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British involvement in JFK assassination covered up

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Plausible Denial: Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?

by Mark Lane

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384 pages, hardbound, \$22.95

There are several things that must be said right off the bat about attorney Mark Lane's new book, which has graced the *New York Times* bestseller list during the past month due to a groundswell of renewed interest in the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy. First, despite the provocative title, it has virtually nothing to do with Kennedy's assassination. It is an interesting and at times informative book—about a 1985 libel suit brought by former CIA official E. Howard Hunt against Liberty Lobby, the publishers of the national weekly newspaper *Spotlight*, and another ex-CIA official, Victor Marchetti.

Anyone reading the book with the expectation of learning something about the conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy would do better to read former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's 1988 book, *On the Trail of the Assassins*, or go see Oliver Stone's movie "JFK."

Second, the book is an ego massage for Mark Lane. This reviewer has had the opportunity to speak with a number of people who were directly involved in the events described in the book, including in the libel suit brought by E. Howard

Hunt against *Spotlight*. To read *Plausible Denial*, one would think that Mark Lane is the only person on the face of the Earth who was definitely not involved in the plot to kill President Kennedy. One would also come away with the impression that Lane single-handedly punctured the CIA's veil of secrecy and won the only standing federal court verdict that says John Kennedy was assassinated as the result of a conspiracy.

In point of fact, Lane received a great deal of help in defending Liberty Lobby against Hunt's multimillion-dollar libel suit. Victor Marchetti, for one, who was the author of the article upon which the libel suit was based, and was an experienced intelligence officer who ostensibly broke from the CIA and wrote one of the earliest of the exposés of the agency's misdeeds (*The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*), was instrumental in the development of the defense strategy (which was, to his credit, brilliantly executed by attorney Lane). From reading the Lane book, one gets the impression that Marchetti was at best a bit player in the case and at worst a hindrance.

Initially, Marchetti was slated to co-author the book with Lane. Reportedly, Marchetti walked away from the project when Lane's views about the case and the JFK affair became clear.

The 'Hunt v. Liberty Lobby' case

On Aug. 14, 1978, *Spotlight* published an article by Marchetti, titled "CIA to Admit Involvement in Kennedy Slaying." The article alleged that former CIA covert operative and Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt would be ex-

posed in the upcoming House Select Committee on Assassinations probe as a participant in the Kennedy assassination. Marchetti reported that in March 1978, senior CIA officials had met at Langley and decided that they would “hang out” Hunt, in order to defend the agency against further implication in the JFK murder, and that evidence would surface proving that Hunt had been in Dallas, Texas on Nov. 22, 1963, the day Kennedy was shot. The article also predicted that the House probe would find that there were more than three shots fired, making it impossible for Lee Harvey Oswald to have been the lone assassin (that forecast proved to be accurate). The March CIA meeting was memorialized in an agency internal memo that both Marchetti and another journalist, Joe Trento, described in autumn 1978 articles.

Hunt sued *Spotlight* and initially won a \$650,000 judgment. But an Appellate Court ruled that the presiding judge at the trial in U.S. Federal District Court in Miami had made a serious error in his instructions to the jury, and ordered a retrial. That trial took place beginning in January 1985, with Mark Lane representing the defendant, Liberty Lobby. On Feb. 6, after less than two hours of deliberation, the jury overturned the earlier verdict and found in favor of the newspaper. Leslie Armstrong, the jury foreman, told reporters at the close of the trial that the jury had not merely concluded that the *Spotlight* story by Marchetti was not willfully malicious—the minimal grounds for dismissing a libel action. The jury was also convinced that President Kennedy had been killed as the result of a conspiracy, and that E. Howard Hunt and the CIA had been involved.

Indeed, the evidence presented at trial by Hunt’s attorneys went over like a lead balloon with the jury. Hunt claimed that he had been closeted at his home with his wife and four children from the early afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963 until Nov. 26. Hunt’s wife was dead, and none of his children would appear in court to testify on his behalf. (In fact, Hunt refused to call his children as witnesses.) The Chinese grocery store in downtown Washington that Hunt claimed he had visited with his wife just before coming home, did not open until three years after the JFK assassination. And none of his fellow employees at the CIA who testified at the trial could convincingly corroborate his alibi.

One former CIA operative who gave a deposition for the defense claimed that she had driven to Dallas, Texas with Hunt and three other CIA operatives, including another Watergate burglar and Bay of Pigs veteran, Frank Sturgis, just days before the Kennedy murder. Marita Lorenz, the daughter of a German luxury ship captain who had been stranded in Havana when Castro seized power and became the Cuban dictator’s mistress (until she escaped with the aid of the CIA), provided the shocking testimony placing Hunt in Dallas 24 hours before the President’s assassination. In her deposition, she claimed that she, Hunt, Sturgis, and the others had met at Jack Ruby’s Carousel Club on Nov. 21 with Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald. Hunt’s lawyers failed to either break

Lorenz’s story or produce any rebuttal witnesses to successfully discredit her. Hunt’s efforts to establish his alibi had focused exclusively on establishing his whereabouts on Nov. 22. No CIA witnesses or records could place Hunt in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 21.

Hunt’s case was not helped either by the deposition of former CIA director Richard Helms. In 1967, at the time of the Garrison prosecution of New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw, Victor Marchetti had been the executive assistant to the deputy director of the CIA, Adm. Rufus Taylor. In that capacity, Marchetti attended the daily executive meetings in Helms’s office, often taking notes. In a 1975 article published by *True* magazine, Marchetti had reported that Helms had asked about the Shaw trial at one of these meetings, wanting to know whether the agency was giving Shaw “all the help” he needed. By the time the final phase of the *Hunt v. Liberty Lobby* case began, the CIA had acknowledged that Shaw had worked for the agency.

What about the British?

The Lane account of the *Hunt v. Liberty Lobby* case does make for fascinating reading, despite the author’s flights of egomania. As a skilled trial lawyer, Lane provides the patient reader with a useful and at times moving insight into the judicial process.

But it was whenever Lane delved into the substantive issues of the Kennedy assassination that this reviewer’s hairs stood on end. At the very beginning of the book, on a page titled, “In Gratitude,” among the people whom Lane cites as “treasured friends” and “old allies” in the struggle to unearth the truth about the JFK assassination are Bertrand Russell, Arnold Toynbee, and Hugh Trevor-Roper—all senior figures in the British intelligence establishment. Although Lane neglected to mention it once in his 384-page exposition on the Hunt trial, when he first surfaced as an investigator of the Kennedy assassination plot, he was sponsored by an outfit with the unlikely name: the British Who Killed Kennedy Committee. Bertrand Russell and Hugh Trevor-Roper were two of the group’s sponsors. As Lane does report in *Plausible Denial*, Trevor-Roper wrote the introduction to the British edition of his 1965 book, *Rush to Judgment*, one of the earliest swipes at the Warren Commission coverup.

Bertrand Russell, perhaps more than anyone else, personified the Anglo-American grouping that hated JFK and benefited the most from his assassination.

From the close of World War II, Russell advocated a world socialist order based on radical malthusian population reduction programs, especially targeted against the Third World. Although in 1946, in a famous article published in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Russell advocated a preemptive nuclear strike against Russia, once Moscow obtained the hydrogen bomb, he pushed for a Moscow-London-Washington “world federalist” axis to referee all global conflicts. Russell stood for the end of national sovereignty and

the nation state.

Through the Pugwash Conferences, where he was a leading participant (along with Henry Kissinger), Russell peddled the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), and advocated limited wars and multinational cartel control over raw materials, as instruments for exercising these global controls. At the 1958 Pugwash meeting, attended by both Russell and Kissinger, Dr. Leo Szilard spelled out the MAD strategy. A group of leading Soviet officials attended that meeting and signaled that Soviet Communist Party chief Nikita Khrushchov was willing to accept those rules of global engagement.

Russell abhorred scientific and technological progress, fearing that it would lead to the emergence of the nations of the South as equal partners to the white nations of the North in world affairs.

It was this doctrine and this outlook that JFK threatened to overturn.

- In a spring 1963 speech at American University, Kennedy announced his intention to pursue a new cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union. Based on America's proven military supremacy following the Cuban missile crisis, Kennedy proposed to help the U.S.S.R. overcome its economic backwardness, and proposed that the two great nuclear powers agree to abandon the Russellite MAD doctrine and develop a ballistic missile defense regime. Close aides to Kennedy called the speech a turning point in his presidency.

- Also in the spring of 1963, Kennedy signed an Executive Order authorizing the U.S. Treasury to begin printing billions of dollars in Treasury notes as part of a plan to crack down on the Federal Reserve System and the runaway power of the private international banks. Attorney General Robert Kennedy told close aides that following his brother's expected reelection in 1964, the administration would move to shut down all the offshore banking havens and force the big banks to comply with American law.

- Shortly before his assassination, Kennedy had signed an Executive Order bringing the first 1,000 American troops home from Vietnam before Christmas 1963. In that order, which is on file at the National Archive, Kennedy declared that all U.S. forces would be withdrawn permanently from Vietnam by the end of 1965. Kennedy had been swayed by the views of Gen. Douglas MacArthur (ret.), among others, against any protracted land war in Southeast Asia.

These and other measures either initiated or planned by Kennedy threatened to overturn the entire Versailles System that had governed world affairs since the close of World War I under British, and later Anglo-American, rules of engagement.

It was because of Kennedy's threat to break from these Versailles arrangements that he was killed. While Kennedy's decision to terminate American involvement in the Vietnamese conflict was unquestionably an important factor in the



President John F. Kennedy in his historic speech to a joint session of Congress, where he launched the Apollo space mission. JFK threatened to overturn the British oligarchy's policy of preventing technological and scientific optimism.

decision to kill him, it was Vietnam as a crucial cog in the Pugwash arrangements that made Kennedy's planned disengagement so important—not the issue of the war in itself.

Whether Lane is wittingly an agent of the Russellites who conspired to kill JFK or not, the influence of those British patrons led him to place undue emphasis on the so-called U.S. military-industrial complex and the CIA in his treatment of the Kennedy assassination tragedy (one close colleague of the lawyer suggested that perhaps Lane's own 1940s socialist background rendered him vulnerable to this Russellite "spin").

Critical evidence which was readily available to careful followers of the Warren Commission investigation and the more important Garrison investigation pointed toward an important British involvement in the JFK hit. (The Garrison investigation itself became infected with this narrow view that a "right-wing CIA" cabal killed President Kennedy, in part through inputs from Lane and Ralph Schoenmann, a longtime aide to Russell.)

There is no doubt that the CIA played an important role in the Kennedy assassination and coverup. There is also no doubt that former CIA director Allan Dulles, a member of the Warren Commission, was one of the major figures in the

coverup, as well as in the assassination plot itself. There is also, however, no doubt that precisely the British intelligence circles associated with Russell, Trevor-Roper, and Toynbee, the grand master of 20th-century British geopolitics, were also decision makers in the JFK execution.

The Permindex angle

The most direct piece of “police blotter” evidence of the active British hand in the JFK assassination comes from the Garrison probe, in the prosecution of Clay Shaw. Shaw, the only man ever criminally prosecuted for the conspiracy to murder John Kennedy, was a board member of the Montreal-based international trading company Permindex (PERmanent INDUSTRIal EXpositions). Shaw was an Office of Special Services (OSS) operative during World War II, who served in London and developed deep ties to all things British. His chairman at Permindex was Maj. Louis Mortimer Bloomfield, a former member of British Special Operations Executive (SOE), who served as its liaison to J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI. Bloomfield was a recruiting officer for the Bureau’s Division Five, the foreign counterespionage unit. Division Five was the FBI’s interface to British MI-5 intelligence. Guy Bannister, who avoided indictment by Garrison’s grand jury only because he died shortly before the indictments were handed down, had been the Division Five chief in Chicago, before moving to New Orleans in the 1950s and infiltrating the local police department. Bannister was a close associate of Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald, and other primary players in the killing of Kennedy.

Bloomfield, Shaw’s boss at Permindex, was a member of Montreal’s most prestigious Anglo-Zionist law firm, a firm that counted the Bronfman family of Seagrams among its clients. The Bronfman family had earned its initial fortune during the period of Prohibition by running illegal whiskey across the border into the United States. The Bronfmans were sponsored in Canada by the Hudson’s Bay Company.

Later in his career, Bloomfield emerged as a leading figure in the International Law Association (ILA), an agency associated with Bertrand Russell’s beloved United Nations Organization. Through his U.N. activity, Bloomfield’s career increasingly converged on that of Henry Kissinger.

Curiously, Bloomfield’s nephew and successor, Harry Bloomfield, showed up in 1982 as a participant in a secret gathering at the Negev Desert ranch of Israel’s Ariel Sharon, which planned an elaborate scheme to steal Palestinian land in Jerusalem and in the Israeli Occupied Territories, as part of what is today known as the Temple Mount project. Among the other guests at the event were: Lord Harlech (David Ormsby-Gore), who was British ambassador to Washington during the Kennedy presidency; Henry A. Kissinger; and Peter Lord Carrington.

The Negev event occurred shortly after Kissinger delivered a speech at London’s Royal Institute of International Affairs on May 10, 1982, in which he declared his longstand-

ing loyalty to the British Crown and boasted that he had often consulted first with the British Foreign Office on crucial policy matters while he was U.S. secretary of state.

The joint assassination bureau

The convergence of Kissinger and the crowd earlier associated with Permindex brings up another essential aspect of the Kennedy assassination that is missing from both of author Lane’s two published accounts of the JFK murder: the involvement of the Permindex apparatus in the 1962 assassination of Italian national oil company chairman Enrico Mattei, and in the numerous unsuccessful attempts to assassinate French President Charles de Gaulle.

The Garrison probe turned up hard evidence linking Permindex and its Italian affiliate Centro Mondiale Commerciale (CMC) to the financing of the Secret Army Organization (OAS) assassination attempts against de Gaulle. De Gaulle expelled Permindex from France as the result of French police tracking of those leads.

The involvement of the same circles in the European actions should have dispelled any efforts to pin the JFK murder solely on disgruntled Cubans or Pentagon brass furious at the prospect of an early end to the Vietnam War. De Gaulle, Kennedy, and Mattei were engaged in either cooperative or parallel policy initiatives that threatened the Versailles-Pugwash arrangements. Another policy ally in the anti-Versailles combination, West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, was driven from office during the same period.

Later, in 1978, when former Italian Premier Aldo Moro threatened to disrupt the Versailles policy arrangements, he, too, was murdered. Subsequent Italian investigations turned up strong circumstantial evidence linking Kissinger to the Moro kidnaping and assassination.

Knowledgeable investigators of the Kennedy assassination and other political murders of the 20th century have come to the conclusion that a joint assassination bureau exists to carry out the executions deemed necessary by the predominantly Anglo-American apparatus that stands to lose the most by the disruption of the Versailles system. Col. Fletcher Prouty referred to this as a “Murder, Inc. operating in perpetuity,” in a recent interview with *EIR* (Feb. 7, 1992).

Indeed, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche discussed in *EIR*’s issue of April 3, 1992 (“New Evidence Emerges in the Herrhausen Assassination Case”), recent history is replete with cases of others who have fallen victim to this apparatus.

Lyndon LaRouche has underlined that it is impossible to understand the political struggle that has unfolded since the JFK assassination without understanding the disintegration of the Versailles System. Mark Lane has no fundamental grasp of this pivotal concept, and, as a result, he is at best a victim of the successful coverup of the Kennedy assassination. At worst, he is one of the more insidious perpetrators of the myths that have served to protect the joint assassination bureau.