The Spectacle of the False Flag

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‘What cost Kennedy his life was his attempt to impose the limits of Camelot Atlanticism on a Frontier-minded defense and security elite.’ —Carl Oglesby

The single most striking, but generally under-appreciated, aspect of Dealey Plaza, is also the most Debordean feature of the JFK assassination: the spectacularly _public_ nature of the execution. In both the endlessly re-cycled iconic ‘Zapruder film’, as well as in Oliver Stone’s monumental film _JFK_, a spectacular cinematic appropriation of a spectacle,¹ the collective impressions mediated through the imagery are those of the clandestine false-flag event: shock, trauma, disorientation, cognitive dissonance—all of the epistemo-cognitive affinities of a parapolitical deep event that, like Poe’s purloined letter, is ‘hiding in plain sight’. On closer reflection, it is the killing of Kennedy in such audaciously open space that itself raises the most intriguing questions. If the purpose of the assassination as an ‘inside job’ (i.e. U.S. intelligence services) was simply to

¹ See Chapter Five.
kill JFK, then the murder both could and should have been conducted in private space. However, the public spectacle of Dealey Plaza, a veritable outdoor amphitheater, itself provides compelling but indirect evidence of the false-flag nature of the event and it is in terms of the spectacular nature of the act that the assassination must be understood: a highly stage-managed act of clandestine theatre, consciously intended to manipulate public perceptions of reality so as to engineer a pre-given set of parapolitical outcomes. In this section, I will outline a ‘minimalist’ theory of a conspiracy to assassinate the President; that is, in order for a deep event to be made out on the basis of the historical record before us, what conditions must have been fulfilled and what is the absolute minimum that must be true? My central thesis is that a ‘minimalist’ theory (following CIA nomenclature, hereafter referred to as JFK/DALLAS) would involve two necessary suppositions: (i) that the murder of Kennedy was a false-flag operation (the artificial cre-

2 I owe this keen observation to Guido Preparata. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were aware that JFK suffered from Addison disease and was addicted to cortisone and other pain-killers while J. Edgar Hoover had extensive files on Kennedy’s sexual addiction, which easily could have been used as political blackmail, forcing the President to either resign or, possibly, to undergo impeachment. Talbot, 42. According to William Sullivan, the ‘number three man’ at the FBI under Hoover: “I was sure [Hoover] was saving everything he had on Kennedy, and on Martin Luther King Jr., too, until he could unload it all and destroy them both. He kept this kind of material in his personal files, which filled four rooms on the fifth floor of headquarters.” Cited in Talbot, 142.

3 Admittedly, following this logic, I would also be able to conclude that the ‘in plain sight’ spectacle of Dealey Plaza provides indirect support of Oswald as the lone gunman; public space was the shooter’s only means of access to the President. Here, the sniper’s physical space from the moving target correlates to the lone gunman’s para-political distance from the Executive. However, as I shall show, the possible fact of Oswald as a lone gunman does not by itself disprove the existence of a ‘conspiracy’ or subtract anything from Dealey Plaza as a parapolitical spectacle.
ation of a ‘state of exception’ by the covert agencies of the State to further an otherwise politically unacceptable foreign policy objective, in this case the invasion of Cuba); and (ii) that the epicenter of the operation was within the disparate and myriad ‘parapolitical’ networks of Cold War Miami, New Orleans, Mexico City and Dallas (primarily the CIA and the anti-Castro Cuban networks with a possible subsidiary role performed by the Mafia).

**The Deep Event and Philosophical Denial**

*I have always believed, and argued, that a true understanding of the Kennedy assassination will lead not to “a few bad people,” but to the institutional and parapolitical arrangements which constitute the way we are systematically governed.’—Peter Dale Scott

Within ‘mainstream’ or orthodox political discourse, the possibility of a deep event—or, in somewhat pejorative terms, a ‘conspiracy’—involving JFK or national politics altogether are ordinarily dismissed on grounds *a priori*. For the Right (of-center), such refusal is grounded on the axiomatic nature of the liberal-democratic consensus and the daily re-enactments of the (media regulated) transparent model of the modern Western State. For the Left (of-center), the *a priori* of the negative is the self-evident ideological uniformity of the political elites: the clandestine agencies of the State would never feel the need to assassinate its own Chief Executive precisely because the monolithic nature of the liberal State would preclude that that Chief Executive would ever act contrary to the self-interest and wishes of the Establishment.
—the elite manufacturers of consent in Chomsky’s famous phrase.⁴

What unites both positions, apart from their mutual rhetorical posturing through the media, is that both reject the pluralistic model of the Dual State, relying instead upon the orthodoxy of political monism, the preferred paradigm of the Western intelligentsia since Plato and, in the 20th century, reaffirmed most emphatically by Martin Heidegger.⁵ For Heidegger, the inherently political nature of the relationship between the political being of the State and political reason (ratio):

[S]prings from the essence of truth as correctness in the sense of the self-adjusting guarantee of the security of domination. The ‘taking as true’ of ratio, of reor, becomes a far-reaching and anticipatory security. Ratio becomes counting, calculating, calculus. Ratio is self-adjustment to what is correct.⁶

In Heidegger’s view, political ‘truth’ that equates with

⁴ Chomsky’s attitude towards Dealey Plaza is exemplary: the assassination is of historical importance only if it provides proof of ‘a high-level conspiracy followed by a cover-up of remarkable dimensions’. As there is in fact no evidence, then conspiracy theorists must engage in empirically unverifiable counterfactuals to construct an a priori argument, such as an early U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam if JFK had not been murdered—all of which betrays a fundamental incomprehension of the nature of American political power and foreign policy. For Chomsky, all such hypothetical counterfactuals ‘are baseless, and hold little interest. In the present case [Kennedy’s approach towards Vietnam], there is a rich record to assist us in understanding the roots of policy and its implementation. People who want to understand and change the world will do well, in my opinion, to pay attention to it, and not engage in groundless speculation as to what one or another leader might have done.’ Chomsky, 38. All of the institutions of the ‘new mandarins’ are both total and totalizing.

⁵ See Wilson, ‘The Concept of the Parapolitical’, 5-8.

⁶ Heidegger, Parmenides, 50.
correctness is both delimited by a homologous discursive space and subjugated to the political will to domination; ‘The essence of truth as veritas [i.e. correctness] is without space and without ground,’7 signifying the unreality of the heterogeneous, or the ‘different’; ‘The result is the presence of truth as self-evidence, or the presence of thought to itself in the manner of self-identity’ within an exclusively homogenous discursive space.8 Veritas is the ground of western jurisprudence’s conflation of Law with Reason, establishing an undifferentiated chain of signifiers delimiting the parameters of ‘orthodox’ or ‘common’ legal speech. Homogeneity guarantees that whatever is not identical with ratio cannot constitute a portion of reality and, by political implication, cannot constitute an actual attribute of the ‘true’ State. Consequently, ‘the idea of sovereignty, which clearly implies but one absolute power laying in the social order, with all relationships, all individuals...ultimately subject to it, has been the characteristic approach to the political community.’9

Nationalism is secular mythology.10 The onto-political division that originated with Plato serves as the historical originary of the modern nationalistic myth of the homologous Nation-State. According to Heidegger, it is with Hegel that ‘the transformation of veritas into certitudo is completed. This completion of the Roman essence of truth is the proper and hidden historical meaning of the nineteenth century.’11 It is also, however,

7 Ibid.
8 ‘There is no space, no distance, between our true thoughts concerning a state of affairs in the world and that state of affairs: the two coincide.’ Bell, 28.
9 Nisbet, 386.
10 See generally Anderson.
11Heidegger, Parmenides, 58
very much the historical meaning of the ‘long sixteenth century’ (1492-1648), the critical incubating period for early modern international law; the Dutch Republic of the early 17th century had emerged as a self-grounding juro-political space, delimited by three undifferentiated signs: sovereignty (potestas), freedom (libertas), and right (ius). Although Heidegger situates the historical victory of political monism in the post-Napoleonic period, it is clear that onto-political homogeneity—or what I have referred to as the indivisibility of sovereignty—had achieved an irreversible ascendency by the time of Jean Bodin (1529/30-1596), as Jens Bartelson has established.

Since Bodin, indivisibility has been integral to the concept of sovereignty itself. In international political theory, this means that whenever sovereignty is used in a theoretical context to confer unity upon the state as an acting subject, all that it conveys is that this entity is an individual by virtue of its indivisibility [i.e. its homologous space], which is tautological indeed. What follows from this search for the locus of sovereignty in international political theory, however necessary to its empirical testability is thus nothing more than a logical sideshow; the essential step towards unity is already taken whenever sovereignty figures in the definition of political order. Whether thought to be upheld by an individual or a collective, or embedded in the State as a whole, sovereignty entails self-presence and self-sufficiency; that which is sovereign is immediately given to itself, con-
scious of itself, and thus acting for itself. That is, as it figures in international political theory, sovereignty is not an attribute of something whose existence is prior to or independent of sovereignty; rather, it is the concept of sovereignty itself which supplies this indivisibility and unity.\textsuperscript{14}

Hegel notwithstanding, it was the early modern nation-state that acted as the discursive space of the identity of unity with political power (\textit{potestas}). The presence of unity/monism equates with the absence of pluralism, which is the multiplication, or proliferation, of political identities and entities. According to Robert Nisbet

\begin{quote}
It has been the fate of pluralism in Western thought to take a rather poor second place to philosophies which make their point of departure the premise of, not the diversity and plurality of things, but, rather, some underlying unity and symmetry, needing only to be uncovered by pure reason to be then deemed the ‘real’, the ‘true’, and the ‘lasting’.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Yet the Platonic denial of differencecontains within itself the very grounds of its actual reversal. The apparent falsity of the originary myth, the inversion of Bartelson’s ‘empirical testability’, is affirmed by the historical continuation of difference(s). As contemporary anti-Hegelian thought insists, the Nation-State ‘is not best and fully understood as a teleological unity, directed exclusively at attending some single end or as having a single function’\textsuperscript{16}—a profoundly parapolitical insight. In other words, the persistence of difference is itself the

\textsuperscript{14} Bartelson, 28. See also Wilson, \textit{The Savage Republic}, 189-93.
\textsuperscript{15} Nisbet , 386. Nisbet’s language repeats the tenor of Platonic myth.
\textsuperscript{16} Geuss, 61.
space of contestation of the Platonic myth; this is the central assumption of Heidegger’s anti-Hegelian project. For Heidegger, ‘serious’—that is, metaphysical—thought within the post-Hegelian State demands a return to the early Hellenic concept of aletheia (the ‘un-concealed’\(^{17}\)) that pre-dated veritas,\(^{18}\) which is both the awareness and the actively making aware of the governing presence of ontology (Being) in all forms of thought and speech, ‘the uncommon within the common’; ‘For us, the matter of thinking is the Same, and this is Being—but Being with respect to its difference from beings.’\(^{19}\) Until this moment, what has been lacking in western logos is the primacy of heterogeneity, the ‘essential space of aletheia, the unconcealedness of things...a space completely covered over by debris and forgotten.’\(^{20}\) Ironically, the fatal flaw of the Heideggerian project lies within this very move towards the un-concealing of the heterogeneous: whenever Heidegger attempts to convey a positive definition of Being, as opposed to the mere invocation of it, he reduces it to a self-identical and (re-) unifying ‘ideal of simplicity, purity and self-containment’.\(^{21}\) To think about Being as such is to repeat, on another level, the original sin of Platonism: the fetishizing of the (self-) identical. The true substitution of homo-

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17 That is, a non-correspondence notion of ‘truth’.
18 Bell’s commentary on this is excellent. ‘Truth as aletheia, as the unstable Being and clearing which allows for the presencing of thinking and being, is stabilised and replaced by the Roman view of truth as veritas, as correctness.’ Bell, 26.
19 Heidegger, Identity and Difference, 47; see also 50.
20 Heidegger, Parmenides, 50.
21 Bell, 150. Being ‘is the unifying One, in the sense of what is everywhere primal and thus most ‘universal; and at the same time it is the unifying One in the sense of the All-Highest (Zeus).’ Heidegger, Parmenides, 69. ‘Truth’—that which is un-concealed—is difference, the being(s) within Being. However, within the Heideggerian schema, beings are ultimately revealed as embedded within the primordial and universal One.
geneity with heterogeneity demands a radical and unconditional *rapprochement* with difference(s)/being(s): *the proof of the absence of political homogeneity is the signification of the presence of a potentially radical and discursively de-stabilizing heterogeneity*. And it is precisely the uncovering of the concealed, the traumatic revelation of the radical and irreducible heterogeneity of the State that serves as the philosophical basis—whether consciously expressed or not—of what is conventionally referred to as ‘conspiracy theory’.

Given, however, the philosophical pedigree of principled doubt concerning all things ‘conspiratorial’, I am loathe to undertake a direct critique of this media-manufactured consensus. Rather, my own form of empirical ‘testability’ will be along lines more oblique: employing Occam’s Razor, I hold that the preferred explanation in any theory of a possible deep event as political conspiracy is the one that most economically reduces the element of implausibility—or, in the alternative, most lowers the ‘threshold of resistance’—to the possibility of clandestine autonomy within the allegedly indivisible unity of the State. My own interest in JFK/DALLAS stems in part from my personal experience of the reverse application of Occam to Oswald, namely the improbably high number of (seemingly) meaningful coincidences that, accumulatively, constitute a body of persuasive circumstantial evidence, albeit on the lower evidentiary threshold of balance-of-probabilities rather than beyond-reasonable doubt. Charles Pigden has articulated the implications of this beautifully: depending on the nature of the event in question ‘non-conspiracy theories may be *more* complex. They may require an elaborate and unlikely sequence of coincidences or complicated social mechanisms which *duplicate* the appearance of conspir-
The notion of JFK/DALLAS as a false-flag spectacle provides the least implausible of the JFK conspiracy theories not only because of its innate simplicity but precisely because the strategy-of-tension that signifies constitutes empirical verification of the parapolitical governance within the Dual State. If JFK/DALLAS can be intelligibly read as a singular event within a broader pattern of strategy-of-tension enactments as an instrument of spectacular power, then not only can the requisite elements of the conspiracy be made out, but the assassination would be automatically invested with ‘deep’ political significance.

Oglesby situates the crux of the parapolitical dilemma of the Kennedy administration within the catastrophic implementation of the (spectacular) ZAPATA Plan—better known as the invasion of the Bay of Pigs (April 15–19, 1961) —which served as the fulcrum of a dangerously precarious Northeast/Southwest divide within the elite coalition of the Kennedy administration (Massachusetts/Texas).

[The] Kennedy administration was in sharp internal conflict over what to do about Cuba, and… the formulation and implementation of Frontier Camelot Cuban policy were affected by this conflict or, as might be said, disfigured by it. That is the key point which the Cold War conception of the Bay of Pigs Fiasco cannot bring into focus: that the Cuban question and the question of hemispheric revolution so divided the Kennedy administration that the United States could neither accept Castro nor act with a will to destroy what

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22 Pigden, 37.
24 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy, 77.
Castro stood for.\textsuperscript{25}

Strikingly, the deep politics both within the Kennedy administration itself as well as among diverse anti-Castro groups mirrors the contending paradigms of Cold War neo-colonialist warfare, between that of covert forms of para-military warfare favored by the Yankee CIA and more conventional but exceptionally large-scale exercises of direct military intervention endorsed by the more Cowboy Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the Pentagon. Even more unnerving, this debate over the correct strategy towards Cuba prefigured almost exactly the equally unresolvable debate over the nature, aims, and scope of military intervention in Vietnam during the ‘Kennedy phase’ of the war.\textsuperscript{26} Enamored as the President was by the entire notion of clandestine power, General Maxwell Taylor’s very covert friendly doctrine of the ‘flexible response’ proved to be the cornerstone of the strategic thought of Kennedy’s administration.

The strategic doctrine which I propose to replace Massive Retaliation is called herein the Strategy of Flexible Response. This name suggests the need for a capability to react across the entire spectrum of possible challenge, for coping with anything from general atomic war to infiltrations and aggressions such as threaten Laos and Berlin in 1959.\textsuperscript{27}

Crucial to understanding the fiasco is that although presented as a covert operation, governed at all times by strict ‘plausible denial’—a signature of the Kennedy administration—there is little doubt that the ZAPATA

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 50.
\textsuperscript{26} Freedman, generally.
\textsuperscript{27} Taylor cited in ibid, 19.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 133-5. Defined as intelligence operations ‘that might cause
Plan was actually a carefully engineered trap, intended to commit the President to a full-scale military invasion of Cuba.

Past experience suggested to the CIA and the military that these [executive] commitments were never fixed and that the pressure of events would oblige the president to bring American power to bear… [According to Allen Dulles] ‘We felt that when the chips were down—when the crisis arose in reality, any request required for success would be authorized rather than permit the enterprise to fail.’

In other words, a nominally ‘Yankee’ (CIA) operation was semi-consciously intended to yield ‘Cowboy’ outcomes (U.S. military intervention)—a micro-level re-staging of the wider Yankee-Cowboy rift, which explains practically in toto the extreme indecisiveness exhibited by Kennedy during the crisis. On January 4, 1961 a preliminary paper on ZAPATA was drafted by two of the chief military planners, CIA officer Jack Esterline and Marine Colonel Jack Hawkins, making clear the operational assumption of the allegedly Cuban nationalist invasion as an immediate pre-text for full-scale U.S. attack.

The primary objective of the [amphibious] force

embarassment (because violate international law or for some other reason) should be planned and executed in a way that allow the head of government [or the Agency itself] to deny that he had anything to do with the activities or even know they were occurring.’ Abram Shulsky cited in Albarelli, 438.

29 Freedman, 145 and 138. See also Blight and Kornbluh, 65-66, 69, 93, 94, 100 and 101. ‘Few believed it—the CIA did not believe it—when Kennedy said that whatever happens, there will be no American military involvement. He meant it. They did not understand that he meant it.’ Arthur Schlesinger in ibid, 65.
will be to survive and maintain its integrity on Cuban soil. There will be no early attempt to break out of the lodgment for further offensive operations unless and until there is a general uprising against the Castro regime or overt military intervention by United States forces has taken place. It is expected that these operations will precipitate a general uprising throughout Cuba and cause the revolt of large segments of the Cuban Army and Militia…If matters do not eventuate as predicted above, the lodgment established by our force can be used as the site for establishment of a provisional government which can be recognized by the United States, and hopefully by other American states, and given overt military assistance. The way will then be paved for United States military intervention aimed at the pacification of Cuba, and this will result in the prompt of the Castro government.30

Oglesby’s parapolitical interpretation of the Bay of Pigs as a micro-deep event closely tracks the confused military nature of the Plan, which was, in turn, the external manifestation of the underlying and unresolved tensions of the Dual State.

30 Gleijeses, 17. For the system-wide cognitive ‘dis-connect’ between the phase one planning of the invasion and the phase two mechanics of the overthrow of the Castro regime, see ibid, 27-39. Hawkins later reiterated the need for direct military action against Cuba in his post-mortem assessment of ZAPATA, ‘Record of Paramilitary Action Against the Castro Government of Cuba’, May 5, 1961, which replicated JFK’s own preoccupation with plausible denial: ‘Further efforts to develop armed internal resistance, or to organize Cuban exile forces, should not be made in connection with a planned overt intervention by United States forces…The Government and the people of the United States are not yet psychologically conditioned to participate in the cold war with resort to the harsh, rigorous, and often dangerous and painful measures which must be taken in order to win.’ Hawkins’s report remained classified until June 4, 1998. Kornbluh, 16.
We see Kennedy’s Cuban policy better if we simply recognize that it was formed under conditions of internal conflict, conflict within the executive policy apparatus itself. Frontier Camelot was the Kennedy’s attempt to transform an exaggeratedly wide electoral coalition—the Kennedy/Johnson, Yankee/Cowboy coalition—into an effective governing coalition, an attempt which failed at the Bay of Pigs, its first test, as it ultimately failed in Vietnam, its most tragic test.\(^{31}\)

Compare this with Colonel Hawkins comments on the Bay of Pigs, in discussion with historian Peter Kornbluh in 1998.

We should have done it so we could succeed. That was the whole thing. No one seemed to have success in mind. What they had in mind was is someone going to know about this. Success was what they should have been thinking about. It was a fundamental error that was really the underpinning of all the other errors made because everybody at the political level was trying for plausible deniability and that caused so many restrictions that the operation could not really be successful.\(^{32}\)

Directly portending the future, and greater, catastrophe of Vietnam, the Cowboy mindset of the JCS on display during ZAPATA clearly rendered it incapable of adequately planning and implementing a successful, large-scale covert operation. According to Esterline,

We [the ZAPATA Plan Task Force] would have debates and meetings among ourselves about the merits of this or that plan when, all of a sudden—and this had nothing to do with the White House

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31 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy, 55.
32 Kornbluh, 265.
—but all of a sudden we would get a new order, usually coming from a member of the Special Group [on Cuba], telling us that we ‘needed’ more of this or more of that—always more of something. Very often, it would be generated by some general who was a member of the Special Group. It was often [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Lyman] Lemnitzer for example, but others did this too. Those guys just didn’t understand anything about guerilla warfare. They wanted to fight this thing as if it was World War II in Europe, or something. You know, the whole thing—land a huge invasion force and march forward until you liberate the territory.33

The accentuating problem here, which is what made Cuba the albatross of the Kennedy administration, was that direct military intervention was the only truly reliable means of eliminating the Cuban government given the overwhelming popularity and broad based support of the Castro regime; predictably, Kennedy was ‘looking for the minimalist option when the only real possibilities were maximalist in nature.’34 Not surprisingly, then, the Taylor Commission/Cuba Study Group drawn up by JFK after the Bay of Pigs to provide post-mortem assessment of the fiasco concluded in no uncertain terms that

A paramilitary operation of the magnitude of ZA-PATA should not be prepared or conducted in such a way that all U.S. support and connection with it could be plausibly denied. Once the need

33 Blight and Kornbluh, 50-1.

34 Freedman, 145. A Special National Intelligence Estimate, released in December 1960 ‘had foreseen no development “likely to bring about a critical shift of popular opinion away from Castro.”’ Any disaffection would be “offset by the growing effectiveness of the state’s instrumentalities of control.”’ Ibid, 138.
for the operation was established, its success should have had the primary consideration of all agencies of government…Operational restrictions designed to protect its covert character should have been accepted only if they did not impair the chance of success. As it was, the leaders of the operation were obliged to fit their plan inside changing ground rules laid down for military considerations, which often had serious operational disadvantages.35

The ‘secret’ reason for the fiasco was that clandestine techniques were employed in order to justify a U.S. military intervention in Cuba. Quite clearly, then, the seemingly autonomous debate over strategy was, in reality, little more than epiphenomenal; the governing truth is that covert versus invasion was the visible manifestation of Yankee versus Cowboy.

This is why it is so important to see the Kennedy administration’s record not in terms of its outward rationality, for it has none, and not as the expression of Kennedy’s will alone, for his will did not prevail, but in terms of the impassioned political in-fighting that in reality constituted its actual life. It is the relations of power in America that speak in Kennedy’s apparent formula: If the Cuban exiles can make the invasion alone, let it be done, but only if. Or again: If the Vietnamese threat can be contained with a Special Forces-level commitment, and without disrupting North Atlantic relations, let it be done, but only if. 36

35 Bohning, 65.

36 Oglesby, Yankee-Cowboy War, 67. This touches directly upon a point of vital importance that, in my opinion, has been under-emphasized by scholars concerning the ‘true intentions’ of JFK with regards to Vietnam. As with so much else concerning the Kennedy presidency, the Vietnam debate took the form of a two track approach: not merely between intervention versus withdrawal, but also, and equally, between para-
It is at precisely this juncture that the parapolitical scholar is forced to confront what is perhaps the single most disturbing series of documents of the Kennedy administration in regard to Cuba—the JCS proposal for OPERATION NORTHWOODS. Prepared by the Chief of the JCS, Army General Lymon Lemnitzer, the operation constitutes an unsettling hybrid of both covert and military measures—a clandestine form of parapolitical theatre to induce an integrated spectacle presaging a military invasion of Cuba.

U.S. military intervention will result from a period of heightened U.S.-Cuban tensions which place the United Nations in the position of suffering justifiable grievances. World opinion, and the United Nations forum should be favorably affected by developing the international image of the Cuban government as rash and irresponsible, and as an alarming and unpredictable threat to the peace of the Western Hemisphere.

It is important to note that some skepticism over the authenticity of the OPERATION NORTHWOODS documents has been expressed by Carol A. Valentine, who finds problematic the occasional use of British, rather than American, English throughout the document. Cf. Valentine, generally. However, most parapolitical scholars accept their authenticity. Personal correspondence with Peter Dale Scott.

Lemnitzer, cited in Davis, 137. Italics added. It is important to compare
NORTHWOODS is an exceptionally grandiose example of the false-flag, the entirety of the operation embedded within the over-arching theatrical strategy of staging and managing public spectacle. It is, therefore, necessary to keep the nebulous relationship between the theatrical and the clandestine in mind at all times.

The basis of the theatrical event is the encounter between different participants, where the boundaries between performer and spectator are in a state of flux. This fluid situation changes not only the context, but the quality of production and communication… [T]he sharing of the same space, which reveals a collective intent, can vary from a simple juxtaposition of presence that establishes a minimal level of connection, to a harmonizing common physical action… [T]he participant can shift role from actor to spectator and vice-versa, thereby determining each time a different level and quality of engagement and a varying degree of involvement.39

Somewhat in contrast to the convoluted counter-intelligence (i.e., psychological) operations of the actually implemented OPERATION MONGOOSE,40 NORTHWOODS involved more overt elements of the brazenly theatrical.

[N]ot just embodiment but enactment; not just a scheme of action but a plot of deceitful action; not just coordinated behavior but purposeful behavior for the creation of faith in illusion…the substitution, in some cases, of simulacrum for an event;

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40 See below, this chapter.
and manipulation of plot elements in order to stimulate belief among persons necessary to (mistakenly) testify to the authenticity of the fabrication.\footnote{Davis, 144.}

Take, for example, the following.

4. We could develop a Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities, or even Washington.

The terror campaign could be pointed at Cuban refugees seeking haven in the United States. We could sink a boatload of Cubans en route to Florida (real or simulated). We could foster attempts on lives of Cuban refugees in the United States even to the extent of wounding in instances to be widely publicized. Exploding a few plastic bombs in carefully chosen spots, the arrest of Cuban agents and the release of prepared documents substantiating Cuban involvement also would be helpful in projecting the idea of an irresponsible government.\footnote{Ibid, 140.}

As theatrical scholar Tracy C. Davis has rightly pointed out

The recognition of elements ubiquitous in dramatic writing and stage performance in [diverse] cultural manifestations—whether a written document or a news story, a community event or an international dispute, an ideological conflict or wit-
nesses’ contrasting points of view—is not merely resemblance; it depends upon the borrowing or appropriation of elements from theatre and drama, as well as the ontology of ‘script’ or ‘performance’.

Wholly consistent with the parapolitical logic of the strategy-of-tension, Lemnitzer and the JCS, displaying a total misunderstanding of the nature of metaphor,

[P]ropose ways to stage the provocation that could lead to war. In such a case, ‘stage’ is not only a verb indicating the calculated orchestration of events, but also stands for a process that deliberately blurs the demarcations between simulations and their legitimization. Performance, by these terms, is not so much the context of Northwoods as its precondition.43

In other words, NORTHWOODS is thoroughly Debor-dean in its assumptions; not only can spectacle be artfully deployed as a covert form of power, but that such a spectacle will perform an integrating function: the collective re-adjustment of perceptions towards a new, and effective, political consensus—the very thing that was absent from ZAPATA. And, following the ultra-cynical instrumentality of spectacular power, I might even be tempted to conclude that NORTHWOODS does, indeed, make a kind of parapolitical ‘sense’: the operation is itself the necessary therapeutic device to resolve the interminable crisis of the Kennedy administration through a traumatic application of a form of ‘shock therapy’—shock and disorientation, of course, being hallmarks of counter-intelligence operations. It is worth noting, then, that ‘Psy-Ops’, or counter-intelligence ‘shock action’, were the operational core of ZAPATA. In a CIA paper

43 Ibid, 145.
entitled ‘Proposed Operation Against Cuba’ (March 11, 1961), the authors held that, ‘This course of action [i.e., the amphibious landing] has a better chance than any other of leading to the prompt overthrow of the Castro regime because it holds the possibility of administering a demoralizing shock.’ And it is also significant that Davis himself dismisses the parapolitical significance of the documents in an annoyingly naïve, or liberal, manner.

From a conventional historical perspective, Northwoods is one among many curiosities pertaining to the Kennedy administration’s handling of Cuba. From a conventional historical perspective, it is documentation of discussions, of a proposal, and perhaps of a point of view held by the Joint Chiefs. Beyond that, because it was not implemented…it is not ‘history’. But from the perspective of a performance historian, it is a set of ideologically linked scenarios that demonstrate a line of thought ratified by the Joint Chiefs: thought made concrete as a set of actions that are templates for events that were—on some level—imaginable and advocated. Northwoods was not implemented, and in that sense it is not history, but neither is it fiction. Like a dramatic script, it exists as actions in potential, yet, like a dramatic script that is real, it results in imaginative acts that makes its reading historicizable. It exists as potential that was (once) acted upon insofar as Lemnitzer envisioned the scenarios and sought approval for them from higher authorities, and this in itself was a form of performance.45

The obvious question here is how can Davis be so certain that NORTHWOODS was never actually imple-

44 Kornbluh, 122.
45 Davis, 145.
mented, albeit in a different form? If certain historical events (JFK/DALLAS, LBJ/TONKIN, NIXON/WATERGATE) were really ‘theatrical events’—and, by virtue of their false-flag status, deep events—then we are facing the prospect of a doubled form of Debordean spectacle: the manufacturing of a false reality that remains unidentifiable as illusion as prescribed by counter-intelligence orthodoxy. There is clear evidence that the germ of NORTHWOODS originated within the Eisenhower White House; according to James Bamford, Lemnitzer was directed to formulate a plan, using ‘phony evidence, all of it [which] would be blamed on Castro, thus giving Lemnitzer and his cabal the excuse, as well as the public and international backing, they needed to launch their war.’ And the strong impression that Lemnitzer was merely following a formally prescribed form of thought actively encouraged by the Executive is further evidenced by the history of the production and distribution of the documents. The plan for NORTHWOODS was officially completed and submitted to the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 13, 1962.

46 Bamford, 82. ‘The idea may actually have originated with President Eisenhower in the last days of his administration. With the Cold War hotter than ever and the recent U-2 scandal fresh in the public’s memory, the old general wanted to go out with a win. He wanted desperately to invade Cuba in the weeks leading up to Kennedy’s inauguration; indeed, on January 3 he told Lemnitzer and other aides in his Cabinet Room that he would move against Castro before the inauguration if only the Cubans gave him a really good excuse. Then, with time growing short, Eisenhower floated an idea. If Castro failed to provide that excuse, perhaps, he said, the United States “could think of manufacturing something that would be generally acceptable.” What he was suggesting was a pretext—a bombing, an attack, an act of sabotage—carried out secretly against the United States by the United States. Its purpose would be to justify the launching of a war. It was a dangerous suggestion by a desperate president.’ Ibid, 82-3. White House, Top Secret memorandum of meeting with the president, on January 3, 1961 (January 9, 1961).
MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the attached Memorandum for the Chief of Operations, Cuba Project, which responds to a request of that office for brief but precise description of pretexts which would provide justification for U.S. military intervention in Cuba.

JUSTIFICATION FOR U.S MILITARY INTERVENTION IN CUBA

2. It is recognized that any action which becomes pretext for U.S. military intervention in Cuba will lead to a political decision which then would lead to military action.

APPENDIX TO ENCLOSURE A: DRAFT: MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, CUBA PROJECT

3. This plan, incorporating projects selected from the attached suggestions, or from other sources, should be developed to focus all efforts on a specific objective which would provide adequate justification for U.S. military intervention. Such a plan would enable a logical build-up of incidents to be combined with other seemingly unrelated events to camouflage the ultimate objective and create the necessary impression of Cuban rashness and irresponsibility on a large scale, directed at other countries as well as the United States. The plan would also properly integrate the time phase the courses of action to be pursued. The de-

47 General Edward G. Lansdale of OPERATION MONGOOSE; see below, this chapter.
sired resultant from the execution of this plan would be to place the United States in the apparent position of suffering defensible grievances from a rash and irresponsible government of Cuba and to develop an international image of Cuban threat to peace in the Western Hemisphere.

By this time, however, the White House had decided against a physical invasion, relying instead upon anti-Castro insurgents aided and abetted by the U.S. to either overthrow or assassinate Castro themselves; accordingly, at the March 16, 1962 meeting between Lemnitzer and JFK to discuss NORTHWOODS, ‘President Kennedy told Lemnitzer that there was virtually no possibility that the U.S. would ever use overt military force in Cuba.’ However, in a memo sent to McNamara on April 10, 1962, Lemnitzer opined that

The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the Cuban problem must be solved in the near future...Further, they see no prospect of early success in overthrowing the present communist regime either as a result of internal uprising or external political, economic or psychological pressures. Accordingly, they believe that military intervention by the United States will be required to overthrow the present communist regime.

Lemnitzer’s memo to McNamara not only replicated the past—a CIA document, ‘Program of Covert Action Aimed at Weakening the Castro Regime’ written on May 19, 1961 openly stated ‘There would be no intervention of U.S. armed forces except in response to aggressive

48 Bamford, 87; Department of State, Secret memorandum, written by U. Alexis Johnson and dated March 16; attached to ‘Guidelines for Operation MONGOOSE’ (March 14, 1962).

military action by Cuba directed at the United States— but it clearly anticipated the future as well.

In May 1963, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul H. Nitze sent a plan to the White House proposing ‘a possible scenario whereby an attack on the United States’ reconnaissance aircraft could be exploited toward the end of effecting the removal of the Castro regime.’ In the event Cuba attacked a U-2, the plan proposed sending in additional American pilots, this time on dangerous, unnecessary low-level reconnaissance missions with the expectation that they would be shot down, thus provoking a war. ‘[T]he U.S. could undertake various measures designed to stimulate the Cubans to provoke a new incident,’ said the plan. Nitze, however, did not volunteer to be one of the pilots.

And it is quite telling that at the beginning of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was the de facto Assistant President himself, Robert Kennedy (RFK), who vetted the option of running an improvised false-flag operation against Havana.

[A]t a high-level White House meeting on the crisis [October 16, 1962], Bobby hinted at the possibility of a provoked or staged attack to justify removing the missiles from Cuba: ‘One other thing is whether…whether there is some other way we can get involved in this through, uh, Guantanamo Bay, or something, er, or whether

50 Bohning, 72.
there’s some ship that, you know, sink the *Maine* again or something.\textsuperscript{52}

OPERATION NORTHWOODS, therefore, is highly revealing of the *systemic* nature of false-flag operations, an entrenched part of the spectacular power of Psy-Ops. Although somewhat dismissive of Lemnitzer, Bamford makes this clear in his authoritative discussion of the documents.

Lemnitzer was a dangerous—perhaps even unbalanced—right-wing extremist in an extraordinarily sensitive position during a critical period. But OPERATION NORTHWOODS also had the support of every single member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and even senior Pentagon official Paul Nitze argued in favor of provoking a phony war with Cuba. The fact that the most senior members of all the services and the Pentagon could be so out of touch with reality and the meaning of democracy would be hidden for four decades.\textsuperscript{53}

A fully sophisticated understanding and appreciation of strategy-of-tension and false-flag provides the ‘missing link’ of JFK assassination conspiracy theory. If it can be shown that the strategy-of-tension had in fact evolved as a systemic property of the U.S. Dual State by c. 1960, then I can argue much more easily for the inherent ‘non-implausibility’ of JFK/DALLAS as false-flag/spectacle. This approach has the added advantage of fully accounting for one of the central facets of conspiracy scholarship: if there was a conspiracy, then, on a purely

\textsuperscript{52} Bohning, 124. The phrase ‘sink the *Maine* again’ is interesting. According to then Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles, during the May-June 1961 crisis in the Dominican Republic Robert Kennedy espoused the explosive demolition of the U.S. Consulate as a pretext for a military intervention. Talbot, 81-2.

\textsuperscript{53} Bamford, 90.
planning and operational level, it would seem to have taken place on a medium-to-low level within the clandestine hierarchy, and that this covert agency was exercised on only the local level in several venues (Miami, New Orleans, Mexico City, Dallas) that formed important ‘nodes’ within the over-lapping parapolitical networks. Within the era of spectacular power one does not need to be very senior, or even very sophisticated, to appreciate the potency of its integrative function. So, deploying the strategy-of-tension re. JFK/DALLAS in the manner of Occam’s Razor, I get the following.

‘The Wilderness of Mirrors’: The Usual Suspects

‘We had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean.’—Lyndon Johnson

‘Well, we took care of that son of a bitch, didn’t we?’—David Sanchez Morales

As parapolitics necessarily supposes a radically pluralistic model of the State, the legal identities and organizational loyalties of the ‘usual suspects’ that loom large in conspiracy literature are never unitary or exclusive; here, I am confronted with the sheer ‘giveness’ of the radical nomadicism of the clandestine actor as a quasi-criminal sovereign. However, I am able to impose a degree of cognitive certainty upon these suspects through the rigorous application of Debordean principles: if the false-flag repeats the logic of the integrated spectacle, then the ‘Cuba Project’ self-evidently presents itself as the unifying thread of interpretation. The parapolitical network of
linkages centered upon Havana provides the only epistemic apparatus that, in equal measure, both explains and is explained by the spectacle of public execution in Dealey Plaza.

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

A/ GENERAL LYMON L. LEMNITZER

Commenting upon JFK’s relationship with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time of his inauguration, Bamford writes that ‘John F. Kennedy’s election buttressed their worst fears.’ Apparently, Washington D.C. was on the brink of the state of exception in January 1961.

Just below the surface, it was a dangerous time in America. For many in the military, the distrust of civilian leadership ran deep, to the point where a number of senior officers believed that their civilian leaders had been subverted by international communism. It was a belief exacerbated by the election of Kennedy, a socially liberal democrat. ‘The presence of a benign and popular General of

54 Bamford, 65-66. Although I follow the bulk of the secondary literature in focussing upon the Central Intelligence Agency as the main covert body implicated in Dealey Plaza, the reader should be aware at all times of the possible role of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) in the events at Dallas. In many ways military intelligence services were the ‘shadows’ of the CIA which has often been used as a ‘cover’, or a ‘front’, for the machinations of much less well known organizations, such as the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). I strongly suspect, although I cannot prove, that many of the ubiquitous personalities of JFK/DALLAS, such as the notorious ‘Maurice Bishop’, may very well have been military intelligence officers. The possible but under-explored role of the CIA as a red herring might go far in explaining the maddening lack of clarity and exactitude concerning the Kennedy assassination, including the identities of the participants (provided, of course, that there actually were any). For Maurice Bishop see below, this chapter.
the Army in the White House [Dwight Eisenhower] had a calming influence on people and kept the Rightist’s audiences small,’ said one account at the time.\(^55\)

If we accept Lemnitzer, and the group of ultra-reactionary military officials that he represents as possible conspirators, then I can detect a possible motive for conspiracy in JFK’s attempt to establish direct back-channel communications\(^56\) with the USSR following the near catastrophe of the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 15-28, 1962).

Vladimir Semichastny, the Moscow head of the KGB, reported to Nikita Khrushchev on October 2, 1963, that Kennedy wanted to re-open the secret channel between them, using [Press Secretary Pierre] Salinger and a Washington-based KGB agent as the conduit…Khrushchev then ‘approved the use of the KGB as an intermediary to exchange proposal [with Kennedy] that could not go through regular diplomatic channels…The President was well aware of how few people in his administration he could trust with his peace-making messages to their Communist enemies. As he was forced to do repeatedly with his Cold War bureaucracy, he simply bypassed the State Department’s resistance to his dialogue with Khrushchev in the fall of 1963 by creating an alternative means of communication.\(^57\)

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\(^{56}\) A reliance upon back-channel diplomacy seems to have been one of the hallmarks of the JFK administration just as it was, perhaps not coincidentally, for Richard Nixon. Talbot presents evidence for Kennedy back-channel efforts with Che Guevara (58-61), Fidel Castro (115-18), the Soviet Union during the Berlin Wall Crisis of 1961 (70), the FBI (141) and with the ‘moderate’ anti-Castro Cuban exiles (194).

\(^{57}\) Douglas, 291.
There is a growing body of scholarship indicating that JFK directly anticipated the detentist strategy of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger—in effect, ‘Détente I’—by a full decade. And, as with Nixon, Kennedy was threatened with subversion from within for having done so.

Nevertheless, although the tactic was a familiar one for Kennedy, the means he sought out for his final effort to explore peace with Khrushchev is startling. For JFK to have to rely in the end not on his own State Department but on the Soviet secret police to convey secure messages of peace between himself and Khrushchev speaks volumes. Because of his own turn toward peace, the President had become almost totally isolated in his own government before he made his trip to Dallas.

The notion of Kennedy as the first Presidential defector from the Cold War seems to have established itself as the ‘grand narrative’ of conspiracy theory—JFK as the martyred hero of noble failure. I tend to refer to this theory as the ‘Garrison Thesis’, as it formed the basis of Jim Garrison’s own formal explanation for the political murder—an act which, like every other form of homicide, legally requires a motive (mens rea) in addition to the act (actus reus).

This decision [to withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam by the end of 1965], on top of the new [anti-intervention] Cuba policy, added up to nothing

58 See Chapter Four, below.

59 Ibid. JFK’s alienation from his own government by November 1963 does, in fact, seem to be one of the defining features of his administration, which had in effect become a “‘family affair’”; according to Peter Dale Scott, “Kennedy couldn’t work through the CIA, the Pentagon or even the State Department. There was so little institutional support in Washington for the Kennedys’ policies. The bureaucrats were very committed to the Cold War…” Cited in Talbot, 53.
less than a fundamental break with Cold War foreign policy, which had been the lifeblood of the CIA. Here, it seemed to me, was a plausible motive for the assassination. Though my thinking at this stage was not very well developed, at least I could see that the C.I.A.’s vested interest as well as its ideological commitment were to the continuation of the Cold War…Along the way [President Kennedy] had made implacable enemies—from top-level C.I.A. cold warriors like Allen Dulles…and Richard Helms (then deputy director in charge of covert operations) down to anti-Castro Cuban exiles who felt betrayed at the Bay of Pigs.

As is well known, the Garrison Thesis provided the para-political narrative spine of Oliver Stone’s film spectacle *JFK*; it also, for all intrinsic purposes, forms the argumentative core of James W. Douglass’ magisterial *JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why He Mattered*. The main problem with JFK/DALLAS as a pre-emption of Détente I as engineered by the JCS and its subordinates within the military intelligence complex is that, once again, it fails to adequately account for the spectacular power invoked: if terminating the back-channel itself was the motive, then the murder would have been better handled far more covertly as an ‘inside job’ performed in secret. But, if I apply *a priori* reasoning and work axiomatically from Dealey Plaza as Debordean spectacle, then it becomes obvious that the parapolitical objectives of JFK/DALLAS could not have been merely negative in

60 This is incorrect; Helms was Deputy Director for Plans (DDP) from 1965-66.
61 Garrison, 178.
62 For discussion, see Chapter Five, below.
63 Douglass, generally.
its nature—that is, the derailment of Détente I—but must necessarily have been positive, which required the presence of the theatre of the false-flag. And this could only have been the psycho-political inducement for the military invasion of Cuba. Even if I hypothesize that the implication of Castro in the death of JFK was the means selected by Lemnitzer et al to create the strategy-of-tension necessary to undermine U.S.-Soviet rapprochement, I am still left with the task of having to explain the not inconsiderable residue of the centrality of Cuba to the successful staging of the clandestine spectacle.

**B/ General Edward G. Lansdale**

Air Force General (and former advertising executive) Lansdale was director of OPERATION MONGOOSE (November 1961-January 1963) the formal Operations Branch of the Cuba Project (1959-62), initiated by the Eisenhower administration and officially discontinued by JFK following the Cuban Missile Crisis of October, 1962. Although Lansdale’s real-world record of self-promotion and border-line incompetence largely fails to substantiate his far more spectacular one as an omniscient dealer of covert death, Lansdale constitutes a ‘usual suspect’ through his connection to MONGOOSE, a vast umbrella organization that provided clandestine

64 See Russo, 3-84, generally.

65 See discussion of Oliver Stone’s JFK in Chapter Five. In the estimation of CIA officer Sam Halpern, Lansdale was a “‘con man, absolutely perfect. He’s the man in the grey flannel suit from Madison Avenue in New York. I think he could sell refrigerators to Eskimos or…the Brooklyn Bridge to people who don’t have cars. I betcha he could sell that, too. He was very good. You got to give him credit for that.” Bohning, 85.
On November 4, 1961, following the Bay of Pigs, a special meeting between RFK and CIA Deputy Director of Plans Richard M. Bissell took place; consistent with JFK’s (now strengthened) aversion to military intervention, both ‘agreed that large-scale sabotage actions would be carried out by both CIA-controlled assets and independent Cuban groups as quickly as possible.’66 This meeting signals the Kennedy administration’s choice of covert para-military and insurgency operations as the prescribed norm of the Cuba Project; in the words of RFK, ‘My idea is to stir things up on [the] island with espionage, sabotage, general disorder, run & operated by Cubans themselves with every group but Batistaites & Communists.’67 The ‘beauty of such an operation over the next few months’ wrote White House aide Richard Godwin in a memo to JFK, ‘is that we cannot lose. If the best happens, we will unseat Castro. If not, then at least we will emerge with a stronger underground, better propaganda and a far clearer idea of the dimensions of the problems which affect us.’68 In December, 1961 Allen Dulles was removed as Director of the CIA for his role in the Bay of Pigs and was replaced by John McCone, who appointed Richard Helms as the new head of Cuban affairs. Helms then replaced the disgraced Richard Bissell as Deputy Director for Plans several weeks later; ‘Helms split Cuban affairs off from the rest of the Western Hemisphere branch, and in February [1962] William Harvey…took over Task Force W, the new CIA office charged with Cuba.’69 It was during this pivotal transi-

66 Kaiser, The Road to Dallas, 100.
67 Freedman, 153.
68 Blight and Kornbluh, 244.
69 Kaiser, The Road to Dallas, 100. Apparently, Task Force W was named
tion towards new personnel committed to covert as opposed to military action that RFK formally established OPERATION MONGOOSE. A generic term for a loose network of anti-Castro proxies and para-military forces, MONGOOSE was nominally under the direction of General Lansdale, but the real decision-making power lay with the Special Augmented Group (SGA) whom Lansdale reported to, which was supervised by RFK and included the Heads of all of the branches of the Armed Forces, most importantly the new Chief of the JCS, General Maxwell Taylor, the author of ‘flexible response’.70

As would be expected, ‘Operation MONGOOSE focused on utilizing a Cuban and Cuban-exile political base opposed to Castro, infiltrating the island, and instigating sabotage in order to spark the overthrow of the regime by internal revolt.’71 On August 7, 1962, CIA liaison Harvey drafted the official ‘Covert Activities’ Mission for the operation: “Exert all possible diplomatic, economic, psychological, and other pressures to overthrow the Castro-Communist regime without overt U.S. military commitment.”72 Although MONGOOSE clearly anticipated eventual U.S. military intervention, the prevailing assumption throughout was that such an invasion would only take place in response to a wholly ‘indigenous’ uprising against Castro—this under the blanket of plausible deniability.73 MONGOOSE provides the needed context to JFK’s rebuff to Lemnitzer over NORTHWOODS on March 16, 1962; however, it also

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70 Ibid, Chapter Five, 97-122.
71 Davis, 135.
72 Blight and Kornbluh, 251.
73 Bohning, 84 and 88.

in honour of William Walker, the 19th century American filibuster who set up a mercenary state in Nicaragua from 1856-7. Talbot, 103.
renders painfully obvious the operation’s ‘fatal flaw’: under RFK’s tenure, the Cuba Project, while officially favoring the clandestine, was in fact always implicitly slanted towards military force, replicating perfectly the underlying parapolitical dynamics that undermined the earlier ZAPATA Plan. At all times, primary operational control lay with the Defense Department; MONGOOSE was ‘masterminded by the Pentagon. The Joint Chiefs were motivated by the desire to prevent Castro from spreading Communism elsewhere in Latin America. For them, time was of the essence.’

The alarming element at work here was the Pentagon’s concern with the buildup of Russian nuclear forces; military planners for the JCS had openly stated that the optimal time for any hypothetical pre-emptive nuclear attack against the Soviet Union would be by the end of 1963. Accordingly, the March 14, 1962 guidelines for MONGOOSE drafted by General Maxwell Taylor and approved by the SGA, clearly stated that although the U.S. will make “‘maximum use of indigenous resources…final success will require decisive U.S. military intervention…’”; therefore, domestic anti-Castro forces were to “‘prepare and justify this intervention, and thereafter to facilitate and support it,’” prompting Sam Hurwitch, the State Department liaison to MONGOOSE, to argue that “‘the concentration of attention upon the employment of U.S. military force against Cuba runs counter to the basic concept of Mongoose, which is to bring down the Castro regime from within.’”

The parapolitical dilemma of ZAPATA had not been resolved by MONGOOSE precisely because of the fractured nature of the Dual State—and, as before,

74 Davis, 134.
75 Douglass, 234-42.
76 Blight and Kornbluh, 170.
77 Bohning, 115.
the centerpiece of Civil War II was Cuba.

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Long the favorite of conspiracy scholars who prefer a domestic origin of JFK/DALLAS—what I call the ‘enemy-from-within’ school—this group of suspects is the most difficult to discuss with certainty because of the intensely compartmentalized nature of the Agency coupled with the standardized operational procedure of refusing to leave paper trails for covert operations. Although I will discuss many of these suspects later in this essay, I have tentatively grouped them together along the following lines.

A. SENIOR LEVEL OFFICERS

Allen Dulles (Director of Central Intelligence, 1953-61); Lt. General Charles Cabell (Deputy Director of CIA during the Bay of Pigs and brother of Earle Cabell, Mayor of Dallas from May 1961 to February 1964); Richard M. Bissell (Deputy Director for Plans/DDP 1958-62; head of the Cuba Project, 1961-62 and initiator of CIA/Mafia assassination operations); Richard Helms (DDP chief of operations 1952-65, creator of ZR/RIFLE); and James Jesus Angleton (Associate Deputy Director of Operations for Counterintelligence, 1954-75).

Dulles, Cabell and Bissell—Dulles’ most likely suc-

78 Three of the most salient points concerning plausible denial, the bane of assassination researchers and theorists, were laid out by William Harvey himself: ‘no projects on paper’, ‘strictly person-to-person, singleton ops’, and ‘never mention word assassination’. Pease, ‘James Angleton’, 162.

79 Albarelli, 151.
cessor—where all scapegoated and then sacrificed by JFK following the failure of ZAPATA.

B. MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICERS

William Harvey (head of special operations CIA international assassination team ZR/RIFLE and supervisor of Task Force W, the CIA operations component of MONGOOSE, which included joint assassination efforts with Chicago Mafiosi Johnny Roselli80); Theodore Shackley (operational head of JM/WAVE, the Miami based CIA station for MONGOOSE); David Atlee Phillips, a.k.a. ‘Maurice Bishop’81 (CIA chief of Covert Action in Mexico City from 1961 through the Fall of 1963); and Tracy Barnes (Assistant Director of Plans to Richard Bissell for ZAPATA; Head of Domestic Operations Branch under Angleton from 1962-63).

80 See below, this chapter. Simpich has made the most powerful argument that I have ever read for Harvey as a leading suspect as a conspiracy planner. Although Harvey was taken off MONGOOSE and appointed head of the CIA station in Rome by Robert Kennedy in June 1963, there is clear evidence that Harvey continued to participate in anti-Castro counter-intelligence operations. Furthermore, as Simpich has shown, Harvey also served as head of the CIA’s Staff D which ran a series of major wire-tapping operations in Mexico City and, apparently, liaised with the National Security Agency (NSA). The two most important of these wire-tapping operations were LIENVOY, which targeted the Cuban and Russian Consulates and Embassies in Mexico City, and LIFEAT, which focused on the residences and private telephones of Cuban and Russian Foreign Service staff. Simpich, Chapters Two and Four. For the possible significance of these wire-tapping operations for JFK/DALLAS, see below, this chapter. Even after his ‘exile’ to Rome, every four to six weeks Harvey travelled to Miami to visit his friend and accomplice Johnny Roselli; Roselli would reciprocate by visiting Harvey every time the latter was in Washington. Morley, 163-4.

81 On Phillips’ possible identity as Bishop see below, this chapter.
C. Low Level Officers

E. Howard Hunt (‘Chief of Covert Operations’ for the Domestic Operations Branch under Barnes); James McCord: operational liaisons with anti-Castro field agents. (Note: both Hunt and McCord share the code-name ‘Eduardo’); David Sanchez Morales (field chief of JM/WAVE ‘secret war’ operations including all Cuba penetration teams; provided operational support to Task Force W assassination operations through both Harvey and Roselli). 82

Cosa Nostra (a.k.a. ‘The Wise Guys’)

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Johnny Roselli (Los Angeles, Las Vegas; liaison with William Harvey, Task Force W83), Santo Trafficante (Tampa; Miami; Havana), Robert Maheu (Las Vegas; connection with Howard Hughes), Carlos Marcello (New Orleans; Dallas); John D. Martino (personal courier between Trafficante and Marcello84); Sam Giancana (Chicago); Jimmy Hoffa (the Teamsters); and last, but certainly not least, the assassin-of-the-assassin Jack Ruby (Trafficante courier to Cuba and Mafia liaison with Operation Mongoose operations in Louisiana/Lake Pontchartrain85).

Although I consider the ‘Made Men’ of the American

82 Fonzi, 366-90; Hancock, 513-14.
83 For an exhaustive account of Roselli’s quite extraordinary history of collaboration with national security agencies, see Rappleye and Becker generally.
84 Kurtz, 209-11.
85 Hancock, Chapter 11, 185-98.
Mafia as lacking the requisite degree of gravitas to successfully plot and to perform the assassination of the Chief Executive, the Goodfellas merit inclusion in my line up not only because of the ferociously ‘Cuba-centric’ nature of their motives, but also for the sheer constancy of their nomadic migrations through the covert spaces of central and military intelligence. The deep meaning of these peregrinations were certainly not lost on Fabio Escalante, the director of the official Cuban investigation of JFK/DALLAS.

The more details revealed…concerning the conspiracy of Giancana and many others, the clearer it became that there were no lines of demarcation between the Mafiosi organization and the CIA. There were no white hats or black hats; everything was a farce ‘for the use of fools,’ as Giancana would say. On many occasions the organization and the Mafia were one and the same thing. That was the case with Frank Fiorni, Giancana’s lieutenant, who was simultaneously working for the government’s espionage agency and was later implicated in the Watergate scandal under the alias of Frank Sturgis. 86

Mafia involvement with the Cuba Project officially commenced in August 1960 when DDP Bissell began to

[EXPLORE] the possibility of mounting a sensitive operation [i.e., assassination] against Fidel Castro. It was thought that certain gambling interests which had formerly been active in Cuba might be willing to assist and might have intelligence assets in Cuba and communications between Miami, Florida and Cuba. Mr. [Robert] Maheu

86 Escalante, JFK, 188. Sturgis was an informant for the CIA. Hancock, 77. For more on Fiorni/Sturgis, see this chapter and Chapter Three.
was approached and asked to establish contact with a member or members of the gambling syndicate…Mr. Roselli showed interest…indicated he had some contacts in Miami that he might use…met with a courier going back and forth to Cuba…never became part of the project current at the time for the invasion of Cuba…no memoranda…no written documents…orally approved by said Senior Officials of the Agency.87

Cosa Nostra is of interest for two additional reasons. Firstly, in the event that there actually were additional shooters, either single or in teams, along with Oswald in Dealey Plaza, then it seems almost certain that the snipers were Cuban.88 Escalante himself strongly insinuated version of the ‘patsy’ Oswald: Thomas Arthur Vallee, a former Marine, ‘disaffiliated’ member of the John Birch Society and alleged paranoid schizophrenic, who worked in a warehouse that the presidential motorcade was to pass by on the way to the sports stadium—which, as in Dallas, would have required Kennedy’s limousine to make a slow, hairpin turn. Vallee was arrested on the basis of a tip that he ‘had threatened to kill Kennedy in Chicago.’ The President’s trip to Chicago was cancelled at the last minute. Two of the snipers, whose names have never been declassified, were arrested but refused to talk during interrogation and were subsequently released; the other two have never been identified. Douglass, 200-7 and 213-17. In their book Ultimate Sacrifice, Lamar Waldron and Thom Hartmann discuss another possible attempt on JFK, this one planned for November 19 in Tampa and, once again, involving a right-wing FFPC anti-social patsy, this time ‘Gilberto Lopez’. Waldron and Hartman, 652-65 and 684-96; they also provide a series of comparisons (and a few contrasts) between Lopez and Oswald at 478-82. However, as Hancock has pointed out, all of the CIA reports on Lopez are second and third hand, apparently originating with David Morales’ death squad unit within JM/WAVE. I find his conclusion


88 Dallas may, in fact, have been the third site on the list for the staging of the homicidal/patricidal spectacle. On November 22nd in Chicago Secret Service agents intercepted a four man sniper team (including two Cubans) who were, apparently, planning to assassinate JFK while he was watching the annual Army-Air Force football game held in Soldier Field. Most striking of all was the shadowy presence of a Chicago-based version of the ‘patsy’ Oswald: Thomas Arthur Vallee, a former Marine, ‘disaffiliated’ member of the John Birch Society and alleged paranoid schizophrenic, who worked in a warehouse that the presidential motorcade was to pass by on the way to the sports stadium—which, as in Dallas, would have required Kennedy’s limousine to make a slow, hairpin turn. Vallee was arrested on the basis of a tip that he ‘had threatened to kill Kennedy in Chicago.’ The President’s trip to Chicago was cancelled at the last minute. Two of the snipers, whose names have never been de-classified, were arrested but refused to talk during interrogation and were subsequently released; the other two have never been identified. Douglass, 200-7 and 213-17. In their book Ultimate Sacrifice, Lamar Waldron and Thom Hartmann discuss another possible attempt on JFK, this one planned for November 19 in Tampa and, once again, involving a right-wing FFPC anti-social patsy, this time ‘Gilberto Lopez’. Waldron and Hartman, 652-65 and 684-96; they also provide a series of comparisons (and a few contrasts) between Lopez and Oswald at 478-82. However, as Hancock has pointed out, all of the CIA reports on Lopez are second and third hand, apparently originating with David Morales’ death squad unit within JM/WAVE. I find his conclusion
ates that the two actual JFK shooters were the violently anti-Castro Eladio del Valle Gutierrez and Sandalio Herminio Diaz Garcia,⁸⁹ both of whom doubled as members of Santo Trafficante’s ‘Havana crew’, the Wise Guy most intimately connected to the Cuban underworld: del Valle Gutierrez was involved with Trafficante’s heroin smuggling network⁹⁰ and Diaz Garcia served as Trafficante’s bodyguard in Havana.⁹¹ Also, both seem to have been connected with Operation 40, the homicidal Cuban counter-intelligence unit established in Miami.⁹² Secondly, there is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest that Trafficante was actually protecting Castro by providing

persuasive: ‘All in all, the saga of Gilberto Lopez more probably reveals the creation of another Cuban associated suspect than a lead in a Cuban conspiracy.’ Hancock, 14-15.

⁸⁹ Escalante, JFK, 162-5 and 165-6. Del Valle was murdered in February 1967, shot through the heart and partially dismembered by a machete; at the time, New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison was seeking to question him as part of his investigation into the Kennedy assassination. Hinckle and Turner, 321.

⁹⁰ Dietche, 162.

⁹¹ Ibid, 168. If del Valle Gutierrez and Diaz Garcia really were the extra shooters at Dealey Plaza, then this may provide the simplest possible explanation of all of one of the most frequently discussed aspects of JFK/DALLAS: that both Trafficante and/or Marcello seemed to have possessed some degree of prior knowledge of the assassination; Trafficante allegedly declared in the fall of 1962—the same time as the missile crisis—that JFK was going to be ‘hit’. Talbot, 122 and Hancock, 59.

⁹² Ibid. Albarelli repeats the theory of two Cuban snipers at Dallas, but identifies one of them as Nestor Izquierdo, a former Brigade 2056 member and a veteran of the Bay of Pigs. Albarelli, 230. Operation 40 originated as an ultra-covert branch of the ZAPATA Plan, intended to operate as a death squad within the ‘liberated’ Cuba, eliminating all political rivals to Manel Artime, the administration’s preferred leader of post-Castro Cuba. Hancock, 6 and 522 fn. 14. Although officially disbanded after the Bay of Pigs, it continued to operate domestically in clandestine form throughout the Kennedy presidency, continuing its activities as an extremist counter-intelligence unit—with extensive ties to organized crime—up to the 1970s. Ibid, 21.
him with information on the assassination plots, all of which ended in farcical failure; if this is correct, then Trafficante would appear to have been acting to secure a prior standing agreement with the Castro regime concerning his continuing control over the Havana terminus of the ‘French Connection’ heroin pipeline.\textsuperscript{93} The transversal flows of pipelines, it would appear, induces a parallel iterability of identities.

\section*{Anti-Castro Cubans}

Organizationally, this body of suspects may be somewhat artificially divided into two groups: (i) the political: The Revolutionary Junta in Exile (JURE), The Cuban Student Revolutionary Directorate (DRE\textsuperscript{94}), The Movement For the Recovery of the Revolution (MRR), The Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC), The Sierra Junta (JGCE), UNIDAD (a coalition of 27 independent anti-Castro groups) and; (ii) the para-military: Operation 40, The November 30 Movement, Commandos L, and Alpha/66.

In my opinion, Alpha/66 is of particular importance, not least because ‘its operational bases were located in the New Orleans-Dallas corridor’, the parapolitical

\textsuperscript{93} Kurtz, 205-6 and 216; Scott, \textit{Deep Politics and the Death of JFK}, 171-81. ‘Santo Trafficante was indeed the mole in the [exile] assassination plots, reporting back to Fidel Castro. This was confirmed by other participants such as Sam Giancana…and Johnny Roselli. Referring to Trafficante, Giancana allegedly said, “Frankly, he’s a rat.”’ Russo, 446.

\textsuperscript{94} The DRE, code-named AMSPELL by the CIA, was under the direct supervision of David Atlee Phillips and was responsible for radicalizing Cuban opposition against Castro, possibly as a means of generating popular support for a future intervention in Cuba. Morley, 128-9 and 170-7.
space(s) inhabited by Lee Harvey Oswald.\textsuperscript{95} It was one of the most militant of the anti-Castro groups, and its members appeared to have anticipated, for whatever reason, a second amphibious invasion of Cuba sometime in early 1964 following JFK’s re-election.\textsuperscript{96} It also openly provoked JFK through staging its own autonomous operations against Cuba.

Alpha/66 was the Cuban exile group which especially seemed to taunt President Kennedy. Not content to limit its assaults to attacks against Cuba and Castro’s forces, it also went after foreign ships supplying Castro and conducted assassination raids on Russian troops to Cuba. Long before the missile crisis, when Kennedy’s policy was to maintain separate U.S. policies toward Russia and Cuba, Alpha/66 seemed bent on provoking a direct conflict between Russia and the United States…At the height of the missile crisis, during the delicate negotiations to keep World War III from erupting, Alpha/66 continued its raids into Cuba and assaults on Castro’s patrol boats…After the crisis, when Kennedy had issued his directive to halt the raids and shut down the exile training camps, Alpha/66 defied the ban by continuing to operate secretly, even attacking British merchant ships in Cuban waters. A lead editorial in the \textit{[New York] Times} warned: ‘No matter how much we may admire the anti-Castroism that motivates its actions, this group is nevertheless dangerously playing with the laws and the security of the United States.’\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{95} Escalante, JFK, 31.
\textsuperscript{96} Kurtz, 179.
\textsuperscript{97} Fonzi, 121 and 122. Alpha/66 may very well have been a front for the more extreme CIA elements staffing and operating JM/WAVE; ‘In the face of the often expressed Kennedy administration annoyance with the exile raiders and the officially announced crackdowns on their
Worse, Alpha/66 seems to have been implicated in some way with one of the most compelling incidents presaging JFK/DALLAS: ‘Leon’ Oswald’s notorious meeting with Silvia Odio, an activist for the social democratic JURE, in Dallas on September 26 or 27 1963 is alleged to have taken place in the presence of two members—‘Leopoldo’ and ‘Angelo/Angel’—of the Dallas chapter of Alpha/66. And also of potential significance are Alpha/66 activities…documents reveal that the Alpha/66 and Commandos L raids on Russian targets in Cuba…were known to JM/WAVE in advance and that no efforts were made to block them. A long time CIA asset, Alberto Fernandez, routinely reported on the movements and plans of independent raider groups including Alpha/66 and Commandos L.’ Hancock, 103. It is worth noting that along with Alpha/66 the DRE also undertook a number of highly aggressive raids against Cuba in direct violation of Kennedy’s wishes; the most spectacular of these attacks was the shelling of the Icar Hotel in Havana on August 24 1962. David Phillips had operational oversight of the DRE. Morley, 130-2.

Fonzi, 108-16; Kurtz, 167-8 and 190-1; Escalante, JFK, 83; Douglass, 158. Several days after the unexpected visit, Odio received a telephone call from one of the ‘Mexican looking men’ who told her that ‘Leon’ was an ex-Marine, ‘an expert marksman and he would be a tremendous asset to anyone, except you never know how to take him. He could do anything, like getting underground in Cuba, like killing Castro. He says we Cubans don’t have any guts, we should have shot Kennedy after the Bay of Pigs. He says we should do something like that.” Hancock, 21. Soon after the visit, Odio wrote a letter to her father describing the uncanny encounter and telephone conversation—a letter that preceded Dealey Plaza by almost two months. Ibid, 22. Both of Odio’s parents were familiar with Antonio Vecania, the founder and head of Alpha/66. Fonzi, 117-18. See below, this chapter. For Fonzi, ‘If the incident did occur as Odio contended, understanding it was key to grasping the truth about Lee Harvey Oswald and the John F. Kennedy assassination. No theory of the assassination would stand without somehow accounting for it…That was the very point that the Warren Commission itself quickly recognized…On August 23rd, 1964, with the first drafts of the Warren Commission Report being written, Chief Counsel J. Lee Rankin wrote to J. Edgar Hoover: “It is a matter of some importance to the Commission that Mrs. Odio’s allegations either be proved or disproved.”’ Fonzi, 114. An obvious problem with Odio’s account is that, on the basis of the ‘official story’ formulated by the Warren Commission, Oswald was in Mexico City at this time. However, this problem disappears if we assume either that: (i) ‘Leon’ Oswald was actually an impersonator meant to
pha/66’s extensive affiliation, along with the other extremist para-militaries, with a ‘nomadic’ community of anti-Castro Americans: mercenaries, gun runners, narcotics traffickers and contract CIA agents which included William-‘Rip’-Robertson, Loran Eugene Hall (Lorenzo Pascillo), Roy Hargraves, Lawrence Howard, William Seymour, and Gerald Patrick Hemming, founder of the Intercontinental Penetration Force/IPF, a highly autonomous outfit of mercenary freebooters.99 The wider community of Cuban anti-Castro activists in which Alpha/66 was embedded was similarly vast and, cause Odio to misidentify the ‘real’ Oswald as the future assassin of the President, or (ii) that there were actually two separate persons called ‘Oswald’ being stage-managed by U.S. counter-intelligence, allowing ‘Lee/Leon’ to parapolitically inhabit two different spaces at the same time. See below, this chapter. Similarly, for Kaiser, Odio’s visitation ‘confirms that President Kennedy was assassinated by a conspiracy for which Lee Harvey Oswald was simply the trigger man. As it turns out, the visit links Oswald and his crime to an enormous network of mobsters, anti-Castro Cubans, and right-wing political activists.’ Kaiser, The Road to Dallas, 2; see ibid, Chapter Twelve, generally. In the end, Odio’s testimony was discounted by the FBI on psychiatric grounds; her psychiatrist Dr. Burton Einspruch advised James Hosty, the FBI agent investigating the case and a frequent ‘contact’ with Oswald in late 1963, that Odio suffered from “‘grand hysteria, a condition [that] he found to be prevalent among Latin American women from the upper class.’” Shenon, 214-15. If Odio’s story is true, then ‘Leon’ may have been either Oswald himself (which would mean that he was being impersonated in Mexico City) or was the infamous ‘second’ Oswald, who has highly active in Dallas at this time. Peter Dale Scott strongly hints that the second Dallas Oswald was John Thomas Masen, a Dallas gun dealer and supporter of the far Right group The Minutemen. Not only was Masen stock-piling weapons to sell to anti-Castro Cubans, but he bore an uncannily strong physical resemblance to Oswald; even worse, he owned the only gun store in Dallas that carried ammunition for the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, the weapon allegedly used by Oswald to kill Kennedy. A final note—the FBI file on Masen was assigned to Agent Hosty. Scott, Deep Politics II, 110-16.

99 Hinckle and Turner, 176.84. Kaiser tentatively identifies Odio’s visitors Leopoldo and Angel as Loran Hall and Lawrence Howard. Kaiser, 2. Hall was suspected to have participated in Alpha/66 raids on Cuba. Kaiser, The Road to Dallas, 248.
not coincidentally, directly overlapped with Oswald’s own contacts within both the pro- and anti-Castro under­
ground.\textsuperscript{100} Although I will take up this issue later, it is worth noting for now that three of the most important members of the Cuban diaspora—Frank Fiorni/Frank Sturgis, Eugenio Martinez, Bernard Barker—were all members of the future Nixon ‘Plumbers’ and were ar­rested during the Watergate break-in of June 17, 1972.

Arguably, the single most important of these usual suspects is Antonio Veciana, who founded Alpha/66 in mid-1962, apparently under the aegis of the CIA.\textsuperscript{101}

Alpha/66 emerged early in 1962, with Veciana its founder and chief spokesman. It received more press coverage than other militant exile groups because it appeared better organized, better equipped and consistently more successful in its guerilla attacks and sabotage operations…With strong management, clever use of propaganda, or­ganizational and fund-raising skills, and expertise in weaponry and military operations, Alpha/66 soon rose to the forefront of Miami’s numerous anti-Castro exile groups.\textsuperscript{102}

Cuban intelligence was particularly interested in both Veciana and his organization as Escalante makes clear.

\textsuperscript{100} Almost too numerous to name, these include Sergio Arcacha Smith, Emilio Santana, Carlos Quiroga, Manuel Artme, Eddie Bayo, Orlando Bosch Avila, Eladio del valle Gutierrez, Sandalio Herminio Diaz Garcia, Manolito Rodriguez/Manuel Oscarberro, Ronaldo Masferrer, Antonio Cuesta, Carlos Prio Socarras, Manuel Ray, Paulino Sierra Martinez, Felipe Vidal Santiago, Antonio Varona, Hermonio Diaz Garcia. See Hancock, generally. Each had their own agenda, political and personal, and their radical proliferation evidences the highly nomadic and heterogeneous nature of the endlessly sub-dividing Dual State—at least on its clandestine frontier with the Cuba Project.

\textsuperscript{101} Fonzi, 117-71 and 391-6.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 121 and 132.
We discovered that in September 1963 Veciana was linked to two events closely related to the Kennedy assassination. The first was the establishment of an Alpha 66 office in Dallas, headed by Manuel Rodriguez Oscarberro, one of his men. Located on Hollandale Street, it would appear to be the same place in which “Oswald or a subject very similar to him” was seen a few days before the crime by the Dallas deputy sheriff according to his testimony before the Warren Commission.\(^{103}\) Vecenia also told Gaeton Fonzi [lead investigator for the House Select Committee on Assassinations] that a few days before the assassination he went to Dallas for a meeting with his CIA case officer [Maurice Bishop]. On arrival, he found the officer talking with a subject who was not introduced to him, whom he later recognized as “Oswald or somebody very like him,” by chance at the same time that the Cuban exile Silvia Odio claimed to have received a visit from Oswald with two counter-revolutionary activists in Dallas.\(^{104}\)

Although there is little doubt concerning the importance of Veciana within the Cuban exile movement, controversy over the identity of Alpha/66’s alleged CIA contact, Maurice Bishop, remains. Both Escalante and Fonzi became convinced that Bishop was, in fact, David Atlee Phillips, at that time the Agency’s chief of Covert Action

\(^{103}\) See ibid, 118 for Fonzi commenting on an article about Silvia Odio by Paul Hoch and George O’Toole that appeared in The Saturday Evening Post in 1976: ‘Alpha/66 had chapters all over the country...[and that] one of the chapters [Veciana] visited was in Dallas at “3126 Hollandale.” Digging in the mounds of the Warren Commission files, Hoch had found a report by a Dallas deputy sheriff saying that an informant told him that a person resembling Oswald was seen associating with Cubans at ‘3128 Harlendale’.

\(^{104}\) Escalante, JFK, 168. The alleged meeting between Veciana, Bishop and ‘Oswald’ is discussed by Fonzi, 141-2.
in Mexico City.\textsuperscript{105} I will discuss Phillips as Bishop in more detail later; of more immediate importance is that Bishop, like Alpha/66, were strongly committed to a full-scale U.S. military invasion of Cuba.

Veciana claimed that ‘Bishop’ constantly pressured him to engage in actions against Cuba. In March 1963, Alpha 66 actually conducted a series of raids against Soviet ships in Cuban ports. Veciana stated that ‘Bishop’ had planned and ordered these raids in a desperate attempt to foment a confrontation between the United States and the USSR over Cuba, a confrontation that would, ‘Bishop’ believed, involve an American military invasion of the island.\textsuperscript{106}

For the para-militaries, the Cuban Missile Crisis\textsuperscript{107} provided the last window of opportunity for a direct U.S. attack of Cuba; ‘The discovery of offensive missiles in Cuba provided precisely the pretext the United States would need to launch an invasion of Cuba. The opportunity was passed by.’\textsuperscript{108} Ironically, it was precisely because of MONGOOSE, and the not unreasonable apprehension of American invasion that it created, that the Russians decided to install nuclear weapons in Cuba as a deterrent force.\textsuperscript{109} Predictably, the JCS regarded the first and most attractive option being debated by the White House during the first phase of the crisis—airstrikes—as merely the initial phase of a full-scale operation that would necessarily culminate in the invasion

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\textsuperscript{105} Escalante, \textit{JFK}, 167. \\
\textsuperscript{106} Kurtz, 182. \\
\textsuperscript{107} Freedman, 161-245. \\
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 175. \\
\textsuperscript{109} Bohning, 112-13.
\end{flushright}
of Cuba.\textsuperscript{110}

The Joint Chiefs never deviated in their advocacy of a comprehensive military strike… [As late as Sunday, October 28] They still wanted an air strike followed soon after by an invasion. Kennedy was shocked. He commented that the ‘first advice’ he would give his successor was ‘to watch the generals’ and not to think that ‘just because they were military men their opinions on military matters were worth a damn.’\textsuperscript{111}

Perhaps the tenor of the relationship between the pseudo-Yankee President and his Cowboy Generals was best expressed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps General David M. Shoup in conversation with Air Force Chief of Staff General Curtis LeMay after their October 19 meeting with JFK.

Somebody’s got to keep them from doing the god-dam thing piecemeal. That’s our problem. Go in there and friggin’ around with the missiles. Go in there and friggin’ around with the lift. You’re screwed. You’re screwed, screwed, screwed. Some goddam thing, some way, that they either do the son of a bitch and do it right, and quit friggin’ around.\textsuperscript{112}

In yet another example of the ‘uncanny’ that envelopes JFK/DALLAS, the timing of the Missile Crisis coincided exactly with Phase IV of the original timetable of OPERATION MONGOOSE, which called for ‘Open revolt and overthrow of the Communist regime’ in the first half of October 1962, to be followed in the second half by

\textsuperscript{110} Freedman, 177 and 447.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, 180 and 219.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 186.
Phase V, the ‘Establishment of [a] new government.’

Consistent with the MONGOOSE timetable, in February 1962 JFK authorized the JCS to draw up OPLAN-314-61, a series of contingency plans, accompanied by real-time military exercises, to prepare an American invasion of Cuba ‘in the event that Castro or the counter-revolutionaries provided an acceptable pretext.’ (Ironically, it was OPLAN-314 that the JCS relied upon when pushing for a full-scale attack of Cuba during the Missile Crisis). On February 21, one day after the submission of OPLAN-314-61, the KGB formally advised Khrushchev that “military specialists of the USA had revised an operational plan against Cuba… [to] be supported by military air assets in Florida and Texas… which, according to this information, is supported by President Kennedy.”

However, instead of ‘resolving’ the Crisis through invasion, JFK negotiated a pledge from Khrushchev to withdraw the missiles in exchange for a binding promise from the U.S. not to invade Cuba.

The day after announcing the formal end of the crisis, on 20 November, [Kennedy] wrote to Khrushchev that ‘there need be no fear of any invasion of Cuba while matters take their present favorable course.’ Khrushchev chose to interpret the letter as saying that [Kennedy] had confirmed his commitment not to invade Cuba.

113 Bohning, 90. Lansdale showed himself utterly prescient when submitting the first timetable on February 20 1962: “a vital decision, still to be made, is on the use of open U.S. force to aid the Cuban people in winning their liberty. If conditions and assets permitting a revolt are achieved in Cuba, and if U.S. help is required to sustain this condition, will the U.S. respond promptly with military force to aid the Cuban revolt?” Ibid.

114 Fursenko and Naftali, 149.

115 Ibid, 150.

116 Freedman, 223.
Although it is true that following the October Crisis, both JFK and his ‘double’ RFK had definitively decided against both U.S. military intervention in Cuba as well as covert action against Castro (including assassination) that could be directly attributable to the U.S., neither of the brothers were willing to suspend clandestine strategies altogether. Commenting on his own promise to Khrushchev, JFK pointedly remarked that “an assurance covering invasion does not ban covert actions or economic blockade or tie our hands completely. We can’t give the impression that Castro is home free.”

What appears to have been put in place by the White House between November 1962 and November 1963 was an ultra-compartmentalized ‘two track’ approach to both Cuba and the Soviet Union. After effectively cancelling MONGOOSE in December 1962, JFK moved to create an entirely new anti-Castro covert operation, code-named AM/WORLD that was to be stationed offshore (primarily in Nicaragua and Costa Rica) and to be manned and operated exclusively by Cubans.

As 1963 progressed, the Kennedy administration was continuing its projects to either eliminate the Castro regime in Cuba (Track one) or to get the Russians off the island through some sort of agreement with Castro (Track two)...President Kennedy authorized thirteen new sabotage missions proposed by the Special Group on October 24 [1963] and gave final support for the AM/TRUNK project, a prospecting effort for

117 Bohning, 150.
118 According to Talbot this was, in fact, the primary objective of the operation; ‘the brother’s main concern was to contain the Cuban exile problem, and off-loading the militants to Central America had a certain political logic.’ Talbot, 194. Talbot is in no doubt that the Kennedys were following a two-track approach to Castro at this time, with back-channel negotiations the preferred strategy. Ibid, 181, 190-4 and 227-8.
Cuban military officers who might be willing to support a coup against Castro. Robert Kennedy was involved not only with these CIA focused projects but also with the new autonomous group efforts...This independent CIA team, separated from JM/WAVE and with its own designation—AM/WORLD and its own facility...was moving the Kennedy Administration sponsored exiles offshore to start a major new and fully deniable effort against Castro. This effort was scheduled to mount several major seaborne attacks into Cuba before the end of 1963, to organize a provisional government that could assume control after a coup against Castro and ultimately lead to a new regime.119

AM/WORLD was headed by Manuel Artime, the founder and head of the MRR and who enjoyed extensive connections with Texan millionaires; the MRR, along with many other many of these anti-Castro private groups, were receiving extensive funding from petroleum interests (H.L. Hunt) and ranchers (Robert Kleberg, proprietor of the King Ranch).

Artime was given far more autonomy than had been previously associated with U.S. backed efforts; in return his charter was to operate totally outside the continental U.S. and to engage in a wide variety of public activities which would

119 Hancock, 200. See Escalante, JFK, 208: sometime during January to February 1963, RFK met with Manuel Artime ‘to discuss training a force of exiled Cubans to invade Cuba. The plan would be directed at provoking an uprising in Cuba, coordinated with an exile landing at two points, Matanzas and Oriente (Near the Guantanamo naval enclave). The officers designated by the CIA for the plan were Howard Hunt and James McCord, both future Watergate “plumbers.”’ According to Waldron and Hartmann, the date of the uprising/invasion (unimaginatively code-named ‘C-Day’) had been set for 1 December. Waldron and Hartmann, 652.
make his U.S. sponsorship totally deniable. Newly released CIA documents show that the Ar-time effort was highly compartmentalized and isolated even from other ‘secret war’ operations within the CIA.  

On the other hand, JFK sought to de-link the Soviet Union from Cuba through the creation of the ‘suspect’ back-channel; within the broader context of Détente I, the U.S. would seek at least limited normalization with both of its Communist antagonists; according to special Presidential aide Arthur Schlesinger, ‘the real concern about Cuba in the last months of the Kennedy administration was the possibility of normalizing U.S.-Cuban relations.’ Of course, the ‘price’ paid by JFK for Détente I would have been the cancellation of the invasion of Cuba, which makes the evidence provided by Veciana in his 1977 interview by the House Select Committee on Assassination (HSCA) that much more meaningful.

According to Veciana, by the fall of 1962 his mentor [Phillips/Bishop] was taking Alpha/66 and its media exploits in a totally new direction. The goal of the [Cuba] raids (now focused largely on Russians and Russian installations) was very focused: The purpose was to politically embarrass Kennedy and to Force him to move against Castro. As Bishop remarked, they had to put Kennedy’s back to the wall, forcing him to act against Castro.

120 Hancock, 507.
121 Blight and Kornbluh, 112.
122 Hancock, 177. Emphasis in the original. Ex Comm meeting in the White House, 30 October 1962; in his notes, McNamara indicates that JFK “stated that insofar as we had any control over the actions of Alpha 66, we should try to keep them from doing something that might upset the deal with the Russians.” Bohning, 153.
And this may very well be what may ultimately have led to the false-flag of Dallas; ironically, the extreme compartmentalization of AM/WORLD may have misled the para-militaries to misjudge the level of JFK’s commitment to normalization.\textsuperscript{123} Although not capable of engineering the strategy-of-tension by itself, the Cubans were connected to both intelligence and military operatives to provide an enormous from-ground-up push for an integrated spectacle.\textsuperscript{124} In the words of Enrique Baloyra, a charter member of the DRE,

\begin{quote}
There is a certain psychology involved in all this business, a psychology shared by groups like Alpha 66…The basic assumption these people make is that you cannot trust the Yankees, so you have
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{123} Conversely, if AM/WORLD really was nothing more than an expedient means of containing the ‘problem’ of the Cuban exiles, then anti-Castro extremists would have interpreted the embryonic efforts at normalization as a third and final betrayal by the brothers Kennedy. In April 1964, Felipe Santiago Vidal, a Cuban exile working in close association with the IPF was captured while on a penetration mission in Cuba. Fabian Escalante claims that during the interrogation prior to his execution Vidal claimed that ‘he had been active in 1963 in informing Cuban exile groups [in Dallas] about Kennedy administration attempts to start a dialog with Cuba… [that] Kennedy was negotiating with Fidel Castro and shortly a deal would be cut to leave Castro in power, eject the Russians, and destroy the hopes of the exiles for a return to Cuba. John Kennedy was about to destroy “La Causa” forever.’ Hancock, 79 and 89. It has been confirmed that both Ted Shackley and David Morales at JM/WAVE were aware of the back-channel with Havana. Ibid, 121.

\textsuperscript{124} This has been indirectly confirmed by Sam Halpern, a senior aide to Richard Helms, in discussion with investigative journalist Jeff Morley. Halpern relates that in May 1963 Desmond Fitzgerald attended a meeting of the NSC on the Cuba Project; at that meeting, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, obliquely referring to AM/WORLD, remarked that “We can give an impression of busy-ness in Cuba and we can make life difficult for Castro.” As Halpern remarked to Morley, “I’ll tell you one thing…I didn’t know that word ‘busy-ness.’ It was never mentioned by [Fitzgerald] when he came back from that meeting, and it was a good thing he didn’t because you may have had a \textit{Seven Days in May} at that point.” Morley, 165-6.
to operate in the shadows and totally disconnect yourselves from any American agency. Their philosophy was: ‘We are not going to follow what you tell us to do. What is sensible for you is not necessarily sensible for us.’

LEE HARVEY OSWALD

‘[The] anti-Castro people put Oswald together. Oswald didn’t know who he was working for—he was just ignorant of who was really putting him together.’

—John D. Martino

Oswald is the quintessential para-political nomad: the (chaotic) bearer of multiple covert identities while moving across parallel clandestine spaces. It is virtually certain that Oswald was either a paid FBI informant/infiltrator and/or a CIA asset, the crucial element still in dispute is whether he was the ‘lone gunman’ of the Warren Commission or the ‘patsy’ that he very publicly proclaimed himself to be—an action that very much violated the stereotypical notion of the Presidential assassin as self-aggrandizing ego-maniac. As liberal historian Lawrence Freedman has argued,

125 Bohning, 154.
126 In espionage parlance, Oswald might best be described as a ‘dangle’; that is ‘an individual who is circulated among potential intelligence targets strictly to see who responds to or contacts him, and to determine their connections.’ Hancock, 91. In December 1962 the FBI initiated operation AM/SANTA in conjunction with the CIA in order to develop intelligence on Castro assets; the FBI was clearly ‘using credible civilians having the appearance and other attributes for the role of a pro-Castro revolutionary, to penetrate pro-Castro organizations…’ Ibid, 113. Emphasis in the original.
Whether Kennedy was killed by a lone assassin or as a result of the complex plots involving the mob and Cuban exiles that are explained by conspiracy theorists, one way or another he was probably the victim of the Cuban issue in American politics.\textsuperscript{127}

I will demonstrate that these are not mutually exclusive alternatives, as is evidenced by much recent work on JFK/DALLAS. David Kaiser situates Oswald within a ‘vast’ right-wing conspiratorial coalition of CIA officers and anti-Castro Cubans while fingerling him as the lone ‘trigger man’\textsuperscript{128}; conversely, Russo embeds Oswald within a blow back pro-Castro assassination plot, a paid assassin but ‘lone gunman’ of the Cuban secret services.\textsuperscript{129} My own purpose in this essay is to argue for a

\textsuperscript{127} Freedman, 243-44. This seems to have been Robert Kennedy’s own early understanding of Dealey Plaza. In December 1963, in yet another striking example of Kennedy back-channelling, RFK dispatched family confidant William Walton to Moscow to deliver a private message to the Soviet government: (i) that RFK did not consider the assassination to have been a Russian plot and; (ii) that the Kennedy family ‘believed that the former president had been the victim of a [domestic] right-wing conspiracy.’ In Walton’s own words, “‘Dallas was the ideal location for such a crime...Perhaps there was only one assassin, but he did not act alone.’” Fursenko and Naftali, 344-6.

\textsuperscript{128} Kaiser, \textit{The Road to Dallas}, 2.

\textsuperscript{129} Russo, generally. It is important to note that Russo fails to adequately consider an alternative reading that is clearly suggested by his own narrative: that the apparently pro-Castro ‘recruiters’ of Oswald were in fact anti-Castro double agents seeking to implicate Castro in JFK/DALLAS so as to precipitate a U.S. military invasion. To complicate matters even further, Oswald-as-spectacle raises the possibility of ‘Leon’ as a ‘double patsy’. This scenario was laid out with remarkable precision by two of the staff attorneys of the Warren Commission, W. David Slausen and William Coleman. ‘The evidence here could lead to anti-Castro involvement in the assassination on some sort of basis as this: Oswald could have become known to the Cubans as being strongly pro-Castro [with the possibility, of course, of Oswald as dangle]. He made no secret of his sympathies, so the anti-Castro Cubans must have realized that law enforcement authorities were also aware of Oswald’s feelings and that, therefore, if he got into trouble, the public
minimalist theory of the assassination that is wholly explicable within the Debordean terms of the false-flag spectacle. It is, therefore, possible to show that very little would have been required for the integrated spectacle of Dealey Plaza to have been successfully staged, including the possibility of Oswald as the sole shooter.\textsuperscript{130} Vitally, this goes to the persistent problem of speculation concerning the exact size of the conspiracy and the number of the conspirators; if both JFK and RFK were as badly alienated from their own government as some of the evidence shows,\textsuperscript{131} then a very small number of middle or }

\begin{quote}
would also learn of them...\textit{It is possible that some sort of deception was used to encourage Oswald to kill the President}...The motive of this would, of course, be the expectation that after the President was killed, Oswald would be caught or at least his identity ascertained, the law enforcement authorities and the public would blame the assassination on the Castro government and a call for its forceful overthrow would be irresistible.'Hinckle and Turner, 269. Emphasis added. Hancock largely adopts this view, generally following the near-death 'confessions' of Cuban gambling syndicate associate John Martino; 'Oswald was approached and manipulated by anti-Castro exiles who represented themselves as pro-Castro operatives. At the time he was contacted, Oswald was being "run" in a counter-intelligence operation by a U.S. government agency, without doubt the FBI, but possibly a part of a joint agency operation [AM/SANTA].' Hancock, 16. The obvious problem with Martino as a source is that he first gained notoriety in 'conspiracy circles' in 1963 by claiming that Oswald had been recruited by Castro, a line of disinformation fully consistent with that taken by his very senior associate Johnny Roselli. Ibid, 12-13. For a recent attempt to recycle the Castro-Did-It theory, see Latell, in general. The author's career included a stint as a CIA desk analyst, a National Intelligence Agency Officer for Latin America in the early 1960s, and, from 1994-98, Director of the Centre for the Study of Intelligence. Much of the author's information concerning Oswald as a Cuban agent comes from the testimony of Florentino Aspilliga, a defector from the DGI. Latell, vi and xiii.
\end{quote}

130 I should also point out that this scenario is also fully compatible with the 'accidental discharge' theory that has undergone a recent revival: that JFK's fatal head wound was the result of the accidental firing of a semi-automatic weapon by a Secret Serviceman—possibly Kennedy favorite Clint Hill—reacting in panic to the 'ambush' of Dealey Plaza.

131 See Talbot, generally.
even low-level operatives could have staged Dealey Plaza—what was essential is that no one within the diverse and over-lapping clandestine entities acted to serve as a braking mechanism upon the ‘project’. Far more important than the exact mechanics of the assassination, then, is the political logic of the killing as public theatre coupled with the absolutely minimal operational requirements for its physical execution, rendering the notion of a ‘conspiracy’ to kill JFK genuinely plausible—or, at the very least, not inherently implausible. Section 5.03 of the U.S. Penal Code (1985) provides the following definition of criminal conspiracy.

### 1.3. Criminal Conspiracy

1. **Definition of Conspiracy.** A person is guilty of conspiracy with another person or persons to commit a crime if the purpose of promoting or facilitating its commission he:

   a. Agrees with such other person or persons that they or one or more of them will engage in conduct that constitutes such crime or an attempt or solicitation to commit such crime; or

   b. Agrees to aid such person or persons in the planning or commission of such crime or of an attempt or solicitation to commit such crime.

2. **Scope of conspiratorial Relationship.** If a person guilty of conspiracy, as defined by Subsection (1) of this Section, knows that a person with whom he conspires to commit a crime has conspired with another person or
persons to commit the same crime, he is guilty of conspiring with such other person or persons, whether or not he knows their identity, to commit such crime. 132

Attention should also be paid to the Model Code’s definition of culpability.

2.02 General Requirements of Culpability.

(1) Minimum Requirements of Culpability. Except as provided in Section 2.05, a person is not guilty of an offence unless he acted purposely, knowingly, recklessly or negligently, as the law may require, with respect to each element of the offense.

(2) Kinds of Culpability Defined.

(a) Purposely.

A person acts purposely with respect to a material element of an offense when:

(i) If the element involves the nature of his conduct or a result thereof, it is his conscious object to engage in conduct of the nature or to cause such a result; and

(ii) If the element involves the attendant circumstances or he believes or hopes that they exist.

132 Denno, 35. The legal definition accords remarkably well with a minimally acceptable philosophical definition: ‘A conspiracy is a secret plan on the part of a group to influence events partly by covert action.’ Pigden, 20.
(b) Knowingly.

A person acts knowingly with respect to a material element of an offense when:

(i) If the element involves the nature of his conduct or the attendant circumstances, he is aware that his conduct is of that nature or that such circumstances exist; and

(ii) If the element involves result of his conduct, he is aware that it is practically certain that his conduct will cause such a result.\(^\text{133}\)

For the ‘minimalist’ conspiracy to be made out, therefore, only two things are truly necessary.

\(\text{(a) Oswald was a (paid) FBI informant and/or CIA asset spying upon pro-Castro groups.}\)

This is perhaps the most verifiable part of Lee’s signature nomadic reality; ‘Oswald functioned as a provocateur in New Orleans and was in contact with pro-Castro and anti-Castro Cuban exiles as well as double agents representing themselves as both.’\(^\text{134}\) Oswald would have to have been a right-wing CIA ‘mole’ penetrating (and, ultimately, discrediting) the pro-Castro communities of both New Orleans and Dallas. This would not necessarily mean, however, that he was an intelligence asset at the time that he undertook his famous defection to the Soviet Union; he could have been a genuine dissenter, be-

\(^{133}\) Ibid, 7. The issue of culpability is important not so much for Oswald but for any confederates he may have had. Even if the conspiracy was of an extremely inchoate or informal manner, anyone who participated with Oswald in any way the issue of killing Kennedy would, \textit{prima facie}, fall within the parameters of the legal definition of criminal conspiracy.

\(^{134}\) Hancock, 479.
came disillusioned, returned to the U.S., was then recruited as an informer, and then began acting out his fantasies of espionage. It is of great interest that *I Led Three Lives*, a television series about an FBI agent masquerading as a Communist spy, was Oswald’s favorite television program as a youngster and reputedly had a tremendous psychological effect on him.

Robert Oswald [Lee’s eldest brother] remembers Lee watching [the show] intensely when he, Robert, left home to join the Marine Corps in 1952. ‘My opinion of what he got out of “I Led Three Lives” and other programs of a similar nature [e.g. ‘The Fugitive’] was the fact that he could put on a façade and pretend to be somebody he wasn’t.’ Robert would later consider the meaning for Lee. It probably opened up a new world for him...[where] you could appear to be something, then appear to be somebody else...To me, that was a training ground...If you’re playing ‘Cowboys and Indians,’ you stop being the cowboys and the Indians when you stop playing. But with Lee, with the ‘I Led Three Lives’ type show, he was still being somebody even though the show was over, the game was over. He still played another role.135

Throughout his nomadic/clandestine migrations, Oswald may very well have been aided and encouraged in his private re-staging of the integrated spectacle by his various low-level controllers. There is no more supremely Debordean moment in the spectacle of JFK/DALLAS than this: Lee Harvey Oswald’s solipsistic transformation of the virtual into the Real.136

135 Russo, 94. Italics in the original.
136 Although Robert Oswald’s account has been questioned on numerous occasions, it was substantiated by Marguerite Oswald’s—Lee’s mother—
(b) Oswald was under the operational control of a CIA or military intelligence officer who was also a ‘planner’ of the assassination.

In the somewhat dramatic prose of Warren Hinckle and William Turner, ‘Oswald was now in the most dangerous of worlds. He was acting out pro-Castro pantomimes under the command of a violently anti-Castro cabal domi-

own testimony to the Warren Commission on February 12 1964 (which, of course, does not necessarily prove anything). In any event, there is an undeniable element of ‘high strangeness’ in Oswald’s relationship with culture, both high and popular. For example, his favorite opera was Tchaikovsky’s adaptation of Alexander Pushkin’s The Queen of Spades; Oswald attended several performances while in the Soviet Union. As the ‘hip’ reader might be aware, the Queen of Hearts playing card was the trigger-mechanism that controlled the homicidal actions of the ‘Manchurian Candidate’ Sergeant Raymond Shaw in both the eponymous novel and film. In addition to the John Frankenheimer film, two other movies that may have been viewed by Oswald close to the time of Dealey Plaza included Suddenly (1954 and, which like The Manchurian Candidate, starred Frank Sinatra), which concerned an alienated ex-serviceman who plots to assassinate the U.S. President (riding in the open air presidential limousine) using a long-range telescopic rifle, and We Were Strangers (1949, starring blacklisted Communist ‘fellow traveller’ John Garfield) who unsuccessfully attempts to blow up the tyrannical President of Cuba Gerardo Machado—who was, in fact, overthrown in 1933. In her testimony to the Warren Commission Marguerite Oswald stated that ‘Lee saw those films…I was with him when we watched them.’ Albarelli, 62-3 and 65-6. Don DeLillo repeats this in his novel LIBRA at 370. Far more strange—and disturbing—than Oswald’s relationship to cinema was John Kennedy’s. Apparently, it was the President himself who pressed Frankenheimer, the director of The Manchurian Candidate, to undertake a film adaptation of the novel Seven Days in May, which outlined an abortive coup d’etat of the U.S. government by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For discussion, see Talbot, 145-51. In Talbot’s somewhat melodramatic prose, the ‘fact that the president of the United States was driven to enlist the support of show business friends in his struggle with the military underscores how embattled he must have felt.’ Ibid, 149. According to Kennedy courtier Arthur Schlesinger, “Certainly we [sic] did not control the Joint Chiefs of Staff.” Ibid, 64. For JFK’s estrangement from his generals, Chief of the Air Force Curtis LeMay in particular, see ibid, 66-70. Rumour has it that the fascistic leader of the military coup in Seven Days in May, General James Mattoon Scott, was based on LeMay. Ibid, 146. The cinematic
nated by autonomous intelligence operatives and mob elements.’\textsuperscript{137} In New Orleans, the list of probable CIA and/or FBI Oswald handlers would have included Guy Bannister,\textsuperscript{138} David Ferrie,\textsuperscript{139} and Clay Shaw.\textsuperscript{140} In Dallas, the obvious CIA contact would have been with contract agent George de Mohrenschildt.\textsuperscript{141} However, none of these individuals appear to have been senior enough to actually engage in both the planning and, even more connection even extends to the assassination of Robert Kennedy; the Senator was staying at Frankenheimer’s Malibu home when he was shot in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Furthermore, Frankenheimer encountered RFK’s assassin Sirhan Sirhan in the Ambassador: ‘Ironically, Sirhan had brushed by Frankenheimer during Kennedy’s victory speech, as the director stood watching Bobby on a TV monitor in the ballroom’s archway. “It was \textit{The Manchurian Candidate},” Frankenheimer later said. “I felt this shaking inside me.”’\textsuperscript{137} Ibid, 372.

137 Hinckle and Turner, 236.

138 Kurtz, 158-61. Remarkably, Kurtz himself was a witness to the ‘Communist pro-Cuban’ Oswald’s contact with the former head of the Chicago office of the FBI Bannister. “I myself saw Oswald and Bannister when they visited the campus of Louisiana State University in New Orleans…when Bannister condemned racial integration. I also saw them at a table in Mancuso’s Restaurant, located in the same building as Bannister’s office.”\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, 159.

139 Ibid, 163; the probable recruiter of the teen-age Oswald in the Civil Air Patrol which may have constituted the very beginning of his ‘double life’. Hinckle and Turner, 232-3.

140 Kurtz, 163-4. Shaw was the New Orleans contact for the Domestic Contact Division overseen by Tracey Barnes. Lane, 131. For both Shaw and Ferrie as CIA ‘contacts’ see Hinckle and Turner, 321. Ferrie was apparently employed as a contract agent of the CIA in the early 1960s, responsible for maintaining contact with the New Orleans community of anti-Castro Cubans. Stone and Sklar, 91. It has been established that at some time between 1955-6 the adolescent Oswald was a cadet member of the New Orleans branch of the Civilian Air Patrol headed by Ferrie. Albarelli, 70. There is a possibility that Ferrie either did or attempted to sexually molest Oswald. Ibid, 429-30.

141 Kurtz, 149-51. De Mohrenschildt committed suicide in 1977, several hours after investigator Gaeton Fonzi had made contact him on behalf of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HCSA). Fonzi, 192. De Mohrenschildt’s wife was apparently a good friend of several of the CIA’s ‘usual suspects’: ‘De Mohrenschildt’s wife, Jeanne, also had a long
importantly, the implementation of counter-propaganda operations necessary for the successful performance of a false-flag event. This could only have been accomplished by positioning Oswald with the larger network of the Cuban paramilitaries that were themselves under the supervision of senior level CIA officers.

[T]he only way individual militant Cuban exiles could act against JFK would be to place the apparent blame on Fidel Castro. No matter how hot their passion or how much support was offered, that was the only method that would allow them to actively target Kennedy without themselves dooming their cause. The use of a Castro-connected patsy was critical. Without a credible and maneuverable patsy, any attack on Kennedy would have been self-defeating. That patsy became visible to them in New Orleans in July of 1963. He became irresistible when they were informed that he was more than simply a naïve revolutionary sympathizer, but was in reality a low-level intelligence dangle who they could play at will.\textsuperscript{142}

Accordingly,

\textit{[O]ne of the major roles of the exiles in the conspiracy [was] managing and manipulating Lee Oswald. It was the exiles who contacted him, represented themselves as Castro agents, and continued contact with him up to the time of the assassination. The exiles were aware that Oswald was a history of working in intelligence and numbered among her friends and former operatives in the CIA Richard Helms, the agency’s future director; James McCord, a close friend of Helms and the future Watergate burglar; Hunter Leake, an agent who worked at the agency’s large New Orleans office; and David Atlee Phillips, the head of the CIA’s Western Hemisphere Division.’ Kurtz, 149-50.}

\textsuperscript{142} Hancock, 368.
playing a role himself and that they had to man-
euver him by continuing to represent themselves
as Castroites.\textsuperscript{143}

Drawing upon my list of the ‘usual suspects’ from the
CIA, I find there to be two medium level case officers of
particular interest.

\textbf{(I) \textit{Tracy Barnes}}

As Assistant Director of Plans to Richard Bissell for the
Bay of Pigs Barnes personally recruited many of the
CIA ‘usual suspects’ for the Cuba Project (E. Howard
Hunt, David Lee Phillips, and David Morales).\textsuperscript{144}
Barnes’ association with both Bissell and Mafia contact
Johnny Roselli placed Barnes ‘at the center of virtually
every CIA assassination project of the early 1960s…’\textsuperscript{145}
And, of the greatest significance, after Bissell’s forcible
transfer to the Institute for Defense Analysis following
ZAPATA, Barnes was appointed head of the Domestic
Operations division of the CIA, the branch responsible
for the creation and operation of CIA ‘front’ companies,
and, apparently, exercising oversight of the Domestic
Contact Service, which handled the monitoring of infor-
mants and defectors; \textsuperscript{146} ‘in 1963, Domestic Operations

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\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, 422.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 424.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, 421-32. This branch was also responsible for the 201 files, which
were opened for every person considered by the Agency to be of
“potential intelligence or counter-intelligence significance.”’ On
December 9 1960, a 201 was opened on Oswald, almost one year
following his (apparent) defection to the Soviet Union—an unusual time
lag. Stone and Sklar, 45. The file was controlled by Angleton’s SGI.
Morley, 205. On November 9 1959, Oswald was put on the CIA ‘Watch
List’, which permitted operatives to read his mail; this program of postal
might well have been the starting point for Lee Oswald being considered as an asset in specific CIA intelligence collection projects (‘dangles’) such as the documented 1963 project targeting the FPCC [Fair Play for Cuba Committee], first in the United States and then in Latin America.’ If Oswald was indeed a CIA asset, which seems almost certain, then the Domestic Contact Service would have been the sub-division handling Oswald’s case file. In the estimation of Larry Hancock

It is certainly possible that Oswald was used in a minor fashion for FPCC intelligence collection, something which grew into a much more aggressive propaganda program in New Orleans and then into an extension of that project in Mexico City. Such an extension would likely have been coordinated by the new Cuban Affairs officer, David Phillips, and monitored by Angleton’s CI/SIG in-

 interception was codenamed HT/LINGUAL and was administered by Angleton’s SGI group. John Newman has speculated that Oswald was a ‘person of interest’ to the CIA even prior to his infamous defection to the USSR in November 1959 and that he might have been part of the program run by the CIA’s Russia division known as ‘Soviet Realities’ (SR/6), which was dedicated to obtaining information about social and economic conditions in Russia through the monitoring of ‘defectors’, many of whom, of course, were not. Newman, Oswald and the CIA, 47-59 and 168-98. As Simpich has put it, ‘If there was anything of greater value than a defector, it was a re-defector such as Oswald. Even if a re-defector had nothing to do with intelligence, such a person was the functional equivalent of a double agent.’ James Angleton himself later testified to the Church Committee in 1975 that ‘the re-defection of Oswald should have been “the highest priority for the intelligence community.”’ Simpich, Preface, page one and two.

147 Ibid, 427. The FPCC was founded in April 1960 by pro-Castro American journalist Robert Taber, who subsequently resigned his presidency in February 1962. ‘By this time the organization had become a hopeless muddle of government informers, psychopaths, communists, black militants, liberal social activists and socialists who carried with them agendas that clashed with the group’s modest objectives.’ Albarelli, 302.
The possible role of Barnes, of course, also increases the likelihood of Angleton’s own involvement, who emerges as the most interesting suspect at the most senior level of the CIA: ‘the files maintained by the Special Investigations Group [SIG] were not part of the [CIA’s] regular record-keeping system but were maintained in the archive controlled by Angleton. The program…sought to generate leads for new covert operations to be mounted by Angleton himself.’ Apparently, Angleton had a fondness for off-the-books operations, establishing his own private “command channels and communications” that effectively ‘bypassed CIA stations and flowed directly to his office in Washington.’ Following Angleton’s forced retirement in 1974, the CIA destroyed all of his files on the Kennedy assassination.\textsuperscript{149}

\textbf{(II) DAVID ATLEE PHILLIPS/MAURICE BISHOP}

What makes Phillips a suspect of outstanding interest is that his entire career at the CIA was dedicated to the stage-managing (with uneven success) of extraordinarily elaborate clandestine spectacles. Next to Oswald himself, Phillips is the most Debordian character in my minimalist scenario. A life-long frustrated thespian (‘Whenever possible during his Agency career, wherever he was stationed, Phillips would invariably start or join a little theater group\textsuperscript{150}), Phillips rose rapidly through the ranks of the Agency, establishing his ‘reputation among his peers as the expert in the field’ of counter-intelli-

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Morley, 200-1.
\textsuperscript{150} Fonzi, 263.
gence, Psy-Ops, and propaganda.\textsuperscript{151}

His successes as an agent…were mainly in the area of propaganda, psychological warfare and counter-intelligence…Phillips was selected by the Agency to play an important role on overthrowing Jacobo Arbenz’s leftist regime in Guatemala in 1954 [OPERATION PB/SUCCESS]. Phillip’s task was to help set up a clandestine radio station in Mexico—the Voice of Liberation—and, while pretending to be broadcasting from within Guatemala, orchestrate a crescendo of false reports about legions of rebels which didn’t exist and major battles that never took place…In this, his first major assignment for the CIA, Phillips demonstrated a particular propensity for the mirror images so prevalent in counter-intelligence craft. For instance, part of the Voice of Liberation’s mission was to generate disinformation that would foment a confusing array of rumors among the populace…Under such a propaganda barrage, the Arbenz government fled the country before many real bullets could fly. Phillips later termed the technique, which he would use again, ‘the big lie.’\textsuperscript{152}

PB/SUCCESS, when looked at in greater detail, carries with it two extremely discomforting implications for JFK/DALLAS. The first is that it illustrates the degree to which the spectacle is the inverted mirror-image of the ‘situation’, executed with a panache and brazenness that any true Situationist (or Orson Welles) could only impotently envy. An operation of enormous complexity,

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid. “Phillips was…told that he had the qualifications the Agency looked for in a propaganda specialist and his theatrical training thereafter concentrated on the techniques of propaganda and political action.’ Ibid, 264.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, 264.
PB/SUCCESS was divided into two prongs: (i) a limited paramilitary infiltration of Guatemala by a small band of anti-Arbenz forces led by American puppet Carlos Castillo Armas supported by limited air raids by CIA owned World War II surplus aircraft; and (ii) an entire network of black propaganda (or ‘black ops’) radio stations, based in the Dominican Republic, Managua, Honduras, and, most importantly, within the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City itself. Phillip’s network ‘The Voice of Liberation’ effectively bridged the divide between conventional disinformation to overt simulation, successfully manufacturing the mass illusion of an entire civil war that was not actually taking place and an entire rebel army that did not really exist.

Frightened Guatemalans listening to the CIA radio broadcasts began fleeing from [Guatemala City], not wanting to be caught in the tremendous battle believed imminent for control of the capital. “Voice of Liberation” announcers actually appealed to the fleeing refugees to make way for the non-existent rebel columns. Few of the panicked

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153 Schlesinger and Kinzer, 110. One of the major airfields for this ‘phantom air force’ was at Puerto Cabezas on the east coast of Nicaragua; during the Bay of Pigs, it was re-used as one of the major launching sites of air attacks against Cuba. Ibid, 114.

154 Ibid, 114.

155 ‘A typical broadcast assured listeners: “It is not true that the waters of Lake Atitlan have been poisoned.”’ Ibid, 185.

156 ‘During a nighttime raid, the Americans played a tape recording of a bombing attack over loudspeakers set up on the [U.S.] Embassy roof that heightened the anxiety of the capital’s residents.’ Ibid, 183.

157 The Voice of Liberation: ‘“At our command post here in the jungle [the U.S. Embassy] we are unable to confirm or deny the report that Castillo Armas has an army of five thousand men.”’ Ibid, 185. These radiographic hallucinations were subsequently picked up and circulated globally by the international press corp. Ibid, 186. At no point did Armas have more than 400 men under his command.
citizens stopped to wonder why, in their flight along the major highways, they never encountered any advancing soldiers…With no one he could trust to give him accurate information, [President] Arbenz could no longer be certain that there wasn’t at least some truth to the radio bulletin.\textsuperscript{158}

The second is that virtually all of the major operators of PB/SUCCESS—David Atlee Phillips, Tracy Barnes, E. Howard Hunt, ‘Rip’ Robertson—re-appear as key members of the ‘usual suspects’ for JFK/DALLAS.\textsuperscript{159}

Through and around Phillips was a semi-permanent ‘unit’, or ‘crew’ (if I can use this word) who were both closely linked with extremist reactionary political and paramilitary groups throughout Central America and the Caribbean and who were also proficient in Psy-Ops and counter-intelligence. In fact, this semi-nomadic unit (including other members such as David Harvey, Theodore Shackley and David Morales) transverses the shadow spaces of numerous black bag operations and may, in fact, have been in existence as early as the late 1940s: many of them appear to have made initial contact with each other while serving in the CIA station in Berlin.\textsuperscript{160}

Members of the unit also shared a fondness for basing their manifold command-and-control centers in Miami: headquarters for PB/SUCCESS was on the Opa-Locka Marine Air Force Base in Miami (consisting of a group of offices covertly secreted directly above a nursery school)\textsuperscript{161} while JM/WAVE was based at the University

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, 192.

\textsuperscript{159} And a few of them, such as Hunt, re-appeared a second time with NIXON/WATERGATE.

\textsuperscript{160} The Berlin Operating Base, or BOB. Hancock, 128 and 413-20. Other members included Henry Hecksher, who appears to have been the senior field officer for PB/SUCCESS. Ibid, 414.

\textsuperscript{161} Schlesinger and Kinzer, 110 and 113. Phillips and Hunt also
of Miami using the CIA front company Zenith Technical Enterprises Inc. as cover.

It is beyond dispute that for the CIA it “was the “psychological actions” of the invasion force that were [truly] significant.” As a result, in April, 1961, as part of ZAPATA, Phillips was appointed director of all propaganda/counter-intelligence operations for The Bay of Pigs. This included the oversight of ‘Radio Swan’, a CIA broadcasting station located on Greater Swan Island, ninety-seven miles off the coast of Honduras, the very same ‘black’ radio station that had been used with such great success in PB/SUCCESS; so successful, in fact, that the CIA attempted to duplicate Phillips’ clandestine/Situationist success a third time under Lansdale.

MONGOOSE’s program of propaganda—consisting of radio and television broadcasting, balloon drops of leaflets, a distribution of photo-models

coordinated the ‘Voice of Liberation’ from Miami. Ibid, 114.

162 Blight and Kornbluh, 40. In fairness to the citizens of Guatemala City in 1954, belief in the spontaneous materialization of a rebel army was not, in itself, inherently implausible given national political conditions of that time. There was considerable political opposition to the Arbenz government among the traditional elites who had remained and were highly active within the country. This was in marked contrast to Cuba, where virtually the entirety of the pro-Batista establishment had either fled or were exiled to Miami—and where, not surprisingly, Phillip’s spectacular theatre met with resounding failure. Coatsworth, xiv-xv and xix fn. 18.

163 Fonzi, 157.

164 Gleijeses, 6. During the Bay of Pigs, Radio Swan’s greatest accomplishment was the unleashing of a cascade of weirdly beautiful Situationist images upon the resisting Cubans: “Alert! Alert! Look well at the rainbow. The fish will rise soon. Chico is in the house. Visit him. The sky is blue...The fish will not take much time to rise. The fish is red.” Rasenberger, 240. As with PB/SUCCESS these messages were intended to simulate the presence of an organized counter-revolutionary force; this time, however, the un-real was actually the real —there was no domestic revolt against Castro.
and cartoon books by open mail, and dissemination of smuggled copies of *Time* magazine—[was] integrated to the preparation of the population in Cuba for regime change. Basic Madison Avenue techniques, such as create musical and visual symbols to express anti-regime sentiments,’ were a specialty of the U.S Information Agency, which managed the *Voice of America*, and the technique of adding ‘new words to a favorite song’ was a staple of political subversion at least since *The Beggar’s Opera*. Thus, the transmission of anti-Castro sentiment was to function seamlessly in everyday activities, capable of being passed person-to-person while augmenting less embodied techniques such as painted slogans.165

Following the Bay of Pigs, Phillips served as the Chief of Covert Action in Mexico City from late 1961 to the autumn of 1963, coinciding with Oswald’s alleged visitation to both the Soviet and Cuban Consulates.

How well Phillips did his work is revealed by the fact that barely two years into his assignment—just prior to Kennedy’s assassination—he was made Chief of Cuban Operations there. In both jobs his main activities were in propaganda, dirty tricks, and counter-intelligence, and his central focus was on maintaining a watch on Castro’s intelligence agents, many of whom worked out of the Cuban Embassy.166

On October 1, 1963 Phillips was promoted to chief of Cuban operations in Mexico City; 167 as a result, ‘Phillips’ Cuban Project assignment [as with Barnes] led him into activities involving domestic counter-intelli-

165 avis, 144.
166 Fonzi, 266.
167 Ibid, 429.
gence dangles against the FPCC and into the exile community of New Orleans.  

**Addendum to Phillips: On the ‘Lords of Misrule’**

‘You really have me consorting with a cast of sordid characters, don’t you Mr. Garrison?’—Clay Bertrand/Shaw (Tommy Lee Jones), JFK

Consideration of the spectacle leads to consideration of the situation which, in turn, leads directly to the problem of aesthetics. If the spectacle is the inversion of the situation, then we must move from the tremulous beauty of poetry-in-the-street (la Beaute est dans la Rue) to the omnivorous obscenity of the clandestine. Upon further reflection Psy-Ops can be shown to bear an uncanny resemblance to Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque, or mis-rule, the inversion of conventional reality (political, moral, social, aesthetic) into its inverted double, the grotesque. When undertaking parapolitical research one is, in fact, uncomfortably aware of a nomadic environment—personalities, places, events—saturated with the ‘fundamental attributes of the grotesque style’, famously defined by Bakhtin in his master work on Rabelais and the carnivalesque as ‘exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness.’ The grotesque, perhaps best defined as ‘the ambivalently abnormal’, is phenomenological in nature, grounded upon a *horror sensorium*: ‘a fundamentally ambivalent thing...a violent clash of op-

168 Hancock, 177.
169 Bakhtin, 303. See ibidem, Chapter Five, 303-67.
posites...an appropriate expression of the problematical nature of existence.'\(^{170}\) When treating the grotesque imaginary, as Bakhtin reminds us, we must always ‘take into consideration the importance of cosmic terror, the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful.'\(^{171}\) The inversion of the world is itself the onto-poetical ground of the grotesque, a world that is eternally teetering on the verge of a chaotic formlessness through the radical and uncontrollable proliferation of irreconcilable combinations, the perpetual construction of ‘what we might call a double body’\(^{172}\): ‘The grotesque body...is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body.’\(^{173}\) Like its aesthetic Other, the sublime, the grotesque is quintessentially Modern, but with this crucial distinction: both modernism and the grotesque ‘focus on the concepts of alienation, subjectivity, and absurdity, but the grotesque tends to focus on explicit representations of these ideas through disturbing imagery and actions, while modernism tends to focus on more implicit representations of these themes.’\(^{174}\) In other words, the aesthetic paradigm of the grotesque requires the coming forth of a monster of some kind;\(^{175}\) the ‘grotesque alienation’ that results arises from an en-

\(^{170}\) Thomson, 11.
\(^{171}\) Bakhtin, 335.
\(^{172}\) Ibid, 318.
\(^{173}\) Ibid, 317.
\(^{174}\) Martin, 47.
\(^{175}\) ‘Grotesque alienation is usually a result of external, physical change or action, communicated through imagery that may include violent acts, self-destructive behaviors [sic], deformity, transformation, monstrous creatures, and any number of other strange or disturbing scenes. However, the physically-based alienation depicted in such works is merely a catalyst or metaphor for the psychological alienation of one or more characters.’ Ibid, 48-9.
hanced self-consciousness of the protagonist of being embedded within a pre-existent (un-constructed) estranged world, the dark numinous,\textsuperscript{176} which neatly correlates with what I call the parapolitical landscape.

Undertaking the most ambitious analysis of the grotesque as a formal sub-category of the Modern, Wolfgang Kayser defines his subject-matter in such a way as to render most transparent the artistic and narrative similitudes between the grotesque and cosmic horror; ‘The modern age questions the validity of the anthropological and the relevance of the scientific concepts underlying the syntheses of the nineteenth century. The various forms of the grotesque are the most obvious and pronounced contradictions of any kind of rationalism and any systematic use of thought.’\textsuperscript{177} For Kayser, the grotesque consists of three signature themes. The first is ‘the grotesque as the estranged world’; ‘It is our world which has to be transformed. Suddenness and surprise are essential elements of the grotesque.’\textsuperscript{178} The grotesque ‘world’, or landscape, as Bakhtin makes clear, is the aesthetic continuation by other means of the phenomenological primacy of the grotesque body.

Thus the artistic logic of the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and the impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body’s limited space or

\textsuperscript{176} ‘In modernist grotesque alienation, there is no going back. The world is not alienated due to malignant influences that can be purged, as in the older [classical?] grotesque. In modernist grotesque alienation, the protagonist realizes that the world itself has always been alienating, and it is the illusion of stability that must be exposed, for the sake of intellectual integrity.’ Ibid, 51.

\textsuperscript{177} Kayser, 188.

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid, 184.
into the body’s depths. Mountains and abysses, such is the relief of the grotesque body; or speaking in architectural terms, towers and subterranean passages...This grotesque logic is also extended to images of nature and of objects in which depends (holes) and convexities are emphasized.

The ‘estranged world’ of the grotesque, unifying both the high and the low, is, therefore, an artistic device deployed primarily in order to stage the mimetic rendition of the trauma-inducing encounter with the radically alien ‘sublime’. Just like Peter Dale Scott’s contemplation of the deep events of American history, the grotesque

is primarily the expression of our failure to orient ourselves in the physical universe...We are so strongly affected and terrified because it is our world which ceases to be reliable, and we feel unable to live in this changed world...

The grotesque instills fear of life rather than fear of death. Structurally, it presupposes that the categories which apply to our world view become inapplicable...the fusion of realms which we know to be separated, the abolition of the law of statics, the loss of identity, the distortion of ‘natural’ size and shape, the suspension of the category of objects, the destruction of personality, and the fragmentation of the historical order.

Second is what Kayser denotes as ‘the Grotesque as a Play with the Absurd’, signified by the operational hege-

180 Ibid, 318 fn. 6.
181 Ibid.
182 Ibid, 184-5.
mony of determinism (natural or otherwise) and the con­comitant manipulation of reality by occult forces: ‘the unity of perspective in the grotesque consists in an unimpassioned view of life on earth as an empty, meaningless puppet play or a caricatural marionette theatre.’ And third is the rather convoluted ‘the Grotesque as an Attempt to Invoke and Subdue the Demonic Aspects of the World’, which may perhaps best be defined in the following manner: ‘In spite of all the helplessness and horror inspired by the dark forces which lurk in and behind our world and have the power to estrange it, the truly artistic portrayal effects a secret liberation. The darkness has been sighted, the ominous powers discovered, the incomprehensible forces challenged.’

One of the most ‘uncanny’ aspects of JFK/DALLAS is the fact that so many of the usual suspects were amateur or marginal artists or involved with that quintessential modern enterprise ‘public relations’: Phillips as amateur thespian, Hunt as sub-par novelist, Lansdale as Wall Street ad-man. Pursuing the Debordean logic of the integrated spectacle to the highest level would involve re-conceptualizing the usual suspects as signs of the grotesque landscape, the quasi-competent ‘lords of misrule’ of the post-Reality era of governance-by-spectacle. Perhaps the most striking aspect of JFK/DALLAS and the ‘high strangeness’ of the (possible) evidence generated within its wake is the half-smart/half-stupid nature of bizarre occurrences and weird coincidences and convergences; Don DeLillo employs this grotesque ‘play with the absurd’ as the narrative foundation of his metaphysi-

183 Ibid, 186. For the intimate connections between the grotesque and caricature, see Thomson, 38-40. Striking here is the utter aptness of the marionette theatre as a signifier of the deep state.
184 Kayser, 188. See discussion of Oliver Stone’s film JFK in Chapter Five, below.
cal thriller \textit{LIBRA}. An outstanding example of this, one that almost certainly originated with Phillips and his grotesque post-Guatemala crew of Psy-Op pranksters, was the absurd (pseudo-demonic?) farce of B-26 no. 933. As part of ZAPATA, Mario Zuniga, an anti-Castro Cuban pilot, flew an American built B-26 bomber (no. 933) from the CIA base at Puertos Cubezas (‘Happy Valley’) in Nicauragua to Miami International Airport in the opening hours of the invasion of Cuba (Saturday, April 15). Zuniga’s cover story was that he was a defector from the Cuban air force, claiming that there was a full-scale mutiny in the armed forces against Communist rule. A number of pilots, including Zuniga, had attacked Cuban military airfields before seeking asylum in the U.S.. As should have been predicted, Zuniga’s story soon fell apart for the following ‘someone-should-have-known’ reasons: (i) Zuniga claimed a two hour flight time when Cuba was only 30 minutes away by air; (ii) the difficult to explain away presence of anti-dust tape covering barrels of the plane’s machine-guns, which would have been removed if the guns had actually been fired; (iii) the nose of no. 933 was made of metal, while those of the B-26s in the Cuban air force were made of plexi-glass; and (iv) the machine guns were mounted on the nose of no. 933 while the B-26s of the Cuban air force were mounted under the wings. I believe that it

185 See Chapter Four.

186 ‘At 6:00 am, Zuniga’s statement claimed, he had taken off from San Antonio de los Banos and flown over to Libertad, where he and other pilots dropped bombs and strafed planes with machine guns, taking fire from ground artillery…As he returned to strafe his own airfield, at San Antonio, his co-conspirators attacked other Cuban airfields.’ Rasenberger, 195.

187 Ibid, 194-5. To compound the absurdity even more, U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson used photographs of Zuniga’s plane to denounce the Cuban regime in the United Nations Security Council. As Phillips later wrote in his memoirs, \textit{The Night Watch}: ‘‘As I watched Stevenson..."
is important to keep these aesthetic digressions in mind when considering perhaps the single most Byzantine element in the Oswald ‘drama’: the shadowy movements of Oswald to and from Mexico City during September and October of 1963. It is also the piece of absurd theatre that offers the most compelling evidence of a higher-level degree of CIA manipulation of the assassin.

**Oswald in Mexico City**

Mark Lane has recently reminded us of the centrality of the Mexico City CIA Station to the Agency’s wider hemispheric operations.

The newspapers were not bothersome in Mexico City and the police authorities had long since been co-opted by the use of several methods. Select mid-level officers were fed secret intelligence about minor or semi-major criminal activities permitting the favored to quickly ‘solve’ open cases through what appeared to be brilliant investigative work. They rose through the ranks knowing that they owed their careers to the CIA. Those open to bribery were easily recruited and the few important officials who were loyal to their own country were placed in situations, filmed sexual assignments as one device, so that their cooperation and silence was extorted. For those reasons the CIA chose Mexico City, rather than a city in the United States, to make plans that directly involved the United States.188

The ideal parapolitical ambience of Mexico City, there-

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188 Lane, 194.
fore, would automatically provide any CIA covert operation the two most necessary requirements for success: deniability and compartmentalization. And, if JFK/DAL-LAS was indeed a false-flag spectacle with Oswald as the pro-Castro gunman, then Mexico City would have been the place to mount the required counter-intelligence operation, with Phillips the thespian wannabe the man to do it. Scott’s argument on this point strikes me as conclusive.

David Phillips does...seem a likely candidate to have co-ordinated the stories coming out of Mexico City and Miami. For in the second half of 1963 he was cross-posted to both stations, as chief of Cuban Operations in Mexico City, and as Chief of Psychological Operations (i.e., propaganda) in Miami. (In fact, it is possible that David Phillips held down three posts in 1963, and was doubling also as a member of the Special Affairs Staff Counterintelligence (SAC/CI) staff.)

Oswald was reputedly in Mexico City from September 25 to October 3, 1963, making five separate visits to both the Soviet and Cuban embassies in an attempt to acquire a travel visa for both countries; ‘That meant that if Oswald was in Mexico City and if he were involved in any intelligence activity, whether pro- or anti-Castro, Phillips would have been either a player, or he would have known about it.’ And what is so decidedly

189 Scott, Deep Politics II, 35.
190 Fonzi, 266.
191 Ibid, 279. What Oswald actually did during those six days is a puzzle. In fact, part of the puzzle is whether or not it was the real Oswald in Mexico City...in the end, the only ‘proof’ that the real Oswald was inside the Cuban Consulate were his photograph and his signature on his visa application. Ibid, 281. For Fonzi’s compelling critique of the evidence for Oswald’s presence in Mexico City, see ibid, 278-97. A recurrent, but tantalizing, sub-theme of the ‘conspiracy literature’ of JFK/DALLAS is
odd here is the memo of November 23, 1963 sent by J. Edgar Hoover to Chief of the Secret Services, James Rowley—a memo that constitutes one of the very few pieces of the paper-trail of JFK/DALLAS.

The Central Intelligence Agency advised that on October 1, 1963, an extremely sensitive source had reported that an individual identifying himself that U.S. intelligence had fabricated a ‘second’ or ‘double’ Oswald, who was activated at strategically crucial moments for counter-intelligence purposes; see Armstrong, ‘Harvey and Lee’, Parts I and II, generally. Pease identifies the ultimate ‘control’ over all counter-intelligence operations involving Oswald as James Jesus Angleton; Pease, ‘Angleton’, Parts I and II, generally. My personal preference would be to situate operational control at a lower level within the CIA hierarchy; hence, my preference for Tracy Barnes as a credible ‘usual suspect’. The most sophisticated and extensive discussion of this issue is Scott, *Deep Politics II*, generally. The obvious problem with the theory is in identifying the precise moment and circumstances in which Oswald became an ‘item of interest’ to the intelligence agencies. Albarelli has tentatively suggested that the possible solution lies within Oswald’s own early history of delinquency, the subject of the masterful first chapter of Don DeLillo’s brilliant novel *LIBRA*. ‘In April 1953, reportedly following additional school absences, Oswald was sent to Youth House, located on 12th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues in Manhattan. Here he was placed under psychiatric observation for three weeks, from April 16 to May 7, 1953.’ Oswald’s forced stay at Youth House puts him uncomfortably close to a much more sinister institution, the Bordertown Reformatory. ‘Boys sent to Youth House who were deemed incorrigible were routinely sent to the nearby Bordertown Reformatory in New Jersey, a home away from home for what were then commonly called “juvenile delinquents”. There is no known evidence that Oswald went to Bordertown, but several physicians who worked at the reformatory also performed work at Youth House. The Bordertown facility is significant, because during World War II, and from 1951 to 1964, it was the site of secret CIA and U.S. Army behavior-modification and mind-control experiments—which were intended to both trigger and study “a model psychosis characterized by visual and auditory hallucinations.” Furthermore, during the Second World War, the Bordertown Reformatory was used by the OSS, precursor to the CIA, for truth-drug experiments.’ Albarelli, 17-18; see also Marks, 201. Following JFK/DALLAS, on 9 December 1963 an article co-authored by Donald R. Flynn and Mike Pearl entitled ‘N.Y. Psychiatric Report Cited Oswald Violence’, appeared in the *New-York Journal-American*, opening with the
as Lee Oswald contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City inquiring as to any messages. Special Agents of this Bureau, who have conversed with Oswald in Dallas, Texas, observed photographs of the individual referred to above and have listened to a recording of his voice [The CIA had wire-tapped all of the telephone lines to the Russian Embassy] These special agents are of the opinion that the above-referred-to-individual was not Lee Harvey Oswald.  

following sentence: “A 10-year old psychiatric report on Lee Harvey Oswald emerged today as a startlingly accurate blueprint for precisely the kind of violence that erupted last November 22 in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.” Ibid, 25. The psychiatrist who examined the juvenile Oswald and who authored the report, Dr. Renatus Hartogs, was linked to a number of other psychiatrists who were involved in the extensive CIA mind-control experimentation of the 1950s (including operations ARTICHOKE, BLUEBIRD, and, most importantly, MK/ULTRA): these contacts included, but were not limited to, Dr. D. Ewen Cameron, Dr. Harold A. Abramson and Dr. Milton Kurian. In 1965, Hartogs co-authored a book on Oswald suggestively entitled The Two Assassins, which argued—on fairly scant evidence—that Oswald fit the classic profile of the schizophrenic loner exactly. Ibid, 19-29. A possible additional factor at work here is that Oswald’s half-brother John Pic was a corpsman in the U.S. Coast Guard and from April 1952 to February 1953 was assigned to the Coast Guard’s Port Security Unit at Ellis Island. This security unit, an outgrowth of the Espionage Act of 1950, was charged with identifying, investigating, and ridding New York harbor, the Longshoreman’s Union, and the maritime industry of communists and subversive elements.” Ibid, 13. See Marks for Abramson (61-2n, 64, 68, 79-83, 118, 120 and 169) and Cameron (131-9, 145, 148, 156, 159, 214). Fonzi, 285. On the presence of Oswald’s double in Mexico City at this time, see Newman, ‘Oswald’ generally; ‘someone pretending to be Oswald made a series of telephone calls between September 28 and October 1, allegedly to and from the Cuban and Soviet Consulates in Mexico City.’ Ibid, 218. See also Morley, 207-14 and 237. An added complication here was the testimony of Sylvia Tirado de Duran, the Cuban consular staff member who allegedly had an affair with Oswald during his stay in Mexico City. The taped conversation in question was reputedly a call that both Duran and Oswald made from within the Cuban Consulate to the Soviet Embassy on Saturday September 28, yet Duran told Mexican authorities that Oswald had not returned to the Consulate after Friday September 27. The CIA officer responsible for translating Duran’s testimony in the original Mexican transcript was David Phillips;
The ‘deep’ significance of the confusion over the identity and movements of ‘Oswald’ was not lost on Fidel Castro, who made a remarkable series of comments to the U.S. Senate Assassinations Committee.

‘You see, it was always very suspicious to me…that a person who later appeared to be involved in Kennedy’s death would have requested a visa from Cuba. Because, I said to myself—what would have happened had by any chance that man come from Cuba—visited Cuba—gone back to the States and then appeared involved in Kennedy’s death? That would really have been a provocation—a gigantic provocation…That is why it has always been something—a very obscure thing—something suspicious—because I interpreted it as a deliberate attempt to link Cuba with Kennedy’s death.’

In a similar manner, Escalante casts damning aspersions upon a series of obviously fake letters allegedly sent to Oswald from Cuba in the days immediately following

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even though fluent in Spanish, Phillips ‘mis-translated’ Duran’s remarks, changing “He [Oswald] never called back” to “she [Duran] does not recall whether or not Oswald telephoned her at the Consulate number on Saturday.” Ibid, 236-7. For more on Oswald and Duran, see below, this chapter. Simpich has argued that this tape is the single most important piece of evidence in JFK/DALLAS; the conspirators, probably members of William Harvey’s Staff D (along with affiliates such as David Morales and Johnny Roselli) impersonated Oswald (and perhaps Duran as well) not only as part of their false-flag agenda, but also to convince CIA counter-intelligence chief James Angleton that the Mexico City wire-tapping operations had been penetrated by a Cuban double agent and that the obviously fake voices were an attempt to provide the Americans with disinformation. The plan was that Angleton would fall for the trap and launch a full-scale ‘mole hunt’, looking for possible Castroite double agents within the anti-Castro network, which would inadvertently provide effective cover for the JFK/DALLAS crew. See Simpich, Chapter Five and Scott, Deep Politics II, 117-30.

193 Fonzi, 284-5.
the assassination, clear signs, in his view, of an absurdly incompetent attempt at a ‘frame’.\textsuperscript{194}

But perhaps the single most intriguing piece of evidence is provided by Alpha/66 director Anthony Veciana, who claimed that on February 1, 1964, in an apparent attempt to make the Oswald frame-up ‘stick’, he was approached by his ubiquitous CIA controller Maurice Bishop and asked to provide additional cover for Oswald’s activities in Mexico City.

At the time, there were newspaper stories about Oswald having met with a Cuban couple in Mexico City. Veciana recalls these stories reported that the wife spoke excellent English. Bishop said that he knew that Veciana had a cousin, Guillermo Ruiz, in Castro’s intelligence service\textsuperscript{195} who then happened to be stationed in Mexico City. Ruiz’s wife, coincidentally, spoke excellent English. Bishop asked Veciana to try to get in touch with Ruiz and offer him a large amount of money if Ruiz would say that it was he and his wife who had met Oswald.\textsuperscript{196}

The vital question at this point is, of course, was Maurice Bishop the cover name for David Phillips? The classic, and most extensive, statement of the case for Phillips-Bishop, is the one offered by Gaeton Fonzi in his


\textsuperscript{195} Fonzi does not appear to make much of this rather remarkable fact.

\textsuperscript{196} Fonzi, 143.
monumental *The Last Investigation*.\textsuperscript{197} However, not all conspiracy investigators are convinced. Scott, for one, finds Veciana unreliable and the character of Bishop a ‘red herring’;\textsuperscript{198} nonetheless, Scott clearly assigns Phillips ultimate responsibility for the ‘double’ Oswald scenario that appears to have been enacted in Mexico City,\textsuperscript{199} so that even if Oswald (and Veciana) was not being handled by Phillips as Bishop, he was still being manipulated by Phillips via counter-intelligence operations being run out of the Mexico City Station. The story becomes even more complicated—but equally more seductive—if I take into account Veciana’s second post-JFK/DALLAS anecdote concerning Bishop. In 1967 Phillips was promoted to Chief of the Cuban Operations Group of the CIA’s Western Hemisphere Division, responsible for all Agency anti-Communist actions run throughout Central and South America. According to Veciana, in 1971 Bishop, with the assistance of anti-Castro Cuban personnel, organized an aborted assassination attempt against Castro while on a State visit to Chile, one that bore an uncanny resemblance to ‘typical’ JFK/DALLAS conspiracy narratives.

‘[Bishop] told me,’ Veciana says, ‘that it was an opportunity to make it appear that the anti-Castro Cubans killed Castro without American involvement’…According to Veciana…[the conspirators] planted phony documents so that if the two who were going to assassinate Castro were caught and killed, the trail would lead to the Russian

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid, 261-97, 304-37, and 364; see also, Hancock, 179-81. Ross Crozier, the CIA case officer who handled the DRE for Phillips from 1960-62, initially claimed that Phillips used that alias but later admitted to making an error. Morley, 185.

\textsuperscript{198} Personal communication with the author, June 27, 2013.

\textsuperscript{199} See Scott, *Deep Politics II*, generally.
agents in Caracas. It was an elaborate scheme. False surveillance reports were slipped into the files of the Venezuelan secret police to indicate that the Cuban assassins had been seen meeting with the Russian agents...Also in the files were fake passports, diaries and notes which would be planted in one of the assassin’s hotel rooms to prove his contacts with the agents. But the most damaging evidence they concocted was a photograph showing what appeared to be one of the assassins leaning into a car window talking with one of the agents. The photo was actually of another Cuban who closely resembled the assassin. As instructed, this double stopped the Russian agent’s car as he left his home one morning, leaned in and asked him for a match. A telephoto shot was taken of this encounter.200

If this story is true, the implications for JFK/DALLAS as a spectacular deep event are obvious: both of the assassins, who really were the actual shooters, had a complex web of disinformation and black propaganda woven around them without their apparent knowledge or participation. Even more intriguing is the reason why the plot failed—both assassins pulled out at the last moment, having ‘developed a sub-plot based on the assumption that the shooters would be immediately caught and killed.’201 An additional germane fact, although not conclusive in itself, is that from 1971 to 1973, Phillips was responsible for conducting all covert, or ‘Track II’ actions against the Allende government in Chile, culminating in the coup d’etat of September 11, 1973 and the (apparent) murder of President Allende.202 Because of his spectacular success with Track II, Phillips was pro-

200 Fonzi, 137-8.
201 Ibid, 137.
promoted to Director of the Western Hemisphere Division of the CIA in June, 1973.

Juxtaposing Phillips with Oswald and (tentatively) identifying Phillips as Bishop, allows me to arrive at two conclusions about JFK/DALLAS. The first is that Phillips/Bishop is an exemplary example of the criminal sovereign. Indeed, Phillips appears to have been very much a ‘Cowboy’ within the Yankee paragon of the Agency; apart from the fact that ‘Cowboy’ is CIA parlance for an experienced covert operator, Phillips was a literal Cowboy as well as a figurative one, having been born in Fort Worth, Texas, far from the spawning-grounds of the Eastern Establishment.203 He also, along with many of the other officers involved with the Cuba Project, very much fit the ‘character profile’ of a criminal sovereign—provided, of course, that I am actually able to assume the existence of such a thing. Fonzi himself was in no doubt concerning Phillip’s personal proclivity for spectacular power.

One retired CIA officer, who still prefers anonymity, was chief of collections in covert action when Phillips was on the Cuban desk. ‘There wasn’t a period when I could sign off on a cable from him,’ he said. ‘I usually had to send them back for some glaring technical errors. He was an incredibly sloppy officer, but he had a keen sense of public relations. Phillips was a grandstander. He was one of those guys who wanted to run countries in his own free-wheeling style. We had a lot of guys like that. Howard Hunt was another fellow cut precisely from the same cloth as Dave Phillips.204 They were romantic adventurers. They couldn’t possibly subject themselves to the kind of dry,

203 Ibid, 263.
204 On Phillip’s and Hunt’s exceptionally close friendship, see ibid, 307-8.
The arid, dispassionate anonymity you have to have if you’re going to be a good espionage. Phillips was the supreme adventurer, one of a crowd of grandstanders who got into this goddamn CIA and once they got in they found out that in America, the grandstanding country, they could actually play to the galleries. And they’ve got away with it…One of the problems with the Central Intelligence Agency…is that it operates with two sets of books [Yankee and Cowboy?] It allows men like David Phillips, who [it] could not endure otherwise, to get into positions where they can’t be dropped off the line…Now once you reach that certain point, you can do almost no wrong because you’ve got too much guilty knowledge inside your head.\(^{205}\)

My second conclusion is that the concept of Dealey Plaza as an open-air stage for the theatre of the false-flag is proven by the person of Phillips himself. It is not merely the case that Phillips happened to be a conspirator who engineered a deep event as a false-flag; rather, the truth of Dealey Plaza as the central component of a strategy-of-tension operation would actively require the presence of Phillips, or someone very much like him, operating within and through the counter-intelligence divisions of either the CIA or some parts of the myriad networks of military intelligence.\(^{206}\) Further, the Dallas

\(^{205}\) Ibid, 329-30.

\(^{206}\) I have suspected for quite a while, but have so far been unable to prove, the ‘background’ role of military intelligence, including the Defense Intelligence Agency/DIA, within JFK/DALLAS. I feel it likely that many of the ‘usual suspects’ from the CIA may very well have constructed within the media as cut-outs for DIA operatives. It is also possible that military intelligence may solve the ‘problem’ of Maurice Bishop: that Veciana was mis-led into thinking that his contact officer was with the CIA and not with the DIA and/or Army Intelligence. Apparently, ‘Maurice Bishop’ was an alias used by a number of different CIA case officers. Albarelli, 441-2. To the best of my knowledge, Bill Simpich’s recently published on-line book, State Secret, does the best job
spectacle as counter-intelligence operation obviates the need to positively establish that Oswald was not ‘the lone gunman’ of the Warren Commission; both the operational, and legal, definition of conspiracy can be established even if Oswald was the sole shooter.

The Dallas script did not position Lee Oswald as a lone nut acting entirely on his own initiative. The plot was intended to present the assassination as a conspiracy, one that would lead directly to Fidel Castro and a Castro intelligence organization operating within the United States. The plotters spent considerable effort associating Lee Oswald with purported Castro agents and positioning him as being paid by Castro in the killing of President Kennedy. This script did not present Oswald as a devout Castro activist and revolutionary—as might have been anticipated from the New Orleans FPCC activities of Oswald—but rather as a nut or an unstable gun for hire. That was the characterization presented to Sylvia Odio [on September 26 or 27, 1963]. Oswald was presented as someone dangerous, emotional, and unpredictable.\(^{207}\)

What matters was the clandestine network operating around him.

The plotters were presenting Oswald as a paid Castro agent associating with Castro operatives. They had one sacrificial patsy but no shortage of shooters; beyond any other consideration they had to ensure that John Kennedy died. Their original concept seems to have included multiple officials as targets, perhaps explaining the shots to Gov-

\(^{207}\) Hancock, 219.
error [John] Connally. There was no reason for them to limit the number of shots or shooters.\textsuperscript{208}

On the basis of my ‘minimalist’ conspiracy scenario, then, premised upon the public staging of the false-flag, the ‘enormous network of mobsters, anti-Castro Cubans, and right-wing political activists’ that Kaiser outlines can be restricted to the following key suspects: David Atlee Phillips, Tracy Barnes, Antonio Veciana, George de Mohrenschildt, Guy Bannister, and, in the not improbable (but as yet unproven) recruitment of one or more supplemental—or even substitute shooters—for Oswald, David Morales. And if we are able to not implausibly expand the covert parapolitical parameters of JFK/DALLAS to include multiple shooters, then Oswald’s ‘network’ would include the Cuban snipers Eladio del valle Gutierrez, Sandalio Herminio Diaz Garcia and Nestor Izquierdo. In order to make out a conspiracy it is not necessary, therefore, to refute any of the Oswald-shot-the-President forensic evidence; I need merely to re-contextualize it.

\textbf{ADDENDUM TO O\textsc{swald} IN M\textsc{exico} C\textsc{ity}: PH\textsc{ilo}-C\textsc{ommunists} TWISTING THE NIGHT AWAY\textsuperscript{209}}

It is necessary, however, to discuss in some detail one of the most troubling aspects of Oswald’s supposed trip to Mexico City. In the second half of 1969, Charles William Thomas, an official of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City throughout the 1960s who was also a CIA ‘plant’ within the State Department,\textsuperscript{210} submitted a series

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, 298; see also ibid, 219-20.

\textsuperscript{209} For much of what follows, see chapters Eight and Ten in Albarelli.

\textsuperscript{210} Albarelli, 353. Thomas committed suicide in April 1971. Ibid, 359. For
of reports ("Investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald in Mexico"), along with extensive attached memoranda, to Secretary of State William Rogers. The core of these reports concerned Elena Garro de Paz, the former wife of the poet Octavio Paz and an important writer in her own right, who claimed on several occasions to have seen Oswald, along with two unidentified ‘gringos’, at a twist party in Mexico City sometime in ‘late September’ 1963. The party was allegedly held at the home of Garro’s cousin Ruben Duran, who was married to Sylvia Tirado de Duran, a receptionist at the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City and (allegedly) Oswald’s ‘mistress’ during his visit. According to Garro, ‘most of the guests at the party were communists or philo-communists,’ in-

Scott in general, see Shenon, 1-10, 505-8 and 527-31.

211 Ibid, 347. As Morley puts it, the ‘chain of communication was elaborate’—and suspicious: Garro told her friend the Costa Rican poet Eunice Odio who told a CIA asset codenamed TICHBORN who told the director of covert action for the CIA station in Mexico City, who then told station chief Winston Scott. Morley, 336. Scott then received independent verification of the story from June Cobb, a CIA informant and a ‘friend received independent confirmation of Garro’s story from June Cobb; Cobb was a highly valued CIA asset who specialized in ‘penetration operations’ against the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (Oswald’s ‘old outfit’) through seduction. Her main sponsor within the CIA was David Phillips. Ibid, 240 and 176. For Cobb’s history as a CIA asset, see Albarelli, 377-425; for Eunice Odio, see ibid, 413-16.

212 Ibid, 274. Duran only confessed to a sexual tryst with Oswald following the application of ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’ by Mexican police following her arrest on November 23 1963. Shenon, 521. Interestingly, Duran has always described Oswald as both short and blond, while Oswald was fairly tall (5’9”) and brown haired. Ibid, 552. The original transcript of Duran’s interrogation clearly refutes her relationship with Oswald as well as his presence in the Cuban Consulate on Saturday 28 September. Newman, Oswald and the CIA, 405-13. As John Newman uncategorically concludes: ‘The CIA and the Mexican government were the source of this bogus story.’ Ibid, 408. Also of note was that Duran’s ‘description of Oswald as blond and short was mysteriously ignored by the Warren Commission.’ Ibid, 413; see ibid, 405-13.
cluding the Cuban Consul Eusebio Azcue, General Clark Flores of the Mexican Olympic Committee, the pro-Castro writer Emilio Carballido, and Sylvia Duran herself, along with the three Americans.²¹³

At the party, the man she [Garro] assumes was Oswald²¹⁴ wore a black sweater [maybe the same black sweater he wore in Dallas when he was shot by Jack Ruby]. He tended to be silent and stared a lot at the floor. Of his two young American companions, one was very tall and slender and had long blond hair which hung across his forehead. He had a gaunt face and a rather long, protruding chin…The other was also rather tall and had short, light brown hair, but had no real distinguishing characteristics…All three were obviously Americans and did not dance or mix with the other people. The three were evidently friends, because she [Garro] saw them by chance the next day walking down the street [Insurgentes Avenue] together.²¹⁵

Elsewhere in his report on Garro’s story, Thomas states that Garro also claimed that on another occasion, sometime either before or after the late September twist party with ‘Oswald’, she attended another party that included Carballidio, Azcue, and a tantalizingly unidentified ‘Latin American man with red hair.’²¹⁶

²¹³ Albarelli, 274.
²¹⁴ Or, perhaps, the ubiquitous second Oswald?
²¹⁵ Ibid, 353.
²¹⁶ One of the minor mysteries of JFK/DALLAS is that reports of a ‘negro’ with frizzy red hair appear periodically throughout the saga. He figures prominently in a bizarre incident involving Gilberto Alvarado, a CIA asset and an informant for the CIA-backed Nicaraguan Intelligence Service. On November 25, Alvarado contacted the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City claiming that he had personally witnessed Oswald inside the Cuban Embassy receiving a payment of U.S. $6500 from a negro with red hair. Contaminating any possible value of this story was the fact that
Reputedly, Carballidio and Azcue

along with a few others, got into a heated discussion on that [undated] occasion about President Kennedy, and they came to the conclusion that the only solution was to kill him.\footnote{217}

This remarkable outburst of un-diplomatic language, occurring in the presence of numerous witnesses, bears more than a passing similarity to Oswald’s own equally spectacular announcement: during his visit to the Cuban Embassy on September 27 Oswald allegedly shrieked out his intent to murder JFK because, apparently, Kennedy’s trade embargo with Cuba was preventing Oswald from obtaining a visa to travel to Havana.\footnote{218} Complicating things even further, Thomas claimed that Garro ‘said that Carballido is known as a Castro agent in Mexi-}

\footnote{217 Albarelli, 354. Emphasis in the original.}

\footnote{218 There is enormous controversy over this alleged event. ‘The ultimate source of the information …was, remarkably enough, Fidel Castro himself. The Cuban dictator’s words had been relayed to the FBI from a “confidential” bureau informant…According to the informant, Castro had repeatedly been overheard in Havana talking about what his diplomats in Mexico City had known about Oswald. “Our people in Mexico gave us the details in a full report of how he acted when he came to Mexico,” Castro was quoted as saying… “Oswald stormed into the Embassy, demanded the visa, and, when it was refused him, headed out saying ‘I’m going to kill Kennedy for this,’” Castro was quoted as saying.’ Shenon, 382. As Simpich has pointed out, not the least striking element of this story is that Oswald apparently went to the Cuban Embassy to demand a visa when he should have gone to the Consulate; the fact that no Embassy staff member pointed this out to him speaks volumes. Simpich, Chapter Five, pages twenty to twenty-one, traces the genealogy of disinformational weirdness. See also, Scott, Deep Politics II, 90-109; ‘Paradoxically, one can argue that the greater the number of falsehoods in the story, the greater the potential evidentiary importance.’ Ibid, 95.}
co. He has been to Red China, the Soviet Union, and many times to Cuba.  

Garro never recanted her story; during Robert Kennedy’s visit to Mexico City in November 1964, Garro ‘was among those trying to pass information about Oswald to Kennedy during his stay.’

This bizarre event does have to be dealt with for, if true, it presents compelling prima facie evidence that Oswald was either recruited as an assassin by representatives of the Cuban government in Mexico City, or, at the very least, was operating under the influence of these Cuban diplomats and pro-Castro Mexicans in the mistaken assumption that killing Kennedy would result in his being granted a visa to Cuba—a scenario which, as a point of law, does meet the definition of criminal conspiracy. The evidence, however, indicates that Garro’s story is either bogus or, more ominously, the result of yet another covert act of disinformation. The U.S. Embassy’s Legal Attache and FBI liaison Nathan Ferris conducted the preliminary investigation of Garro’s claims after she approached the U.S. Embassy soon after Dealey Plaza and rejected her story, noting that “someone who was at the [first] party had stated that there were no Americans there.” In 1977, Thomas Mann, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico in 1963, approached staff members of the HSCA and informed them that Secretary of State Dean Rusk had personally ordered him to

219 Albarelli, 354.
220 Talbot, 301.
221 See Section 5.03 (1) (a) of the U.S. Penal Code (1985): a criminal conspirator ‘Agrees with such other person or persons that they or one or more of them will engage in conduct that constitutes such crime or an attempt or solicitation to commit such crime.’
222 Albarelli, 350. The general consensus among JFK/DALLAS investigators is that the FBI report effectively discredited Garro’s story. Personal communication with Peter Dale Scott.
terminate any investigation in Mexico City that would “confirm or refute rumors of Cuban involvement in the assassination”; he also speculated at that time that Silvia Duran was a CIA asset.\textsuperscript{223} Oscar Contreras, a law student at Mexico City’s National Autonomous University in 1963, claimed to have met with Oswald on campus and agreed to help him obtain a Cuban visa\textsuperscript{224}; however, in June 2013, in conversation with investigative journalist Philip Shenon, Contreras claimed to have later seen Oswald at a distance during a reception in the Cuban Embassy but did not approach him, ‘because of warnings from Cuban friends that he might be some sort of CIA plant.’\textsuperscript{225} (This fits well with Hancock’s own estimation of the affair: ‘Oswald’s own activities in Mexico City can best be interpreted as an extension of his FPCC propaganda role with possible enhancement as a test of whether he could establish himself in an anti-American role with the Cuban Embassy.’\textsuperscript{226}) Finally, Thomas himself makes clear in his own report to Rogers that ‘some of the people appearing in the Elena Garro scenario may well be agents of the CIA.’\textsuperscript{227} In the alternative, even if we were to accept the story as true, there is still considerable internal evidence of a CIA frame of Oswald, consistent with the false-flag. It is definitely possible that Emilio Carballido was a CIA double-agent: following JFK/DALLAS, Carballido, spent approximately one year in Cuba and, when he returned to the U.S. in September 1965 via Mexico, although he was a known Leftist,\textsuperscript{228} ‘he got a job teaching at Rutgers University

\textsuperscript{223} Shenon, 543-44.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid, 522-3.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid, 554.
\textsuperscript{226} Hancock, 121.
\textsuperscript{227} Albarelli, 352.
\textsuperscript{228} ‘Emilio Carballido, according to CIA and FBI files generated in 1966,
through Dr. Jose Vasquez Amaral, who was formerly with the Rockefeller Foundation’, a known CIA affiliate and ‘front’. If Carballido was a mole, this could provide evidence for an alternative theory that occasionally appears within the conspiracy literature: that the Marxist Oswald was recruited by anti-Castro double agents posing as pro-Castro operatives; in a less complicated narrative, however, he could simply be one of the CIA sources for the frame. Of particular interest, therefore, is the utterly uncanny history of a strong candidate for the (possibly non-fictitious) second American at the twist party for whom Garro provided a ‘near perfect description’: Thomas Eli Davis III. Davis appears to have been both a CIA asset and an informant for the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN). He also seems to have participated in at least some of Jack Ruby’s gun-running shipments to Cuba. In May 1963 in Downey California, Davis attempted to recruit an outfit of American ‘soldier-of-fortune types’ for a mercenary expedition to Haiti by placing an advertisement in the Los Angeles Times. Significantly, Davis’ (unspectacular) recruiting efforts took place simultaneously with the far more suc-

229 Ibid.

230 Ibid, 353.

231 Albarelli speculates that Davis may have been subjected to MK/ULTRA mind-control experiments at the CIA front Lafayette Clinic during his internment there from July 16 to October 1 1958. Ibid, 314-15. A preoccupation with MK/ULTRA is one of the signature characteristics of Albarelli’s work.

232 Ibid, 323.

233 Hancock, 526.

234 Albarelli, 321.
cessful efforts of anti-Castro paramilitary Loran Hall.

Hall, surely not coincidentally, was also recruiting for what was most likely the same operation. Indeed, there is serious speculation, according to one former CIA operative, that Davis’ Los Angeles operation was deliberately slip-shod and high-profile by design so as to throw off FBI investigators from Hall’s concurrent recruitment activities. Said the same official, who declined to be named in this book, ‘It is a common ploy with the CIA. Sometimes there can be 3 or 4 operations in play at one time but only one is actually fully planned and intended to go forward. It is similar to sophisticated drug traffickers sending out three or four large shipments of drugs with the objective that only one shipment will actually make it to its intended destination.’

It should come as perhaps no surprise that George de Mohrenschildt conducted a series of Haitian-based oil and geological business ventures, some of which ‘according to at least two former U.S. State Department officials, involved the technical, in-country [Haiti] services of Thomas Eli Davis III, [as well as] two or three other American soldier-of-fortune types who were in and out of Haiti, Guatemala, Panama, and the Dominican Re-

235 Ibid, 325. We can also link both Davis and Hall with that nameless black guy with red hair. After Oswald’s death, the address ‘1318 ½ Garfield, Norman Oklahoma’ was found in his address book. Apparently both Davis and Hall lived briefly in Norman Oklahoma prior to the assassination. As for the residents of 1318 ½ itself, they consisted of several white teenagers along with one African youth. Albarelli writes: ‘Additionally, and very intriguing is that at least two elderly residents of the…neighbourhood, not wanting to “get involved in any way with anything to do with that Oswald character,” reported that the “Black man” that lived with the group at the address “stood out some” because “he had reddish hair.”’ Ibid, 88.
public on a regular basis…”

In other words, not three left-wing defectors at the twist party but three right-wing infiltrators.

In the end there are three ways to interpret Oswald’s bizarre journey through the grotesque parapolitical landscape of Mexico City: (i) that the entire story was a wholesale fabrication of the CIA that doubled as both a key component of the false-flag operation as well as one part of a wider cover up most likely coordinated by either David Lee Phillips and/or CIA station chief Winston Scott (see below); (ii) Oswald was in Mexico City (with or without two gringo companions), but deliberately acted in an irrational and highly theatrical manner whether under operational control or not; or (iii) that Oswald himself was never in Mexico City but one or more imposters were (with or without two gringo companions) who were under orders to engage in a series of spectacular performances. In all three scenarios the presence of clandestine agency is undeniable.

**Oswald-as-Nomad**

Of Oswald, the central nomadic actor of the spectacle of JFK/DALLAS, only three things may be said with certainty. The first is that he was clearly a ‘person of interest’ to U.S. intelligence agencies (CIA, FBI, DIA) and was probably actively employed by them, either as a (paid) informant for the FBI and/or a (paid) ‘asset’ by the CIA or DIA (dangle, provocateur, infiltrator, fake de-

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236 Ibid, 343. The reader might be interested to know that Davis ‘died in September 1973 in an abandoned Texas quarry while allegedly attempting to steal copper. He was electrocuted when he cut through a high power line.’ Ibid, 319.
The second is that there was a genuinely strange covert operation/event of some unspecified kind involving Oswald(s) in Mexico City (20 September to 3 October 1963), providing direct evidence that either Oswald’s person (direct participation) and/or identity (indirect participation; the ‘second Oswald’) was manipulated on multiple occasions by either the CIA and/or military intelligence. The third is that he was involved in some manner with the very public assassination of JFK in Dallas on November 22 1963. Determining the nature of the spectacle of Dealey Plaza ultimately hinges on the maddeningly nebulous third certainty. As Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry said “We don’t have any proof that Oswald fired the rifle…No one has been able to put him in that building [the Texas Book Depository] with a rifle in his hand.”\(^{238}\) The problem for the ‘conspiracy theorist’ is that there is absolutely nothing that puts the Mannlicher-Carcano into anybody else’s hands—an evidentiary obstacle that has proven insurmountable over the years. There is currently no direct evidence that would allow us to insert the CIA or military intelligence into Dealey Plaza. One and Two can be proven and placed together to form a plausible and discernible ‘deep background’ to the spectacle; the difficulty is that the move from One and Two to Three still requires a deductive inference or conjectural leap of some kind; there is no direct evidence that any of this formed part of an assassination conspiracy. ‘Oswald’, real or fake, could have been embedded within a plethora of anti-Castro espionage activities none of which bore any direct connection to Dealey Plaza; here, a wholly

\(^{237}\) The fusion of CIA and FBI anti-Cuban counter-intelligence operations in December 1962 with AM/SANTA makes bright-line distinctions here essentially useless.

\(^{238}\) As quoted in Summers, *Not in Your Lifetime*, 98.
synchronous convergence among separate CIA operations involving a fake defection to Cuba by an Agency-run ‘Oswald’ and the presidential execution in Dallas emerges as an undeniable possibility. Much of what has become known in common parlance as ‘the cover-up’ may have been more about *deniability* rather than suppression; the systematic concealment or destruction of evidence of *knowledge* of Oswald by national security agencies in reaction to a massive lapse of national security (the system-wide failure to detect and monitor an objective threat to the Chief Executive), coupled with the need to maintain the integrity of intelligence and counter-intelligence operations, both domestic and foreign (e.g., Mexico City) in the face of judicial or Congressional investigation. Any ‘conspiracy’ would have been strictly ‘off-the-books’ meaning that there would be comparatively little that would need to be covered-up; the conspirators (if any) may very well have counted on the automatic implementation of a thoroughgoing ‘damage control’ operation in the event of such a catastrophic breach of security protocols. And it is within this shadow space of ‘trade craft’ we can postulate any given number of scenarios, including the extraordinarily simple: Phillips, having previously secured the ‘deep background’ of Oswald as pro-Castroite, contacts De Mohrenschildt to instruct Oswald to shoot at the President which ‘the patsy’ understood as one phase of a

239 See below.

240 Technically, it would not even have been necessary to kill JFK: any kind of homicidal attack by a Castro agent would have been sufficient to raise the false-flag. Kennedy’s throat wound (presumably Oswald’s second shot), which, if not fatal, would have been permanently debilitating, rendering the ‘iconic’ head-shot, whether administered by Oswald, a second gunman, or a panicked Secret Service agent, superfluous.
fake Cuban defection operation. 241

In the end we are back to the methodological centre-piece of understanding Dallas-as-Spectacle: Occam’s Razor and the implausible accumulation of improbabilities. In my opinion the most intellectually honest way to confront the logical dilemma inescapably posed by circumstantial evidence is to invoke the counter-intuitive: out of approximately 160 million U.S. citizens what are the exact odds that the man who shot the President is the same person who was either the actor in or the subject of a Byzantine intelligence operation in Mexico City two months prior to the execution? Ultimately what matters most is the accumulative circumstantial evidence of Oswald as a low-level clandestine actor that, when taken in its entirety, works to drastically reduce the implausibility of Dealey Plaza as the spectacle of the false-flag.

Both the beginning and the end of Oswald lie within the nomadic space(s) he inhabited and the thresholds that he traversed.

THE COVER-UP/PHASE II

‘What may have been promoted as a brilliant counter intelligence operation against the Cubans may have become a huge problem for the CIA on November 22.’ —Larry Hancock

If Dealey Plaza is understood as a false-flag spectacle—

241 Or, if Oswald’s Marxist credentials were genuine, as a heroic act on behalf of the Cuban people, one which provided him with the necessary credentials to seek asylum in Havana—at least in the considered opinion of De Mohrenschildt and/or any other fake pro-Castroites Oswald may have been in contact with.
in effect, the importation of OPERATIONS NORTHWOODS into domestic space—then it becomes necessary to divide JFK/DALLAS into two distinct components. ‘Phase I’ was the actual political murder itself, preceded by the ‘frame-up’ of Oswald via the CIA-affiliated segments of the anti-Castro para-militaries.\textsuperscript{242} ‘Phase II’ was what in common parlance is known as the ‘cover-up’ but might be better understood as ‘damage control.’ For the most outstanding fact of JFK/DALLAS, the successful execution aside, was that it utterly failed in its purpose: the integrated convergence of public opinion around a military invasion of Cuba. In place of this was offered a spectacle of a very different but equally integrative kind: Oswald as ‘the lone gunman’, tantamount to the substitution of the Enemy-from-Without by the Enemy-from-Within. Therefore, along with other parapolitical scholars such as Scott, I can postulate a two-phase operation, but one in which the two components are in active opposition.\textsuperscript{243}

\textsuperscript{242} See Scott, \textit{Deep Politics II}. For Scott, it is clear ‘that a number of the “phase one” stories linking Oswald to Cuba did come from a single milieu of anti-Castro Cubans in Miami close to, and in some cases supported by, the CIA’s JM/WAVE station there.’ Ibid, 35.

\textsuperscript{243} It needs to be mentioned here that many conspiracy theorists, such as Mark Lane, interpret Phase I and II as inter-linked sequences of a single covert plan; for whatever reason, JFK was assassinated by elements within the national security services and Oswald was framed as a Cuban and/or Soviet agent precisely so that the political and media Establishment would cover up the crime on behalf of the perpetrators by committing themselves to the politically far safer media image of Oswald as ‘lone gunman’. In other words, the ‘evidence’ of Oswald’s Cuban links was a form of clandestine political blackmail that threatened World War III; the non-covert but equally spectacular agencies of both the Government and the media would therefore be \textit{forced} to both deny the presence of a conspiracy to kill the President and to insist upon Oswald’s identity as a loner. Lane, generally. For me, the obvious difficulty with this interpretation is, apart from the staggering level of political and military risk that it would have involved, is that it is far too complicated, involving far too many actors. Employing Occam’s Razor again, I feel
On November 23, 1963 the newly sworn-in President Lyndon Johnson held two separate meetings with the Director of the CIA, John McCone, concerning reports of several alleged meetings between Oswald and suspected KGB assassination specialist Valery Kostikov in Mexico City the previous September; ‘Undoubtedly, McCone alarmed Johnson by voicing CIA suspicions of the Soviets employing Oswald to assassinate Kennedy, possibly in retaliation for Kennedy’s humiliation of the Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.’ Whatever effect the frame-up may have had on Johnson was quickly nullified by a series of memos and (taped) conversations between the President and both the Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, and the Deputy Attorney-General Nicholas Katzenbach. In the decisive memo from Hoover to Johnson, dated November 24, 1963, the FBI chief makes it clear that ‘The thing that I am concerned about, and so is Mr. Katzenbach, is having something issued so we can convince the Public that Oswald is the real criminal.’ Similarly, in a memo from Katzenbach to Bill Moyers, special assistant to LBJ, he for-

that the optimal theory to pursue is that of an operational de-linkage between Phase I and Phase II, while insisting that both phases display the logic of the spectacle. And this, in turn, requires understanding the assassination as a false-flag operation directed against Cuba.

244 A concise chronology of President’s Johnson damage control efforts immediately following Dealey Plaza is provided by Hancock, 323-34.
245 Kurtz, 169.
246 Oglesby, Who Killed JFK?, 12.
247 Katzenbach’s own opinion about Dealey Plaza expressed in personal discussion with Talbot is interesting: ‘Today, Katzenbach even suggests that Oswald may have been backed by others. “I’m as certain as one can be there was no other gun shot,” he told me, characterizing as “silliness” views to the contrary. “But it’s not silliness to speculate that somebody was behind Oswald… I’d almost bet on [anti-Castro] Cubans. If I had the choice, if it had to be one of the three,” he said, referring to the CIA, the
mally declares that

1. The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial.

2. Speculation about Oswald’s motivation ought to be cut off, and we should have some basis for rebutting [the] thought that this was a Communist conspiracy or (as the Iron Curtain press is saying) a right-wing conspiracy to blame it on the Communists. Unfortunately the facts on Oswald seem about too pat—too obvious (Marxist, Cuba, Russian wife, etc.) The Dallas police have put out statements on the Communist conspiracy theory, and it was they who were in charge when he was shot and thus silenced.248

In a striking covert move that directly anticipates Nixon’s behavior ten years later during the Watergate scandal, Johnson deploys the FBI to clandestinely ‘over-

Mafia, and Cuban exiles, “I’d say the Cubans probably had the worst judgment.”’. Cited in Talbot, 290.

248 Hinckle and Turner, 263 and Robert Hennelly and Jerry Policoff in Stone and Sklar, 485-6. In the words of revisionist historian James K. Galbraith, “Once you hear the conversations that Johnson had with [future Commission members Earl] Warren and [Senator Richard Russell], you recognize that the commission was not set up for the truth about the assassination…Nonetheless, it had a very high purpose, which was to protect Johnson from the far right, from being stampeded into nuclear war. This is the haunting risk that keeps Johnson wake nights throughout his presidency.” Cited in Talbot, 285. On Johnson’s efforts on suppressing any possible connection between Oswald and either the Soviet KGB or Cuban DGI, see Morley, 215-31. In a television interview given just prior to his death in 1970, Senator Russell publicly declared that he “never believed that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy without at least some encouragement from others…And that’s what a majority of the committee wanted to find. I think that someone else worked with him on the planning.” Cited in ibid, 282.
ride’ the CIA in its estimation of Oswald’s ‘Cuban connection’. On December 9, 1963, the FBI unilaterally (and improperly) released its own investigation of the Dallas shooting to the public, concluding Oswald to have acted alone;\(^{249}\) this ‘pre-emptive’ maneuver via media spectacle effectively bound the Warren Commission to the FBI’s conclusions in advance and forced an integrating convergence of public authority.\(^{250}\)

When confronted with this report, the CIA abruptly curtailed its own internal investigation and carefully followed both J. Edgar Hoover’s and Lyndon Johnson’s strong desire to adhere to the lone assassin interpretation. Both deputy director Richard Helms and director of counter-intelligence James Jesus Angleton made sure that no evidence damaging to the lone assassin-no conspiracy thesis would surface, especially evidence that might implicate the Central Intelligence Agency, or anyone associated with it. Helms, Angleton, and other leading CIA figures clearly preferred to blame the assassination on a ‘lone nut’ than to allow a thorough investigation into matters their agency preferred to keep under the rug.\(^{251}\)

\(^{249}\) Kurtz, 21.

\(^{250}\) Hinckle and Turner, 264-5. As Talbot has remarked, without ‘an investigative unit of its own, the Warren Commission was utterly dependent on the information provided by Hoover at the FBI and Helms and Angleton at the CIA.’ Talbot, 276. Anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that the dominant personality of the Commission was none other than Allen Dulles. Ibid, 274.

\(^{251}\) Kurtz, 171-2. Within Mexico City, most of the Phase II cover up work was undertaken by the head of the CIA station Winston Scott, who received a letter of commendation from the chief of Western Hemisphere division,, J.C. King: “‘your analyses were major factors in the clarification of the case, blanking out the really ominous spectre of foreign backing.’” Morley, 232. There is little doubt that Scott’s Phase II work doubled as a cover up for the whole series of CIA anti-Castro
The paper-trail of both the memos and the oral testimony point to the ‘cover-up’ as inhabiting the same parapolitical contours as the original strategy-of-tension component of Phase I.

Masking the myriad purported links between Oswald and the pro-Castro community, the ‘lone gunman’ was the creation of official damage control, not an element of the conspiracy… Among the difficulties in understanding the Kennedy conspiracy, perhaps the most challenging is reconciling the many elements that appear to be contradictory. This has been made even more difficult for those who have viewed the ‘cover-up’ as an extension of the conspiracy. That difficulty disappears if we first view the conspiracy to frame Oswald as a Castro (or both Cuban and Soviet associated) conspirator, a plan that came totally unraveled when Oswald was taken into custody. And second, we see that the so-called ‘cover-up’ was an independent, largely unplanned and highly reactive effort to ensure that a Lee Oswald would [take] the fall all by himself—as a lone nut.

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252 operations in Mexico City, including LIENVOY and LIFEAT, that any investigation into Oswald would have threatened to expose.

252 Hancock, 298 and 311. Another reason why I reject Lane’s overly elaborate theory of the cover-up is that it requires an absurdly uneconomical expenditure of effort. If the CIA wanted to disassociate itself from Oswald after the fact, then it would have been far simpler, and more convincing, to have framed him as an a-political paranoid or schizophrenic misfit, more along the lines of a Sirhan Sirhan or an Arthur Bremer, rather than as a pseudo-intellectual pro-Castro provocateur. Oswald’s ‘displays’ of neo-Marxist activism are simply too public to be meant for anything other than popular consumption as spectacle. Perhaps the most infamous example of this was Oswald’s ‘street fight’ with anti-Castro Cubans while handing out FPCC leaflets on Canal Street in New Orleans on August 9, 1963; this was followed up several days later by his equally infamous appearance on a local television show. The anti-Castro Cubans whom Oswald engaged with were all members of the DRE; in his report, the police officer who arrested Oswald after the fight wrote...
The entire rationale of Phase II was to pre-emptively neutralize the spectacular power evidenced in the false-flag of Dallas: the integration of the public will to invade Cuba in retaliation for the Communist provocation of murdering JFK. The parapolitical logic of Johnson and all of the other operatives of Phase II mirrors perfectly both the operational and political logic of the strategy-of-tension; opposite in effect but identical in kind.253

One thing is crystal clear. Based on the records releases of the 1990s, fear was a factor in many of the activities that followed the assassination. President Johnson used fear in the creation of the Warren Commission; he personally gave Earl Warren the responsibility to validate the FBI report, which presented Oswald as the lone assassin. That FBI report, itself generated after no more than a few days of investigation, was leaked to the media even before the report itself was completely finalized. Johnson himself, with the assistance of his personal political aide Clifford Carter, had contacted and ordered the Dallas Police and the Dallas District Attorney not to file conspiracy charges against Lee Oswald. In addition, Johnson officially took the murder investigation and major pieces of evidence away from Dallas and apparently ordered them into the possession of the FBI prior to midnight on the evening of the murder.254

The cross-purpose operating between Phase I and Phase II signifying the multiple divergences between the assas-
sination and the cover-up is itself prima facie evidence of the dualistic nature of the American State: the strategy-of-tension that was to result from the assassination phase undertaken by some sort of network of CIA/anti-Castro Cubans was covertly neutralized through the pre-emptive damage control phase executed by both the White House and the FBI through the ironic creation of a rival ‘spectacle’ of their own, the Warren Commission. From a purely judicial perspective, of course, the findings of the Warren Commission, even if factually accurate, or legally worthless, as a ‘properly’ constituted and empanelled independent body of inquiry cannot be, under law, pre-committed to any finding of fact. Similar concerns may also be expressed concerning the autopsy of JFK, which appears to have been performed in total violation of prescribed forensic procedure. Not only was the body improperly removed from Dallas, the scene of the crime, but the post-mortem in Washington appears to have been directed to arrive at a pre-ordained conclusion; at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Admiral George Buck­ley, JFK’s personal physician, ‘briefed the doctors with the information that “the police had captured the guy who did this and all we need is the bullet.”’

If, however, the clandestine modus operandi of Phase I was coun-

255 ‘Less than an hour after the president was declared dead, the Secret Service removed his body from Parkland Hospital. The Dallas County Medical Examiner, Earl Rose, tried to block the doorway, resisting its removal until an autopsy was performed. (And, legally, he was quite right to do so—in 1963, it was not a federal crime to murder a president, and so the federal authorities had no right to make off with the evidence.) But the Secret Service simply shifted him out of the way and left for Love Field.’ Oglesby, Who Killed JFK?, 40.

256 Hancock, 301. Emphasis in the original. See also DiEugenio, 288-309. Although enormously controversial, perhaps the most legally significant outcome of Jim Garrison’s prosecution of Clay Shaw was the District Prosecutor’s exposure of deliberate and repeated violations of forensic propriety. See both Garrison and DiEugenio.
ter-intelligence, then that of Phase II was disinformation. And, as Debord reminds us, disinformation is a vital part of the integrated spectacle, neutralizing the dissenter through the strategic deployment of partial truths and selective counter-claims and counter-factuals. The covert magic of disinformation is that the signaling of its presence operates solely through slanderous imputation; ‘In a world that really has been stood on its head, truth is the moment of falsehood.’ In this way, the ‘conspiracy nut’, such as Jim Garrison or Mark Lane can be undermined through the enormity of the potential for political subversion in the event of the validation of their claims, this with the threshold of counter-intuition having been raised considerably by the elaborate theatre of the spectacular(ly) Dual State. 257

[Disinformation is] openly employed by particular powers, or, consequently, by people who hold fragments of economic or political authority, in order to maintain what is established; and always in a counter-offensive role. Whatever can oppose a single official truth must necessarily be disinformation emanating from hostile or at least rival powers, and would have been intentionally and malevolently falsified…Unlike the straightforward lie, disinformation must inevitably contain a degree of truth but one deliberately manipulated by an artful enemy. That is what makes it so attractive to the defenders of the dominant society. The power which speaks of disinformation does not believe itself to be absolutely faultless, but knows that it can attribute to any precise criticism the excessive insignificance which characterizes disinformation; with the result that it will never have to admit to any particular fault. In essence,

257 For the orchestrated campaign to discredit Lane by CIA ‘plants’ in the mass media, see Lane, 71-154 ; for Garrison, see DiEugenio, 157-66.
disinformation would be a travesty of truth. Whoever disseminates it is culpable, whoever believes it is stupid.\textsuperscript{258}

Paradoxically, once understood as a failed exercise in the raising of the false-flag, the political murder of JFK becomes, in terms of the coldly cynical logic of spectacular power, a remarkably trivial thing: it was a ‘fake’ event that yielded an integration of \textit{inaction}. What is far from trivial, however, and of far greater interest, are the cascades of much wider parapolitical occurrences flowing directly from the successful integration-of-no-thing. For it appears that the integrity of the spectacle required a radical resolution of Civil War II that would culminate in the even more pressing need for another deep event: the only way that Johnson could guarantee the preservation of the media image of the lone gunman was by preempting future Cowboy action through the offering up of a substitute theater of war for Cuba. It cannot be a coincidence that Johnson’s de facto termination of the Cuba Project\textsuperscript{259}—which is precisely what the Warren Commission represented—coincided with the initial beginnings of what was to become the full-scale U.S. military intervention on Vietnam. As Esterline insightfully remarked, “one recognized the inevitability that the total U.S. involvement in Vietnam precluded anything being done in terms of Castro. Since the missile crisis, there didn’t seem to be anything new and different that would warrant any diversion from Vietnam.”\textsuperscript{260}

In truth, the groundwork for a parapolitical ‘swap’ of Vietnam for Cuba had already been prepared fairly early in JFK’s term. On April 20, 1961, the day after the sur-

\textsuperscript{258} Debord, \textit{Comments}, 45.
\textsuperscript{259} Talbot, 271 and 285.
\textsuperscript{260} Bohning, 254.
render of the Cuban amphibious force at the Bay of Pigs (Brigade 2506), JFK issued two executive orders to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The first called for the immediate development of plans to remove Castro with U.S. military force, subject to the vital caveat that this request “should not be interpreted as an indication that U.S. military action against Cuba is probable”; these plans ultimately culminated in MONGOOSE. The second directive created a Presidential Task Force on Vietnam chaired by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell L. Gilpatric that was to immediately formulate ‘A Program of Action to Prevent Communist Domination of South Vietnam.’ These elements of linkage and equivalence were strongly buttressed on April 24, 1961 with McNamara’s receipt of a memo from Deputy Director of the NSC Walter Rostow entitled ‘Notes on Cuba Policy’, who, in even stronger terms than JFK established a new orthodoxy of geo-strategic thought.

There is building up a sense of frustration and a perception that we are up against a game [sic] that we can’t handle…There is one area where success against Communist techniques is conceivable and where success is desperately required in the Free World interest. That area is Vietnam...a clean-cut success in Vietnam would do much to hold the line in Asia while permitting us—and

261 Bohning, 70-1. Emphasis added.
262 Rasenberger, 316-17. Although the subject of extensive historical debate, for consummate Kennedy insider, speech-writer Ted Sorensen, Vietnam did not loom large in the President’s thinking: “Vietnam was not central to the foreign policy of the Kennedy presidency…Berlin was, Cuba, the Soviet Union—but not Vietnam. Vietnam was a low-level insurrection at that point.” Cited in Talbot, 215. According to Talbot, Vietnam only began to acquire serious status in the autumn of 1963 with the beginning of the political crisis in Saigon that culminated in the assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem on 1 November. Ibid, 217-18.
the world—to learn how to deal with indirect aggression.  

Herein ‘clean-cut success’ clearly signified the Cowboy-friendly policy of military intervention; accordingly, on April 27, 1961 Gilpatric’s Task Force submitted its Program to the President who instantly authorized the deployment of an additional 400 ‘anti-guerilla troops’ (i.e., counter-insurgency forces) in South Vietnam. 

Simply put, if the clandestine script of JFK/DALLAS called for the integrating invasion of Cuba, then it was an abject failure. However, the (largely) successful dis-information strategy of Phase II raises the possibility that a vague yet discernible secondary goal—a ‘subliminal’ Track II—was, in fact, achieved: the installation of a red-blooded Cowboy in the Presidency in place of a half-assed Yankee. The spectacular swapping of Johnson for Kennedy and the subsequent ‘Cowboy-izing’ of the war in Vietnam served as the short-term resolution of the civil war of simulacra, albeit at the cost of the by now waning Yankee Establishment.

A comparative reading of two of the most important

263 Ibid, 337.
264 Ibid. 337.
265 ‘Kennedy, despite his Irish Catholicism, was an Establishment figure…[his] introduction to the Establishment arose from his support of Britain, in opposition to his father, in the critical days at the American Embassy in London in 1938-1940. His acceptance into the English Establishment opened its American branch as well. The former was indicated by a number of events, such as sister Kathleen’s marriage to the Marquis of Hartington and the shifting of Caroline’s nursery school from the White House to the British Embassy after her father’s assassination…Another indication of this connection was the large number of Oxford-trained men appointed to office by President Kennedy.’ Quigley, 1245.
266 Although, as I discuss in Chapter Three, there is some evidence that Johnson was a reluctant militarist, prompting the need for another staging of the integrated spectacle in the Gulf of Tonkin.
national security documents of this time provides some compelling circumstantial evidence for my Debordian hypothesis. The first document, prepared for JFK, was National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 263 of October 1963.

**At a meeting on October 5, 1963**, the President considered the recommendations contained in the report of Secretary [Robert] McNamara and General [Maxwell] Taylor on their mission to South Vietnam.

**The President approved the military recommendations contained in Section I B (1-3) of the report**, but directed that no formal announcement be made of the implementation of plans to withdraw 1,000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963.

- It remains the central object of the United States in South Vietnam to assist the people and Government of that country to win their contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy. The test of all decisions and U.S. actions in this area should be the effectiveness of their contributions to this purpose.

- The objectives of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remain as stated in the White House statement of October 2, 1963.[Emphasis added]

NSAM 263 has to be read and understood in light of a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) on the evening of October 2 which was convened specially by JFK to discuss the McNamara-Taylor Report. What en-
sued was, as McNamara said, ‘heated debate about our recommendation that the Defense Department announce plans to withdraw U.S. military forces by the end of 1965, starting with the withdrawal of 1,000 men by the end of the year…once discussions began, we battled over the recommendations.’ In fact, the so-called McNamara-Taylor Report may have been drafted by the Kennedy brothers themselves. While on their fact-finding mission to Vietnam, McNamara and Taylor would cable their daily summations to Marine General Victor Krulak (special assistant for counterinsurgency and special activities for the JCS from February 1962 to January 1964) at the Pentagon who would deliver them regularly to the White House. Both John and Robert Kennedy would dictate the final version of the text directly to Krulak, who would then return to the Pentagon. ‘When the secretaries finished typing up the report in Krulak’s office, it was then bound in a leather cover, flown to Hawaii, and placed in the hands of McNamara and Taylor on their way back from Vietnam. They read the report on their flight to Washington, and presented it to Kennedy at the White House on the morning of October 2.’

267 Douglass, 187.

268 Douglass, 187. It should be noted that the source of Douglass’ account is L. Fletcher Prouty who was referred to by Oliver Stone in an outburst of hyperbole remarkable even by his standards as an anti-conspiracy whistle-blower of such stature as one whose “name will go down in history.” Cited in Chomsky, 140. For a decisive critique of Prouty as a reliable source for ‘inside’ Washington, see Robert Sam Anson in Stone and Sklar, 208-29. Of course, if McNamara was not the true co-author of the Report, then this would go a long way towards explaining the apparently inexplicable: McNamara’s sudden transformation into a ‘hawk’ following Dealey Plaza. See Chapter Three. Porter unpersuasively attempts to argue that McNamara’s outbursts of ‘dovishness’ during the Kennedy administration were due mainly to a truly exceptional sense of personal loyalty to JFK; ‘In McNamara and Taylor, Kennedy had two top national security advisers whom he trusted to come back with the policy
NSAM 263 now becomes clearer.

[Section] 1: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

B. Recommendations:
We recommend that:

- A program be established to train Vietnamese so that essential functions now performed by U.S. military personnel can be carried out by Vietnamese by the end of 1965. It should be possible to withdraw the bulk of U.S. personnel by that time. 269

- In accordance with the program to train progressively Vietnam to take over military functions, the Defense Department should announce in the very near future presently prepared plans to withdraw 1000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963. This action should be explained in low key as an initial step in the long-term program to replace U.S. personnel with trained Vietnamese without impairment of the war effort. 270

While NSAM 263 does not by itself offer definitive proof that JFK intended to gradually withdraw from Vietnam, 271 it does provide unambiguous ‘evidence of recommendations he needed, because of their personal ties to the Kennedy family.’ Porter, 168 and 173.

269 ‘Unequivocally, the goal was withdrawal after victory, by 1965.’ Chomsky, 129. In truth, ‘the sticky question lay in deciding when, if ever, the ARVN [the South Vietnamese army] had reached that elusive performance level.’ Jones, Death of a Generation, 384.

270 Emphases added.

271 ‘No issue in the interpretation of US policy on the road to war in Vietnam has stirred as much controversy as the role of John F. Kennedy.’
absence’ of the political will in the Kennedy administration to authorize full-scale military intervention at that time.\(^{272}\) The second document is draft version of NSAM 273, which was presented to Johnson for his signature on November 26, 1963; however, this draft was actually prepared on November 21.

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\(^{272}\) Porter, 141. The interpretation offered by Logevall impresses me as the most judicious: ‘Kennedy was ambivalent [about Vietnam], more so than many of his top aides. He also was more resistant than most to making an unequivocal American pledge to preserve an independent, non-communist South Vietnam, and he repeatedly made clear his opposition to using American ground troops in the war. He wanted out of the war and probably said so privately to like-minded people. But this says little about his actual intentions in the autumn of 1963.’ Logevall, 69. Whether JFK was the co-author or not, the McNamara-Taylor report ‘had accomplished the major task set for them by Kennedy: to produce a consensus paper and bring back from Saigon a plan he could call a policy. Upon landing back in Washington on 2 October, McNamara went straight to the White House, where Kennedy approved the recommendations and ordered the gradual implementation of a “selective pressures” policy. “As of tonight, we have a policy,” he told those present.’ Ibid, 55. According to presidential speechwriter and consummate Kennedy insider Ted Sorensen, JFK thought that the Vietnam imbroglio was going to be “this nation’s severest test of endurance and patience…He was simply going to weather it out, a nasty and untidy mess to which there was no other acceptable solution…”’. Sorensen cited by Leslie H. Gelb in Stone and Sklar, 392. Perhaps the simplest way of reconciling opposing academic viewpoints is to understand JFK’s (limited) prevarications over Vietnam as just one more example of a preference for two-track approaches; Porter provides compelling detail about JFK’s signature use of back-channel diplomacy in attempting to resolve the Laos ‘crisis’ of March-May 1961 ; ibid, 143-52. He also somewhat less convincingly presents evidence of JFK sporadically attempting to establish a back-channel with Hanoi via New Delhi throughout 1962-3 which were effectively sabotaged by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell Harriman; ibid 153-65.

\(^{272}\) As Porter rightly reminds us, Kennedy ‘never made a formal decision against military intervention in either Laos or Vietnam…Instead, he spoke on the record only of conditions for agreeing to military intervention that were in fact so stringent as to make it impossible.’ Porter, 142-3. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that the real
The President has reviewed the discussions of South Vietnam which occurred in Honolulu, and has discussed the matter further with [U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam Henry Cabot] Lodge. He directs that the following guidance be issued to all concerned:

It remains the central object of the United States in South Vietnam to assist the people and Government of that country to win their contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy. The test of all decisions and U.S. actions in this area should be the effectiveness of their contribution to this purpose.

The objectives of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remain as stated in the White

reason for the ‘secret’ withdrawal plan was to signal to senior South Vietnamese generals the U.S. desire for ‘regime change’ in Saigon. The exact wording of NSAM 263 ‘posed a major dilemma. It sought to achieve the [McNamara-Taylor] mission’s central objective of a phased withdrawal…In reality, however, this step was the one most coveted by the generals as a quiet signal of US interest in a coup.’ For McNamara, the withdrawal strategy ‘would either “push us toward a reconciliation with [President] Diem or toward a coup to overthrow Diem”’ Jones, Death of a Generation, 379 and 383. As co-conspirator General Tran Van Don remarked to his CIA contact Lucien Conein in a meeting on October 28, four days before the coup d’etat, ‘“The only way to win [the war] before the Americans leave in 1965 was to change the present regime.”’ Ibid, 400. See generally Jones, Death of a Generation, Chapter 16. In slightly less cynical terms, Logevall sees NSAM 263 as a more limited attempt to pressure Diem to undertake the political and agrarian reforms understood by Washington to be necessary for the preservation of the South Vietnamese regime. Logevall, 54-5. ‘As for the one-thousand-man withdrawal plan, it must be understood as being primarily a device to put pressure on Diem, as appearing at a time of general military optimism (or at least non-pessimism) in the war, as being wholly conditional upon battlefield success, and as designed to neutralize growing domestic American concerns and counter the appearance that Washington was taking over the war effort.’ Ibid, 69.

There are two important differences between NSAM 263 and the draft version of 273: (i) all reference to Section I B has been removed from the later document, and (ii) the reference to the President in NSAM 273, drafted the day before JFK’s murder, is to Johnson, not Kennedy; it was the Vice-President, not the President, who had attended the Honolulu Conference.

The record confirms that the first and only President to ever review the discussions conducted at the Honolulu Conference and further discuss them with Ambassador Lodge in Washington was LBJ. How do we know with certainty? JFK never survived Dallas. He never returned to Washington to meet with Lodge or anyone else. He returned to Washington in a casket. The only person to whom this DRAFT document could therefore refer by implication is LBJ. Although he was not yet President at the time it was written—LBJ is the one who met with Ambassador Lodge in Washington and is the one who signed the final version of NSAM 273 on the 26th.

As Scott has pointed out, the subject of the Honolulu meeting was OPLAN-34, which had been approved by General Taylor and the JCS at a meeting at the Pentagon on November 20. But it had not been shown to McNamara and it was never seen by Kennedy. Calling for a substantive escalation in the deployment of U.S. armed forces in South Vietnam—in a marked deviation from JFK’s signature strategy of covert operations and counter-insurgency—‘the 34-A Operations led in August 1964 to the first bombing of North Vietnam with U.S. planes, something which ‘President Kennedy for two

273 Burnham, 2.
and one half years had resisted.’\textsuperscript{274} And the deep event that provided the necessary linkage between the implementation of OPLAN-34 and the U.S. invasion of South Vietnam was yet another spectacle.

\textsuperscript{274} Scott, ‘9/11’, 25; Kaiser, \textit{American Tragedy}, 211. Although Scott does not raise this point explicitly, his discussion of NSAM 273 clearly implies that certain members of the Cabinet, such as Secretary of State Dean Rusk, had foreknowledge of Dealey Plaza. If so, then it would strongly imply that either active planning or passive knowledge of JFK/DALLAS was present at the most senior levels of the CIA; in my opinion, the most likely candidate for the ‘master mind’ of the spectacle would have been James Jesus Angleton, the Director of Counter-Intelligence and the officer exercising executive oversight over both Barnes and Phillips.