

Edward Epstein: Warren Commission Critic?

By Jim DiEugenio

Edward Epstein was an early critic of the Warren Commission who has written three books on the Kennedy assassination and several articles on the same subject. Epstein went to Cornell where he majored in political science and was planning on becoming a teacher. But for his master's thesis he hit upon the idea of writing about the internal problems of the Warren Commission on its way to their problematic conclusions about the Kennedy case. The book proposal was submitted to a publisher and six months later, in early 1966, it hit the bookstores and became a best-seller. Epstein then went on to Harvard and got his Ph. D. He taught for a short time at MIT and then later at UCLA before becoming a full-time writer. Since then he has served as a contributing editor to *The New Yorker* and written several books, most of them related to various aspects of intelligence work.

In the mid-sixties, while working on *Inquest*, Epstein got acquainted with the fledgling research community on the Kennedy case. At that time, it was quite small, consisting of perhaps 20-25 serious people who formed an internal network of meetings, phone calls, and correspondence. One of the prominent members of this network was Sylvia Meagher who lived in New York. Another was Vince Salandria who lived in Philadelphia. Epstein came into contact with both, especially Meagher. In fact, the late great critic actually helped index *Inquest*.

But it didn't take long for both critics and the community itself, to become disenchanted with Epstein. It happened shortly after the publication of *Inquest*. For that project, Epstein had somehow obtained access to some important people involved with the Commission.

As he described it in a radio interview with Larry King (2/28/79):

So I started by writing letters to the different people on the Warren Commission which included Gerald Ford... Allen Dulles, the former director of the CIA; Chief Justice Warren; senators, congressmen—and everyone, to my amazement, agreed to see me.

This is curious in itself. But on that same show Epstein expressed his intent in writing the book:

My book *Inquest* was really on a single problem—that the Warren Commission failed to find the truth, and there were two main reasons for that. One: they were acting under pressure.... And secondly, they had to rely on other agencies.... And these agencies had themselves things to hide. So it was not a question of the Warren Commission being dishonest: it was a question that the way the investigation was organized, it would have been impossible for it to find an exhaustive truth.

Later, Epstein was asked by King:

King: First, should we have appointed a commission like the Warren Commission?

Epstein: Well,—yes—I believe that the men who served on the Warren Commission served in good faith.

Epstein has been consistent with this attitude ever since. That the Warren Commission did an unsatisfactory job, not because of any wrongdoing of its own, but because of the time constraints placed on them and because of secrets about Oswald that were hidden from them. Yet, Epstein insists they did get it right:

King: Did Oswald kill John Kennedy

Epstein: Yes, I believe he did.

King: Acting alone...in Dealey Plaza that day?

Epstein: I think he was the only rifleman....

What Epstein is saying is that although the Warren Commission was not an in-depth, exhaustive investigation, its ultimate conclusion—that Oswald shot JFK—was on the

money. Secondly, as he stated on the King program, if there was a cover-up, it was a benign one. That is, the FBI and CIA should have known Oswald was a dangerous character from his recent activities. In reality, Epstein in *Inquest* was the first advocate of the thesis that the "errors" of the Warren Commission were done to cover up mistakes by the intelligence agencies in their surveillance of the dangerous Marxist Lee Oswald. This was the track taken decades later on the thirtieth anniversary of Kennedy's death by journals like *Newsweek* and CIA related writers like Walter Pincus. This was done just before the Assassination Records and Review Board was about to disclose millions of pages of new documents that completely undermine this whole concept.

Best-Seller vs. Best Book

It is interesting to compare Epstein's book with Mark Lane's *Rush to Judgment*. Lane's book came out two months after Epstein's. Although Epstein's book sold well, Lane's quickly and greatly surpassed it on the charts. As Epstein told King:

Well, my book, I was actually published...in April and Lane's book was published in June, and Lane's book became a sort of number one best-seller and Lane was on TV—and my book was a best-seller too, but it sort of faded away, and Lane's book is remembered by everyone.

There is a likely reason for this. Lane's book showed that the Commission could not have been working in good faith. He did this in two related ways. First, he brought into the gravest doubt every major conclusion of the Commission. Second, he showed that the Commission had in its hands evidence that contradicted their conclusions. (Sylvia Meagher did the same in her wonderful *Accessories After the Fact*, published in 1967.) And Meagher was quite disappointed in Epstein's performance when it came to debating the

opposition. In a letter she circulated in 1966, Meagher expressed her chagrin over a debate televised in New York between Epstein and Commission counsel Wesley Liebeler. She wrote privately that "Epstein was absolutely disastrous. I really let him have it the next morning and haven't heard from him since. I learned later that at least three other people afterwards gave him a tongue-lashing for his extremely weak position, his capitulating and almost apologizing to Liebeler. (Letter of 8/30/66) On the other hand, when Lane debated Liebeler at UCLA on January 25, 1967, by most accounts he obliterated him.

The questions about Epstein deepened around the time of the Garrison investigation. First, Epstein's voice appeared on a record album that accompanied the book *The Scavengers and Critics of the Warren Report*. This should not be passed over lightly, for this 1967 book was the first one to go after the critics on a personal and demeaning level, making them out to be a bunch of kooks and eccentrics who did what they did out of some psychological or other weirdness. Schiller was later exposed by declassified documents as being a chronic FBI informant on the Kennedy case. On the album, entitled *The Controversy*, Epstein joins in the ridicule of the critics. Around this same time period, Epstein appeared in a debate with Salandria, arguing the case against Oswald. Salandria was so outraged that after the debate, he asked if Epstein had gone over to the other side.

But it was the Garrison case that marked Epstein's public conversion. Other critics, like Meagher, Paul Hoch, and David Lifton all turned against the DA, but Epstein went to great lengths to actually hinder and deflate the DA's case. (It should be revealed that Lifton had a correspondence with Epstein at this time in which he appeared to be helping him write his upcoming article and book.) Epstein approached Garrison about doing an interview with him and looking through some of the documents and interviews he had done to build his case for a New Orleans conspiracy. Bill Turner warned Garrison about meeting with Epstein and cooperating with him, as the writer-investigator had already begun to doubt what Epstein was really doing on the Kennedy case. But the unsuspecting DA went ahead and accommodated Epstein for his article which appeared in the *New Yorker* of July 13, 1968. It was an unabashed hit piece on Garrison that was written with an authoritative tone that meant to cover the one-sided approach the author had taken. According to investigator Lou Ivon of Garrison's staff, Epstein spent about 48 hours in town, about three of those at Garrison's office and did not return. According to Turner, Garrison was

heartbroken when the piece appeared. Turner wrote a response to Epstein in the 9/7/68 issue of *Ramparts* which took Epstein apart. He quoted Richard Popkin, author of *The Second Oswald* as saying about the piece:

I found it a queer mix of facts, rumors and very dubious information from people hostile to Garrison. Epstein has compressed all this to make it look like everything's on the same level. I think it would take an awful lot of work to disentangle what he's saying on almost any page as to how much of it has factual base, how much of it is rumor that he has heard from people, how much of it are charges that have been made by people like [William] Gurvich...against Garrison, which haven't been substantiated anywhere....

But it was the Garrison case that marked Epstein's public conversion. Other critics, like Meagher, Paul Hoch, and David Lifton all turned against the DA, but Epstein went to great lengths to actually hinder and deflate the DA's case.

Turner later pointed out that the publication of the piece aided Clay Shaw's defense. His lawyers entered it as evidence to a federal panel who were considering charges that Garrison had conducted his case irresponsibly. That argument was rejected. But Epstein seems to have been in touch with Shaw's lawyers a lot, as was revealed in declassified documents which I quoted from in my article on the Wegmann brothers (Shaw's attorneys) in *Probe* Vol. 4 #4. He was also in contact with the lawyer for both Gordon Novel and Jack Ruby, Elmer Gertz. And as Novel revealed in a deposition, his attorneys were clandestinely compensated by a third party. And as I wrote in the same piece, all three of Shaw's lawyers were in close contact with the CIA, FBI, and the Justice Department. It also should be noted that within one week of publication of the article, the CIA had circulated the piece in memorandum form and distributed it to chiefs of station throughout the world, in order to demonstrate no hard evidence of a conspiracy. (CIA memo numbered 1127-987) The

article was later turned into a book, which in light of the new documents on the Garrison case, is pretty much worthless today. Which means, of course, it wasn't worth much when it was published either, but at that time people did not have the records to prove such.

In 1971, Epstein again used the *New Yorker* to bolster an Establishment myth. This time he aided the FBI. His piece argued that the FBI had not really killed 28 Black Panthers as their attorney, Charles Garry had argued. And he argued that there was no scheme by the Bureau to try and liquidate the Panthers as some had suggested. He actually argued this on television with Garry. (FBI memo of 1/20/76) This exploded in Epstein's face later when during the Church Committee investigation the COINTELPRO program of the FBI against the Panthers and other leftist groups was exposed. The evidence today leaves little doubt that the FBI, working with state and local authorities, infiltrated these groups and tried to turn one against the other, or groups inside one group against each other. Also, that at times, the Bureau coordinated violent action against provocative leaders of these group, a prominent one being the murder of Chicago Panther Fred Hampton. (See the long essay in *Government by Gunplay* by Sid Blumenthal.)

But there was a project ahead that surfaced even stronger doubts about Epstein. That was his book *Legend*, published in 1978 and praised by much of the mainstream media. In 1976, Kenneth Gilmore, Managing Editor of the *Reader's Digest* got in contact with the FBI. The memo reads that "Gilmore said that the book will be a definitive, factual work which will evaluate, and hopefully put to rest, recurring myths surrounding the Kennedy assassination." The memo goes on to read that Gilmore's purpose was to request Bureau cooperation in "1.) Seeing Epstein when Epstein is in Washington later this month or early in February, 2.) Furnishing Epstein copies of previously issued statements and/or press releases concerning the assassination, and 3.) Giving consideration to requests which Epstein may make for other information." The timing of this contact and Epstein's research is relevant. In 1975 the Zapruder film was shown to the nation on television. It created a furor and instigated the drafting of at least three bills in Congress to reinvestigate the JFK case. At the time of this contact, the House Select Committee on Assassinations was in its earliest stages. It is a natural deduction to believe that Epstein was getting the jump on the Committee. As we shall see, the resulting product makes this conclusion even more natural. Another contributing factor to this deduction is the recommendation in this

continued on page 24

Epstein

continued from page 15

memo:

That this memorandum be returned to the Research Section so that Mr. Gilmore can be telephonically advised...that Epstein should feel free to contact us while he is in Washington late this month or early next month, at which time we will be glad to consider whatever questions or requests he may have.

Needless to say, Epstein did visit Washington and FBI headquarters shortly thereafter.

But there was something more to Epstein and his book than just the FBI. Researcher Charles Marks found out that Senior Editor John Barron, one of the originators of the Epstein project, was a close friend of Mexico City station chief of 1963 Win Scott.

ter with the blessings of Director Clarence Kelley (FBI memo of 4/5/76).

But there was something more to Epstein and his book than just the FBI. Researcher Charles Marks found out that Senior Editor John Barron, one of the originators of the Epstein project, was a close friend of Mexico City station chief of 1963 Win Scott. (Letter by Marks to *Reader's Digest* of 8/18/93.) As Marks notes in his letter Epstein himself noted that in his Preface to his 1992 compilation called *The Assassination Chronicles*, Epstein wrote that the editors approached him with an offer to detail Oswald's relationship with the intelligence services. But they went further and said they would make available to him Yuri Nosenko, the Russian defector who gave the CIA information in 1964 about Oswald's non-employment by the KGB. They also said he could have access to the CIA tapes made at the Mexico City Soviet and Cuban embassies of Oswald's visits there. This is ex-

traordinary. The only author since who has had access to Nosenko was Gerald Posner for his Oswald-did-it atrocity *Case Closed*. And as exposed by John Newman in our last issue, the tapes of Oswald at the two embassies are very likely forgeries created and then covered up by prime JFK conspiracy suspect David A. Phillips. Phillips worked with Win Scott and had a special desk at the Mexico City station.

But this is not the worst of it. One of Epstein's chief sources, perhaps his major source, was none other than the legendary eccentric James Angleton, the CIA's chief of counter-intelligence for over 20 years. To understand why Angleton would be his major source one must understand some of the major ideas in this book. According to Don Freed, Epstein's total budget for the book was two million. This included a large staff of researchers including Pam Butler and Henry Hurt of *Reader's Digest*. Of the two million, Epstein got a \$500,000 dollar advance, which is probably, in relative terms, still the largest ever for a book on the JFK case. Even though he had these resources, the book *Legend* is an unbelievably slanted look at Oswald. Although the book is amorphous, it seems to say that the KGB made a pitch for Oswald in Japan in 1959. The Soviets then convinced him to defect to Russia in October of that year. He was debriefed by Russian intelligence and found to have good information on the U-2 aircraft. He was awarded with special monetary privileges because of his information. He was then given the assignment of redefecting to the United States in 1962. The Soviets gave him an undisclosed intelligence mission in Texas. But in 1963, Oswald abandoned the KGB relationship and moved toward Cuba and this seems to have provoked him to kill Kennedy. In order to avoid any suspicion of a Russian involvement, the Soviets sent over Nosenko to deny that Oswald had any connection to the KGB. Ultimately, and erroneously, the Agency bought Nosenko. And this is where Angleton's influence on Epstein is manifest. Today, most CIA officers believe that Nosenko was a genuine defector who inflated his credentials slightly in order to make himself more attractive to the CIA. Nosenko's story about Oswald seems to check out. Yet Epstein sides with Angleton and his allies. Angleton maintained to his death that Nosenko was not a genuine defector, refusing to admit he was wrong on this case. He rationalized that if Director Bill Colby did not agree with him, then there had to be a high-level Soviet plant in the CIA protecting Nosenko. Thus began the notorious "molehunt" which pitted the "fundamentalist" side of the CIA, Angleton and his allies, against the "modernist" school led by Colby. The fundamentalist camp believed that

Nosenko was a fraud sent to cover Oswald's real KGB ties and the fact he was close to them around the time of the assassination. In other words, if there was any conspiracy in the JFK

But this is not the worst of it. One of Epstein's chief sources, perhaps his major source, was none other than the legendary eccentric James Angleton, the CIA's chief of counter-intelligence for over 20 years.

case, it was a Soviet plot done with Castro's encouragement.

Yet Epstein even hedges his bets here. For in the above referenced Larry King interview, he does not go that far. He says Oswald was not a KGB agent at the time and was probably just influenced by what he had heard of the plots to kill Castro. So what does the book amount to? In its basic terms it seems to be deliberately written to muddy the waters around the case. In fact, Jim Marrs interviewed a woman who was involved with Epstein in the making of the book and asked her why Epstein never went into Oswald's ties to the CIA which were at least as obvious as his ties to the KGB. The woman replied that they were advised to avoid that area.

If there is a villain in the book, it is William Colby the man who became CIA Director when Jim Schlesinger resigned. It was Colby who had a blood feud with Angleton over his weird counter-intelligence operations and his belief that Nosenko was a fraud. Colby clearly observed that if Angleton was correct, then why did Nosenko try to defect before the assassination? In fact, Colby felt that Angleton's eccentric proclivities were tearing apart the CIA. Yet Angleton refused to resign. So Colby leaked some of Angleton's illegal operations to Sy Hersh of the *New York Times*. Hersh gave them major play and Angleton was gone. In one way, the reader can read Epstein's *Legend* as an apologia for Angleton and a broadside against Colby. Yet to do this, Epstein has to whitewash Angleton. He could not hide his source since Angleton openly admitted his cooperation with Epstein in a midnight phone

call with Jerry Policoff. But to read Epstein, one would never suspect the damage Angleton did to the CIA, or that he had ruined careers with his unbelievable paranoia over Soviet penetration of the Agency, or that he backed CIA efforts to bring down governments in allied countries like Australia and Great Britain. And finally, as John Newman showed in his book on Oswald the new CIA files on Oswald strongly indicate that far from being a KGB agent, Oswald was being run by Angleton's closest associates as a counter-intelligence agent against the Soviets and Cubans. Policoff told me that after his long talk with Angleton, he was leaning toward the idea that *Legend* was a "black book" i.e. one that was

[T]o read Epstein, one would never suspect the damage Angleton did to the CIA, or that he had ruined careers with his unbelievable paranoia over Soviet penetration of the Agency, or that he backed CIA efforts to bring down governments in allied countries like Australia and Great Britain.

inspired by and secretly sponsored with help from the CIA. Surely, Epstein did two things in the book that were inexcusable. First, he hinted that Colby might have been the mole in the CIA, to which Colby responded with laughter (see Carl Oglesby's *The JFK Assassination*, p. 14). And at the end of the book, he writes, "With Nosenko accredited and the counterintelligence staff purged [by Colby], the CIA had truly been turned inside out." Clearly, Epstein is implying that Angleton was correct about Nosenko and Oswald was a KGB agent, and whoever the Soviet mole was, he had won out.

There was another quite interesting fact about the making of *Legend*. One of the people who Epstein spent much time in describing was George DeMohrenschildt, nick-named the Baron. DeMohrenschildt is important for two reasons. He had worked for various foreign intelligence agencies and finally worked for

the CIA as, at least, an informant. Second, in 1962 and part of the next year, he became Oswald's best friend in Dallas. Besides Oswald and perhaps Nosenko, Epstein spends more time on DeMohrenschildt than any other person. This is quite interesting because on March 29, 1977 at a sprawling mansion outside of Palm Beach, Florida, De Mohrenschildt was found dead from a shotgun blast. Two things had happened that day that make his death more than interesting. Gaeton Fonzi of the House Select Committee on Assassinations had been to the estate to notify the Baron of an interview he wished to conduct with him. Fonzi left his card with DeMohrenschildt's daughter Alexandra. Alexandra's aunt owned the mansion. Secondly, DeMohrenschildt had just returned from an interview with Epstein at his hotel about 12 miles away.

Although the Baron's death was ruled a suicide, the evidence presented at the inquest does not make that conclusion altogether convincing. First, although DeMohrenschildt was supposed to have shot himself through the mouth, the autopsy photos show no blasted out hole in the back of the head. As Jerry Rose pointed out in *The Third Decade* (Vol. 1 #1), although the maid and cook were in the kitchen directly below DeMohrenschildt's room, neither of them heard the shotgun blast explosion. Rose also points out that the rifle's position after death is weird. The rifle was trigger side up, the barrel resting *at his feet*, the butt to his left, and the general direction was parallel to the chair he sat in. As Rose writes, "to the layman's eye it will appear...that the rifle was placed in that position by a living person." Rose also points out another peculiarity with the crime scene: the blood splatter pattern. In photos it appears that the blood splatter is only consistent with a continuous flat surface between the bedroom door and the wall. So the door had to be closed at the time of the shooting. Yet at the inquest, the chief investigating officer testified that the door was open! This suggests either the corpse was shifted, or the "blood splatter" was applied afterwards. This would jibe with another fact Rose points out: there were no discernible fingerprints on the shotgun, only smudges.

All this suggests some kind of foul play in the death of DeMohrenschildt. But there is one other point that needs to be made in this regard. In the November, 1977 issue of *Gallery*, Mark Lane wrote an article based on his attendance at the inquest. Lane wrote that Alexandra's aunt told her maid to tape record her favorite soap opera while she was gone. She did so and the tape carried the sound of the program and that shotgun blast. Lane continues,

The various servants testified that an alarm system installed by the owner of the house caused a bell to ring...whenever an outside door or window was opened. The courtroom became silent as the tape recording was played. Just after a commercial...a gentle bell was heard, and then the shotgun blast.

Did someone enter the house right before the shooting? Was this person involved with the death? The House select Committee was obligated to explore this fact. It did not.

Incredibly, despite all these weird oddities in the evidence, Epstein, who the Baron had just seen, was not called to testify at the inquest. Epstein had been staying at the five-star Breakers Hotel. He had offered DeMohrenschildt three thousand dollars for four days of interviews. Lane interviewed David Bludworth, the U. S. attorney on the case. Bludworth said that although Epstein was paying through the nose for the interview, he let DeMohrenschildt go after a very short period of time.

Incredibly, despite all these weird oddities in the evidence, Epstein, who the Baron had just seen, was not called to testify at the inquest. Epstein had been staying at the five-star Breakers Hotel. He had offered DeMohrenschildt three thousand dollars for four days of interviews. Lane interviewed David Bludworth, the U. S. attorney on the case. Bludworth said that although Epstein was paying through the nose for the interview, he let DeMohrenschildt go after a very short period of time. Bludworth then said:

Why do you think that was?...You know, I know what long distance calls are made from here and who Epstein called. And I questioned Epstein just after I came into this matter. Epstein said he had

continued on page 26

Epstein

continued from page 25

taken no notes and had no tape recordings of an interview with DeMohrenschildt. Of course I didn't believe that, not after he had paid all that money. When I questioned him closely he finally told me why DeMohrenschildt left, drove home in a car Epstein had rented, and then he killed himself. ... Epstein added to me that he showed De Mohrenschildt a document which indicated that he might be taken back to Parkland Hospital in

Lord described Epstein as a "critic of anyone who criticizes the Warren Commission." Because of this, Lord was reluctant to talk to him and "suspects he may be an agent for, or otherwise connected with, the CIA."

Dallas and given more electroshock treatment.... You know, DeMohrenschildt was deathly afraid of those treatments. They can wreck your mind. DeMohrenschildt was terrified of being sent back there. One hour later he was dead.

To say the least, the HSCA should have found out whom Epstein called from his hotel and why he deliberately upset a man in a fragile state of mind.

Before leaving this tragic incident, we should add two relevant points. In Aaron Latham's fictionalized biography of Angleton, obviously done with insider dope, he notes that the eccentric CIA counterintelligence chief was an expert at disguising Agency murders to look like suicides. Second, Fonzi made some interesting comments on this case at a talk in Fort Lauderdale in October of 1994. Although he thought DeMohrenschildt's death was self-inflicted, he also thought there were extenuating circumstances:

He...felt he was being set up. He was supposed to have a meeting with a KGB official...but he ran away. He came back to Florida. He believed he was being set up to make it appear that there was a link between him and the KGB. And then obviously a link between Oswald and the KGB because of his link to the KGB. And then, Epstein shows up.

Need I add that this scenario fits the scheme of the Angleton-inspired Epstein

book.

Epstein had an interesting encounter with Billy Joe Lord. Lord was a passenger on board the same ship that took Oswald to Europe in 1959. In fact he was Oswald's cabin mate. The ship, the SS Marion Lykes, left from New Orleans. Oswald had picked up his passport in Clay Shaw's Trade Mart building. The two spent about two weeks together across the ocean. From Europe, Oswald then went to Russia. Epstein and his team wanted to talk to Lord in his home state of Texas. Lord was so upset by this encounter that he wrote a letter to President Carter on February 2, 1977. After this he had a report to the FBI. In this report of March 15, 1977 Lord said he had been contacted by two assistants to Epstein, Pam Butler and Henry Hurt. Lord described Epstein as a "critic of anyone who criticizes the Warren Commission." Because of this, Lord was reluctant to talk to him and "suspects he may be an agent for, or otherwise connected with, the CIA." Hurt persisted and Lord agreed to have lunch with him but declined to be interviewed. Hurt then told him he had contacted a local political boss in Virginia who may know someone who could convince Lord to talk. This politico gave Hurt the names of Jim Allison who owned a nearby local newspaper as well as the name of George Bush Jr., "who is supposed to reside in the ...area, and is allegedly the son of George Bush, who was director of the CIA at that time." In his letter to Carter, Lord wrote "Shortly thereafter, my mother discovered that her telephone had been tampered with. The casing around the dialing apparatus had been pulled out about one-half inch. It was so obvious as to be grotesque."

The experience with Epstein had clearly shaken Lord and he then added in his letter that based on his two weeks with Oswald he was ready to offer the "following considerations to the American people;"

1. It is the CIA and FBI relations with Lee Oswald which have been covered up since November 22, 1963.
2. It is the CIA and the FBI which have concealed and destroyed evidence of their relations with Oswald prior to November 22, 1963.
3. It is the CIA which has, from the beginning, fabricated or distorted certain Cuba-Oswald relations, and certain Cuba-JFK relations, as a smokescreen and decoy to conceal the CIA-Oswald relationship.
4. I can testify, and others can testify, that the CIA did not conduct a real investigation of the so-called defector Oswald in 1959. The CIA has long been concerned about witnesses who can testify to this oversight on their part.
5. They did not conduct a real investigation because Mr. Oswald was a bogus defector.

"I can testify, and others can testify, that the CIA did not conduct a real investigation of the so-called defector Oswald in 1959... The CIA is concerned lest the knowledge that Oswald was a fake defector in 1959, linking him to CIA, also link him with CIA on November 22, 1963 ... A necessary conclusion is that CIA and FBI elements in 1963 are suspect in the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy."

6. The CIA is concerned lest the knowledge that Oswald was a fake defector in 1959, linking him to CIA, also link him with CIA on November 22, 1963. But there is an impressive body of evidence that CIA used—and abused—Oswald as late as November 1963.

7. It is the CIA-Oswald relation and the FBI-Oswald relation which have necessitated the thirteen-year cover-up.

8. A necessary conclusion is that CIA and FBI elements in 1963 are suspect in the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

9. The assassination of John Kennedy has every appearance of having been our first American coup d'etat.

Lord's experience with Epstein either educated him or jarred him into action. For he never expressed these concerns, or his experience with Oswald that provoked these thoughts, to the Warren Commission or the FBI previously. Epstein's scare tactics did it. And from the political clout he expressed in this affair, it is very difficult to conclude that his book was not sponsored by some governmental or perhaps extra-governmental body that had a reach from Virginia to Texas and the Bush family.

What are we to make of all this? With Epstein, where was the turning point? Or was there one? We can at least be certain about the result. Epstein became one of the most potent and aggressive obfuscators in the JFK field. The only remaining question now is, exactly when and exactly why? ♠