

The Posthumous Assassination of John F. Kennedy

Judith Exner, Mary Meyer and Other Daggers

By Jim DiEugenio

Current events, most notably a past issue of *Vanity Fair*, and the upcoming release of Sy Hersh's new book, extend an issue that I have dealt with in a talk I have done several times around the country in the last two years. It is entitled "The Two Assassinations of John Kennedy." I call it that because there has been an ongoing campaign of character assassination ever since Kennedy was killed.

In the talk to date, I've dealt primarily with the attacks on Kennedy from the left by Noam Chomsky and his henchman Alexander Cockburn which occurred at the time of the release of Oliver Stone's *JFK*. But historically speaking, the attacks on the Kennedys, both Jack and Robert, have not come predominantly from the left. The attacks from the right have been much more numerous. And the attacks from that direction were always harsher and more personal in tone. As we shall see, that personal tone knows no limits. Through papers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, the attacks extend into the Kennedys' sex lives, a barrier that had not been crossed in post-war mainstream media to that time. To understand their longevity and vituperativeness, it is necessary to sketch in how they all began. In that way, the reader will be able to see that Hersh's book, the *Vanity Fair* piece on Judith Exner, and an upcoming work by John Davis on Mary Meyer, are part of a continuum.

The Right and the Kennedys

There can be no doubt that the right hated the Kennedys and Martin Luther King. There is also little doubt that some who hated JFK had a role in covering up his death. One could use Secret Service agent Elmer Moore as an example. As revealed in *Probe* (Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 20-21), Moore told one Jim Gochenaur how he was in charge of the Dallas doctors testimony in the JFK case. One of his assignments as liaison for the Warren Commission seems to have been talking Dr. Malcolm Perry out of his original statement that the throat wound was one of entry, which would have

indicated an assassin in front of Kennedy. But another thing Gochenaur related in his Church Committee interview was the tirade that Moore went into the longer he talked to him: how Kennedy was a pinko who was selling us out to the communists. This went on for hours. Gochenaur was actually frightened by the time Moore drove him home.

But there is another more insidious strain of the rightwing in America. These are the conservatives who sometimes disguise themselves as Democrats, as liberals, as "internationalists." This group is typified by men like Averill Harriman, Henry Stimson, John Foster Dulles and the like. The common rubric used to catalog them is the Eastern Establishment. The Kennedy brothers were constantly at odds with them. In 1962, Bobby clashed with Dean Acheson during the missile crisis. Acheson wanted a surprise attack; Bobby rejected it saying his brother would not go down in history as another Tojo. In 1961, JFK disobeyed their advice at the Bay of Pigs and refused to add air support to the invasion. He was punished for this in *Fortune* magazine with an article by Time-Life employee Charles Murphy that blamed Kennedy for the failure of the plan. Kennedy stripped Murphy of his Air Force reserve status but — Murphy wrote to Ed Lansdale — that didn't matter; his loyalty was to Allen Dulles anyway. In 1963, Kennedy crossed the Rubicon and actually printed money out of the Treasury, bypassing that crowning jewel of Wall Street, the Federal Reserve Board. And as Donald Gibson has written, a member of this group, Jock Whitney, was the first to put out the cover story about that Krazy Kid Oswald on 11/22/63 (*Probe* Vol. 4 No.1).

Killing off the Legacy

In 1964, author Morris Bealle, a genuine conservative and critic of the Eastern Establishment, wrote a novel called *Guns of the Regressive Right*, depicting how that elite group had gotten rid of Kennedy. There certainly is

a lot of evidence to substantiate that claim. There were few tears shed by most rightwing groups over Kennedy's death. Five years later, they played hardball again. King and Bobby Kennedy were shot. One would think the coup was complete. The war was over.

That would be underestimating these people. They are in it for the long haul. The power elite realizes that, in a very real and pragmatic sense, assassination isn't enough. You have to cover it up afterwards, and then be ready to smother any legacy that might linger. The latter is quite important since assassination is futile if a man's ideas live on through others. This is why the CIA's Bill Harvey once contemplated getting rid of not only Castro, but his brother Raul and Che Guevara as well as part of single operation. That would have made a clean sweep of it. (In America's case, one could argue that such an operation was conducted here, over a period of five years.)

The smothering effect afterward must hold, since the assassinated leader cannot be allowed to become a martyr or legend. To use a prominent example, in 1973, right after the CIA and ITT disposed of Salvador Allende and his Chilean government, the State Department announced (falsely) that the U. S. had nothing to do with the coup. Later on, one of the CIA agents involved in that operation stated that Allende had killed himself and his mistress in the presidential palace. This was another deception. But it did subliminally equate Allende's demise with the death of Adolf Hitler.

The latter tactic is quite prevalent in covert operations. The use of sex as a discrediting device is often used by the CIA and its allies. As John Newman noted in *Oswald and the CIA*, the Agency tried to discredit its own asset June Cobb in the wake of the Kennedy assassination. It did the same to Sylvia Duran, Cuban embassy worker in Mexico City who talked to Oswald or an impersonator in 1963.

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In *Probe* (Vol. 4 No. 4, p. 9) we have seen how journalist (and CIA-applicant) Hugh Aynsworth and the *New York Herald Tribune* tried to smear Mark Lane with compromising photographs. If one goes to New Orleans, one will still meet those who say that Jim Garrison indicted Clay Shaw because he was himself gay and jealous of Shaw's position in the homosexual underworld. And we all know how the FBI tried to drive King to suicide by blackmailing him with clandestinely made "sex tapes."

The Church Committee

What precipitated these posthumous and personal attacks on the Kennedys? Something happened in the seventies that necessitated the "second assassination" from the right — i.e. the use of scandal to stamp out Kennedy's reputation and legacy. That something was the Church Committee. Belated revelations about the CIA's role in Watergate, and later of the CIA's illegal domestic operations created a critical firestorm demanding a full-scale investigation of the CIA. The fallout from Watergate had produced large Democratic majorities in both houses of congress via the 1974 elections. This majority, combined with some of the moderate Republicans, managed to form special congressional committees. The committee in the Senate was headed by Idaho's Frank Church. Other leading lights on that committee were Minnesota's Walter Mondale, Colorado's Gary Hart, Tennessee's Howard Baker, and Pennsylvania's Richard Schweiker.

As writers Kate Olmsted and Loch Johnson have shown, the Church Committee was obstructed by two of the CIA's most potent allies: the major media and friendly public figures. In the latter category, Olmsted especially highlights the deadly role of Henry Kissinger. But as Victor Marchetti revealed to me, there was also something else at work behind the scenes. In an interview in his son's office in 1993, Marchetti told me that he never really thought the Agency was in danger at that time. He stated that first, the CIA had infiltrated the staff of Church's committee and, second, the Agency was intent on giving up documents only in certain areas. In Watergate terminology, it was a "limited-hangout" solution to the problem of controlling the damage.

The Escape Route

The issue that had ignited so much public interest in the hearings had been that of assassination. CIA Director Bill Colby very clearly drew the line that the CIA had never plotted such things domestically. Colby's admission was a brilliant tactical stroke that was

not appreciated until much later. First, it put the focus on the plots against foreign leaders that could be explained as excesses of anti-communist zealotry (which is precisely what the drafters of Church's report did). Second, all probes into the assassinations of JFK, RFK, and MLK would be off-limits. The Church Committee would now concentrate on the performance of the intelligence community in *investigating* the death of JFK; not complicity in the assassination itself. This distinction was crucial. As Colby must have understood, the Agency and its allies could ride out exposure of plots against Marxists and villains like Castro, Patrice Lumumba of the Congo and

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Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic. The exposure of domestic plots against political leaders would have been lethal.

Colby's gambit, plus the strictures put on the investigation as outlined by Marchetti above, enabled the intelligence community to ride out the storm. The path chosen for limited exposure was quite clever. The most documentation given up by the CIA was on the Castro assassination plots. Further, the Agency decided to give up many documents on both the employment of the Mafia to kill Fidel, and the AM/LASH plots, that is, the enlistment of a Cuban national close to Castro to try and kill him. Again, not enough credit has been given to the wisdom of these choices. In intelligence parlance, there is a familiar phrase: muddying the waters. This means that by confusing and confounding the listener with diverse and prolific amounts of information, the main point becomes obfuscated. Since none of the Mafia plots succeeded, one could claim they were ineffectual. The huge amount of publicity garnered by them could eventually be deflected onto the Mob's role in them and not the Agency's. The AM/LASH plots, exposed in even more copious documentation, could be used in a similar way. If Castro knew about these plots within his midst, couldn't he then claim turnabout and use the same tactics by employing a Communist in the U.S. to kill Kennedy? This, or a combination of the two, has been what suspect

writers like Jean Davison and Jack Anderson have been foisting on the public for years.

The Establishment Takes Some Hits

The political fallout from the Church Committee was quite intense. The CIA took quite a few hits, though it emerged intact. Eastern Establishment-GOP mainstay Allen Dulles was implicated in the authorization of two assassination plots (Lumumba and Castro). Even Republican icon Dwight Eisenhower was implicated:

The chain of events revealed by the documents and testimony is strong enough to permit a reasonable inference that the plot to assassinate Lumumba was authorized by President Eisenhower.

Nixon was shown to be obsessed with getting rid of the Allende regime in Chile. And since he had already been disgraced with Watergate, his defenders, like Bill Safire of the *New York Times*, felt that this was piling on. As we shall see, Safire struck back through Judith Exner.

But the plots against Castro took center stage. They seemed full of sensational, fantastic revelations that seemed right out of a James Bond movie: poison pills, exploding sea shells, contaminated diving suits etc. But no matter how hard they tried, the media moguls (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*) could not tie the Kennedys to them. This didn't seem fair in light of all the mud heaped on Eisenhower, Dulles and the Watergated Nixon. Unfortunately, not even the CIA's 1967 Inspector General's report, commissioned by Richard Helms for LBJ, implicated the Kennedys.

No Authorization

The Inspector General's Report (which is quite thorough and methodical), and the Church Committee's report dealing with assassinations (entitled *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*) are both quite clear on this point. For instance, when the former report was analyzing the published details of a Drew Pearson-Jack Anderson 1967 leak about the Castro plots, it labeled the Pearson-Anderson insinuation about Robert Kennedy's "approval" of the plots as "Not true." It later goes on to say that the role played by Robert Kennedy in Pearson's story is "a garbled account." What had happened was that through the FBI's discovery of a wiretapping favor done for Maheu's contact in the plots (Chicago mobster Sam Giancana) Hoover had learned of the CIA-Mob link and forwarded his knowledge to Robert Kennedy. Kennedy turned it over to Courtney Evans, his FBI liaison, and asked him to get back with all the known details. He was finally briefed on it in May of 1962. There can be no doubt about his reac-

tion. As one of Bobby's CIA briefers stated: "If you have seen Mr. Kennedy's eyes get steely and his jaw set and his voice get low and precise, you get a definite feeling of unhappiness."

In a memo of a meeting Hoover had with RFK after this briefing, Hoover wrote: "The Attorney General told me he wanted to advise me of a situation in the Giancana case which had *considerably disturbed him*" [emphasis added]. For his own part, Hoover wrote of his talk about the matter with the AG:

I expressed great astonishment at this [the association] in view of the bad reputation of Maheu and the horrible judgment in using a man of Giancana's background for such a project. The Attorney General shared the same views.

Kennedy had made it clear to the CIA that if they were to have any more of these types of ideas about using these characters, they would have to go through the Justice Department first, i.e. him. But what RFK did not know is that, as the I. G. Report states:

It should be noted that the briefing of Kennedy was restricted to Phase One of the operation, which had ended about a year earlier. Phase Two was already underway at the time of the briefing, but Kennedy was not told of it.

In fact, on the same day that RFK was briefed, the CIA's Sheffield Edwards (one of the briefers) along with William Harvey agreed to falsify the record by saying all future plots had to be authorized by the Director of the CIA. They weren't. John McCone was deliberately kept out of the loop by Richard Helms and Harvey. Harvey admitted to the Church Committee that the Edwards memo was a deliberately false record, a cover story. In fact, Harvey had already taken over the plots when Edwards told Robert Kennedy they were terminated.

JFK Never Authorized Them

On the question of authorization, every official from Kennedy's administration testified that JFK never knew of any plots, or authorized them. This includes Dean Rusk, Max Taylor, John McCone (*Alleged Assassination Plots* pp. 154-161). Even McGeorge Bundy, about whom many have had suspicions, denied that Kennedy had ever approved them or been informed of any plots (*Ibid.* p. 156). To conclude the matter, the two people in on them at this time (1962) said the same, i.e. Richard Helms (*Ibid.* pp. 148-152) and Bill Harvey (pp. 153-154).

The CIA *did* try to coax approval from him. The Church Committee took testimony from two people who were quite compelling on this point. They were Tad Szulc, a reporter for the *New York Times* Washington bureau, and Sen. George Smathers of Florida. In late 1961, Szulc had been called in to speak with the presi-

dent at the request of Richard Goodwin and Robert Kennedy. After a general discussion of Cuban matters, JFK asked him, "What would you think if I ordered Castro to be assassinated?" Szulc said he didn't think it would help foster change in Cuba, and he didn't think Americans should be associated with such matters. Kennedy replied, "I agree with you completely." Szulc testified that:

He went on for a few minutes to make the point how strongly he and his brothers felt that the United States should never be in a situation of having recourse to assassination.

Szulc's notes of the meeting state:

JFK then said he was testing me, that he felt the same way — he added "I'm glad you feel the same way" — because indeed the U. S. morally must not be part (sic) to assassinations.

The Church Committee also heard testimony from Smathers who stated that once when it was brought up in his presence (presumably by the CIA friendly Smathers), Kennedy got so mad he smashed a dinner plate and told him he did want to hear of such things again (*Alleged Assassination Plots* p. 124). Smathers furthered this portrait later when he stated that:

President Kennedy seemed "horrified" at the idea of political assassination. "I remember him saying... that the CIA frequently did things he didn't know about, and he was unhappy about it. He complained that the CIA was almost autonomous. He told me he believed the CIA had arranged to have Diem and Trujillo bumped off. He was pretty well shocked about that. He thought it was a stupid thing to do, and he wanted to get control of what the CIA was doing." (*The Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond* pp. 379-380)

Such statements not only absolve Kennedy, they actually provide a motive for the CIA to get rid of him, which is probably why the media ignored them.

The fact that Kennedy had clean hands was a bitter pill to swallow. The establishment organized a furious counterattack. Frank Church was accused of being a partisan. The Democrats were charged with "protecting" the Kennedys. There was an exchange of letters in the press between David Eisenhower and one of Bobby Kennedy's sons over the issue. Finally, a solution appeared. Her name was Judith Campbell Exner.

All of this essential background is usually left out of any discussion of the following. It can't be. As we shall see, in many ways it is crucial to an understanding of some events

that — without this precis — seem to take place in a vacuum: motiveless, random, out of place; yet in Exner's case, recurring at regular intervals. As we shall see the promulgators of the following, are very aware of the results of the Church Committee.

Exner To The Rescue

The committee had found that Hoover had a meeting with President Kennedy on March 22, 1962. Through his investigation of Sam Giancana, the Director had discovered that an acquaintance of his — Campbell — had called Kennedy at the White House on numerous occasions. Once Kennedy was told of this, the calls to the White House stopped. Campbell's

name was included in the first draft of the report. But in deference to her privacy and the fact that she denied ever communicating any messages between the two, the committee — by a unanimous vote — did not name her in the final draft. She was referred to there as a "close friend." Some

staffers, perhaps the CIA plants to which Marchetti referred, leaked her name to the *Washington Post*. Significantly, *four days* before the final report was issued, the *Post* printed her name in an article about her. This did the trick. The *Times* and *Post* used this to weaken the impact of Church's report. No less than *two dozen* stories were printed in those two newspapers about Exner. Altogether, those two establishment bastions kept her name in the papers for *six months*. William Safire of the *New York Times*, a former Nixon speechwriter, screamed there could be no "whitewash" of this matter and made it his personal agenda to use Exner as JFK's connection to the plots. He himself wrote five columns on the subject. *Time* magazine did a feature on her. *Newsweek*, the *Post's* sister publication did two. Exner — via the *Times* and *Post* — became a media sensation.

Riding the wave, Exner now took advantage of the publicity and decided to write a book. Big-time literary mogul Scott Meredith was her agent. Meredith reportedly sold serialization rights to the book, sight unseen, to the *National Enquirer* for \$150,000. The book outline was prepared by Meredith's office and was approved by Exner's attorney. A co-author was arranged for.

The co-author turned out to be Ovid Demaris. This is significant. Demaris is usually described as a veteran crime writer of such

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 — Senator George Smathers

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books as *Captive City* and *The Green Felt Jungle*. This is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough.

Demaris Enters the Scene

In his prologue, Demaris writes that he was in the midst of a multi-city tour for his previous book when he heard about Exner's story. The previous book was an oral biography of Hoover entitled *The Director*. In the Hoover book, Demaris has some disparaging remarks about the Church Committee: it was politically motivated, inspired by "rehashes of old charges," and was "flogging a dead horse." Demaris was also unhappy with the many books on Watergate and the fall of Richard Nixon. He characterizes them with the following: "While some of their tall tales may be true, they are not unaware that truth that is stranger than fiction will sell better in a market already jaded by exotic overexposure."

Demaris' book on Hoover can only be called sympathetic. This is immediately indicated by his choice of interviewees. They include high level FBI administrators like Robert E. Wick, John P. Mohr, and Mark Felt; former Attorney General Richard Kleindienst; Hoover publicity flack Louis Nichols who named one of his sons after his boss; and actor Efram Zimbalist who starred in ABC's glamorized series on the Bureau. In the entire book, there are eight pages on Hoover's infamous COINTELPRO operations, i.e. the infiltration, disruption, and occasional destruction of domestic political movements.

In Hoover's disputes with the Kennedys, there can be no doubt where Demaris stands. Speaking of Hoover's reputed blackmailing of presidents, he writes: "It is possible that one or two were intimidated by their own guilty conscience...." He sums up Hoover by saying, "He was, whatever his failings, an extraordinary man, truly one of a kind." The above gives us a hint of why Demaris hooked up with Exner. But a previous work of his is more valuable in that regard.

In 1968 Demaris co-authored with Gary Wills a book titled *Jack Ruby*. The book is, to say the least, a rather shallow portrait of Ruby based on a string of conversations with people the nightclub owner worked with. The profile that emerges is in total concordance with the Warren Commission view of Ruby as a dim, emotional, hustler who killed Oswald because he admired Jack and Jackie so much and wished to spare the widow the ordeal of a trial. Other events are also in line with the *Warren Report*: the shooting is from the sixth floor, Oswald killed Tippit, Ruby went straight down

the Commerce street ramp on November 24th to kill Oswald.

The authors' honesty and acuity are quite suspect in that one of their chief sources is Dallas Deputy DA Bill Alexander, notorious for his close relationship with FBI-CIA journalist and cover-up artist Hugh Aynesworth. Striking also is the fact that they described one of the doctors treating Ruby as "having performed LSD experiments on an elephant" and left it at that. If they would have dug a little deeper, they would have found out that the man was longtime CIA doctor Louis J. West, who also treated Aldous Huxley. It was West's diagnosis that Ruby was a "candidate suitable for treatment" that allowed him to be put on drugs.

At the end, the book reveals that Demaris was "standing close to Jack Ruby when he shot Oswald." In fact, he was the first person to identify Ruby.

Demaris and Wills spend much of their time ridiculing the critics of the *Warren Report*, especially Mark Lane. They also attack Nancy Perrin Rich, a witness who calls attention to Ruby's very important gunrunning into Cuba. At the end, the book reveals that Demaris was "standing close to Jack Ruby when he shot Oswald." In fact, he was the first person to identify Ruby. He then began interviewing witnesses and got especially close to Ruby's lawyers. The authors are especially thankful to Elmer Gertz, the same Gertz who has been revealed in the last two issues of *Probe* as a lawyer for CIA agent Gordon Novel whose attorneys were "clandestinely remunerated" for their services. Gertz also wrote a book on Ruby. It is an equally gaseous whitewash that also goes out of its way to attack the critics, again singling out Mark Lane.

To make the picture complete, in his prologue to the Exner book, Demaris writes about his new task at hand:

Legends are not easily surrendered. The press will fight to preserve its manufactured illusions, its Camelots and Good Ships Lollipop, and God help anyone who inadvertently threatens them.

God, or rather the *Washington Post* and a good review from the *New York Times*, helped them to the tune of over 145,000 books sold, including a mass market paperback sale. Demaris later adds, characterizing the book's approach:

She has a story to tell that is unique, and I would gladly topple all the Camelots, and King Arthurs, or Sir Lancelots, to give her that chance. . . . Francis Ford

Coppola, who directed *The Godfather*, says it best: Men of power and the criminals in our society are distinguished only by their situation, not their morality.

In other words, as far as Exner and he are concerned, there is little difference between the Kennedys, Sam Giancana, and Johnny Roselli.

Judith Exner: My Story

The book itself is more of the same. The aim is to make Exner as attractive as possible; more personally attractive than those around her, especially Kennedy, his clan, and circle. Giancana and Roselli are just your average Italian-American good guys. To Exner, they might as well have owned Domino's Pizza. And Demaris places her frankness beyond question. She says that she will tell the truth, even about people and events she doesn't care to. It is her vow to tell the whole story. Exner inherited a lot of money from her grandmother (in the twenty year adult span of the book, she only mentions one job of a few weeks duration). In her early years she gravitated toward the Hollywood acting colony, since her sister and first husband were thespians. She fell in with the California-Malibu jet set: Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis et. al. She says she prefers the company of men over women and her book shows it. She is flying from one to another so often that, at times it is hard to keep track of where she is: Los Angeles, Palm Springs, Miami, Chicago, Washington etc. She met JFK through Sinatra. Kennedy immediately fell for her. According to Exner, it was not just physical. Kennedy became a doozy mooner in her hands. He talked of leaving his wife for her. At times the pressures of his life got so intense he wanted to escape with her to a deserted island. Since he can't bear to lose her, whenever there is friction in the relationship, Kennedy pours on the charm to smooth it out. Even when Hoover confronts him with the Exner-Giancana association, Kennedy insists on seeing her. At one time, he asks her to board Air Force One with him. She won't because she wants to spare Jackie's dignity.

There is one scene in the book that caps her aforementioned personal appeal vs. JFK's. It crystallizes the Errol Flynn/Don Juan image that Exner wishes to construct out of Kennedy. It is used by some authors of the type we will discuss, most notably CIA-FBI toady and *New York Times-Washington Post* veteran Ron Kessler in his book *Sins of the Father*. On the first day of the Democratic convention in Los Angeles in 1960, Kennedy sends for Exner. She arrives at the hotel but several people are there, including Kennedy's sister. He assures her that they will all be leaving momentarily and that he wants to be alone with her in his moment of victory. Eventually

most of the visitors leave except for two: a tall skinny secretarial type, and Kennedy's adviser Ken O'Donnell. As JFK and Exner slip into the bedroom, the secretary type slips into the bathroom. Exner is puzzled. Kennedy/Flynn then suggests a menage a trois. Exner is outraged, "I can't tell you how disappointed I am in you." Kennedy is in love with her though. Sweetly, he eventually calms her down and they later resume their relationship.

There was something about this hotel scene that bothered me. Something was off and I couldn't put my finger on it until later. I then realized that Exner had left Ken O'Donnell in the suite before the fireworks began. I couldn't understand why. Was Kenny, with the boss' permission, going to make it a foursome? Was he there because he liked to watch and Kennedy understood? Was he going to take pictures so Kennedy/Flynn could admire his handiwork later? Or was he just there to give JFK a ride home since he would be too tired to drive? None of the above. Kennedy asks Exner to give O'Donnell a ride home. When she drops him off, Exner has Ken make an incomplete pass at her. That's when I realized why Ken had not just called a cab while waiting around. O'Donnell had been one of those who wouldn't ratify Exner's visits to the White House. So Exner and Demaris have to make a lecher out of him in order to weaken his credibility and preserve theirs.

O'Donnell had been one of those who wouldn't ratify Exner's visits to the White House. So Exner and Demaris have to make a lecher out of him in order to weaken his credibility and preserve theirs.

Although *Judith Exner: My Story* is pretty thin and prosaic, it runs on for 300 pages. But evidently, Demaris didn't ask enough tough questions. Because in 1988 Exner's story started growing arms and legs. In the February 29, 1988 issue of *People* magazine, Kennedy's picture appeared on the cover. The magazine now did what the Church Committee could not: it linked Kennedy with the plots to kill Castro. The story billed Exner as "the link between JFK and the Mob."

Exner's 1988 Version

Exner's writer for her new rendition was none other than Kitty Kelley, the woman who shattered the non-fiction category forever by reducing it to tabloid standards. Significantly, the article was entitled "The Dark Side of Camelot," a phrase used by Ron Rosenbaum

(who will be discussed later) and the title of the upcoming book by Sy Hersh, of whom Kelley is a great admirer. In this new version, Exner now said that she was seeing Sam Giancana at Kennedy's bidding. She even helped arrange meetings between JFK and Giancana and JFK and Roselli. Some of the meetings took place at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Why would Kennedy need personal consultation with gangsters like Sam and John? To cinch elections on his ruthless way to the White House and later to arrange the liquidation of Castro. Kelley adds that the latter meetings were done for operation MONGOOSE. But Exner's time sequence does not jibe with the lifespan of that operation and, as the record shows, Castro's assassination was not on the MONGOOSE agenda. In spite of that explicit record, Kelley adds that historians have never been able to pinpoint Kennedy's role in those plots, thereby ignoring the abundant evidence unearthed by the Church Committee which says he had none. Nevertheless, Kelley and Exner will now exhume the hidden history of those times for *People*. Let's examine their excavation.

Exner says that Kennedy needed help in West Virginia in the 1960 primary. So her first secret assignment for Kennedy was to arrange a meeting with "Sam Flood" for JFK. (By a coincidence, Kennedy also knew Giancana by the very same alias that Exner did, even though he had fifteen others.) After the meeting, with Exner waiting outside, Kennedy emerged beaming. He was so exuberant he wanted to pay for a mink coat for his girl. And of course, he won the election. On the heels of this success, Exner arranged another meeting between Kennedy and Giancana. (In an insider aside, Exner assures us that Giancana called the president "Jack"). In the ensuing exchanges of sealed envelopes between the two, Exner didn't open any of them. In another aside, Kennedy cutely tells her, "Don't let him [Giancana] turn your head."

Later, JFK wanted meetings with Roselli too. After a series of these, the meetings stopped. Retroactively, Exner finally realized that, unbeknownst to her, she was arranging the plots to kill Castro.

The trusting Kelley never seemed curious enough to ask the skeptical questions that any researcher would pose. For instance, the Kennedy family's worth at that time was estimated to be between 400 and 600 million. With that kind of money, why would they need someone like Giancana to buy a state as sparsely populated as West Virginia? Was he supposed to rally up the squirrel vote? Kelley never asked what Bobby Kennedy's reaction was to seeing Giancana at the White House. But considering his efforts against Giancana, it must have been something like, "Geez Sam,

I guess our surveillance slipped. I didn't know you were going to be here tonight." Or to his brother: "Jack, this is going to make me look like a hypocrite. Also, it will compromise my case against this guy in court when he shows the judge that photo of us three sitting here." Finally, Kelley has no questions about a glaring inconsistency in her scenario. In the course of these ongoing meetings, probably at the first one, wouldn't nice guy Sam say, "Jack I really appreciate the dinner, but this is all kind of redundant. See, I'm already working with Bob Maheu at CIA to kill Fidel." Evidently, Exner was so convincing that neither Kelley nor her editors ever entertained any doubts. Or to hopeless cynics like myself, maybe they didn't want to blow the hundred grand they had invested in their cover story.

Kelley did ask one pertinent question. Namely, why did Exner not tell Demaris these startling details back in 1977? Why did she wait eleven years to bare her soul? Exner says she was afraid and needed to protect herself. Unfortunately, this rings a bit hollow since 1) Giancana and Roselli were both dead when she wrote her book, 2) the Church Committee spilled all the beans on the plots to kill Castro in 1975, which 3) leaves only the Kennedys to fear, and its clear she doesn't give a damn about them.

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But for those still skeptical, she adds the other (clinging) reason for breaking the silence: her doctor told her she had terminal cancer and she had only 36 months to live. The article ends in a crescendo that would move even the world weary Claude Rains:

Now that I know I'm dying and nothing more can happen to me, I want to be completely honest. I don't think I should have to die with the secret of what I did for Jack Kennedy, or what he did with the power of his presidency. I feel that I am finally free of the past.

Exner's 1997 Version

I hope Exner sued her doctor, because ten years later she's still with us. She now turns up in the pages of the January 1997 *Vanity Fair* which, unembarrassed, again bills her as "facing her death." This time she was teamed with another questionable expert on Kennedy's Cuba policy — Hollywood gossip columnist

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2nd Assassination

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Liz Smith. And evidently, the previous fear of death wasn't enough to squeeze the whole story out of her. She still has a few goodies to add.

The choice of Smith in 1997 is as revealing as Demaris in 1977 and Kelley in 1988. Smith writes for the *New York Post*, which is literally a tabloid in both format and approach. Like Kelley, Smith is a big fan of Sy Hersh. In fact, her column has released several "teaser" items about his upcoming book. In the past she has also flacked for Tony Summers. What do those two writers have that other Kennedy researchers, say John Newman, do not? They have both pushed the angle that the Kennedys were somehow involved with the death of Marilyn Monroe. Smith dutifully mentions both authors in her *Vanity Fair* piece and writes, as fact, that RFK was at Marilyn's the day she died. Exner herself claims that Summers has offered to supply a new "foreword should she write another book" and Smith sent Exner to see Hersh who, predictably, also endorses her story.

In the article, Smith seems conscious of her questionable qualifications to address the serious subjects of Kennedy and Cuba and the Church Committee. Throughout, she sprinkles in little aphorisms to neutralize any attacks. She quotes Oscar Wilde (not famous for his history books) when she says that history is merely yesterday's gossip. Later on she notes that "today's gossip is tomorrow's headline," a bit self-serving considering her profession. Rising to an Exner-like crescendo near the end, she quotes the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who felt that history "is what people have said to me and what I've heard, that I must write down." She leaves out the fact that Herodotus did not have access to the National Archives, 3.5 million pages of newly declassified documents, and the on the record testimony of the principals involved via Sen. Frank Church.

Like the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, Smith has her hatchet out for the Church Committee. About the most extensive investigation of the CIA and FBI ever, she says that it was a "little nothing of a half-assed investigation," that the report was written by "aides and underlings" and that they asked Exner "rather pointless questions." She finishes them off by characterizing it as "the pathetic

1975 Church hearings," the implication being that Smith — between interviews of Barbara Streisand and Julia Roberts — has been digging through the newly declassified record and will now set us straight.

But her only source is Exner. And, like Kelley, Smith seems to avoid asking the tough questions, probably because these two have been pals since 1977. At one point she calls her a "real star." None of the inconsistencies or absurdities I have noted get into the article. In fact, Smith adds more of her own. As with Demaris, one of her aims is to make Exner a victim of the press so that she can imply that the "liberal media" is "protecting" the Kennedys. As demonstrated above, this is preposterous. Exner was a media creation used

"The government wants me to talk again."

— Judith Exner, 1997

by that press to pummel the Kennedys who the *Times* and *Post* — and their ally the CIA — never liked. To camouflage this, Smith claims that after her book came out, the Exners "fled" to California. Yet, according to Demaris, Exner and her husband were already in California when he met them to start work on the book. Smith can actually write the Orwellian statement that Safire — author of no less than five pro-Exner columns — "derided" Exner's story. Again, contradicting her book, Exner now says she never went to bed with Giancana. In fact, in the *Vanity Fair* version, the whole scene where he proposes to her is different from the book. In the revisionist go round the suggestion is that good Italian Catholics, even though they may be murdering mobsters, don't believe in premarital sex.

More Hidden History

What are the new revelations about the Kennedys that merited Exner's meeting with Smith for a catered dinner at the five star Four Seasons Hotel in Newport Beach? There are two. First, she forgot to add that Bobby's crimefighting campaign was a mirage. Not only did he not mind JFK's White House meetings with Giancana, he encouraged her in arranging them. For *Vanity Fair*, she remembers RFK's words to her about the subject:

You know I used to be at the White House having lunch or dinner with Jack, and Bobby would often come by. He'd squeeze my shoulder solicitously and ask, "Judy, are you O.K. carrying those messages for us to Chicago? Do you still feel comfortable doing it?"

This about the man who had such heavy surveillance on Giancana that the mobster went to court to stop those six FBI agents from following him everywhere. Including the putting green of the golf course.

The other revelation is something that she forgot: Kennedy impregnated her and she had an abortion. There are some problems with this that the never curious Smith doesn't bother to pursue. In 1977, in her book, Exner stated that there was no abortion; that this was a canard made up by the FBI in order to harass her. In fact, it is the one scene in the book that has emotional force. Consider for yourself:

"A what?" I yelled, speaking to them for the first time since the day they had broken into my apartment.... "You people are insane! I didn't have an abortion. How dare you walk in here and accuse me of that.... You get out of this room right now!"

She then adds:

If I could have killed that man, I would have on the spot. There is nothing heinous about having an abortion today, but in 1963, my God, it was the sin of the century. They knew precisely what they were doing when they falsely accused me of something like that.

Another problem with this story is how Exner knows it was JFK's child. She deduces this from the fact she had been with no one else during the whole time, "not ever" she assures us. Trying to remain a gentleman, I will only refer the reader to approximately the second half of the book, which details a rather active social life on her part.

Finally, what raises this latest revelation to a jocular level is Exner's description of Kennedy's reaction to her pregnancy when she informs him of the news. Again, let us use Exner's own words as quoted by Smith:

So Jack said, "Do you think Sam would help us? Would you ask Sam? Would you mind asking?" I was surprised, but said I'd ask. So I called Sam and we had dinner. I told him what I needed. He blew sky-high. "Damn him! Damn that Kennedy." He loved to be theatrical, and he always enjoyed picking on Jack.

Smith/Herodotus was so carried away by that cute, cuddly Italian mobster that she never bothered to ponder the fact that zillionaires in America have always had quiet, discreet ways to solve such personal problems. How about a private jet to a secretive Swiss clinic? They don't need Mafia chieftains to help them. Especially one with six FBI agents following him around ready to squeal on Kennedy the minute Hoover wants them to.

Say That Again Please

There is one revelation in the article that does not come off tongue-in-cheek.

After talking to Smith's pal Hersh, Exner calls Smith back. She states that the Kennedy-Giancana talks could be released under the JFK Act. She then adds: "I hope they will. *The government wants me to talk again.*" [Emphasis added]

No surprise, Smith didn't ask Exner what she meant by that last comment, which sent the following flurry of questions bursting through my brain: *Who* in the government wants her to talk? Since she had just talked to Hersh, was it him who relayed this to her? And what on earth does that stunning adverb "again" signify? Does this mean the government pushed her in 1977? In 1988? On both occasions?

In retrospect, the recurring intervals of Exner's appearances are suggestive. Although the *Post* surfaced her in 1975, her book did not come out until two years later, on the fifteenth anniversary of Kennedy's assassination. The 1988 *People* version — boosted by two *Times* stories previewing its release — seems done to get the jump on other stories for the 25th anniversary (as we shall see, Ron Rosenbaum filled this role for the 20th anniversary). The latest edition, with Exner aware of the JFK Act, was done at the beginning of what was originally to be the last year of the Review Board. Smith wrote the piece before the extra year was granted by Congress. Smith's friendliness with Hersh, seems to further this. For according to the ARRB's original timetable, the *Vanity Fair* piece would arrive at the beginning of its last year and Hersh's attack book in October, right when the Review Board was originally set to shut down. This would make a nice pincers movement with which to smother the Board's serious and blockbuster work amid sexy smears about abortions and Marilyn Monroe (Hersh).

In historical perspective, the *Times* and *Safire*, and the *Post* and Ben Bradlee (who, as we shall see, also embraced Exner) opened the flood gates to all kinds of *National Enquirer* type stories about JFK's private life. Rumors about Monroe, numerous secretaries, these all started to get tossed about. A prominent one about to be recycled emerged just a year after Exner. It was promulgated again by Bradlee's *Post* via *The National Enquirer*.

Mary Meyer

Mary Pinchot was the niece of that early conservationist hero Gifford Pinchot. She married CIA officer, and Allen Dulles protégé, Cord Meyer. Mary's sister was named Tony and was married to Ben Bradlee. Mary and Cord divorced in 1956 and he later went on

to become a CIA — associated reporter for various papers including the *Chicago Tribune*. In the fall of 1964, while walking along the tow path of the C & O Canal in Georgetown, Mary Pinchot Meyer was murdered by being shot through the face. A suspiciously acting black man was apprehended nearby and was identified by a witness as being the nearest person to Meyer before she was killed. At the trial, the man was acquitted through the efforts of a very good defense attorney, mainly due to the circumstantial nature of the case. Many years after Mary's death, the *National*

surprising since two of the people involved in shaping the story are CIA counterintelligence chief James Angleton and Ben Bradlee. Relating to the Kennedy murder, much has been written about the former (and more will come in *Probe*). Little has been written about Bradlee (see the sidebar on page 30).

Bradlee, JFK & Meyer

Bradlee's background, and his need to hide it, are important in his role with Kennedy and in the origin and evolution of the Mary Meyer story. Bradlee has always tried to suggest that he had a fairly normal, middle-class WASP background in Massachusetts. In fact, in his book *Conversations With Kennedy*, there is a charming subtext by Bradlee implying that Kennedy comes from a high social strata to which Bradlee can't relate. For instance, Bradlee makes Kennedy out to be a fashion plate, changing shirts two or three times a day. Bradlee has to remind him that common folk sometimes wear the same shirt two days in a row. Like he does. When he and Kennedy are talking about the tax code, they commiserate over there not being enough tax breaks for middle class people like Bradlee.

Having swallowed this, I was surprised to learn that Bradlee's family spent each summer with the Astors in Maine (the Astor Foundation owned *Newsweek* which is how Bradlee got started there); that one of Bradlee's early mentors was Walter Lippmann, that fabled adviser to presidents and confidant of OSS chief Bill Donovan; that on his father's side, the Bradlees went back *five generations* at Harvard. That his father married into the law firm of Cravath, Swain & Moore, John McCloy's firm. In other words, Bradlee was Boston Brahmin all the way. David Halberstam once described a typical Saturday morning in the Bradlee household as follows: 9:00 AM — French lesson, 10:00 AM — piano recital, 11:00 AM — horseback riding, 12:00 AM — ice skating. Bradlee's first marriage was into another wealthy Massachusetts family, the Saltonstalls. Bradlee may or may not have succeeded in deceiving Kennedy about who he was (I hope not). But the fact that he feels the need to hide all this — and more — from the reader is instructive to the matter at hand. Because, as we will see, Bradlee's writings on the Meyer story are at odds with other renditions. And no one has ever bothered to point out the many discrepancies, or a possible motive for them.

Bradlee's Version

We now come to the most relevant part of the Meyer story: the circumstances surrounding her lost diary which supposedly contained notes on her affair with Kennedy. No one to-

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"A what?" I yelled, speaking to them for the first time since the day they had broken into my apartment ... "You people are insane! I didn't have an abortion. How dare you walk in here and accuse me of that ... You get out of this room right now!" ... They knew precisely what they were doing when they falsely accused me of something like that.

— Judith Exner, 1977

"I telephoned and said, 'Jack, just about the worst thing I can tell you has happened. I'm pregnant. ... I can't keep this child.' ... Abortion was then illegal. So Jack said, 'Do you think Sam would help us? Would you ask Sam?' ... After the abortion, Jack was on the phone to me right away, begging me to come back to Washington...."

— Judith Exner, 1997

Enquirer revealed that she had been a girlfriend of Kennedy.

Before getting into all the details of this story and its aftermath, it is necessary to note a bit about Ben Bradlee's actions in both the Exner and Meyer stories. Bradlee is essential, not just because of his personal involvement in the matters under discussion, but because he was the editor of the *Washington Post* in 1976 when the *Enquirer* broke the story. As with the Exner story, once the Meyer story broke, the *Post* gave it its imprimatur by filling out certain elements of the story and giving it respectable, mainstream play. Thirty five years later, the essentials I have drawn out above are really all that can be known for certain about this tale. All the remaining details are hazy, confusing, or contested. This is not

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day can say what happened to it, or what it actually contained. To begin to explain why, let me summarize the account about the matter given by Bradlee in his 1995 autobiography *A Good Life*.

The night of the Meyer murder, at his home, Bradlee got a call from Anne Truitt, Mary's artist friend and then the wife of Jim Truitt, *Newsweek's* Tokyo correspondent. Mary had told Anne to retrieve the diary in case anything happened to her. The next morning, Ben and Tony went to Mary's house. Once inside they discovered James Angleton there (Bradlee provides no explanation as to why he was there). No diary is found. But later in the day the Bradlees decide to go to Mary's art studio which is down the alley in their garage. They again discover Angleton there in the process of picking the lock. Embarrassed, the super spook walks off. The Bradlees make a pass through the studio and don't find the diary. But an hour later, Tony secured it. In Bradlee's telling, there is only a diary. Bradlee writes that, although Kennedy's name was not in it, it was clear that he was the person having an affair with her. Bradlee decides not to make the diary public and a day or so later, gives it to Angleton because he felt he would be able to ensure that it would be permanently destroyed. Years later, when Tony Bradlee asked Angleton how he had destroyed the diary, he admitted he hadn't. She demands it back. He gives it to her and she burns it with a friend (not named) as a witness.

Bradlee's version was sharply criticized in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* published on November 12, 1995. The letter was from Anne Truitt and Angleton's widow Cicely. They write that Mary's instructions to Anne had been that the diary should be entrusted to James Angleton himself and that Anne Truitt called for Angleton that night and found him at Bradlee's house (it's not specified how she found out he was there). Angleton and Cicely were there because the Bradlees had asked them to come over after Mary's death. Once Truitt got Angleton on the phone, she told him for the first time about Mary's wishes. At this point, the Angletons, Tony Bradlee, and another (unnamed) person make a search at Mary's home. Again, the diary is not there. The search continued in the garage-studio (time not specified). In this version, several papers and the diary are discovered. Tony Bradlee gives it all to Angleton and asks him to burn it. Angleton burns the papers only. He "safeguarded" the diary. Years later, Tony asked for the diary. Angleton gave it to her.

She burned it, and the witness was Anne Truitt.

Ron Rosenbaum

The longest treatment of this whole affair was one of the earliest. Ron Rosenbaum did a story for *New Times* in 1976. In his version, the Angletons went to Mary's the day she died. When no one answered, they entered the house. From her answering service(!), they found out she was dead. They proceeded to the Bradlees' home to make funeral arrangements. Later that night, Jim Angleton returned to Mary's, but only to retrieve her kittens. The Truitts then called the Angletons (the time is not mentioned). In Rosenbaum's version, it is the Truitts who are entrusted with the diary. In an even more serious difference, the search for the diary occurs *five days* after the

But the point is clear that someone — perhaps more than one — is lying. The versions are not reconcilable. And they can't be chalked up to memory lapses, not for such an unusual, even singular event. It is striking that even the time frame and principals involved change between versions.

murder. This time the search party includes the Angletons, Tony Bradlee and — making their first appearances — Mary's ex-husband Cord Meyer, and Mary's old college roomie Ann Chamberlain. The search goes on for hours amid drinking and even dishwashing by Angleton. The diary is not found. Later (at an unspecified time) Tony Bradlee finds it in the studio, this time in a locked steel box. And this time, there are "hundreds" of letters, not just several. In the Rosenbaum version, Angleton says that he burned the whole package. Yet Rosenbaum also writes that other unnamed sources say the contents were sent to the Pinchot estate in Milford, Pennsylvania.

I could also quote other versions of the diary search e.g. the sketchy one in the book *Katherine the Great*. But the point is clear that someone — perhaps more than one — is lying. The versions are not reconcilable. And they can't be chalked up to memory lapses, not for such an unusual, even singular event. It is striking that even the time frame and principals involved change between versions. Concerning the former, if the call from the Truitts came in the night of Mary's death, why wait five days to search for the diary? About the latter, either all the people who say they were

there were not, or are lying about the presence of others. Rosenbaum got interviews with some of the principals, Angleton, Bradlee, and others who gave him bits of information (Cord Meyer would seem to be a source). Yet in his detailed account he can, with a straight face, write that the bonds among those involved in the search were so strong that years later, some of them attended a seance to attempt to establish contact with Mary's departed spirit. Can anyone imagine Angleton or Bradlee sitting through a seance? (I could imagine Angleton arranging a fake one.)

That Rosenbaum can unabashedly write such a thing tells us a good deal about him (for more on Rosenbaum see the sidebar at left). The fact that he never notes any of the discrepancies in the story that he himself presents, tells us even more. For example, he relates that Tony Bradlee found the diary. Yet in the article, in the presented notes of an interview with her, she seems to refer to more than one person being with her at that time. Also, in those notes, Tony states that they were all honor bound not to look at the diary. Yet Rosenbaum says that Angleton read, indexed, and took notes on everything she found.

As is his bent, Rosenbaum seems intent on not probing key parts of the story. The man who thinks Oswald shot at Kennedy (and believes John Davis' *Mafia Kingfish* is as close as we will get to a conspiracy alternative to Oswald), does not ask the question as to why the Truitts seem to be siding with Angleton. That is, unlike Bradlee's version, there are no hints of Angleton breaking into places unexpectedly. Also indicative of this is that Angleton, a source for Rosenbaum in 1976, said the diary was to be entrusted to the Truitts. Yet Anne Truitt signed off on the 1995 *L. A. Times* letter saying it was meant to be handled by Angleton himself. Both cannot be true. This is interesting because it implies a relationship between the two couples. And his wife's loyalty to Angleton is proven.

Truitt and Leary add Drugs

As noted earlier, Jim Truitt gave this curious tale its first public airing in 1976, on the heels of the Church Committee. From there, the *Washington Post* (under Bradlee) picked it up. There had been an apparent falling out between Truitt and Bradlee and Truitt said that he wanted to show that Bradlee was not the crusader for truth that Watergate or his book on Kennedy had made him out to be. In the *National Enquirer*, Truitt stated that Mary had revealed her affair with Kennedy while she was alive to he and his wife. He then went further. In one of their romps in the White House,

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Mary had offered Kennedy a couple of marijuana joints, but coke-sniffer Kennedy said, "This isn't like cocaine. I'll get you some of that."

The chemical addition to the story was later picked up by drug guru Tim Leary in his book *Flashbacks*. Exner-like, the angle grew appendages. Leary went beyond grass and cocaine. According to Leary, Mary Meyer was consulting with him about how to conduct acid sessions and how to get psychedelic drugs in 1962. Leary met her on several occasions and she said that she and a small circle of friends had turned on several times. She also had one other friend who was "a very important man" who she also wanted to turn on. After Kennedy's assassination, Mary called Leary and met with him. She was cryptic but she did say, "They couldn't control him any more. He was changing too fast. He was learning too much." The implication being that a "turned on" JFK was behind the moves toward peace in 1963. Leary learned about Meyer's murder in 1965, but did not pull it all together until the 1976 Jim Truitt disclosure. With Leary, the end (for now) of the Meyer story colors in JFK as the total sixties swinger: pot, coke, acid, women, and unbeknownst to Kennedy, Leary has fulfilled his own fantasy by being Kennedy's guide on his magical mystery tour toward peace.

But there is a big problem with Leary, his story, and those who use it (like David Horowitz and Peter Collier). Leary did not mention Mary in any of his books until *Flashbacks* in 1983, more than two decades after he met Mary. It's not like he did not have the opportunity to do so. Leary was one of the most prolific authors I know. He got almost anything he wanted published. Although it is hard to keep track of all his work, he appears to have published over 40 books. Of those, at least 25 were published between 1962, when he says he met Mary, and 1983, when he first mentions her. Some of these books are month to month chronicles e.g. *High Priest*. In none of the books I could find, i.e. most of them, is Mary mentioned or even vaguely described. This is improbable considering the vivid, unforgettable portrait that Leary drew in 1983. This striking looking woman walks in unannounced, mentions her powerful friends in Washington, and later starts dumping out the CIA's secret operations to control American elections to him. Leary, who mentioned many of those he turned on throughout his books, and thanks those who believed in him, deemed this unimportant. That is until the 20th anniversary of JFK's death. (Which is when Rosen-

baum wrote his ugly satire on the Kennedy research community for *Texas Monthly* which in turn got him a guest spot on *Nightline*.) This is also when Leary began hooking up with Gordon Liddy, doing carnival-type debates across college campuses, an act which managed to rehabilitate both of them and put them both back in the public eye.

There is another problem with Leary's book: the Phil Graham anecdote. In his book, Leary has Mary tell him that the cat was out the bag as far as her and JFK were concerned. The reason was that a well-known friend of hers had blabbed about them in public. This is an apparent reference to *Post* owner Phil Graham's outburst at a convention in Phoenix, Arizona in 1963. This famous incident (which preceded his later alleged mental breakdown) included — according to Leary — a reference to Kennedy and Mary Meyer. The story of Graham's attendance at this convention and what he did and said has been described in different ways in different books. Unfortunately for Leary, his dating of the convention does not jibe with any that I have seen. In 1986, Tony Chaitkin tracked down the correct date, time, and place of the meeting. No one had done it correctly up to that time. But Chaitkin and his associates went one step further. They interviewed people who were there. None of the attendees recalled anything said about Mary Meyer.

To me, this apocryphal anecdote and Leary's book seem ways to bolster a tale that needed to be recycled and souped up before its chinks began to show. Leary's reason for being a part of the effort may be through his association with intelligence asset Liddy. Or it may be because he was never enamored of the Kennedys' approach to the drug problem, which was antagonistic to Leary personally and a lot less liberal in its approach. Leary was quite frank about this in his book *High Priest* (p. 67) and later in *Changing My Mind* (pp. 143 ff.). Whatever his motives, Leary's retroactive endorsement is just not credible.

The Split at the Post

In fact, when it comes to Mary Meyer, stories between the same couple are not consistent. As mentioned previously, Bradlee states in his book that Kennedy's name was *not* in the diary. Yet his wife told *The National Enquirer*, that although she only looked at it briefly, Kennedy's name *was* there. According to an interview with writer Debbie Davis, Ben Bradlee once told television personality David Frost that the diary was not even a diary but in fact a sketchbook.

In this regard, Tony Bradlee made a telling comment to the *National Enquirer* in 1976. In the notes written up from her interview, after she has discussed (with a bit of ambiguity)

whether or not Kennedy's name was in the diary, she is quoted as saying: "But the diary was destroyed. I'll tell you that much is true." The suggestion in the last sentence is that everything else is not. Or, at least, the diary's destruction is all she knows for a fact.

If Mary's own sister is not forthright, then who among the rest is? Don't rely on Rosenbaum to find out. He is a friend of both Angleton and the *Post*. Consider the man who helped him write his 1976 Mary Meyer piece, one Philip Nobile. When I interviewed Deborah Davis about the attempted censorship of her book, which exposed the *Post's* ties to the CIA, she told me that her troubles began with a whispering campaign to her publisher. The whisperer was Rosenbaum's partner Nobile. When that wasn't enough, Nobile talked to Alexander Cockburn of the *Village Voice*. Cockburn printed the rumors that her book was unfounded and that she had cried in her publishers' office when challenged on this. Both accounts were untrue. But Cockburn was not an unbiased observer. As Nobile must have known, his live-in girlfriend at the time was Kay Graham's daughter. It is odd that Rosenbaum would choose to write on such a controversial subject with someone who seems to be such a friend to the *Post*. Related to that, in his 1991 reflections on the 1976 article, and in the article itself, he tries to insinuate that these people — Bradlee, the Truitts, the Angletons — are actually friends of Kennedy. In addition, Rosenbaum and others never seemed to ask why those involved all seemed so eager to violate Mary's privacy by reading the diary. In no version I have read was that ever part of Mary's instructions. And Angleton, the man who the Truitts seem to side with against Bradlee, supposedly went through them like an archivist.

The Truitts' trust for and seeming loyalty to the Angletons is particularly interesting. In Rosenbaum's 1976 piece, the following passage appears:

The Truitts were still in Tokyo when they received word of the towpath murder, and the responsibility for the diary was communicated to their mutual friend James Angleton through still uncertain channels.

With the quiet skill of a cardsharp, Rosenbaum avoids an important detail. Namely, how the Truitts found out about Mary's death in the middle of the night halfway around the world. Someone must have either called or wired them. Why is this matter never addressed in any version? The logical choice as contacts would be the Angletons. This is apparently off limits for Ron. If he drew attention to his lack of curiosity on this matter, it would hint that something is being papered over in order to conceal a point.

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Gordon Novel

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anybody but Schlumberger to have furnished the key to that bunker and it is an impossibility for those munitions to come from any place else but Uncle Sam."

Clearly, despite what some laggard researchers have claimed over the years, there is no denying that Arcacha, Ferrie, Martens, Banister and Novel were working for the CIA in these efforts. Novel later relates that these weapons were destined for the Bay of Pigs

operation. In the CIA's name traces conducted by Angleton's staff during the Garrison investigation, some mid to lower level operatives are acknowledged as CIA assets. But the CIA worked to distance themselves from people like Banister, Arcacha, and Clay Shaw (whose circle overlaps all of the people mentioned here). Now we begin to understand why. Each one of these people was no more than one degree of separation (or possibly two in Shaw's case) away from David Phillips, not to mention Oswald. Garrison nearly had Phillips by the tail; but he didn't know it. Garrison bashers have tried to imply that not only was

Garrison on the wrong track, but that Arcacha wasn't important, Phillips wasn't involved, and Banister and Novel weren't even CIA. Amazing. And decidedly untrue.

Novel never had any such doubts that he was working for the government:

Obviously this was not a Mafia operation, which is the only other comprehension thing [sic] it could have been. So it had to be something going on relative to top secret.

Gordon wasn't sure who he was working for until the Bay of Pigs. But when Arcacha called him the day after with an urgent request to find some blood, Novel figured it out. ♠

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If that were so, then a previous occurrence in Jim Truitt's career would bear mentioning, since it quite closely resembles what he did later in 1976. In August of 1961, Truitt had called Bradlee and said he had evidence that Kennedy had been previously married before his wedding to Jackie, and that this fact had been covered up. Both Bradlee and Truitt pursued the story. But before they printed it they asked Kennedy about it. He referred them to Pierre Salinger, his press secretary. Salinger had already heard the charge from rightwing commentator Fulton Lewis. He had all his points lined up and proved the story false. Bradlee's account in *Conversations With Kennedy* (pp. 43-49) seems to suggest that Truitt and Bradlee still worked on the story after they were shown it was wrong.

Also intriguing is a flourish added in Rosenbaum's version, which appears heavily reliant on the Truitts and Angletons as sources. Rosenbaum writes that Mary's diary, although usually laid upon her bedroom bookcase, was found in a locked steel box in her studio. Rosenbaum doesn't probe as to why it was not found in its usual resting place. The locked steel box is not a part of any other version of the story I know, including Tony Bradlee's, and, in all versions, she supposedly found the diary. Of course, a locked box suggests intrigue, but it strains reality. Are we to believe that every time Mary wanted to make an diary entry she would first fumble for her keys? Even in her own bedroom while she's living alone?

Of course, Rosenbaum makes nothing of the two most obvious paradoxes in the entire tale. Almost everyone agrees that, while the Meyers were married, she was knowledgeable about his CIA activities and that Cord Meyer was close to Angleton. Reportedly, the liberal

Mary grew disenchanted with Cord, his cohorts, and the Agency shop talk. She wanted to become her own person, hence her interest in painting. She also admired Kennedy's policies. If the above is true, why would she entrust the secrets of her diary to, of all people, Jim Angleton? This, plus the fact that his wife and Anne Truitt now say that Angleton found out about his "inheritance" of the diary on the transcontinental call, seem to suggest some sort of collusion between the couples. Or else why would Anne Truitt switch the "entrustment" of the diary from her to Angleton, as she did in 1995, as if they were interchangeable? And if Mary had instructed the diary be given to Angleton, why would he then turn it over to Tony Bradlee?

Finally, let us assume for a moment that the diary *did* record the Kennedy-Meyer affair and/or the pot smoking. If that were so, does anyone who knows anything about the CIA think that Angleton would not have found a way to get it into the press? Or did I just answer my own question? If no such entries existed, Angleton would do the next best thing. He would call on his friend Jim Truitt to accomplish it for him through *The National Enquirer*, and into the mainstream via Kennedy's false friend Bradlee at the *Post*. For good measure, Truitt poured on the pot angle which does not figure in the Exner story. Need I add that the Meyer story came out right after the Exner story, i. e. on the heels of the Church Committee's report. And Ron Rosenbaum, an unquestioning backer of Exner, was there to unquestioningly accept the package on Meyer.

When Mary Meyer died in 1964, Angleton had just finished — with the help of Richard Helms and Allen Dulles — the CIA's Warren Commission cover-up. As we shall see in part two, Angleton will also figure in another packaged "Kennedy brothers affair," namely Marilyn Monroe. We shall also see that Rosenbaum's favorite conspiracy author, John Davis, will pick up the baton on Mary Meyer. ♠