

## Still Guilty After All These Years: Sirhan B. Sirhan

*By Mel Ayton*

It has often been said that lurid theories about the Lincoln and JFK assassinations have thrived because neither John Wilkes Booth nor Lee Harvey Oswald received their day in court. The concept of due process is so embedded in the American psyche, in other words, that its denial inexorably gives rise to conspiratorial explanations.

The aftermath of Robert F. Kennedy's June 1968 assassination, however, challenges this somewhat comforting observation.

In this instance, the assassin was literally caught red-handed—tackled by Kennedy's bodyguards moments after the shots were fired, a .22 caliber revolver still in hand. When the trial of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, a 24-year-old native of Palestine, opened seven months later, his defense counsel explained, "There will be no denial of the fact that our client . . . fired the shot that killed Senator Kennedy."<sup>[1]</sup> Instead, Sirhan's lawyers mounted a defense of not guilty because of "diminished capacity," the only way to spare their client from what seemed to be his likely fate, the gas chamber at San Quentin.

Sirhan's counsel had no other choice because the presiding judge, Herbert Van Walker, exercising his discretion, had summarily rejected a plea bargain that would have exchanged life imprisonment for a guilty plea. "We don't want another Dallas," Walker reportedly observed, repeating the mantra uttered moments after Sirhan's apprehension.<sup>[2]</sup> Walker believed, presumably, that prosecuting Sirhan to the full extent of the law would avert the uncertainty that was already rampant with respect to the first Kennedy assassination. The Sirhan case was being tried at virtually the same time the awful miscarriage of justice in New Orleans—the circus-like [persecution of Clay Shaw](#) by district attorney Jim Garrison—was coming to a head. And that debacle was the direct outgrowth of the doubt and disbelief which existed because of Jack Ruby's vigilantism, and the denial of due process for Oswald.

Sirhan Sirhan had his day in court, indeed, several months. Because of the extraordinary security precautions employed, Sirhan's prosecution was judged the most expensive US trial ever held, costing the county of Los Angeles \$900,000 (\$5.3 million in 2007 dollars).<sup>[3]</sup> And despite the best efforts of his lawyers, Sirhan received the ultimate sanction. The only factor which saved him from being executed decades ago was that three years after the penalty was handed down in May 1969, the state Supreme Court

declared California's death penalty unconstitutional. Sirhan's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and Corcoran State Prison near Fresno, an infamous maximum-security facility, is where he remains to this day—along with other notorious inmates such as Charles Manson.

Judge Walker was not a naïve man, but even a cynic might have been hard pressed in 1969 to foresee how conspiracy theorists would succeed in twisting the facts in a ceaseless effort to raise doubts about what amounted to an open and shut case. Today it comes as little surprise, given the absence of any editorial vetting on the internet, to find many websites and blogs saturated with bogus revelations and mindless repetition of supposed “facts” that were, in actuality, refuted or rationally explained years ago.<sup>[4]</sup> The tide of nonsense is sufficiently high that on occasion, and as if by osmosis, palpable falsehoods are accepted and propagated by even the most venerable news organizations, as will be seen below.

There were, to be sure, apparent anomalies in the evidence, including problems with the ballistic and forensic evidence. In addition, some eyewitness statements, if taken completely at face value, at least raised the possibility that Sirhan had not acted alone in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel. But such incongruities are entirely normal in most murder investigations, which are far from being as neat and tidy as an episode of CSI. It is particularly true of major investigations, where the possibility of human error is compounded because of the vast amounts of paperwork and physical evidence that must be processed. Then, too, police forces 40 years ago were simply not as careful about securing a murder scene as they are trained to be now.

What is immediately apparent when the historiographies of the JFK and RFK assassinations are placed side by side is their similarity, independent from the reality that Sirhan confessed, was tried, and convicted. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the assassination mimicry serving as inspiration for Sirhan's crime in the first place has extended to the post-assassination arc of the RFK case. Though not in the same order, many of the same tactics used to put the official story of the JFK assassination in disrepute by 1968 have been employed in the RFK case—sometimes by the very same people.

### Purported Involvement of the CIA

It took four years before allegations of CIA involvement in the JFK assassination achieved critical mass in the public mind, courtesy of [Jim Garrison](#). In the RFK case, the allegation was leveled far more quickly, owing to the [noxious political atmosphere](#) generated by Garrison and comrades such as [Mark Lane](#) in the late 1960s.

Even as a special unit of Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) detectives were investigating Sirhan's every movement and association prior to June 5, some of the conspiracists who had attached themselves to Garrison's probe were contacting the

LAPD to report a “CIA conspiracy” in the senator’s assassination. These freelance researchers, or “Dealey Plaza irregulars” as they were dubbed, claimed that RFK was killed because the CIA feared he would launch an investigation into “[agency] involvement in his brother’s death” if elected president in 1968.<sup>[5]</sup> Garrison himself was uncharacteristically silent on the subject, perhaps because he had accused the former attorney general, prior to June 1968, of obstructing the DA’s probe into the JFK assassination. The truth, Garrison alleged, threatened to “interfere with [RFK’s] political career.”<sup>[6]</sup> In fact, within the DA’s bizarre world, according to Tom Bethell, who worked on the investigation, Robert Kennedy was considered a *suspect* in the JFK case until his own death.<sup>[7]</sup>

The theme of CIA involvement in the RFK case waned in subsequent decades, but was resuscitated with the success of Oliver Stone’s 1992 film, *JFK*. The most persistent purveyor of this meme was Lawrence Teeter, a criminal defense attorney who took up Sirhan’s case in 1994 and immediately began petitioning state and federal courts for a new trial. Taking a leaf from two earlier, conspiratorially-minded books about the case, Teeter never denied that Sirhan fired a handgun shortly after midnight, but claimed the assassin was a victim of hypnotic programming, à la Richard Condon’s 1959 book, *The Manchurian Candidate* (later a film by John Frankenheimer).<sup>[8]</sup> In Sirhan’s case, however, he was not a tool of a foreign power and Stalinist mother, Teeter contended, but was controlled by the CIA, the “military-industrial complex,” or both.<sup>[9]</sup>

As inexorably happens, the latest incarnation of this fantasy is even more Baroque and involved than its precursors. That did not, however, prevent it from being propagated by the BBC.

On 6 November 2006, “[Newsnight](#),” the BBC’s flagship news program, broadcast a 12-minute segment about a forthcoming “documentary” on the assassination, written by Shane O’Sullivan, an Irish screenwriter. Though not previously known for his investigative prowess or non-fiction writing, O’Sullivan claimed to have uncovered new video and photographic evidence that proved “three senior CIA operatives were behind the [RFK] killing.” In the BBC segment, and a [companion article](#) published in *The Guardian* on the same day, O’Sullivan even named names: David Sanchez Morales, Gordon Campbell, and George Joannides, all three of whom were involved in anti-Castro activities out of the CIA’s station in Miami in the early ’60s.<sup>[10]</sup>

There was only one problem (well, actually there was more than one, but one will suffice) with O’Sullivan’s allegation. These CIA officers he claimed were the real sponsors of the assassination were not at the Ambassador Hotel on the night in question.<sup>[11]</sup>

Primarily because my own book on the RFK assassination, *The Forgotten Terrorist*, was coming out in a matter of months, I immediately undertook to investigate O’Sullivan claims. Through Don Bohning, the former Latin America editor for *The Miami Herald* (and author of *The Castro Obsession*), whose contacts in this subject are unrivaled, former colleagues who knew David Morales and/or Gordon Campbell very well were

promptly located.<sup>[12]</sup> All three positively and without hesitation stated that the dubious witnesses O’Sullivan had relied upon—Wayne Smith, Bradley Ayers, and David Rabern—were wrong in their identifications of Morales and Campbell.<sup>[13]</sup>

Simultaneously, two other journalists, David Talbot and Jefferson Morley, began investigating O’Sullivan’s story, because they, too, were working on projects with equity in the allegation. Talbot was putting the finishing touches on *Brothers*, his biography of Robert Kennedy post-1963. Talbot was going to argue that JFK had been killed as a result of a conspiracy involving CIA operatives, and he obviously needed to understand if a similar “plot” extended to RFK. Morley had a keen interest because he had single-handedly transformed [George Joannides](#) from an all-but-forgotten officer into the crucial link that would supposedly unravel the CIA’s alleged cover-up of its embarrassing involvement with Lee Harvey Oswald prior to the JFK assassination. If Joannides had been at the Ambassador Hotel, Morley also needed to know it immediately.

Despite their predisposition to believe in conspiracy theories when it came to one or both Kennedy assassinations, not even Talbot and Morley could countenance O’Sullivan’s flimsy proof.<sup>[14]</sup> After six weeks of crisscrossing the country, their investigation not only confirmed the mistaken identifications of Morales and Campbell, but took the debunking of O’Sullivan’s allegation two steps further. In an [essay](#) posted in the spring of 2007, they proved that Campbell could not possibly have been in Los Angeles in 1968 because he had died in September 1962. In addition, utilizing Morley’s familiarity with Joannides, Talbot and Morley quoted five close friends/relatives who said the man who “looked Greek” to Shane O’Sullivan was definitely not Joannides.<sup>[15]</sup>

In a brief [rebuttal](#), O’Sullivan claimed to “welcome this new evidence,” although he found the tone of Morley and Talbot’s article “absurdly pompous,” given that they, too, had initially been titillated and intrigued by the allegation (according to O’Sullivan). In any case, the Irish screenwriter promised to address the issue again in more detail when his feature-length documentary was released in a matter of months.

### The Actual Documentary

When *RFK Must Die* was finally released in 2007, a reasonable person might have predicted that a chastened O’Sullivan would back off from his claim of CIA involvement. Quite the contrary.

O’Sullivan devoted 45 minutes of his 138-minute “investigative documentary” to the supposed controversy over CIA operatives allegedly at the Ambassador. To his credit, O’Sullivan showed Ruben Carbajal, one of David Morales’s best friends, denouncing those who allege the CIA officer was present at the Ambassador Hotel in June 1968. But then O’Sullivan devoted even more footage to the supposed identifications of Morales and Joannides made by the likes of Wayne Smith, Bradley Ayers, David Rabern, and Edwin Lopez.

Even more astounding was O'Sullivan's subsequent disclosure that upon further investigation, he had actually discovered the real identifies of the men he previously claimed were as "Gordon Campbell" and "George Joannides." From LAPD files, O'Sullivan had learned these men were two now-deceased executives from the Bulova Watch Company, who had been attending a company convention at the Ambassador at the time of the California primary. "Campbell" was actually Michael Roman, Bulova's national sales manager in 1968, and "Joannides" was, in reality, Frank Owens, a regional sales manager. But O'Sullivan then went on to insinuate, incredibly, and without citing a shred of evidence, that [Bulova](#)—a fabled New York company founded in 1875 by a Czech immigrant—was a well-known CIA "asset," "cover," or "front."<sup>[16]</sup>

In all the investigations ever conducted into the CIA, no information has ever surfaced to suggest that Bulova was utilized for cover purposes or as a CIA front—though, in all likelihood, some officers undoubtedly wore the company's popular "Accutron" wristwatch in the mid-1960s. Perhaps O'Sullivan made the connection because Bulova used to advertise the "Accutron" in 1966 on the popular TV spy show, "[The Man from U.N.C.L.E.](#)" If so, that should have raised, by the reasoning and logic O'Sullivan consistently employs, some questions about the actor Robert Vaughn, who played Napoleon Solo in the TV series, and just coincidentally happened to be one of RFK's most prominent backers in Hollywood.

Was Vaughn actually playing a dual and sinister role? Perhaps using his access to Kennedy to telegraph the senator's schedule and whereabouts? Where *was* Robert Vaughn shortly after midnight on 5 June 1968? And was he wearing a Bulova?

Perhaps O'Sullivan will address these new questions in his forthcoming book, the next fruit of his investigation. [Who Killed Bobby?](#) is to be published in the United States in a matter of weeks. In all likelihood, though, *Who Killed Bobby?* will probably have the same impact and shelf-life as Peter Evans's 2005 book, *Nemesis*. In that work, Evans claimed the FBI, CIA, and Aristotle Onassis(!) hypnotized a Palestinian man (but *not* Sirhan) into assassinating RFK.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Fabricated Gunshots

Insinuating CIA complicity, of course, is only one of the tactics shared by those who stoke conspiratorial explanations for the Kennedy assassinations. Another is to call into question the ballistic evidence. Championed by former Representative [Allard K. Lowenstein](#) (D-New York) and former RFK aide Paul Schrade, this mode of criticism reached its first peak in December 1974 and took three years to wane. Since next month marks the 40th anniversary of RFK's slaying, it would not be complete without another supposedly new challenge to the forensic evidence.

In late March, ABC News [reported](#) that two "forensic scientists," Robert Joling and Philip Van Praag, had developed startling new evidence that undermined the notion

Sirhan was the only one who fired a gun in the Ambassador's pantry. In their new, self-published book, *An Open and Shut Case*, Joling and Van Praag asserted that an audio recording of the assassination proved at least 13 shots were fired, which exceeded by five the number of bullets that Sirhan's revolver could fire. According to ABC, the authors also claimed the bullet that killed Kennedy had entered the back of his head, and Sirhan was believed to be facing RFK at all times. "It can be established conclusively that Sirhan did not shoot Senator Kennedy," Joling told ABC. "And in fact not only did he not do it, he could not have done it."<sup>[18]</sup>

While ABC News's lack of judgment here was not as bad as the BBC's, it was only so by a very small margin. The ABC story included this sentence: "But other forensic scientists dismiss these theories, saying the analysis is flat-out wrong."<sup>[19]</sup> That was plain lazy, "on-the-one hand, on-the-other-hand" journalism. Given the seriousness of the allegation, it was incumbent upon the network to do its own rudimentary vetting of the story. If ABC had, it would have discovered the Joling/Van Praag allegation is neither novel nor accurate, and thus not news.

The notion that Sirhan was never in position to shoot Senator Kennedy in the back of the head is very old, but oft-repeated, buncombe—not dissimilar from the canard that there was something "magic" about the bullet that passed through President Kennedy before striking Governor Connally.<sup>[20]</sup> Vincent DiPerro, an Ambassador waiter in 1968, was standing five feet behind the senator in the pantry and had an unobstructed view of the shooting. As he told *The Washington Post*'s Ronald Kessler in 1974, it was true that Sirhan was standing about three feet in front, and slightly to the right, of Kennedy. But a moment before Sirhan whipped out his handgun, Kennedy turned to his left to greet some busboys. As Sirhan began firing, he lunged forward, bringing the muzzle of his Ivor-Johnson revolver to within inches of Kennedy's head.

"It would be impossible for there to be a second gun," DiPerro told Kessler. "I saw the first shot. Kennedy fell at my feet. His blood splattered on me. I had a clear view of Kennedy and Sirhan."<sup>[21]</sup> After Kennedy was shot, according to DiPerro, Sirhan continued to fire wildly and rapidly, while bystanders slammed his gun hand down on a nearby table in an effort to wrest it from him. There are at least three more eyewitness statements corroborating DiPerro's account that Sirhan, and no one else, shot Kennedy at point-blank range.

The allegation that more than eight shots were fired is also a concoction, although of a more recent vintage. It has the same odor as the House Select Committee on Assassinations' 1979 discovery of a fourth shot in the JFK case, because it, too, cannot withstand scientific scrutiny.

The story here begins in early 2006, while I was conducting archival research for my account of the RFK assassination, *The Forgotten Terrorist*. I learned from a source that the RFK-related holdings of the California State Archives contained a previously unreported tape recording of the gunshots in the pantry. The 35-minute recording had

been made by Stanislaw Pruszyński, a freelance journalist at the time, and is the only extant recording of all the shots fired.

At my request, Philip Harrison of [J.P. French Associates](#), the oldest independent forensic speech and acoustics laboratory in the United Kingdom, analyzed a digital copy of the Pruszyński tape. During this process, Harrison would consult both his laboratory colleague, Professor Peter French, who is also a lecturer in forensic speech and audio analysis at the University of York, and Steve Barber, who is well-known for having exposed HSCA's bogus claim of a fourth shot in the JFK case. Harrison was able to identify seven impulse sounds (which are characterized by a sharp onset and rapid decay) that corresponded to Sirhan's gun being fired to the exclusion of another weapon (the seven impulses all exhibited very similar characteristics). An eighth shot could not be clearly identified on the spectrogram made from the tape recording; this sound appeared to be masked by other noise, including screams. Harrison's report was printed as an appendix in *The Forgotten Terrorist*, published in May 2007. A trio of Americans, led by Steve Barber, who had begun to analyze the Pruszyński recording even before Harrison became involved, also concurred with Harrison's finding. [Their analysis](#) was published online in March 2007 on History News Network.[\[22\]](#)

The following month, the [Discovery Times Channel](#) broadcast an episode of its "[Conspiracy Test](#)" series in which it was claimed that "forensic audio experts" had detected not seven or even eight, but as many as 13 shots on the Pruszyński tape. One of the experts, Philip Van Praag, insisted there were 13 identifiable sound signatures, while the other, Wes Dooley, found ten.[\[23\]](#)

It could be argued that Harrison's analysis simply ought to be given more weight than Van Praag's or Dooley's on the basis of Harrison's superior expertise and experience. A trained acoustic engineer, Harrison has worked on more than 1,000 cases for one of the leading forensic firms of its kind in the world. Van Praag is actually an audio engineer by profession, which is quite a different thing, and his experience is simply not comparable to Harrison's; nor is Dooley's. It could also be argued that the vast majority of ear-witness testimony comports with Harrison's analysis and contradicts Van Praag's and Dooley's assertions.

But the most revealing aspect of all is that neither Van Praag nor Dooley has been willing to discuss their respective findings in detail, despite several appeals. Indeed, Dooley disclosed to Harrison that he had had to destroy his files after the documentary was filmed, and that he did not consider his findings to be as conclusive as the documentary made them seem.[\[24\]](#)

This is not the method of science. It is pseudo-science.

### Facts Irrelevant

Whether they are relative neophytes, like Shane O’Sullivan, or grizzled veterans, like Robert Joling, who has cried conspiracy and cover-up in the RFK case for nearly 40 years, the tactics and gambits employed by conspiracists are easily identifiable. If caught in a lie, they shamelessly manufacture a new one. Facts don’t matter, because their conspiracy-mongering is seldom, if ever, about the facts. As far back as 1971, Lynn D. Compton, the chief prosecutor in the Sirhan case, noted that conspiracy theories about the second Kennedy assassination were unlikely to cease because the allegations were not rooted in the facts of the case, but stemmed from the critics’ political agenda.<sup>[25]</sup>

To be sure, conspiracism about RFK’s political murder has never gripped Americans’ collective psyche to quite the same degree as has the assassination of his brother. The pantry has no grassy knoll, and “[Ambassador Hotel](#)” never connoted the same instant chill as the words “[Dealey Plaza](#).” The Los Angeles County DA and LAPD chief never became household names overnight. The city of Los Angeles never bore the kind of burden visited upon Dallas.

Perhaps that is because Robert Kennedy was not president when he was assassinated, and the shock of the sequel was more like a numbing after-shock than a political earthquake. There is also the fatigue factor: just how many conspiracies must a citizen keep track of? Finally, one would like to think that the due process accorded Sirhan has something to do with the relative deficit of interest in conspiracy theories about RFK’s assassination.

But this much is true: the public’s lack of interest has not stemmed from conspiracy theorists’ lack of effort.

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[1] Janet M. Knight, ed., *3 Assassinations: The Deaths of John & Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King* (New York: Facts on File, 1971), 205.

[2] Ibid. While waiting for the police to arrive, Sirhan’s captors had to fend off many hysterical on-lookers who attempted to assault Sirhan (in some cases successfully, as his left index finger was broken). “We don’t want another Dallas!” went the cry. “Let’s keep this one alive! We don’t want another Oswald!” Robert A. Houghton, *Special Unit Senator: The Investigation of the Assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy* (New York: Random House, 1970), 292.

[3] Knight, *3 Assassinations*, 205.

[4] Books that have thoroughly debunked the supposed mysteries of the RFK assassination include Dan E. Moldea, *The Killing of Robert F. Kennedy: An Investigation of Motive, Means, and Opportunity* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995); and Mel Ayton, *The Forgotten Terrorist: Sirhan Sirhan and the Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2007).

[5] Houghton, *Special Unit Senator*, 292.

[6] Patricia Lambert, *False Witness: The Real Story of Jim Garrison's Investigation and Oliver Stone's Film JFK* (New York: M. Evans, 1998) 124.

[7] Tom Bethell, "Was Sirhan Sirhan on the Grassy Knoll?" *Washington Monthly*, March 1975.

[8] Robert Blair Kaiser, "*R.F.K. Must Die!*" *A History of the Robert Kennedy Assassination and Its Aftermath* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970); William W. Turner and Jonn G. Christian, *The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy: A Searching Look at the Conspiracy and Cover-up, 1968-1978* (New York: Random House, 1978). In the late 1960s, Turner, a disgruntled former FBI agent, was the author of several articles in *Ramparts* magazine that extolled the virtues of Garrison's probe.

[9] "Lawrence Teeter," *Washington Post*, 5 August 2005; Isabel Vincent, "Kennedy's Killer Demands Retrial: Sirhan Sirhan Claims He Was a Victim of Hypnotic Programming," *National Post*, 11 June 1003.

[10] Shane O'Sullivan, "[Did the CIA Kill Bobby Kennedy?](#)" *The Guardian*, 20 November 2006. Morales, a senior officer, was the paramilitary chief of operations; Joannides served as chief of psychological warfare operations; and Campbell was a former Army colonel serving as a contract agent.

[11] In his article, O'Sullivan had noted that Tom Clines, a retired senior CIA officer, had disputed the identifications when presented with the same evidence. But O'Sullivan dismissed Clines's denials as an effort to "blow smoke." O'Sullivan, "[Did the CIA Kill Bobby Kennedy?](#)" 20 November 2006.

[12] Via Bohning I contacted Lt. Col. Manuel Chavez, an Air Force intelligence officer, who had known Morales in Venezuela in the late 1950s and later, in Miami; Grayston Lynch, the CIA officer present during the Bay of Pigs invasion, who knew Morales and Gordon Campbell from the CIA Miami station; and Luis Rodriguez, an Army officer seconded to the Miami station when Morales worked there.

[13] Ayton, "[Did the CIA Kill Bobby Kennedy? The BBC's Blunder](#)," HNN, 27 November 2006, updated 4 December 2006. Wayne Smith, a former foreign service officer, is known to believe, as he once put it, that "the [JFK] assassination "was carried out by the 'cowboys' of the CIA—men like David Morales." He would hardly qualify as an objective eyewitness regarding Morales's alleged involvement with RFK's murder.

Eric Hamburg, *JFK, Nixon, Oliver Stone & Me: An Idealist's Journey from Capitol Hill to Hollywood Hell* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 273. The credibility of Bradley Ayers, who served in the CIA's JMwave station in Miami with Morales, is also suspect. Ayers has long sought to profit from his association with JMwave station; his first book on the subject was a sober account, but his second, self-published book was sensational, and even contradicted the first one—a sure sign of unreliability. Compare Bradley E. Ayers, *The War That Never Was: An Insider's Account of CIA Covert Operations Against Cuba* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), with Ayers, *The Zenith Secret: A CIA Insider Exposes the Secret War Against Cuba and the Plot That Killed the Kennedy Brothers* (Brooklyn, NY: Vox Pop, 2006). As for Rabern, whom O'Sullivan described as a “freelance operative who was part of the Bay of Pigs invasion force,” no one who knows anything about the 1961 operation recalls Rabern as having anything to do with the invasion. Rabern also apparently claims to have been at the Ambassador Hotel the night RFK was shot, although there is no reason to believe that is true either. Ayton, “[Did the CIA Kill Bobby Kennedy?](#)” 27 November 2006. It was Ayers who discovered, while working on his second book, that Rabern had supposedly seen Morales at the Ambassador. Ayers went on to accuse Morales in the book of complicity in everything from the JFK assassination to the murder of Arizona reporter Don Bolles in 1976, often in cahoots with then Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona). Ayers, *Zenith Secret*, 199, 255.

[14] Although their joint article flatly called the BBC report “erroneous,” Talbot's book claimed, “Morley and I unearthed new evidence that tied Morales and other JMwave veterans to the assassination of President Kennedy, and possibly to the killing of Bobby Kennedy as well.” Talbot's “new evidence” included old and discredited allegations about former CIA officers [H. Howard Hunt](#) and [David Atlee Phillips](#). Talbot, *Brothers*, 398-406.

[15] Jefferson Morley and David Talbot, “[The BBC's Flawed RFK Story](#),” Mary Ferrell Foundation; Talbot, *Brothers*, 397-398. Edwin Lopez, a New York lawyer who served as a researcher for the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), was O'Sullivan's sole source for the identification of Joannides, who served as a liaison to HSCA from the agency. But Lopez is also a conspiracy theorist regarding CIA involvement, and his HSCA colleague, Don Hardway, who spent just as much time with Joannides, did not think the grainy photograph depicted Joannides.

[16] [RFK Must Die: The Assassination of Bobby Kennedy](#), Soda Pictures, 2007. Written, directed, and produced by Shane O'Sullivan.

[17] Peter Evans, *Nemesis: The True Story of Aristotle Onassis, Jackie O, and the Love Triangle That Brought Down the Kennedys* (New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2005); John Hiscock, “[Was Robert Kennedy Killed by a Real 'Manchurian Candidate'-Style Assassin?](#)” *The Independent*, 18 January 2005.

[18] Pierre Thomas, “[Two Guns Used in RFK Assassination, Experts Say](#),” ABC News, 27 March 2008.

[19] [Ibid.](#)

[20] A real “magic bullet” would have been one that disappeared after striking JFK. For if it didn’t wound Connally after exiting the president’s throat, where did it go?

[21] Ronald Kessler, “Expert Discounts RFK 2d-Gun Theory, *Washington Post*, 19 December 1974. Moldea reported that Sirhan himself told one of the defense team’s investigators why he didn’t shoot RFK in the face, since their eyes met an instant before Sirhan started shooting. “Because that son of a bitch turned his head at the last second,” Sirhan explained, apparently without remorse. It is also possible, as Moldea reported, that Kennedy recoiled and tried to twist further away from Sirhan as he began firing. Moldea, *Killing of Robert F. Kennedy*, 312-313, 326.

[22] Ayton, *Forgotten Terrorist*, 277-278. For the Americans’ analysis, see Steve Barber, “[The Robert F. Kennedy Assassination: The Acoustics Evidence](#),” HNN, 26 March 2007.

[23] Ayton, “[How the Discovery Channel Duped the American Public about the RFK Assassination Acoustics Debate](#),” HNN, 19 November 2007.

[24] [Ibid.](#)

[25] Don Bolles, “Bob Kennedy’s Assassin Acted Alone, Lawyer Says,” *Arizona Republic*, 28 November 1971.