

Tin Foil Hat Sold Separately

by Richard Brown

[Transcription of a tape I received anonymously in the mail today with no return address.]

I can't believe it's been 50 years and you still haven't figured it out yet.

Since I only have a few weeks to live, I figured it was time to come clean. I was a central figure behind the John F. Kennedy assassination. I also played a key role in the deaths of RFK, Martin Luther King, Princess Diana, Tupac and Biggie, Michael Hastings, and JonBenet Ramsey, as well as 9/11 and the O.J. Simpson case. It's in my genes; my grandpa told me I was descended from the guy who framed Cain for slaying Abel.

I'm sitting in my living room, recording this confession at 1700 hours on the 15th day of the 11th month of 2013, through a microphone onto a VHS tape. (Yes, I know there are more modern methods of communication, but I'm old school. Don't trust computers - too many digital fingerprints.) When I finish recording this tape, I will bury it under the azaleas in my front lawn. I have left instructions for my attorney that, on the first full moon after my death, he should have Oliver Stone dig it up during the dead of night and deliver it to Jim Marrs at a location to be transmitted from Roswell, NM through their dental fillings, but only if it's a day divisible by three.

One thing I've learned: conspiracies are *hard*. The more people involved, the more likely that someone will get cold feet, experience a pang of conscience or remorse, whisper the wrong thing during pillow talk or write a tell-all book to pay his kid's tuition bills. Do you know how difficult it is to pull off that shit today? All those digital fingerprints plus video cameras and cell phone towers everywhere tracking your movements, the NSA listening to your phone calls and

monitoring your emails, and as soon as you whisper a secret to someone, it's broadcast to the world on Twitter or Facebook. Instead of one Super-8 film, we would have a thousand cell phone videos of just the grassy knoll.

When I told my wife about my role, she said, "Let me get this straight. Your superiors decided to kill the most powerful man in the world. You looked at the assassinations of Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley, all done by one man a few feet away, you thought about all the occasions Kennedy did meet-and-greets, and you decided: no. Better to spend months of elaborate planning to put a mediocre marksman with an inexpensive rifle at the top of a building a hundred yards away shooting at a moving target that is partly hidden by foliage. Then for good measure, on the grassy knoll you added other shooters whose aim was partly impeded by innocent bystanders. Was that your genius plot, Einstein?"

Well, I replied, if you put it that way, it does sound stupid. And we almost screwed the pooch anyway. That morning, it was raining and my mole told me Kennedy's people were leaning toward keeping the limo's bubble top up for the motorcade. Crap, I thought, there goes our unobstructed shot — all that planning down the drain. Thank God the skies cleared up or our degree of difficulty would have escalated.

Then my wife said, "You got Oswald a job at the Book Depository a month before the Administration even knew it was coming to Dallas. Did your conspiracy include a psychic? None of the witnesses who claimed to see shots from the grassy knoll reported that to either the authorities or the press on November 22. Did your conspiracy include a hypnotist?"

As a matter of fact, I said, we did use a psychic and hypnotist.

Next she asked me, "So your powerful bosses set up this elaborate plot to have Oswald shoot Kennedy, but you didn't arrange an escape for him? You didn't offer to hide him, change his identity or slip him out of the country? You left him flailing on his own, and within an hour he got arrested for shooting a cop in broad daylight in front of a dozen witnesses. Instead, you decided to silence him but

instead of using a professional killer or having someone wait outside the Depository or having the Dallas police hang him in his cell and claim it was suicide, you use a strip club owner who'd never shot anybody to kill Oswald in front of a national TV audience after the cops and the FBI had 48 hours to interrogate him. Do I have the facts right, Sherlock?"

Hindsight's 20/20, babe, I replied. We fucked that part up. Ruby turned out to be such a putz. He could have shot Oswald that first night because he was there at the police station for the press conference — he was three goddam feet from Oswald when he entered the room - but no, the jerk doesn't pull the trigger. On Sunday morning, he brought his fucking dog in the car with him, like he was expecting to go home! Jesus, who does that? Then before arriving at the police station, the a-hole stops at Western Union on the way to the police station to wire some money to one of his strippers, and almost misses the Oswald handover. I screamed, Jack, we'll take care of the goddam stripper, just get your ass over here ASAP or my superiors are going to be VERY unhappy. I mean, what a schmuck.

She said, "Really, Oswald? Communist, ex-Marine, wife-beater, Russian defector, passed out pro-Castro leaflets. The clown even went to Mexico a month before the killing to request a visa to Cuba. I mean, the guy should have changed his name legally to Patsy. He was one of those pathetic nobodies who today ends up shooting up a shopping mall. What sane person would ever think of using such a loser as part of a conspiracy?"

I said, That's why I thought he was perfect. Too perfect, as it turned out. We underestimated the American people's love for Kennedy and their refusal to believe that such an insignificant wretch could eliminate someone so powerful and beloved. We were able to snow the Warren Commission, but not John Q. Public. In the end, I think we outsmarted ourselves.

Finally, she said, "You must be annoyed that so many people see a conspiracy despite your best efforts to make it look like a lone gunman."

Yeah, I said, it cost my superiors a lot of money. I mean, A LOT of money. Do you know much it cost to scrub Oswald's phone records of all of our contacts? Do you know much it cost to rig those ballistics tests that "prove" Oswald could have fired off those shots in that short amount of time? Do you know much it cost to pay PBS' *Nova* to "prove" that Kennedy and John Connally were hit by the same bullet? Do you know how much it cost to bribe 21 photographic experts — twenty-fucking-one! — to testify in front of the House Committee that the photo of Oswald posing with his rifle was legitimate? Do you know how much it cost to bribe the panel of distinguished doctors who reviewed the X-rays and autopsy results for the House Committee to agree they matched the official story?

My wife said, "Gerald Posner and Vincent Bugliosi wrote detailed books 'proving' Oswald did it alone. Were they paid off too?"

Well, I said, let's just say they owed us favors.

Finally, I said, I'm lucky that so many conspiracy theorists believe in some crazy shit. They play so many rounds of "Six Degrees of Lee Harvey Oswald" that I'm surprised they haven't accused Kevin Bacon of being involved. Have you seen Jim Marrs' list of "mysterious deaths" related to the assassination? Mostly a bunch of nobodies who knew somebody who knew somebody. Meanwhile, the people really dangerous to my superiors, the ones who write the conspiracy theory books or say they saw shots from the grassy knoll, all live to a ripe old age. How does that make sense?

They can't even agree among themselves. Oswald was a CIA-trained marksman. No, he couldn't shoot his way out of a paper bag. Yes, Oswald did it but he was working for someone. No, he never fired a shot, it was the guys on the grassy knoll. No, it was an accidental shot from a Secret Service agent. Obviously, the CIA was behind it. No way, the Mafia arranged it. Come on, LBJ was guilty. No, it was Fidel Castro. Hell no, it was anti-Castro Cubans. An international corporation planned it. It's like a drunken game of Mad Libs. I'm surprised nobody's blamed Professor Plum.

"Some of their villains make sense," my wife said.

True, I replied. Castro hated Kennedy, the Mafia hated Kennedy, some guys in the CIA hated Kennedy. So what? Castro? Man, if the government thought Castro was responsible, the next day they would have had B-52s strafing his ass and the Marines knocking on his casa door. The Mafia? They have the most lethal hit men in the world. Why would they use dipshits like Oswald and Ruby?

The CIA? That's insane. The government is incapable of sharpening a pencil without stabbing itself in the eye — I mean, have you seen healthcare.gov? — yet somehow it's supposedly capable of a massive conspiracy without one word leaking out. We asked them to assassinate Castro and you know what they came up with? A cigar. An exploding fucking cigar. What would they have come up with if we asked them to kill Kennedy, poisoned condoms?

"Well," my wife said, "the government has become pretty good at killing people." OK, I said, I'll grant you that.

Oliver Stone's *JFK*? Please. I can't believe anyone took that crap seriously. Jim Garrison was a paranoid egomaniac who wouldn't recognize real evidence if it bit him in the testicles. He ruined the life of Clay Shaw, an innocent man, while refusing to prosecute cases against New Orleans Mob boss Carlos Marcello, who he called a "respectable businessman" — there is evidence he was taking bribes from Marcello - and people believe Garrison was a *hero*? Barnum was right, there's a sucker born every minute.

Anyway, let me tell you what really happened. First, however, let me set the mood properly, like it's a documentary on the History Channel. I'll turn on some ominous music in the background — yeah, that sounds good — and I'll dim the lights so I'm speaking in shadows. Hey, maybe I'll throw off the camera focus too, make it look a little blurry and spooky. That works.

So anyway, on the morning of November 22...

[Gun shot is heard. The speaker drops the microphone, puts his hand up to his throat and pitches forward. Tape runs out.]

[End of transcription.]

