to empower others."

She also hopes to help change the role of women in the church, but admits that she needs and appreciates the support of the Valley's Catholic bishop, Rev. Fitzpatrick, the first recipient of the Holy Spirit Peace and Justice Award. A bumper sticker spotted in the parking lot of the diocesan chancery office suggested the bishop's philosophy: "If You Want Peace, Work for Justice."

Bishop John Fitzpatrick

The bishop has worked with Italian Americans in the 1940s and later with Puerto Ricans and Cubans in Miami. He followed farm workers north on their annual trek, then returned with them to the Rio Grande Valley. "I made speeches, marched, wrote articles deploring low wages, no insurance for workers and prejudice toward the poor," he said. "But I longed for an institutional, broader approach as opposed to those 'piecemeal' protests."

Archbishop Patrick Flores of San Antonio suggested to Fitzpatrick that Ernesto Cortes, with the Industrial Areas Foundation, be invited to assist in getting something more permanent started in the Valley. Thus was born, in 1983, the now-famous Valley Interfaith, modeled after COPS in San Antonio. "Our early enemies were vitriolic in their opposition and cowardly in their tactics," Fitzpatrick recalls. "They posted unsigned hate letters on the church doors." Valley newspapers owned by the Libertarian "Freedom" chain were full of letters denouncing VI as communist. The bishop said he merely "wrote in the sand, because some critics don't deserve an answer." His visible support helped legitimize VI for the faithful.

Later the bishop tackled the problem of refugee needs through his support of Casa Oscar Romero, a leading refugee center in the lower Valley. Modestly he scoffs, "Was it really brave to feed 30 people rice and beans? No, but someone just had to do it." The Casa, too, took a pounding in the local press and still suffers harassment from the INS. It has endured partly because of the bishop's steady support.

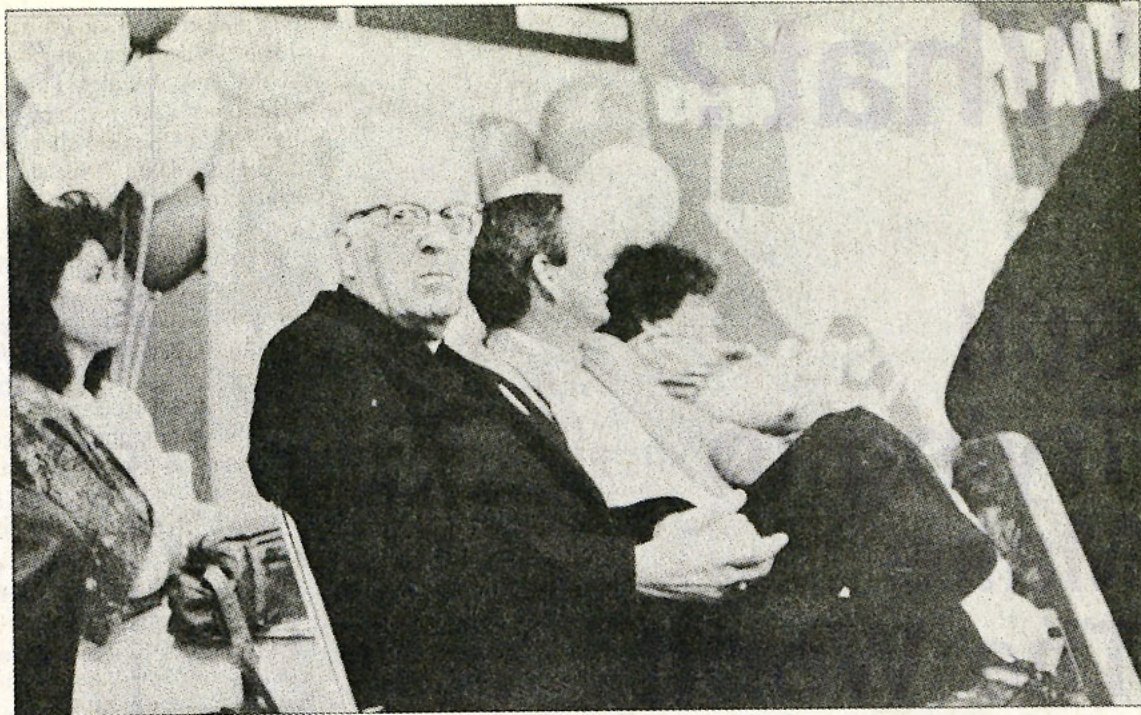
"The current focus of VI on education and literacy is the correct goal," the bishop said. "The 40-to-60-percent school dropout rate in some areas of Mexican-American youth is still the area's number one problem as I see it." As for future challenges, Fitzpatrick believes Valley Interfaith has much more potential. "Only 38 of 62 parishes are members. With more support, more could be done at the state level" through the votes and lobbying, he said. Gov. Ann Richards has encouraged VI, he noted. But the support of more Protestant churches is needed, he said.

Fitzpatrick and VI work together to train speakers at various member parishes. "The idea is to teach teachers to teach others," he said. "We focus on issues such as the strong Bishops' Letter on the Economy, so critical of the increasing gaps between rich and poor." Fitzpatrick occasionally is critical of his parishioners, whom he admonishes, "Do not ask a priest to do what can be done by others. Remember, responsibility belongs to all."

Fitzpatrick has his detractors, in and out of the church. Many of the epithets applied, such as "strong-willed," also point to qualities that are frequently and perhaps necessarily present in many successful leaders of religious or political persuasion.

None of the five people profiled here would claim saintliness. Their philosophies can be debated and their actions criticized. To some, they are not revolutionary enough; others fear that Valley-type social action will calm the masses enough to save the elites from more jolting changes. Secular critics complain that the social movements are too dependent on church leaders. Another critic has argued that the almost exclusive emphasis on the underclass ignores middle-class attitudes and potential participation.

But these five Valley leaders will continue to work for social justice at home and peace in the world as they see fit. It is up to others who desire different or more progressive changes to build upon this foundation and to go beyond. □



Bishop Fitzpatrick

Jumper Cables for the Middle Class

Economic blues have Texas congressmen looking for green

BY DEBORAH LUTTERBECK

A FRENCH MORALIST once observed that we all have strength enough to endure the misfortunes of others. In no place has this been more true than in Washington, until of course there were political stakes. Now that the economy is on the mind of the public, nationwide unemployment at 6.8 percent is starting to mean something inside the Beltway. In Texas, the unemployment rate is running ahead of the national average — now at 7.0 percent. But this is not to say there are no cures. In fact, lawmakers of every stripe have lined up on Capitol Hill to offer remedies.

So what are the economic wish lists from Texans? Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, is seeking a tax rebate for the middle class. Over in the House Republican camp, Rep. Richard Arme of Lewisville would like to see a capital gains tax cut. In Austin, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock and State Treasurer Kay Bailey Hutchison have the simple hope that Texans will get back a dollar for every dollar they send to Washington.

From the looks of how the national economic debate is developing, chances are there will be a little bit of something for all of the lawmakers. What remains to be seen is if that will be enough for the American public. The best laws may not be made through compromise, but it is certainly true that most have that birthright. For example, Bentsen's "Tax Fairness and Savings Incentive Act" contains a little something for everyone, and that gives it a better chance to get adopted.

Bentsen's bill puts some extra cash in the middle income taxpayer's pockets, provides incentives for the housing sector and postpones spend-

ing cuts for several years. The nuts and bolts of the Act include a \$300-per-child tax credit for those who fall in the middle income bracket and it allows more people to make use of their Individual Retirement Accounts. In addition, first-time home buyers would be allowed to dip into their IRA accounts without a penalty. The price tag for this initiative is \$72.5 billion. It would be paid for by a 5 percent cut in defense spending that would not begin until 1993.

Bentsen's tax credit takes aim at the fairness in the current system. As the senator describes it: "The attitude of middle income Americans, skeptical after economic policies of the 1980s ran roughshod over the them, can perhaps be summed up by paraphrasing the country/western song: 'They got the gold mine but we got the shaft.'" The economic policy of the last decade was no friend to the middle class. Forbes magazine reports that the combined worth of the 400 richest people swelled \$270 billion in 1989, from \$92 billion in 1982. The story of the middle class is not the stuff of glossy magazines. It is a tale best told by the Census Bureau, which found that median net worth of American households dropped 4 percent between 1984 and 1988. You could say the good times were killing them.

The \$300 child credit contained in Bentsen's proposal targets the middle class. For instance, the credit could add up to a 25 percent cut in income tax for a family of four earning \$35,000. In case you wondered how many middle income families there are in Texas, the Comptroller's office says that about 2.8 million of the 6.8 million families in the state earn between \$28,000 and \$50,000. That's the good news.

The bad news is that \$300 in middle-income pocket money may be a little like an undertaker's make-up — the deceased may look better but is still dead. In fact, at least one voice of American industry thinks the credit will do little to revive the economy in general. Donald Hilty, the chief economist from Chrysler, thinks that a \$300 tax credit for each

Deborah Lutterbeck is an economics writer in New York.

What?

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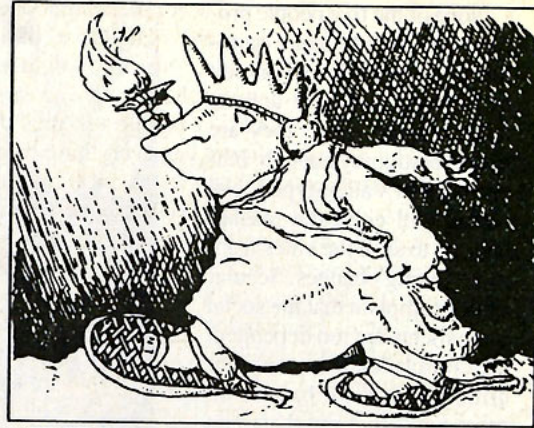
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child will provide little octane for the automobile sector.

But there is more to Bentsen's plan than a child tax rebate. The heavy artillery is in the IRA initiative. Not only would more people get to take advantage of IRAs — such as the people who earn more than \$40,000 a year — but also it would let people use their IRA to buy their first homes. The Texas economy has everything to gain from this type of initiative. Sen. Bentsen notes that a \$400 billion pool of IRA money that could be tapped to help people buy new homes.

People who pay attention to the Texas housing sector are very encouraged by what they see. "Texas is a place with the right opportunity — I think (the IRA plan) will have a very positive impact on Texas and that makes it all the more logical that Sen. Lloyd Bentsen proposed it," was the reading from Weston Edwards, president of the Dallas-based Housing Roundtable group. "Most people are a little envious of Texas — it took its medicine early," he said. Now all it has to do is get up off the couch. The IRA plan could be just the thing to do that.

This part of the Bentsen plan that has found broad-based support. Something similar to it is part of what Arney would like to see enacted. Only Arney's plan is even more aggressive. The IRA buck would not stop at new homes; people could use it to pay for higher education or health care. Arney also includes a little something for growth, a little something called a capital gains tax cut. That is one of those issues that comes back to haunt lawmakers no matter what they do to it.

A capital gains tax would apply to the sale of a stock, a bond or a real estate holding. A taxable gain is the difference between what you buy it for and what it fetches when you want to sell it. So, if you are one of those lucky stockholders who now has a portfolio worth \$100,000 for which you paid \$10,000, that \$90,000 difference will be taxed at the current 28 percent capital gains rate. Arney, and a long line of supply-siders — and a medium-sized line of Republicans and yes, some Democrats too — want that tax rate pushed down. Arney would like to see it at 15 percent. What would that do? Why, you would rush to sell that \$100,000 of stocks and turn around and re-invest it, and as the French say — voila — in comes business investment, new jobs are created and before you know it the economy is back on track and the sound of "Happy Days Are Here Again" could be heard on kitchen radios throughout the country. Will it be time for "afternoon again in America"?

But there are a few more sticking points with capital gains. One of the largest is whether it giveth to the economy or it taketh away. The Arney proposal — which was introduced by Sen. Robert Kasten, R-

Wis. and Rep. Vin Weber, R-Minn., says a capital gains cut would add \$63.7 billion to the economy over the next five years. The Congressional Budget Office, however, says it would drain \$53.1 billion in revenues. It boils down to one of those battles of statisticians.

Tax cuts — whether in the form of a break for the middle class or something to encourage the wealthiest to pour money back into the economy — are not the only plans in the works.

There is also spending. Unlike the recessions of the past spending plans will have to take a new form. The fact of the matter is that the government is doing plenty of spending. Arney can point to a study he backed at the Joint Economic Committee which concluded that for every dollar that the government collects in taxes about \$1.59 goes out in spending. Not a good way to run a business. And one of the largest chunks of spending is paying the interest on the money that is borrowed to do the spending. On a practical level that translates into no new bold initiatives. That means getting back to the basics like spending what you have rather than what you hope to get.

According to Bernard Weinstein, director of the Center for Economic Development Research at the University of North Texas, the government will try to spur the economy by accelerating spending of money that has already been appropriated. In early December, President Bush took the first step down this path when he ordered \$9.7 billion of funds for public works and housing programs to be spent in the first four months of the year rather than later. While a \$9.7 billion injection into a \$5 trillion economy is little more than a gesture, it could be significant if it represents the start of new trend.

For example, one of the biggest spending plans to make it through Congress during the last session was the Highway Bill, which comes closest to the wish that Texans would get back from Washington every dollar they send there. The Texas return in the multi-billion highway bill is 94 percent. Over the next five years, Texas will get more than \$7.1 billion for surface transportation. That's up from \$4.3 billion in the last highway funding cycle. Rep. Greg Laughlin, D-West Columbia, said, "The highway expansion projects mean more jobs for Texas and a shot in the arm for local businesses." Furthermore, "for every dollar invested in the nation's transportation infrastructure system, \$10 returns full to the economy," he said.

If law-making is compared to making sausage, crafting economic policy can be compared to making stew. There are all kinds of ingredients in the recipe, and you may never be quite sure what you have on your fork until you bite into it. □

Anonymous AIDS Tests

Persons who have engaged in high-risk behavior are encouraged to be tested for AIDS, but they should consider going to an anonymous testing facility or requesting that the test results not be placed in their medical files, a spokesman for the AIDS Legal Resource Project of the Texas Human Rights Foundation warned. Patricia A. Presley, legal coordinator for the foundation, said disclosure that a person took the test, even if it turned out negative, might lead to discrimination in insurance coverage.

Presley noted there is a difference between anonymous and confidential testing sites. "If you use a confidential testing site, your name is likely to be entered into a medical database, along with your test results — positive or negative. When applying for new insurance, that information would be available to anyone accessing that database."

Insurers use the information that the person was at risk for HIV exposure to evaluate whether the company should insure that person or group and whether to raise premiums to a prohibitive rate. "It can and does happen. The ALRP receives at least three calls per week from around the state dealing with questions on this very issue," Presley said. For information, call 479-8473 in Austin or 1-800-828-6411 statewide.

Improve Nursing Homes

United People for Better Nursing Home Care has opened a capital-area office at the Austin Groups for the Elderly, 2710 Cedar St. Martha Kooch Ward, coordinator of the office, intends to link the family councils of nursing homes in the nine-county Capital Area.

Ward became active in nursing home concerns when her father was a resident in an Austin facility. When the nursing home staff failed to satisfy her family's concerns about care, she and others formed a family council which has helped to produce improvements in resident care.

Reorganization of the Texas departments of health and human services make it important that consumers address nursing home concerns to ascertain that quality care is available to all. For information, call (512) 4476848 or write United People for Better Nursing Home Care, P.O. Box 161582, Austin, Texas 78716-1582. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

TO SUBMIT ARTICLES for the Social Cause Calendar, please send information, preferably at least a month in advance of the event to be listed, to the Social Cause Calendar, Texas Observer, 307 W. 7th St., Austin, Texas 78701. Also, the Observer would welcome a volunteer to assume responsibility for this feature.

It Can Happen Here

By David W. Belin

This is the Epilogue from the book, Final Disclosure, by David W. Belin, and is reprinted with permission.

Nearly twenty-five years have passed since the hour of two murders on November 22, 1963. I had more firsthand, direct contact with the key witnesses to these two murders and with the physical evidence than anyone else in the world. I had this contact in 1964, right after the events took place, when the recollections of the witnesses were most accurate. It was clear beyond a reasonable doubt that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman who killed President Kennedy.

Yet a majority of Americans believe otherwise. Why should I care whether they are right or wrong? After all, President Kennedy, Officer Tippit, and Oswald are long dead.

Why should I be concerned if there are people who purvey distortions and deceive the American public, like the Mark Lanes of the 1960s, the Robert Sam Ansons and George O'Tooles of the 1970s, and the David Liftons and Henry Hurts of the 1980s — and who knows who else in the 1990s?

I care.

I care about our country. I care because I believe that to continue to enjoy freedom and democracy, we must recognize how crucial it is to have citizen participation.

I believe I made a difference in the way I went about my work as counsel to the Warren Commission. I believe I made a difference in my work as executive director of the Rockefeller Commission. I hope this book will make a difference.

If the American public can be so readily deceived on such "black and white" issues as who killed Officer Tippit and who killed President Kennedy, then they can also be deceived by a small cadre of people about issues that can be far more directly related to the survival of a country — those of war and peace.

People might say, "It can't happen here," but it did happen here. The truth has been obscured, and very successfully, by people who in total numbers can be measured only in the hundreds.

Let me turn to the CIA. The central issue in the Rockefeller Commission investigation was the potential conflict between the need for intelligence for national security purposes and the need to protect the constitutional rights of citizens, including the right to privacy. Privacy is not a precious luxury of a free society; it is a fundamental attribute of a free people.

Beyond the issue of constitutional rights was another crucial issue: the preservation of trust between the citizens

and their government. Trust is the mortar that holds the structures of our government together. If trust erodes, our democracy can crumble. In the Iran-Contra fiasco in the 1980s, the worst aspect was not the stupidity of the act itself but, rather, the subsequent coverup, which tremendously damaged the trust and confidence of citizens in the president and in the entire government.

I am terribly concerned that our nation be secure from foreign military threats in general and from foreign intelligence operations in particular, and therefore I am a strong supporter of the CIA. But I am equally terribly concerned about the other side of the ledger, where the CIA has eroded citizen trust and has thereby done great harm to our nation's well-being.

The continued deterioration of trust and confidence in our governmental institutions is just as great a threat to our free society as are the intercontinental ballistic missiles behind the Iron Curtain. My concern for citizen trust in government as well as my concern for the truth are central reasons why I have written this book.

Finally, I have written this book because America is a wonderful country.

How many other countries are there in the world in which a citizen from the heartland — away from the centers of governmental or financial power — can come to the capital of the country and investigate the assassination of a head of state with no holds barred and with just one standard: the reporting of the truth?

How many countries are there in the world in which a free press can call to account before the people of the country the activities of the secret intelligence agency of that country and in turn pressure the chief of state to appoint an independent commission to investigate those activities? How many countries are there in the world in which such an independent commission would pick a citizen with no ties to government, wholly independent, to head the investigation of a secret intelligence agency and present a report that all of its citizenry can read?

This is the essence of our freedom. This is the perspective in which we must place the criticism that we level day in and day out against our government and its leaders.

Throughout my work I have never lost sight of the fact that it was the free society in which we live that enabled me to come to Washington and investigate the assassination of a president and to later come back to Washington and investigate and discover all of the improper activities about which I have written in this book.

Life is a very precious gift. So is freedom. Neither should be taken for granted.

Out of the Loop

Texas cities pursue outdated transportation policies

BY ROBERT BRYCE

WHILE TEXAS LAND developers seek more loop highways to expand the outer limits of urban areas, a new report by the World-watch Institute suggests cities should be working to make themselves more compact. "All cities, whether surrounded by affluent suburbs or by makeshift shantytowns, need to plan land use far more carefully than in the past," says author Marcia Lowe in the report.

Released last month, the Worldwatch report, "Shaping Cities, the Environmental and Human Dimensions" (number 105), is relevant for Texas cities such as Houston, Dallas and San Antonio, where loop highways have fostered tremendous sprawl, and Austin, which is considering building its own outer loop. But the call for more conservative land use planning runs up against longstanding Texas boosterism about new highways.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TDOT) has started work on the Grand Parkway, a 170-mile-long loop about 25 miles from downtown Houston, despite objections that the six-lane road is not needed. The new road, which would be Houston's fourth loop, will cost state taxpayers about \$5 million a mile to build with an estimated total cost of more than \$1 billion. While the first contracts are being completed on the parkway, Beltway 8, an 88-mile loop 12 miles from downtown Houston, remains unfinished.

The Grand Parkway survived elimination in 1978 from the state highway commission's wish list with the help of powerfully connected patrons who stand to reap millions from completion of the parkway. They include Houston Mayor-elect Bob Lanier, who reportedly owns an interest in six properties worth an estimated \$23.1 million along the route, and who helped revive the parkway after Gov. Mark White appointed him to the state highway commission, now called the TDOT, in 1983. The Houston Chronicle reported that Lanier voted on six occasions to approve and fund the parkway. Another patron was U.S. Secretary of Commerce

Robert Mosbacher who, according to the Village Voice, has made between \$40 and \$50 million on the 5,400-acre Cinco Ranch, through which the first section of the Grand Parkway will run, just south of Interstate 10 in west Houston.

They were helped by the Texas Transportation Act, which was pushed through the Legislature in 1984 by then-Rep. Ed Emmett, R-Houston. The act allows developers to form a "transportation corporation" that would seek donations of land for the roads and private funds for engineering and planning. In the case of the Grand Parkway Association, executive director Jerry Coffman said private landowners provided some \$600 million in land and engineering work, while the state committed the \$1 billion to build the road.

In Austin, a special road district was set up in 1984 to build the Southwest Parkway. The road was promoted by well-connected developers such as former Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes and former Gov. John Connally, who owned several thousand acres in the environmentally sensitive Barton Creek watershed. When the district was established, the district's real estate appraiser predicted the value of the property would increase tenfold, to \$1.1 billion. Instead, with the collapse of land values, it is valued at some \$28 million and Travis County and road district landowners face huge tax bills to pay for the road. The \$208 million bill comes due in 2019. (See "Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad," TO, 5/31/91.)

Austin's Gary Bradley and associates have set up the MoPac South Transportation Corpo-

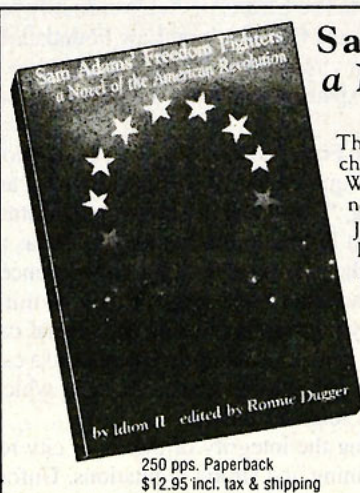
ration to help extend the MoPac Expressway to Bradley's development, Circle C Ranch. Like the Grand Parkway Association, the MoPac South Transportation Corp. stood to dramatically increase the value of its members' land by getting an expressway built to their front door. The project has been held up by a federal court order obtained by environmentalists who oppose the roadwork over the environmentally sensitive areas.

Why sprawl?

Studies done around the world have shown that no matter how many roads are built, their carrying capacity will not keep pace with demand — there will always be more cars than available road space. Lowe's report identifies automobiles as the enemy. The unrestrained use of automobiles increases air pollution, infrastructure costs and energy consumption while decreasing arable land, usable living space and pedestrian traffic, she writes.

"One of the most important factors in a city's physical appeal, and in the quality of urban transport, is the amount of space devoted to automobile parking," according to Lowe, a senior researcher on urban transport and land use issues for the Washington, D.C.-based institute. She continues: "Zoning and building codes that require extravagant parking provision have unintended, negative effects; massive expanses of parking create an intimidating setting and deter pedestrians by increasing the distances between buildings. Moreover, the lure of convenient parking leads many people to choose driving,

Robert Bryce is environmental editor of the Austin Chronicle.



Sam Adams' Freedom Fighters a Novel of the American Revolution

by OTTO MULLINAX

The freedom-fighter of the American Revolution, as the principal character of this novel, develops swiftly but accurately around the lives of William Mollineaux, one of Sam Adams' Lieutenants in Boston, and his nephew J.J.

J.J. diligently searches for Laurie Aldrich, a Quaker mistress to Major Percy of General Gages' British Forces. She is also the dream girl of J.J.'s boyhood infatuation.

His quest, kidnapping, and flight with Laurie to the Carolinas is a romantic backdrop to that revolutionary history and the battle of Kings Mountain—the critical battle of the revolutionary war which resulted in Cornwallis' retreat through North Carolina into Virginia and surrender—ending the war.

The history of that time is told in faithful detail, since the Revolution itself is the principal character.

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even where the finest public transport is available. In the United States, minimum parking requirements are particularly lavish — often making new developments devote more space to auto parking than to the building's actual floor area. Many cities in developing countries also overemphasize parking."

Recognizing the drawbacks of too much parking, several major urban areas have begun to reverse the tendency to pave over inner-city areas with parking lots. Lowe points out that while more roads and parking garages are being built in Houston, 200,000 parking places are being eliminated from central Paris. Geneva and Copenhagen have banned onstreet parking in their downtown areas. Lowe says that by increasing the costs of driving, downtown areas become "more lively and compact, and makes buildings more accessible to people on foot." To reduce congestion in the inner city, officials in Copenhagen announced last November that the city would buy 5,000 bicycles and place them in racks around the city for the use of citizens.

Clear the Air

Cities that have managed to reduce the use of cars also enjoy other environmental benefits: fuel conservation and less pollution. Lowe found that as urban density increases, fuel consumption drops dramatically. Comparing urban New Yorkers with those living in the suburbs, Lowe found that the average person living in an area with a density of 13 people per hectare (a hectare is about two and a half acres) used 454 gallons of fuel per year. In urban New York, with a density of 107 people per hectare, gas consumption dropped to 153 gallons.

Reducing gasoline consumption reduces air pollution. In *Worldwatch* Paper 98, "Alternatives to the Automobile: Transport for Livable Cities," Lowe reported, "Motor vehicles are the single largest source of air pollution, creating a haze of smog over the world's cities." She noted that the main component of car-induced smog is ozone, a gas which is formed as nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons react with sunlight. Ozone and other pollutants, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons, aggravate bronchial and lung disorders and are often deadly to asthmatics, children and the elderly. Lowe noted: "Automobiles are also a major source of carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas [said to be] responsible for over half of the global warming problem. Passenger cars account for more than 13 percent of the total carbon dioxide emitted from fossil fuels worldwide, or more than 700 million tons of carbon annually. This figure is projected to increase 75 percent by the year 2010."

In a section of the new report addressing the effects of urban sprawl on water quality, Lowe writes: "Water, like energy, is vital to cities and all human settlements and like energy, it is pro-

foundly undervalued.... To enhance the safe recharging of aquifers, communities can set standards to limit the portion of a development site that can be cleared of native plants and trees.... In addition to prohibiting development in critical areas and setting standards to protect water in those where growth is allowed, local governments can encourage voluntary measures to protect and conserve water. Encouraging developers to cluster their structures on one portion of a site—leaving the remainder as undisturbed open space—is an ecologically sound alternative to conventional subdivision rules."

The findings of Lowe's reports are confirmed by a 1980 study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Transportation called "The Land Use and Urban Development Impacts of Beltways Guidebook." In addition to causing more air pollution and fuel consumption, beltways and the sprawl they generate have other adverse impacts. The 63-page report says beltways can "increase demand for new infrastructure; reduce central city's fiscal base; increase segregation by income and race; decrease employment opportunities for minorities and the disadvantaged; undermine efforts to revitalize and/or redevelop older industrial areas; increase exposure to highway noise;" and, "encourage development in environmentally sensitive areas."

Another study done in Perth, Australia, found that new roads only increase pollution and congestion. The Murdoch University study argues that "Rather than something that must always be eradicated as far as possible, congestion can actually be creatively exploited as a tool in helping a city progress towards lower car dependency and lower energy use through a better balance between cars, public transport, walking and bicycling."

Law arms environmentalists

The 1990 U.S. Clean Air Act could slow the rush to build new roads. Under the new federal law, new road projects must meet specific air quality targets in order to receive federal highway dollars. The Clean Air Act is currently being used by the Conservation Law Foundation, a Boston environmental group that opposes a \$5 billion expansion of Boston's antiquated freeway system.

Douglas Foy, the director of the Boston group, was quoted in a *Wall Street Journal* article saying, "The Federal Highway Administration can't just build roads anymore. It has to recognize the long-term negative consequences of new roads and make certain they're mitigated." Foy's group is pushing for special car pool lanes, mass transit improvements and a cap on downtown parking space, changes which would cost some \$1 billion.

Preserving the integrity of the inner city requires planning and strong regulations. Unfor-

tunately, good intentions, good planning and regulations aren't enough to prevent land speculators from pushing roads and developments that foster urban sprawl. In Europe, the high cost of owning and operating a car has forced cities to re-evaluate auto travel. While Europeans are used to gasoline prices in excess of \$3 per gallon, Americans are used to paying about one-third that. While fuel is cheap, Americans do not pay the entire cost of automobile usage. The Internal Revenue Service estimates the cost of maintaining and operating a car is 26.5 cents per mile. Lowe estimates the cost is 34 cents per mile. Foy of the Conservation Law Foundation says if the costs of road building, road maintenance, bond debt, oil-spill cleanups, air pollution and military expenditures are figured in, the actual cost of owning and operating a vehicle is \$1.50 per mile.

Ultimately, the most effective way to counter urban sprawl may be to raise the cost of the one commodity that makes urban sprawl possible: gasoline. Lowe writes, "Among the greatest barriers to compact urban development are artificially low gasoline prices, which encourage automobile dependencies. Raising national gasoline taxes to a level that more accurately reflects the true costs of driving — from the health costs of air pollution to the economic risks of foreign oil dependence, to the military costs of policing the Persian Gulf — would give an enormous boost to more efficient urban land use and raise revenues for investment in a broader range of transport options." □

Civil Rights Help

The Texas Civil Rights Project has set up a civil rights litigation and cooperating attorney program designed for rural areas of Texas, Legal Director Jim Harrington said. The outreach program, funded by the Equal Access to Justice Foundation, is designed to assist attorneys in rural Texas who want to handle civil rights cases for indigent clients, but lack resources or experience in that area of law.

Harrington hopes the program will help develop a statewide network of lawyers who will handle civil rights cases in rural communities. The service include a toll-free number, 1-800-745-8277; help with legal research; assistance with drafting pleadings and briefs; appellate support; publication and distribution of model pleadings; and direct participation as co-counsel in cases.

The Texas Civil Rights Project operates under the auspices of *Oficina Legal del Pueblo Unido Inc.*, a non-profit foundation established in 1978 to promote social, racial and economic justice through the legal system, relying principally on the Bills of Rights set out in the Texas and U.S. Constitutions.

Times Herald Croaks Newspaper Blues

BY JAMES CULLEN

GOODBYE, DALLAS!" croaked the Times Herald on its final front page. The banner headline Dec. 9 was nearly three inches tall, but the 112-year-old newspaper was a withered frame when the life support was pulled. The final press run of 266,000 was snapped up, in most places by mid-morning. The Herald hadn't sold that many weekday newspapers on a regular basis in nearly eight years.

The death of the Times Herald put 900 people out of work, it deprived Dallas of a daily editorial alternative to the Morning News and it sent another shudder through the newspaper industry, which is going through one of its toughest times ever. The outlook for two-newspaper towns is grim. Over the past year, 10 afternoon newspapers have failed, including the Shreveport Journal and the Baton Rouge State-Times in Louisiana. In addition, the widely-respected Arkansas Gazette in Little Rock was bought and scuttled by its cross-town rival Arkansas Democrat two months ago. One of the few attempts to start a metropolitan daily newspaper, the St. Louis Sun, failed last year after less than two years in business, and an attempt to establish a national sports daily, The National, also foundered. Among the newspapers on the endangered list are the San Antonio Light and the Houston Post.

In the past, newspapers have been considered among the most recession-proof industries, but many of the newspapers' largest advertisers — banks, thrifts, groceries, department stores and real estate agencies — have gone out of business in the past decade. Many surviving advertisers have cut back or have invested in other areas, such as direct mail. At the same time, newspaper operating costs have risen, and publishers, many of whom are used to profit margins of more than 20 percent, have been caught in an unfamiliar crunch as their profits edge down toward the levels achieved by passbook savings.

The Dallas Morning News ended the now-legendary newspaper war the first week in December when it bought the Times Herald's assets for \$55 million and promptly buried its former rival. Since the plant, presses and other property of the Times Herald were appraised at \$31.1 million, the News appears to have secured a monopoly in the nation's eighth-largest city at a bargain price. However, John Buzzetta, the Times Herald's publisher and principal owner

since 1988, said he had little choice after more than 100 prospective buyers turned down the chance to buy the paper.

Although the impending demise of the Times Herald had been rumored for years, the capitulation in the 21-year-old Dallas newspaper war caught most of its employees by surprise. The newspaper was still hiring the week before the shutdown.

The 21-Year War

There had been skirmishes between the two major Dallas newspapers over the past century, but the war started in earnest when the Los Angeles-based Times Mirror Co. purchased the Times Herald in 1970. The new owners started pouring money into the afternoon paper that traditionally had appealed more to working-class city residents than the more staid Morning News, which had a larger statewide circulation.

The Times Herald was long considered the more liberal paper and more concerned with minorities and the underclass, but that was an easy distinction to make when it was compared with the Morning News, which was notoriously neolithic conservative and Republican in its editorial policy. As the Morning News improved its editorial product and softened its editorial edges in the 1970s and 1980s, it became less objectionable.

The Times Herald started a morning edition in 1977 and both newspapers spent millions of dollars improving their products. Unfortunately for the Times Herald's California-based corporate owners, the family-held A.H. Belo Co. was blessed with visionary leadership that was determined to forgo short-term profits in favor of long-term success. In 1980, Robert Decherd, Belo's home-grown but Harvard-educated chief executive officer, hired Burl Osborne from the Associated Press to be editor of the Morning News. Under Osborne's leadership, the newspaper expanded bureaus in Austin and Washington and opened bureaus in Houston, San Antonio, Central America, Europe and elsewhere. When Belo went public in 1981, Wall Street was told the company would not be ruled by short-term interests, and that strategy finally paid off.

The rivalry produced five Pulitzer prizes (six if you count the award for the famous 1963 photograph of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald), but the Morning News finally overtook the Times Herald in Dallas County circulation in 1980. When Times Mirror Co., seeing the

newspaper dip into the red, sold the Times Herald and the Denver Post to William Dean Singleton of Media News Group Inc. for a reported \$110 million in 1986, the war was effectively over. Singleton's group, which also purchased the embattled Houston Post, was forced to cut staff and other operating costs to handle its debt. In 1988, Buzzetta, one of Singleton's associates, formed DTH Media Inc. to buy the Times Herald for a reported \$105 million. By that time, survival of the Times Herald was rated a long shot at best, and the continued recession in North Texas only brought home the inevitable. At the end, the News, with a larger circulation in the more affluent suburbs, led the Herald two-to-one in circulation, with more than two-thirds of the advertising revenue.

The U.S. Justice Department approved the sale on Friday, Dec. 6, and it was announced the following Sunday. When the battle was over, the score was: Morning News, 406,768 daily, 618,283 Sunday; Times Herald, 200,730 daily, 289,284 Sunday, according to the latest Audit Bureau of Circulations figures.

In the view of advertisers, there was no compelling need in Dallas for a newspaper that sold 201,000 copies a day, no matter how many Pulitzers it won or how many wrongly convicted inmates its investigations sprang from Death Row. America may love an underdog, but department stores lust for upscale readers.

Payday for the News

The Justice Department approved the sale because there were no other buyers on the horizon. The Morning News rejected Buzzetta's proposal to enter into a joint operating agreement, under which the two newspapers would combine business operations but continue to publish separate editorial products. Belo executives clearly saw nothing to gain financially from such an arrangement. After absorbing years of diminished profits, why should the Morning News share with the Times Herald when it shortly could have the Dallas market to itself? In the end, the terms would be: unconditional surrender.

No sooner had the Morning News locked up the Times Herald plant in downtown Dallas than the News announced a 15 percent increase in advertising rates. It would waste no time making up that \$55 million. On Wall Street, the value of Belo stock rose \$4.125 per share, or 17 percent, while the other regional beneficiary, Capital Cities/ABC, owner of the Fort Worth

Star-Telegram, rose \$1 to \$369.75 a share.

Editors at the Star-Telegram, the state's fourth-largest daily with a circulation of more than 244,000 and Sunday circulation of more than 336,000, said they still plan to concentrate on Tarrant County, but executives at the Fort Worth paper may have cause to dread the departure of the Times Herald. With that score settled, the News can now turn to the next turf war, over the lucrative Mid-Cities.

Things are tough all over

Before the demise of the Times Herald, 94 Texas newspapers had a daily circulation estimated by the Texas Daily Newspaper Association at 3.9 million. The TDNA did not have comparisons with previous years, but executive director Phil Berkebile noted that circulation has been on the decline nationwide, generally tracking the decline in literacy among Americans.

Texas literacy officials expect the latest census figures to show more than one-third of adults 18 and older are functionally illiterate. The state ranks third in the nation in the percentage of under-educated adults, ahead of Mississippi and Louisiana. This translates to nearly four million Texans who have difficulty reading a newspaper.

The death of the Times Herald and other, less-publicized layoffs at other Texas newspapers, have reminded reporters that they are at the mercy of their publishers, who face pressure from corporate directors to maintain profits in the face of shrinking ad revenues. (At least the 60 days of severance pay and benefits for unemployed Times Herald staffers was a touch of decency. When I was laid off after seven-and-a-half years with the Beaumont Enterprise, along with 17 other Enterprise employees, nine in the newsroom, we each received three weeks' pay along with accumulated vacation pay.)

Only 120 newsrooms are unionized out of more than 1,600 newspapers in the United States. The Newspaper Guild, based in Silver Springs, Md., represents 40,000 newsroom workers in the United States and Canada, but its president, Chuck Dale, said Guild-organized newsrooms have sustained a 10-percent loss in the past 18 months.

"I've been around the newspaper industry 40 years and a member of the Newspaper Guild 36

years and this is the first time a recession has impacted on the newspaper industry," he said.

With advertising revenue down 7 percent nationally, according to the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Dale said he sympathizes with news executives, but he also believes they are partly to blame because, until now, editorial boards have largely ignored the nation's economic problems.

"I think the newspaper industry is gutless when it comes to talking about the economy," he said. Publishers and news executives are unanimously pessimistic about the economy, he said, but they have balked at drawing attention to the problems. He attributed the silence of editorial boards to an unwillingness to upset advertisers. "If they were screaming about economic conditions, a whole lot more politicians would take a lot more notice," he said. In the meantime, he said, newspaper executives "are going to be the victims of their own goddamned apathy."

Dale does not see any relief in the near future. "I thought it bottomed out toward the end of the summer, but as the bean counters close out the year and total the profits and losses ... I expect more layoffs in the early part of next year," he said.

For the nine months ending Sept. 30, Gannett profits were down 25 percent. New York Times Co. profits were down 76 percent and Affiliated Publications, publisher of the Boston Globe, watched profits plunge 94 percent. Newspaper executives have grown accustomed to profits of more than 20 percent, he said, so executives panicked when those profits got into the single digits. "If they're only making four-and-a-half or five percent, you know damn well they're going to be looking at ways to get those profits up and the easiest way is to cut staff."

Weeklies offer alternatives

With the death of the Times Herald, one hope for an alternative editorial voice in Dallas may be the Dallas Observer, a weekly newspaper with a free circulation of 85,000. It recently was purchased by Phoenix-based New Times Inc., which also operates weekly papers in Phoenix, Denver and Miami.

"In a situation like this, where a town becomes a one-newspaper town, an alternative newspaper can expand its readership and its clout," said Don Hazen, executive director of the Institute for Alternative Journalism, based in Washington, D.C. Alternative papers are attracting the young readers daily newspapers are failing to attract, Hazen said. "Over the last 10 years, the number of people between the ages of 25 and 35 that are regular readers of daily newspapers has been cut in half," he said.

In the case of Dallas, he said, "What I'd like to see is an alternative paper with a local and national mix," he said. "We're seeing more

alternative newspapers popping up and there is some competition among alternative weeklies," Hazen said. The association hopes to provide advice to people who are interested in setting up independent alternative newspapers, he said, but he added, "The secret is advertising. You need somebody who knows how to reach advertisers in the community and provide a service, because most of those papers are distributed free and so they pay for themselves through their advertising."

Alternative newspapers such as the Dallas Observer are among the few growth areas. Ray Hartmann, publisher of the Riverfront Times in St. Louis and president of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies, recently wrote that the alternative press is enjoying growth, which has attracted the attention of the dailies. "By no coincidence, at least three chains of dailies have seen fit to flatter us with imitation alternatives," he wrote in the group's fall newsletter.

Dale acknowledged that the failure of newspapers such as the Times Herald offers opportunities for weeklies, but that does little good for journalists looking for a livelihood. "Lots of suburban areas and metropolitan areas have throwaways and community shoppers that are doing pretty well for the owners, but in general they're not such good places to work. They pay starvation wages and generally have little or no health benefits," he said.

"In terms of opportunities for new newspapers, they are slim," he said.

Of course, there will always be a Texas Observer. □

Austin Catholic Worker

Since May, when Lynn Goodman Strauss Sanders organized the Mary House Catholic Worker in Austin, roughly a half-dozen volunteers have provided breakfast for homeless people who gather at the corner of Interstate 35 and First Street each weekday morning at 6:45 a.m. For information call Sanders at 472-6254 or Doug Zachary at 472-3662.

Help Heralders

The Dallas/Fort Worth Association of Black Communicators opened an emergency bank account to help 900 former employees of the defunct Dallas Times Herald. The group donated \$1,000 to the account and challenged other media organizations to match the donation. The fund, to be administered by the association, will help with housing, food or medical needs. Send donations to: DFW/ABC/Herald Emergency Fund, Account No. 0187101702, P.O. Box 620020, Dallas, Texas 75262-9720.

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Crossfire: A Call for a New Inquest

**CROSSFIRE:
THE PLOT THAT KILLED KENNEDY**

BY JIM MARRS

New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, Inc.,
1989. Clothbound and paperback.

BY RONNE DUGGER

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT methodically and systematically lied to the world about who killed President Kennedy and how they killed him. That appalling fact, which has long been manifest to most people who are well-informed on the subject, among whom I number myself, has shadowed our collective life for a quarter of a century.

The large consequence which followed on the lie most closely was the permanent distortion of the 1963 assassination in history. Being big and impressively elaborated, the lie was respectable, and even to approach the truth, that President Kennedy was ambushed in a crossfire, that there had to be at least two shooters, and that this meant there could well have been a large, politically-motivated conspiracy, was long regarded by conventional minds, which after all are in the majority, as nuts.

But the lie has had much larger consequences far from the center of itself, consequences which have eaten away at our national vitals in hiddenly-working ways, making some of us neurotic, and some of us spasmodically furious, and some of us paranoid, and some of us contemptuous of even the hope that virtue still abides in our governmental center. The lie was the hidden genesis of President Johnson's credibility gap, and it is the original enduring cause of our seeping loss of our collective confidence in ourselves. Our country has never been the same and never will be.

At the outset of this book review, I suggest that we try once and for all to revise our mind-sets on the Kennedy assassination. There is persuasive hard evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald was framed. We should accept that as quite possible. In 1978 the otherwise almost worthless re-investigation of the assassination by a House select committee concluded, on the basis of newly-discovered acoustical evidence, that at least four shots were fired and, given the known number of seconds during which they were fired and the kind of rifle Oswald was alleged to have fired, that therefore President Kennedy "was probably assassinated as a result

of a conspiracy." Let us begin, responding to Jim Marrs' 625-page book, with the presumption that there was a conspiracy, and not with the presumption that Oswald and only Oswald shot Kennedy. One's mind-set on which of these presumptions to admit into one's thinking determines there who, on this subject, is respectable, and who is not.

Having meditated on the assassination across 28 years — hearing again the sounds of firing I heard, seeing again the sights I saw in Dealey Plaza as the press bus sped through it; staying on in Dallas two months reporting, reporting, reporting on what happened; poring befuddled over the 26 volumes of the Warren Report; talking excitedly to thousands of people about it until finally in quest of calmness I set myself a rule not to talk about it at all; interviewing more people; reading many, but far from all, and reviewing some, of the books about it — I wish to make a second preliminary point. On this subject you either are or you are not a sucker for the government's original lies. The government lied to us and has not corrected its lies — indeed, the government keeps the body of the unjiggered evidence locked away from us still. Who, then, shall we thank for our collective arrival, confirmed in many public opinion polls, at the conclusion that Kennedy was killed by conspirators? We *must* thank the citizens who have refused to accept the government's lies and have worked to find and publish whatever parts of the truth they can find. The fact that these citizens have included some crazies, and some writers who don't know the difference between a suspicion and a fact, and some propagandists who are more interested in their own screeds than in what happened, is there, but it is not here. Generally speaking, the nation is in the debt of "the conspiracy theorists," and "the assassination buffs," for what hesitant progress we have made during the last quarter century toward healing the gaping wound left by the enormous lie that was plunged into us.

Too Many Suspects

Jim Marrs provides an effective overview of his book in his essay published in this issue of the Observer.

He does not know who killed Kennedy; no one who has written a book about the subject does. One should keep that fact not only in one's mind, but foremost there.

Marrs dismisses the possibilities that Castro or the Soviets killed Kennedy. I think Marrs is

wrong in doing that. Kennedy was trying to kill Castro (as President Johnson exclaimed to me outright in the White House); tit-for-tat, get-him-before-he-gets-me, is at least as plausible a motive for killing Kennedy as many others that are postulated, and anyone familiar with the history of the KGB would not put murdering an American President past it.

Marrs also plays lightly on, and by implication dismisses, as sources of plausible leading suspects, local Dallas law-enforcement authorities and hard-right-wing, wealthy personages in private life. Absent proof of who did it — absent what Bill Alexander of the Dallas district attorney's office once characterized to me as "the greasy thumbprint" that the prosecutor is really looking for — I believe Marrs is wrong in that, too.

To summarize my own overall conceptual approach to the assassination, as it has evolved, in a sentence: Five or six political groups could have been the source of the conspiracy to kill Kennedy, and I can make a very plausible case for each one of them, but they are mutually exclusive possibilities. Marrs takes an opposite approach toward approximately the same evidence and considerations: In effect declaring his belief in a high-level domestic conspiracy and his disbelief in either an international or a low-level domestic conspiracy, he argues that the leading suspects are the FBI, the CIA, the U.S. military and the Mob, and that since the first three work together all the time and the Mob has worked with the CIA, elements of all of them might have done it. For reasons of caution and probity stubbornly rooted in the presumption of innocence, I definitely prefer my approach — hey, I want the proof — but there is something to be said for Marrs' approach, too. What he has done, as he writes, is give us a work that is "a distillation of the numerous books, articles and documentaries that have been produced over the years." That is a useful service. In *Crossfire* he ranges as persuasively as he can across all the suspicions, and the grounds for suspicions, that are subsumed under his four groups of principal suspects, never choosing among them on the ground that they could have acted together. That is an exercise worth the time it takes. For instance, considering the persuasive indications (although no hard proof) that Oswald was an agent, quite possibly a paid one, of the U.S. government, which Marrs marshals, the author's bias in favor of a domestic conspiracy does not lack foundation.

Marrs also suspects that Johnson had some role in the assassination, but disallows the idea that he was the source of it, saying, to wit: "most serious students of the assassination cannot discount the idea that Johnson, in some way, played a role in the Dallas tragedy.... But did Johnson really have enough power to initiate the assassination and force literally dozens of government officials and agents to lie and cover up that fact? Probably not." But the last words of the book are these: "One can almost hear the sad spirit of John F. Kennedy whispering from Dealey Plaza: *Et tu, Lyndon?*"

The Devil in the Details

As with any widely-ramifying murder, the substance of this subject is in the details; to experience Marrs' book you must read it. Here I shall limit myself, for examples of the details which Marrs has recounted, to a few matters of primary importance in themselves and of particular interest to Texans.

Being the Democratic U.S. senator from Texas, Ralph Yarborough was riding in the presidential motorcade in the limousine with Vice President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson. In an interview with Marrs (and in others with me, which I have not yet published), Yarborough backed up Kenneth O'Donnell and others who said the car bearing the Kennedys and John Connally paused after the firing began — that its rear brake lights blinked on — that it slowed, agonizingly slowed, perhaps to a stop, and did not accelerate until after Kennedy's head was blown off.

You will recall the tale of the heroism of Secret Service agent Rufus Youngblood. Riding in the front seat of the Johnson-Yarborough car,

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The SOS Hotline (1-800-992-9767) is taking calls for the Share Our Surplus, Hunters for the Hungry and Summer Food Service Programs. The hotline, under the auspices of the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, is designed to:

- Help farmers and other producers distribute surplus food to emergency assistance programs;
- Increase the amount of food available for the hungry in Texas, particularly in underserved rural communities;
- Network the activities of emergency food distribution agencies throughout Texas.

The hotline has answered numerous calls for the Hunters for the Hungry program, a cooperative effort of deer hunters, meat processors, Second Harvest Food Banks and the End Hunger Network to allow hunters to donate legally harvested deer to the needy.

Youngblood said, "I stepped over into the back seat and sat on top of the Vice President," protecting him from the gunfire. President Johnson told the Warren Commission: "Agent Youngblood turned in a flash, immediately after the first explosion.... I was pushed down by Agent Youngblood.... He vaulted over the back seat and sat on me. I was bent over under the weight of Agent Youngblood's body, toward Mrs. Johnson and Senator Yarborough." Johnson wrote later: "Agent Youngblood's quick reaction was as brave an act as I have ever seen anyone perform."

"It just didn't happen," Yarborough told Marrs (as Yarborough has also told me). "It was a small car. Johnson was a big man, tall. His knees were up against his chin as it was. There was no room for that to happen." Johnson and Youngblood both ducked down, Yarborough said, and Youngblood never left the front seat.

Think this over. Meditate on it, a long time.

Yarborough also said that Youngblood had held a small walkie-talkie over the back of the car's seat and that Youngblood and Johnson had both put their ears to it. "They had it turned down real low," he told Marrs. "I couldn't hear what they were listening to." Marrs does not say when Yarborough said this was occurring, but the senator told me it was happening as they were being driven along before the shooting began.

One must conclude from Yarborough's further remarks that his testimony was not welcome at the Warren Commission. The United States senator from Texas from 1957 to 1971, Yarborough told Marrs that in the summer of 1964:

"After I wrote them [the Warren Commission], you see, a couple of fellows came to see me. They walked in like they were a couple of deputy sheriffs and I was a bank robber. I didn't like their attitude. As a senator, I felt insulted. They went off and wrote up something and brought it back for me to sign. But I refused. I threw it in the drawer and let it lay there for weeks. And they had on there the last sentence which stated, 'This is all I know about the assassination.' They wanted me to sign this thing, then say this is all I know. Of course, I would never have signed it.

"Finally, after some weeks, they began to bug me. 'You're holding this up, you're holding this up,' they said, demanding that I sign the report. So I typed one up myself and put basically what I told you about how the cars all stopped. I put in there, 'I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but for the protection of future presidents, they should be trained to take off when a shot is fired.' I sent that over."

Marrs added: "Yarborough also was shocked to find that all vital assassination information was sent to President Johnson before it ever went to the Warren Commission or even Attorney General Robert Kennedy."

In the Dallas News the morning after the historic murder of John Kennedy, Dallas DA Henry Wade was quoted stating that preliminary reports indicated that more than one person were involved in the shooting. But Wade then immediately reversed himself and (obviously long before he could know that it was true) told the press that the still-living Oswald did it alone. Why? Years later Wade was quoted as stating:

"Cliff Carter, President Johnson's aide, called me three times from the White House that Friday night. He said that President Johnson felt any word of a conspiracy — some plot by foreign nations — to kill President Kennedy would shake our nation to its foundations.... Washington's word to me was that it would hurt foreign relations if I alleged a conspiracy — whether I could prove it or not, I would just charge Oswald with plain murder and go for the death penalty. So I went down to the Police Department at City Hall to see Captain Fritz — to make sure the Dallas police didn't involve any foreign country in the assassination."

Citing work by the late Bernard Fensterwald, Marrs also informs us that in an internal Warren Commission memorandum on Feb. 17, 1964, Melvin Eisenberg recorded that Earl Warren had told his fellow commissioners, regarding how he had been "pressured" to accept the chairmanship by President Johnson, that: "The President stated that ... some rumors went so far as attributing the assassination to a faction within the government wishing the presidency assumed by President Johnson. Others, if not quenched, could conceivably lead the country into a war.... He placed emphasis on the quenching of rumors and precluding further speculation."

Footnotes Lacking

Throughout Marrs' book, however, there is a serious and pervasive problem: the question of the quality of the evidence.

I realize that Marrs teaches a course on the assassination at the University of Texas at Arlington. Nevertheless, his footnoting of his book is lamentably insufficient. This is a strange lapse indeed in a work which is meant to be an authoritative distillation of the antecedent assassination books, because the authenticity, the reliability, of this fact, and this one, and that one, and that one over there, is the very heart of the matter, and the only way for a reader to judge the facts is by knowing their sources and (tracing back when necessary) evaluating their pedigrees.

"In a work such as this," Marrs states under "Sources and Notes," "extensive footnoting within the text can often impede the flow of ideas, reducing comprehension." That is nonsense. Small numbers in a text leading to reference notes which state the source of a proffered fact facilitate the flow of ideas by enabling skeptical readers (and on this subject, who is not a skeptical reader?) to test the quality

of the fact. Is this a hard fact? Is this only an arguable intuition? Is that just what somebody who is prejudiced or careless said was true without any or adequate proof? It is the *absence* of sourcing which reduces comprehension, by justifying skepticism.

"Major statements in this work or ones that contradict the official version of the assassination are attributed," Marris explains. In other words, the sources of "minor" statements or those that fall within "the official version" are not given. He continues: "Any statements without attribution or a source listing indicate historical fact or issues which are undisputed among the majority of credible assassination researchers." So he also justifies not giving the source of any fact which he deems to be "undisputed among the majority of credible assassination researchers." Who judges their credibility? Marris, of course. But I for one sharply disagree with him concerning the credibility of Mark Lane; although I may come to be, I am not convinced, as Marris is, that Jim Garrison, the hero of Oliver Stone's new movie based on Garrison's and Marris' books, is an acceptably credible source. Others who are well-informed will have other judgments concerning different researchers. Yet I estimate that Marris has failed to specify his sources for 80 percent or 90 percent of the facts he has presented, many of them highly arguable. Who can know how many of them come from sources some of us would not deem to be *per se* credible?

By his scanty sourcing Marris has fundamentally reduced the credibility and utility of his otherwise stimulating and useful book. I judge that, unless Marris himself was kind enough to provide a fully-footnoted manuscript of his book, it would take me at least six months' reading and work, and perhaps six years', to find and evaluate all of the sources of all of the salient points which he discusses.

Marris' work is subject, also, to the complaint that he casts suspicion on so many groups and so many individuals, he appears to be positing a conspiracy too large to be credible. I am not sure that this complaint should be granted in light of the profundity and the magnitude of federal crimes and lies to which the nation has been subjected in the period since the assassination, but it certainly has some force. For who, per Marris, are "the men and organizations considered most likely to have been involved in a plot against the President"? "Many assassination researchers believe" that organized crime was responsible, but if so, the mob bosses "may have received some assurances of protection before the fact." Not the CIA as an organization, but "persons within the CIA may have played roles in an assassination conspiracy." "[M]ost researchers today ... regard certain agents within both the FBI and the Secret Service as prime suspects in the plot

to kill Kennedy." And, "... many assassination researchers believe that at least some members of the U.S. military may have played a role in an assassination conspiracy."

Wandering in the Dark

Finally we are forced to think through fundamental questions that are deeply disturbing. All our life is finding our way through ambiguous and frequently deceptive reality. We pay close attention to the quality of what we take to be the facts of reality so that we will be as sound as we can in opinion and in action. Walking barefooted in a strange house in a lightless night, walking in the dark outside in the marsh, the swamp, of felt objects and milky shadows, where are we going, what are we doing? Even if we attain the ability to think and act wisely, the course we take depends on the quality of the evidence we accept about the reality we are in. As a nation we are still mired in a deep doubt about the reality of our collective life since November 22, 1963. That was when began the long national hallucination from which we cannot seem to escape. In the very garishness of this hallucination a pervasive suspicion has taken root and has begun to spread that we are governed, not by ourselves in a democracy, but by liars and killers in a military state rooted in unscrupulous violence for which the term "the national security state" is merely a euphemism.

A photograph of Jack Ruby is blocked out on the cover of my paperback copy of *Crossfire* by a pasted-on gold-colored star that is imprinted with the words, "Soon to be a major motion picture from Oliver Stone." We cannot say that Jim Marris' theory of the conspiracy behind the assassination is true or that it is false because it may turn out to be either. If, say, the Mob, but not the government, turns out to be guilty, or persons in a government agency, but not in other suspected agencies or the Mob, Marris can turn out to be right, but mostly wrong. A jury acquitted the man Jim Garrison accused of complicity in Kennedy's murder. Yet Stone, using the books by Garrison and Marris as his foundation, has made his movie, and many of us will go see it. What the people of the United States and the rest of the world are being given now in the movie houses is theory as entertainment and entertainment as history.

Whose fault is this? It is not the people's, it is not the assassination researchers', and it is not Oliver Stone's. It is the fault of the liars and the withholders in the federal government. Nothing can cleanse our country of the black 26-volume lie but the flinging open of the government's files on this case and a President who will initiate, from the point of zero, a new and fully-funded historical inquest.

Unless we get that, our long national hallucination will continue. □

Observations

Continued from page 4

"Nobody from the administration ever asked me to tell the truth," North wrote. Reagan as-severated in his own memoirs that "we sent word to the lawyers representing Oliver North and John Poindexter...that I wanted them to tell the entire truth and do nothing to protect me." North asked his lawyers if they had received any such message. "They hadn't," North wrote. "The only message I heard was: exonerate the President. And I heard it from at least three different people."

First, North said, Paul Laxalt, one of Reagan's oldest and closest friends, sent North's lawyers a legal memo arguing that North would not waive his Fifth Amendment rights if he chose (you know, if he just happened) to say publicly that Reagan didn't know about the Iran-Contra deal. North's lawyers dropped that into the trash can.

Then, North said, Perot, with whom North had had several dealings, told Brendan Sullivan, North's lawyer, "Look, why doesn't Ollie just end this thing and explain to the FBI that the President didn't know. If he goes to jail, I'll take care of his family. And I'll be happy to give him a job when he gets out." Six days later, according to North's account, Perot repeated this message to North himself and to Sullivan, to wit, that "I should forfeit my Fifth Amendment rights and make a statement that 'cleared' the President. I find it hard to believe that Ross Perot was acting on his own."

Finally, North said, an unnamed military aide to then Vice-President George Bush, another of our fellow Texans (this aide being also a member of Bush's national security staff), approached North and "suggested that I waive my Fifth Amendment rights and absolve the President of any responsibility. Naturally, we wondered. Had this officer come on his own? Had he been sent? I still don't know."

Perot told the News that he had tried to talk to North about their grievous disagreement on what happened, "but he won't talk to me."

On one closely related matter, however, Croesus and Mars agreed. In his book, North, while not offering any proof, italicized his conviction that: "*President Reagan knew everything.*" Perot told the News that Reagan "had to know....(North) had a highway with no lights on it. And there's only one person in this country who can give you that."

The political scientist James David Barber has a theory that every President since Truman has been worse than the one before. And sure enough: Reagan gave North a highway with no lights, and now Bush has given the whole country one. — R.D.

Molly's unexpurgated final column:

An Epitaph for the Times Herald

BY MOLLY IVINS

Former Observer editor Molly Ivins was an Austin-based columnist for the Dallas Times Herald. She is a contributor to several national magazines. A collection of her work, Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?, published by Random House, is among the top 10 books on the New York Times Book Review Best Sellers list. A truncated version of this column was published in the final edition of the Times Herald on Dec. 9—minus the portions italicized below. Used by permission of the author.

IT WAS NEW Year's Eve, 1986, and Ernie Stromberger, who had been the entire Austin Bureau of the Dallas Times Herald during the 1960s, was drunk as a boiled owl at Sam Kinch's annual New Year's bash. A bunch of us had been discussing the ever-troubled Times Herald and Ern rocked back on his heels in the Kinch garage, plastic drink glass in hand, and announced, "Management ... was never the strong point ... of the Herald."

"Damn, Ern," says I, somewhat spiflicated myself. "That's plangent. We ought to carve it into the marble on the front of 1101 Pacific." I know an epitaph when I hear one.

Not unexpected, the death of the Herald, yet who knew it would hurt this much? But let us not mourn, let us celebrate the Herald at its best. Ever since I've known the paper, we had the writers and the guts, the *Morning News* just had the money and the circulation. We ran the stories they were too chicken to print and we took on the Dallas Establishment time and again. We had some fine crusades against lousy nursing homes and the racist criminal justice system and on behalf of innocent citizens put away by a town that often favored law-n-order over the Bill of Rights — Lenell Geter, Randall Dale Adams, Michael Anthony Woten — ask them if it never made a difference that Dallas had two papers.

O.K., so it was not all glory and high-mindedness — the "Crimes Herald" was capable of bringing you all the gory details of the latest society murder; boy, did we have fun with T. Cullen Davis and his charming wife. But there were many days when one was so proud to work for the Dallas Times Herald. A Page One-er by Jim Henderson and every line of it would sing; back when Blackie Sherrod ran the best sports department in Texas it was a joy to read. Lost

Blackie to the News, of course, when the fools in management failed to give him enough money or honor.

One of our unsung strengths was the women's page under Vivian Castleberry and her successors. When every other women's page in Texas featured food, fluff and fashion, Viv and her crew were doing gut-wrenching features on abortion, sex discrimination, day care, the whole range of issues in the early days of the women's movement. More, she had a sense of community and decency that made a real difference in Dallas. As did Bert Holmes.

When the Herald was owned by the Times Mirror Corporation out of Los Angeles, I used to hear people complain about the "out-of-staters" who didn't understand "the real Dallas." They forget that the Herald took on "the real Dallas" long before foreign ownership. The front-page editorial A.C. Greene wrote after the assassination of John Kennedy caused an enormous flap at the time. Greene just did an honest piece of work describing the climate of political hatred that had grown up in Dallas in that era. So people called him and the paper "traitors" to Dallas.

We had a string of great women court reporters; I've never been prouder of the Herald than when Lori Montgomery took on Judge Jack Hampton for giving a light sentence to a cold-blooded double-murderer because his victims were "just queers."

And I loved it when one of the beat regulars would haul off and do a piece showing everyone how well he or she could write — remember the time Jerry Needham, our longtime police reporter, solemnly recounted the great roundup that followed the escape of the animals from the living creche at a North Dallas church?

When Virginia Ellis and Dale Rice in the Austin bureau began that magnificent series on foul nursing homes, our editorial page under Jon Senderling backed them with one blast after another. Some Texas journalists began sniping that the Herald was "crusading." Imagine that, crusading! Said we'd lost our objectivity on the issue. Sure, we weren't giving equal space to the vultures who leave old people to lie in filth for days at a time so the owners can increase their profits.

Then there were the odd hitches in the Herald's getalong that made the paper so much fun to read. We introduced the world to Joe Bob

Briggs and drive-in movie reviews. Columns by Henderson and feature stories by Bryan Woolley that actually achieved the level of literature were available for a quarter a day.

Much of what I loved about the Herald cannot be found in its pages — the Rev. Woolley officiating at the marriages of Herald staffers; the sight of Ernie Makovy, an editor who adored hard news, in a state of ecstasy over beating the *News* on some disaster; the party after the '84 Republican convention at which we threw all the editors into the swimming pool. *I don't think they ever throw editors into swimming pools over at the Morning News.* The Herald, at its best, stood for fun and justice. *But management was never the strong point of the Herald.*

My personal thanks to thousands of loyal readers. I will miss you, I will miss Dallas. Please keep working for justice, and remember to have fun doing it. □

Political Intelligence

Continued from page 24

forced to vote any which way in November on the basis of party pledges signed in earlier primaries. If this group of Democrats, saying in advance they'll take no straight-party-vote pledge, were expelled or barred from a convention, they might be able to raise the issue of whether they can be expelled from a party by insisting on their constitutional rights in advance.

✓ **HARKEN UNCENSORED.** The Observer's series on Harken Energy Co. of Grand Prairie (see box, next page) has been named a finalist for the 1991 Project Censored awards. Project Censored, in its 16th year, explores and publicizes significant stories overlooked or under-reported by the major news media. (It was the subject of a PBS special this year.) Out of more than 700 stories nominated for the honor, 25 were named as finalists, and two of those were Texas Observer stories: the Harken series and "Have Badge, Will Travel" (by Armstrong and Midland writer Nick Johnson), which concerned the machinations of the Midland County Sheriff's Department. The Project Censored awards, judged by a panel of prominent journalists and scholars, will be announced in January. □

Update on George W. Bush and Harken

George W. Bush (G.W.B.), the President's son who stands to be greatly enriched of Harken Energy Corp. strikes oil in Bahrain, has become an uppermost adviser to the President, according to reports from the Baltimore Sun and Dallas Morning News. G.W.B. first told John Sununu that his time as chief of staff was over; 24 hours later Sununu resigned. G.W.B. proved himself in that matter, "to be a high-stakes political intermediary who always had the President's ear," the News reported.

The Wall Street Journal joined Time and other periodicals which have picked up and elaborated, without naming the Observer as one of the sources, on Dave Armstrong's Observer stories of G.W.B.'s involvement with small-potatoes Harken and its subsequent landing of the gigantic contract to drill in Bahrain. (See "Global Entanglements," TO, 9/20/91, and "Oil in the Family," TO 7/26/91.) The first investigations into Harken, in which G.W.B. serves as a director, were made by former Houston Post reporter Pete Brewton. But as Observer readers are aware, this magazine first detailed some of the company's links to various overseas intrigues.

The Dec. 6 Journal story broke important new ground in these areas by exposing the involvement of prominent Harken figures in decisions on U.S. foreign policy and raising

additional questions about whether politics played a role in the awarding of lucrative Bahraini drilling contracts to Harken. "[A]n investigation by this paper has not revealed evidence of wrongdoing or influence peddling by George W. Bush or anyone else connected to Harken," the Journal reported. "Yet what does emerge is a complex pattern of personal and financial relationships behind Harken's sudden good fortune in the Middle East, raising the question of whether the Bahrainis or others in the Middle East may have hoped to ingratiate themselves with the White House."

Within six months of Harken's acquisition of the choice contract with Bahrain, the Journal said, the name of G.W.B.'s co-director at Harken, Talat Othman, was added to a select list of 15 Arab Americans chosen to meet with President Bush, Sununu, and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft two days after Iraq invaded Kuwait; and Othman was present again last month at another White House gathering of the President and Arab-American leaders.

The Journal story, which bore a subtitle, "In the Background: BCCI," also reported in a gingerly fashion on "numerous links among Harken, Bahrain, and individuals close to the discredited Bank of Commerce and Credit International." At the request of Journal reporters, Armstrong supplied the Journal with information he had dug out, while editor of the

Observer, on the Harken-BCCI connections. Some of Armstrong's findings will be published in the January issue of Z Magazine.

"The mosaic of BCCI connections surrounding Harken Energy may prove nothing more than how ubiquitous the rogue bank's ties were," the Journal wrote. "But the number of BCCI-connected people who had dealings with Harken — all since George W. Bush came on board — likewise raises the questions of whether they mask an effort to cozy up to a presidential son."

The links: a major Harken shareholder has been a co-investor with alleged BCCI front man Ghaith Pharaon; the prime minister of Bahrain and brother of its ruling emir was a BCCI investor (the emir played a role in approving the Harken deal); Harken's investment bankers helped BCCI get established in U.S. banking and arranged for a Swiss bank, which was at the time a joint-venture partner with BCCI, to help Harken solve its debt problems in 1987; and Harken's consultant on the Bahrain deal is a close friend of a principal owner of BCCI and has long been acquainted with Pharaon.

"Harken officials," the Journal noted, "say they resent any suggestion their company somehow has ties to BCCI. They dismiss the circumstantial links to it as purely random and say they were shocked to learn of them." —R.D.

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POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE

✓ **RICHARDS ON INSURANCE.** Striking a startling new note, Gov. Ann Richards said, in a speech in Houston, that the regulation of insurance companies may have to be taken over by the federal government. The industry, she said, "prefers obstruction to change." Meanwhile, a report on new risk-based capital guidelines that are being proposed by insurance regulator said, according to the Wall Street Journal, that roughly one in eight insurance companies, mostly smaller ones, will not be able to meet the standards.

✓ **SECRETARY GRAMM?** If Wendy Gramm, Sen. Phil Gramm's wife, ascends now to the Cabinet post of Secretary of Transportation, for which press reports state she is a leading candidate, and if Bush is re-elected, Ms. Gramm will be a very-high-profile figure in the Bush Administration for the four years running up to Gramm's expected campaign for the Presidency in 1996. Ms. Gramm is now chair of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, an agency which, despite the Chicago floor trading scandals, has relatively low visibility. (The Cabinet slot for transportation came open when Bush dumped chief of staff John Sununu for Samuel Skinner.)

✓ **GRAMM'S \$15 MILLION.** Gramm had accepted \$14,989,258 in political contributions from all sources through his 1990 campaign for re-election, and after campaign expenditures he had more than \$5 million cash on hand: \$5,401,119, to be exact. Maury Maverick called attention to these phenomenal facts, produced by Common Cause, in one of Maverick's Sunday columns in the San Antonio Express-News this month. In addition, Common Cause said, David Duke raised \$2,101,123 in his race for the U.S. Senate in Louisiana.

Among Texans, Maverick said, only Rep. Bill Archer, the Houston Republican, refuses all contributions from political action committees (PACs). Turning to his San Antonio congressmen, Maverick pointed out that Lamar Smith, Republican, accepted \$130,230 in PAC money, Albert Bustamante, Democrat, \$199,875, and Henry Gonzalez, Democrat, \$81,550. Over 10 years, Maverick noted, Gonzalez, now chairman of the House Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee, accepted only \$3,025 from

savings and loan PACs, the fourth smallest amount received by the 46 members of the committee.

✓ **MAURY AND BILLY SOL.** "When I ran for the Senate," Maverick confessed in this same column, "I rode a few times on the airplane of Billy Sol Estes, who later went to the penitentiary. I didn't have the remotest idea who he was, but should have suspected something when my staff told me he was 'a good Christian businessman.'"

✓ **HOBBY ON HEALTH CARE.** Former Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby, in a column published this month, calls Canada's system of national health care "a good place to start" in fixing the U.S. medical care system. Free as he is now of the political constraints that bind a high officeholder, Hobby wrote:

"There are about 40 million people in the United States without health care coverage. There are none in Canada.

"Canada spends about eight percent of its gross national product on health care—about one-third less than we do. Canadians are so satisfied with their system that health care is not a political issue.

"But it certainly is here....

"Federal programs, except Medicaid, have basically tied health care to employment. That doesn't work because there are millions of people whose employers can't afford the insurance and millions more who have no employer at all....

"In Canada, doctors are paid for the number of patients under their care.... The government pays the bills directly. Citizens choose their own doctor, just as we do.... The system probably could not be imported to the United States without major surgery, but it is a good place to start."

✓ **WHAT COALITION?** "We have three voting blocs, Hispanics, blacks, and Anglos," Billie Carr, Democratic National Committee-woman from Houston, told the Observer after the mayor's election there in which an Anglo beat a black, "and I'm tellin' you, Hispanics didn't support blacks. From what I've looked at, it looks very bad. Where is the coalition? We better worry about that. And the usually more liberal white precincts didn't support

Turner, either," she said. "Hispanics and blacks always support each other — but they didn't in this race."

Carr said that she has been giving parties for the three major candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination, Harkin, Kerrey, and Clinton. Clinton has been working on her the hardest — "he called on the phone and talked to me for hours, he writes me notes about the family — he's a lover, he's a hugger," she said. But she is automatically an unpledged delegate on the presidential nomination, she said. "I'm so tired of Cuomo and all his indecision," she said. But if he is the nominee she's for him, she added.

Carr said Mrs. Molly Luhrs, the granddaughter of the first publisher of the Texas Observer (and herself now a grandmother), now works two days a week in the offices of the Harris County Democrats, which Mrs. Randolph brought to great political power in Houston in the late 1950s.

Carr recently took six fellow workers in the HCDs to Baton Rouge and New Orleans to oppose David Duke for governor of that state. "We worked the phone banks for Edwards," she said, laughing that she and the others had found themselves in such a position, as had many of the people of Louisiana.

✓ **UT-WORLD?** The immediate fate of multicultural education at UT-Austin depends now on the outcome of a faculty vote by secret ballot on whether to require all entering undergraduates after the fall of 1992 to take a course in U.S. minorities or a Third World culture, and after 1992, to take one in each of those subjects.

✓ **NO BRASS COLLAR.** The Progressive Democrats of San Antonio, which claim about 150 members, have sent a letter to the national and state Democratic chairmen renouncing any duty or commitment to vote for Democratic nominees, whoever they are. Texas Democratic party chairman Bob Slagle responded on the theory that a soft answer turns away wrath: "I'm sure," he told the San Antonio Express-News, that "they're going to be home for next year's election."

The organization may have raised a thorny constitutional question. It is Texas law, per a standing attorney general's opinion, that citizens cannot be

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