

# New Poetry by Todd Heldt: “This Is A Drill, This Is Only A Drill” and “Suffer The Children”



ACTION IS PRETTY / *image by Amalie Flynn*

**This is a drill. This is only a drill.**

They voted to abolish history.  
There had been no commercials.  
We didn't know which wrong to fear most,  
and nobody got the joke.  
When the polls ran out of ballots,  
somebody hurled a beer bottle  
through a church's stained-glass window.  
Peace officers deployed  
pepper spray for the white kids  
and bullets for the black.  
You should expect to see things  
like this in democracy. Because  
the cost is always  
what the market will bear.  
We all went home or to jail,  
or to hospital or morgue, grateful.  
America in action is pretty,  
the Blue Angels swooping in for the kill  
as spectators cheer from the beaches below.  
We don't even know who we are fighting.  
Someone is crossing himself.  
Someone is crossing the border.  
War is just how we learn geography,  
and someone scaled a wall  
to pick your corn. Good people  
are unarmed and  
defenseless in church,  
and no one will tell us straight  
which group of not us we should bomb.

## **Suffer the Children**

12000 kids in detention  
300 shot dead in their schools  
200 bombed by drones  
the ones we don't know to mention

and the ones the future will starve  
my two who are safe in their bedroom  
who cry when they are scared

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**New Nonfiction by M.C.  
Armstrong: "Murder Most Foul:  
The Role of Lyndon Johnson in  
the Murder of John F.  
Kennedy"**



*What is the truth, and where did it go?  
Ask Oswald and Ruby, they oughta know.*

*"Shut your mouth, " said the wise old owl.  
Business is business, and it's a murder most foul.*

*-Bob Dylan, Murder Most Foul*



Doyle Whitehead flew Air Force One on November 22, 1963, the day JFK was killed in Dallas, Texas. Whitehead waited a long time before speaking up about the assassination of John F.

Kennedy. He enlisted in the Air Force after graduating from Oxford High School in 1954. In 1959, after one of Dwight Eisenhower's Air Force One stewards suffered a heart attack, Whitehead subbed in and became part of the executive detail. It was while serving on Air Force One that Whitehead came to know Kennedy. Caroline, JFK's daughter, called the steward "Whitey."

"Did you know I have a steward on my plane who went to Oxford?" Whitehead remembers the president teasing on occasion.

"People celebrated on the plane ride back to Washington," Whitehead said in 2016. "They were laughing and talking about 'what we gon do now.' They were so loud we had to shut the door so Jackie wouldn't hear them."[\[i\]](#)

Only hours earlier, Johnson was being investigated for corruption by the Senate Rules Committee.[\[ii\]](#) As recently released evidence reveals, Kennedy was about to drop Johnson from the 1964 ticket.[\[iii\]](#) Thus, flying back to DC, drinking nearly a fifth of Cutty Sark whiskey on the way, LBJ had reason to celebrate. His job was secure. And as President of the United States, he now possessed control of the investigation into the murder of JFK.

## **The Radioactive Belief**

In 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Nobel Prize-winning songwriter Bob Dylan released "Murder Most Foul," a seventeen-minute ballad about the death of President Kennedy. Many writers reported on the song's length and surprise surge to the top of the Billboard charts. But Richard Eskow wrote, "most commentators tiptoed around the true news value: a major cultural icon has boldly given voice to a widely held but professionally radioactive belief: that John F. Kennedy was killed, not by the lone nut, Lee Harvey Oswald, but as part of a plot that was tantamount to a coup d'etat."[\[iv\]](#) Is

America finally ready to have an adult conversation about this “radioactive belief”?

It is time to reclaim the narrative of the Kennedy assassination from the propaganda machine Lyndon Johnson catalyzed when he commissioned the Warren Report, the official government version of the JFK assassination. Johnson played a hand in the murder of President Kennedy and America needs to reckon with what this means for our democracy. To be sure, we must be careful when handling the reputation of a public figure, especially one like Johnson whose presidential achievements in civil rights tie his story to so many others. But America is a deeply divided country whose democracy is in danger. The post-truth moment we find ourselves in will not go away by continuing to dance around the history of the coup in Dallas.

Dylan writes, in “Murder Most Foul,” that “We’ll mock you and shock you and put it in your face/We’ve already got someone here to take your place.”[\[v\]](#) But who was the “we” and what was Johnson’s role in the conspiracy? In November of 2022, longtime JFK assassination researcher Jefferson Morley asked on Twitter, “What’s the evidence tying LBJ to the crime or to Oswald? I don’t know of any.”[\[vi\]](#) Morley is not alone in viewing the LBJ theory as a hidden history. But there is a mountain of evidence hiding in plain sight to indict Johnson and demonstrate that he was the mastermind of the coup.



Nobody but Johnson had the means, motive and opportunity to kill Kennedy, and those who knew LBJ left behind a trail of transactions, confessions, and forensic evidence. As members of Kennedy's Secret Service acknowledged after the murder, there were multiple conspiracies to kill JFK in the fall of 1963, such as one in Chicago just a month before Dallas.[\[vii\]](#) To pull off a coordinated attack against a formidable security apparatus required a command of the police on federal, state, and local levels. The fact that the successful plot finally played out in Johnson's home state of Texas is no coincidence.

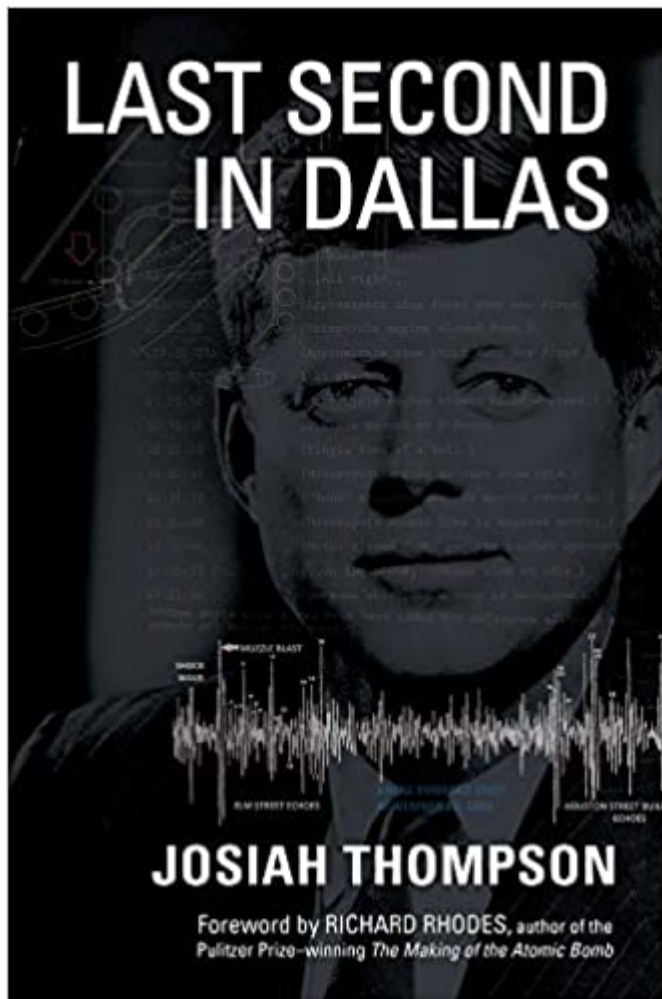
We cannot comprehend Johnson's role in the plot without understanding the network of supporters he cultivated from his earliest years as a Congressman from Texas, among these being Herman Brown, Johnson's number one source of money. Johnson's "power base," in historian Robert Caro's words, "wasn't his congressional district, it was Herman Brown's bank account . . . His power was simply the power of money."[\[viii\]](#) To understand Johnson's part in the killing of Kennedy, we must map the finances and motives of the men who depended on Johnson's access to Washington. Among these were three key figures: Herman Brown, the oilman D.H. Byrd and Ed Clark, Johnson's attorney and a former lawyer for Brown and Root. The story of the Kennedy assassination is the map of Texas power.

The “we” Dylan describes in his song is the bipartisan war industry that depended on Johnson for their work, both at home and abroad.

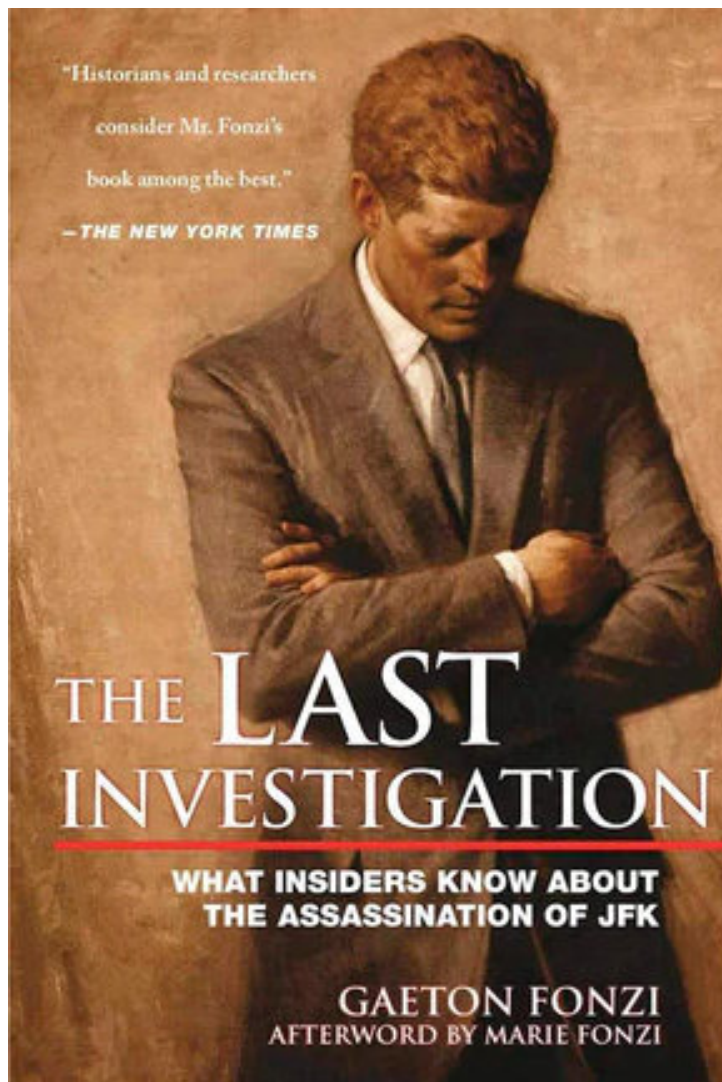
## **Forensic Evidence & CIA Confessions**

Dylan’s “we” suggests that the Warren Commission’s official story of a lone nut assassin was a myth and that there was a second shooter stationed atop a slope of grass in Dealey Plaza. The songwriter sings, “Put your head out the window, let the good times roll/There’s a party going on behind the grassy knoll.”[\[ix\]](#) Twenty-first century scholarship supports Dylan, revealing that the decisive headshot from frame 313 of the Zapruder film was, in fact, from an angle consistent with the location of the grassy knoll. In a 2001 issue of *Science and Justice*, a quarterly from Britain’s Forensic Science Society, a government researcher named D.B. Thomas claimed that there was more than a ninety-six percent certainty that the infamous headshot came from the front right of JFK’s limousine and, more specifically, from the grassy knoll, not the Texas School Book Depository.[\[x\]](#) Thomas’ article, supported by Josiah Thompson’s 2021 study, *Last Second in Dallas*, refutes the Warren Commission’s 1964 “lone nut” theory and affirms the findings of the 1978 House Select Committee on Assassinations who argued the president’s murder was most likely the “result of a conspiracy.”[\[xi\]](#)





The power of *Last Second in Dallas* is a function of Thompson's methodology "that ignores the sexy and elusive" question of "whodunnit?"[\[xii\]](#) Like the scholarship of D.B. Thomas, Thompson takes us back to the fundamental questions of forensic data such as "Were there multiple shooters?" and "Where did the shots come from?" By focusing rigorously on the forensic analysis, Thompson creates a firm foundation for investigators to now concern themselves with the question of culpability. The answer, in line with the work of researchers like James W. Douglass, Gaeton Fonzi, Oliver Stone, and David Talbot is that the CIA, using Cuban and mafia assets, murdered JFK, with Allen Dulles playing a key hand.



"Historians and researchers  
consider Mr. Fonzi's  
book among the best."  
—THE NEW YORK TIMES

# THE LAST INVESTIGATION

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW ABOUT  
THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK

GAETON FONZI  
AFTERWORD BY MARIE FONZI

But we must now go one step further and share the big open secret in Texas: Lyndon Johnson sat at the top of the plot's chain of command. Johnson, Kennedy's Vice-President, ordered the hit and, through his attorney, Ed Clark, played a decisive role in the orchestration of both the assassination and the cover-up.

**"Neither le Carré nor Graham Greene could do any better."  
— *Daily Beast***

# **The Devil's Chessboard**

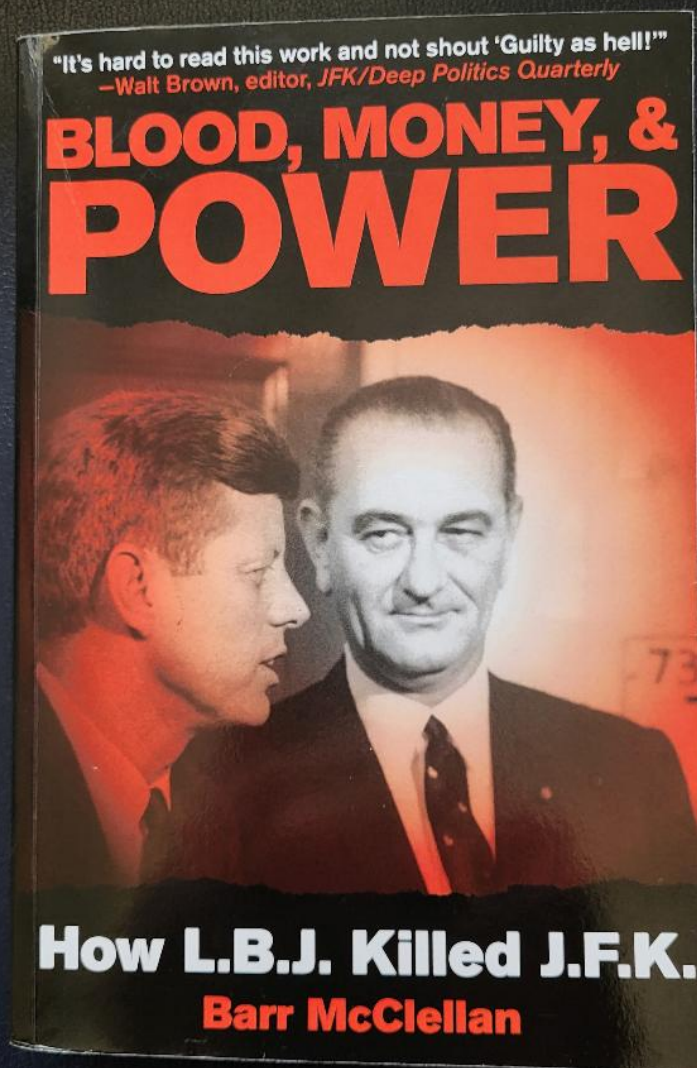
**Allen Dulles,  
the CIA,  
and the  
Rise of  
America's  
Secret  
Government**

**David Talbot**  
***New York Times Bestseller***

To prove this point, we must step behind the curtain of attorney-client privilege. Barr McClellan, who was the father of Scott McClellan, the press secretary for George W. Bush, was employed by the Johnson administration (National Labor Relations Board and Federal Power Commission) and served as a Johnson attorney from 1966 through 1971, working under Ed Clark and Don Thomas at Clark, Thomas and Winters. For decades, McClellan maintained a silence consistent with the code of confidentiality that attends lawyer-client relations.



However, like Whitehead, McClellan felt an obligation to tell the truth before it was too late. In 2003, forty years after the murder of the President, McClellan wrote *Blood, Money, & Power: How LBJ Killed JFK*. What McClellan's book reveals is a man who was an eyewitness to history and intimately understood why Johnson had Kennedy murdered: to end a government investigation into Johnson's corruption. In 1973, the same year LBJ died, Don Thomas confessed to McClellan the firm's role in the assassination and that Ed Clark was the figure who planned the hit. McClellan writes, "Edward A. Clark, attorney at law, Johnson's right-hand man and the only man he trusted, was the key man in the scheme that culminated in Dallas on November 22, 1963."[\[xiii\]](#) McClellan's book investigates Johnson's hand in the assassination, Johnson's theft of the 1948 Senatorial race (Don Thomas stuffed the ballot box in Precinct 13), and also explores LBJ's relationship with Malcolm "Mac" Wallace, whom McClellan claims was responsible, at Johnson's behest, for the 1961 murder of government investigator Henry Marshall. McClellan writes that Johnson was a "psychopath" and capable of murder and that the Wallace case offers precedent for the murder of JFK.[\[xiv\]](#) Recent scholarship from Jeremy Kuzmarov supports the claim that Johnson had plotted other murders before Kennedy's. McClellan, in his book and Kuzmarov in his article, "Was LBJ A Serial Killer Who Advanced His Career by Murdering 6 Other Men Who Stood in His Way?", both reveal a nexus of Texas corruption ("Bubba justice") that resonates with this student of the Iraq war under Bush and Cheney.[\[xv\]](#) But before the Kellogg, Brown, and Root that regulated the burn pits of the Global War on Terror, there was the Brown and Root that served Lyndon Johnson and his corporate partners in Vietnam.



McClellan points readers toward a “money trail” that shows contracts at risk before November 22, 1963, and contracts secured after the assassination. On January 17, 1963, John F. Kennedy proposed the repeal of the famous “oil depletion allowance,” a revision to the tax code that would have cost Texas oilmen up to \$300 million a year.[\[xvii\]](#) In addition to documenting these provocatively progressive policies from Kennedy, McClellan goes beyond circumstantial evidence and delivers forensic data that places the fingerprint of Wallace, Johnson’s henchman, on the sixth floor of the Texas School

Book Depository on the day of Kennedy's murder. Furthermore, the Wallace print has now traveled through a blind submission peer-review process and has been confirmed by two independent researchers, including Interpol print examiners in Paris, France.[\[xvii\]](#)

The Wallace print is significant and so is the precedent of the Marshall case. In 1961, Henry Marshall was himself investigating Johnson and another LBJ aide, Billy Sol Estes. Wallace, implicated in Marshall's murder, was spotted at the Texas School Depository on November 22, 1963, by a Chickasaw Indian named Loy Factor who claimed that he himself—Factor—was part of the kill team. Factor's statement and Wallace's fingerprint in "the sniper's nest," places Johnson's key fixer at the scene of the crime. But Whitehead and McClellan's disclosures, Factor's eyewitness account, and Wallace's fingerprint (available for viewing in the National Archive) do not close the case of the Kennedy assassination. No single data point does. As Jim Marrs, the author of *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*, writes, "when it comes to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, don't trust any one source."[\[xviii\]](#) Let it be clear: McClellan is not the only witness indicting Johnson. So let the story now turn to corroboration from participants in the coup: E. Howard Hunt and David Morales.

Famous for his role in the Watergate break-in, Hunt was also a novelist and screenwriter, as well as a friend of former CIA Director, Allen Dulles. Hunt, who died on January 23, 2007, admitted to being a "benchwarmer" on the CIA team that murdered JFK.[\[xix\]](#) Hunt's testimony, published on the pages of *Rolling Stone* and *Wired* in 2007, can also be located in his son Saint John's 2008 memoir, *Bond of Secrecy*.[\[xx\]](#) In the map of the hit that he provided to Saint John, Hunt places the name "LBJ" at the top of "the chain of command." Beneath LBJ is a CIA agent named "Cord Meyer," a man whose estranged wife, Mary, was a mistress of JFK and was herself murdered less than

a year after the president. In addition to this “chain of command” map, Hunt provides a timeline for a plot that begins in 1962 and includes the names of CIA agents Marita Lorenz, David Atlee Phillips, and David Morales. Lorenz, Phillips, and Morales, separately, claimed Kennedy’s death was a CIA hit, but Morales went further, arguing, like Hunt, that Johnson approved the plot.[\[xxi\]](#)[\[xxii\]](#) Even more than this, “According to his lawyer, Robert Walton, Morales revealed that he [Morales] was involved in *both* Kennedy assassinations.”[\[xxiii\]](#) Yes, Morales’ and Hunt’s story point straight at the man McClellan accused and the same man Whitehead heard laughing and celebrating on November 22, 1963: Lyndon Johnson.

### **“Business is business”: The Money Trail**

Clare Boothe Luce, former Congresswoman and the wife of Henry Luce, the media magnate who founded *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune* and countless other mainstream media publications, knew a thing or two about power and propaganda. On the way to JFK’s inaugural ball in 1961, Luce asked the new Vice-President, Lyndon Johnson, if he minded being relegated to the number two spot. She asked Johnson to “come clean.”

“Clare,” Johnson replied, “I looked it up. One out of every four presidents has died in office. I’m a gamblin’ man, darlin’, and this is the only chance I’ve got.”[\[xxiv\]](#)

If Johnson rolled the dice and was indeed the figure at the top of the chain of command for the assassination of JFK, why should we care, now that both men are dead? Sixty years later, what does this story tell us about contemporary America where this is still so much talk of coups, corruption, and treason? In order to comprehend government corruption we have to understand how corporate power captures government agencies and assets. We cannot fully fathom the means and motives of Johnson without understanding America’s permanent war party, the ongoing bipartisan social network of politicians and their clients in the military-industrial community. In order to

contextualize the killing of Kennedy, we have to study the city and state of “The Big Event,” as the CIA called the assassination.[\[xxv\]](#) If Johnson ordered “The Big Event,” and Clark and the CIA orchestrated the logistics and Brown was one of Johnson’s primary financial backers, who in Dallas facilitated the placement of Lee Harvey Oswald in the Texas School Book Depository?

In 2021, the year after Dylan released “Murder Most Foul” and the same year Thompson published *Last Second in Dallas*, the historian H.P. Albarelli published a posthumous book called *Coup in Dallas*. Based on the 1963 datebook of CIA operative, Jean Pierre Lafitte, *Coup in Dallas* offers readers a primary document that maps the cast behind “The Big Event.” On November 23, 1963, Lafitte writes, “Rene says, ‘Coup de grace.’[\[xxvi\]](#) “Rene” was the name of Lafitte’s wife, the woman who gave Albarelli the datebook. Rene Lafitte once remarked, “Dallas, ah goodness, I’m not sure what to say . . . I wasn’t there anywhere near as often as Pierre . . . not at all. But Pierre would say it was . . . Dallas was like the arms and legs of the American secret service, your CIA.”[\[xxvii\]](#) Albarelli’s book shines a light on the major players in the coup and pays particular close attention to Johnson’s friend, D.H. Byrd.





Other than C.I.A allegations, eyewitness accounts, and the fingerprint of Mac Wallace, how else do we answer Jefferson Morley's question and connect Oswald to Johnson? The answer is David Harold "Dry Hole" Byrd, the military subcontractor, Texas oilman, and founder of the Civil Air Patrol, to which Oswald belonged as a teenager. Incidentally, Byrd also owned the building that contained the Texas School Book Depository where Oswald was employed on the day of the assassination. Byrd was a crony of Johnson and once said, "Sam Rayburn, Morrie Shepard, John Connally, and Lyndon Johnson on the national scene were to become men I could go to anytime that I wanted action, and so were a succession of Texas governors." [\[xxviii\]](#) Like Brown, Byrd knew Johnson personally, stood to profit greatly from a Johnson presidency, and, likewise, stood to absorb substantial losses if the oil depletion allowance was allowed to expire or if Johnson went to prison. We may never know for sure whether Oswald was a whistleblower, CIA double-agent, or "patsy" (as he claimed on TV), but what is now irrefutable is the fact that there were multiple shooters and that on November 22, 1963, Oswald was working in the building Byrd had purchased just the year

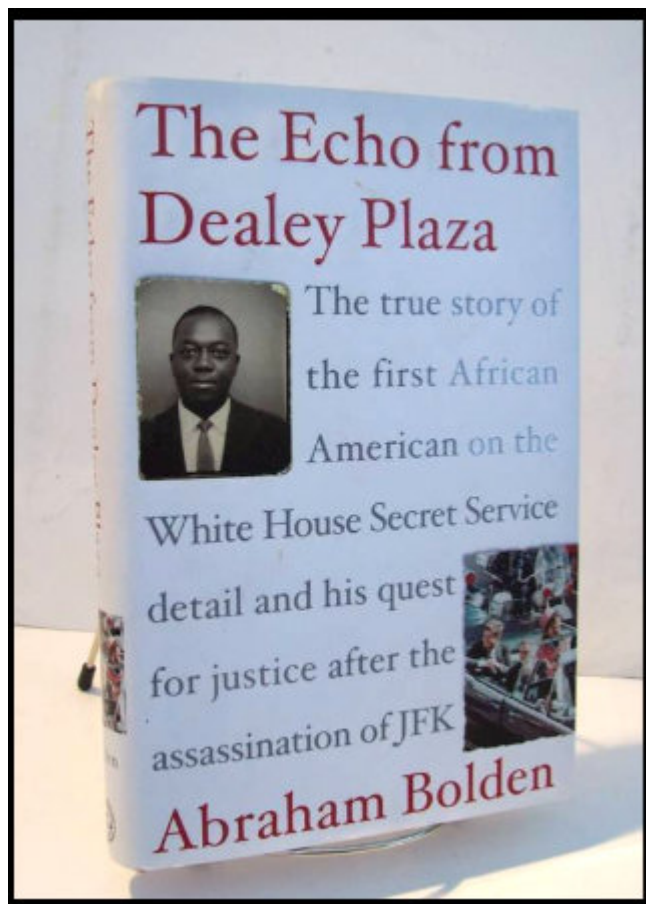
before and where a fingerprint of Johnson's fixer, Mac Wallace, was discovered by police.[\[xxix\]](#)

McClellan, Byrd, Clark, Hunt, Factor, Wallace, and Morales all tie Johnson to Kennedy's killing. McClellan claimed that Johnson's attorney, Ed Clark, was horrified when Oswald wasn't murdered after the assassination but was instead arrested and allowed to speak on TV and declare he—Oswald—was a "patsy."[\[xxx\]](#) McClellan provided his colleague's confession and Wallace's fingerprint as evidence to connect Johnson to the crime of the century, but also insisted that researchers follow the money trail of Johnson's social network in order to witness foreknowledge of the plot. Nowhere is the advance intelligence more apparent than in the pre-assassination stock trades of Byrd and his associate at Ling-TEMCO-Vought (LTV), James Ling, former employer of Mac Wallace. LTV, perhaps the inspiration for "Vought International" from the Dynamite Comic series, was one of the largest engineering and manufacturing conglomerates in the United States in 1963. Like with Brown and Root, the profits of Vought went through the roof in the years after JFK's murder. Right before the assassination, Ling and Byrd, through an investment vehicle called the Alpha-Omega Corporation, "purchased 132,600 shares of LTV stocks for around \$2 million."[\[xxxii\]](#) LTV was responsible for developing a number of planes and weapons that were used during the Vietnam War. According to Albarelli, the "\$2 million investment by Byrd/Ling was worth \$26 million by 1967."[\[xxxiii\]](#) As Johnson reversed the Kennedy policy of withdrawal from Vietnam and the war progressed, LTV "would consistently be among the top-ten aerospace companies in dollar volume of prime contracts."[\[xxxiii\]](#) Which is to say, Byrd got rich off the coup in Dallas, and so did Clark and Brown of Brown and Root, later renamed KBR. Lyndon Johnson was the savior of the military-industrial complex. So much depended on that day in Dallas.

**"Lyndon Johnson Did It"**

Critics might reasonably ask, “Where are the stories of the marginalized?” in the history of the Kennedy assassination? How do we summon the voices of the millions dead in Vietnam? We can’t possibly tell the tales of all the people around the world who were impacted by Kennedy’s murder. But perhaps some small measure of justice can be achieved by listening to four American citizens whose stories have been muted by the media. So, let us turn here in the end to Abraham Bolden, Evelyn Lincoln, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Dorothy Kilgallen.

On April 26, 2022, President Biden pardoned Bolden, a man JFK called “the Jackie Robinson of the Secret Service,” which is to say the first Black Secret Service agent to serve on White House detail. Bolden was hired by Kennedy and then later challenged Johnson and the Warren Commission with Secret Service evidence of conspiracies to kill Kennedy prior to the release of the Warren Report.[\[xxxiv\]](#) Was Bolden rewarded for his bravery? No. Like so many who came after him, Bolden was attacked for telling the truth and on May 18, 1964, Bolden was thrown in prison for bribery, conspiracy, and obstruction of justice.



Bolden committed a narrative violation. Decades before Snowden, Assange, Hale and Manning, Bolden blew the whistle on the military-industrial complex. He told the truth. For sixty years, Bolden claimed he had been framed by the very government he took an oath to serve. He has stated to this writer and others that he heard Johnson threaten both Kennedy brothers while serving in the White House.[\[xxxv\]](#) In the twenty-first century, Bolden has been forceful about his analysis of the killing: "[T]he assassination of the president went to the highest position of government," he said in a 2018 interview. "There was a coup to take him [Kennedy] out of power."[\[xxxvi\]](#) Like "many in the DFS" (Mexican CIA), Bolden's investigation of the murder points to "the highest position in government."[\[xxxvii\]](#) But for a long time, Bolden, author of *The Echo from Dealey Plaza*, has been ignored by America's mainstream media. Fortunately, with the help of journalists, President Biden heard Bolden's story before it was too late. In January of 2022, Mary Mitchell, writing in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, published an editorial in which she wrote, "While

Bolden's life story might seem like a conspiracy theory to some, Black Americans will identify with the brand of injustice that buries its victims under false accusations and legal documents." [\[xxxviii\]](#) Mitchell's voice, amplifying Bolden's, was legitimated by Biden, the man who now keeps a bust of Robert F. Kennedy in the Oval Office and is currently being challenged by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. for the 2024 Democratic nomination.



Perhaps part of RFK Jr.'s challenge to Biden has something to do with Biden's refusal to go all the way in the story of Kennedy's uncle. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., whose career and campaign platform focuses on government corruption and agency capture, may be the only American capable of compelling Biden to open the assassination archives. Certainly, others are trying. In October of 2022, The Mary Ferrell Foundation sued the Biden administration for once again postponing the release of the JFK files. [\[xxxix\]](#) In December of 2022, the Biden administration ordered the release of more than 13,000 records, but caved to the CIA's appeal to maintain the redaction of more than 4,000 others. [\[xli\]](#) Why does the censorship persist? Is this just institutional protection or is something else at play? And beyond the redaction and withholding of documents, why does the American media refuse to listen to the people closest to this case? What did Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's secretary and a passenger in the motorcade, say at the time of the assassination and how did Jackie

Kennedy, covered in the blood of her dead husband, view the crime she witnessed?

Lincoln, who was fifty-four on the day of the murder, visited JFK's grave every year on November 22nd. On the plane ride back from Dallas, the same flight where Whitehead overheard Johnson celebrating, Lincoln wrote down a list of suspects. At the top of her list was the same name at the top of Hunt's deathbed chain of command: "Lyndon." [\[xli\]](#) Was Lincoln the only one on Air Force One who felt she was travelling with the architect of a coup?

No.

Jackie Kennedy knew what many in DC knew about her husband's relationship with both LBJ and Allen Dulles. She knew that her husband loathed the Vice-President and that the ex-head of the CIA resented her husband after JFK fired Dulles subsequent to the disastrous failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Did Jackie see the pictures in the *Chicago Tribune* on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1963, three months before her husband's murder, revealing Dulles meeting with LBJ at the Vice-President's ranch? Did she ever come to find out that Dulles, who kept a meticulous datebook, left that particular encounter with LBJ off the record? [\[xlii\]](#) We may never know the answer to these questions, but we do know that on November 22, 1963, Jackie Kennedy was an eyewitness to a crime that traumatized her, her family, her nation, and countless others beyond America's borders. We also know that Jackie, like her brother-in-law, Robert F. Kennedy, suspected a conspiracy from the very beginning.

RFK once famously said, "If the American people knew the truth about Dallas, there would be blood in the streets." [\[xliii\]](#) Jackie Kennedy knew there was a conspiracy. She was caught in the crossfire. Hours after the assassination, while aboard Air Force One with Whitehead and Johnson, she considered her grisly appearance. "My whole face was splattered with blood and hair. I wiped it off with a Kleenex," she said. But then,



“one second later I thought why did I wash the blood off? I should have left it there, let them see what they’ve done.”[\[xliv\]](#) Jackie knew from the start that her husband’s murder was the work of more than one lone communist nut bar. Her pronoun was “they.”

But Jackie went further.

According to Whitehead, after the assassination Johnson and his cronies were laughing and celebrating within earshot of the widow and were so out of hand that Whitehead had to hide Jackie away. Perhaps keeping this woman in the dark seemed an act of mercy in the moment, a gesture of compassion on behalf of “Whitey.” But the truth has a way of getting through those doors men close to protect women. No one was closer to the crime of the century than Jackie Kennedy. No one had a better seat for what Dylan called “the greatest magic trick ever under the sun.”[\[xlv\]](#) In the singer Eddie Fisher’s memoir, *Been There, Done That*, Fisher describes his relationship with Pamela Turnure, the press secretary for Jackie Kennedy at the time of the assassination. “On the flight back,” Fisher writes, “Pam told me, Jackie told her, ‘Lyndon Johnson did it.’ Words I’ll never forget.”[\[xlvi\]](#) Those words, like Bolden’s, Factor’s, Hunt’s, Lincoln’s, McClellan’s, Morales’, Whitehead’s and so many others, cannot stand alone. In this essay, however, they find accord. In closing, they stand here with the voices of Dorothy Kilgallen and Jack Ruby.

In “Murder Most Foul,” Dylan sings, “What is the truth and where did it go? Ask Oswald and Ruby, they oughta know.”[\[xlvii\]](#) Dorothy Kilgallen did ask Jack Ruby, the man who murdered Oswald on national television. Who was this fearless journalist who dared to question her government’s official narrative? According to Ernest Hemingway, Dorothy Kilgallen was “the greatest female writer in the world.”[\[xlviii\]](#) Kilgallen, in the final years of her short life, worked as a crime reporter and was about to publish a book about the Kennedy killing. But Kilgallen died on November 8, 1965, just

before she could deliver the pages of *Murder One* to her publisher at Random House, Bennet Cerf.[\[xlix\]](#) However, history has documented that Kilgallen's quest for the truth was focused on Ruby. Kilgallen attended the Ruby trial and was the only journalist granted a private interview.



Dorothy Kilgallen, journalist

In February of 1964, Kilgallen wrote, "It appears Washington knows or suspects something about Lee Harvey Oswald that it does not want Dallas and the rest of the world to know or suspect." Kilgallen told her closest friends that her Ruby disclosures would "blow the JFK case sky high."[\[l\]](#) But then, at the age of fifty-two, Kilgallen died of an "accidental overdose" of alcohol and barbiturates. Was she murdered because she knew too much? We may never know. But what the historical record can provide, even though her book and notes have disappeared, is the voice of Jack Ruby, the key to the Kennedy assassination, according to Kilgallen.

In a letter he sent to a friend while in jail, Ruby wrote: "I



am counting on you to save this country a lot of bloodshed. As soon as you get out you must read *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* (reference to a book called *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* by J. Everett Haley), and it may open your eyes to a lot of things. This man is a Nazi in the worst order.”[\[li\]](#) Yes, Jack Ruby knew that Johnson was corrupt and part of the plot. Ruby shot Oswald to protect the cover story. Jack Ruby didn’t kill Lee Harvey Oswald out of love for JFK and he certainly didn’t do it out of love for the man he calls “a Nazi.” This pattern of focusing on LBJ can be further located in Ruby’s testimony to the Warren Commission and the videos of his brief exchanges with reporters.

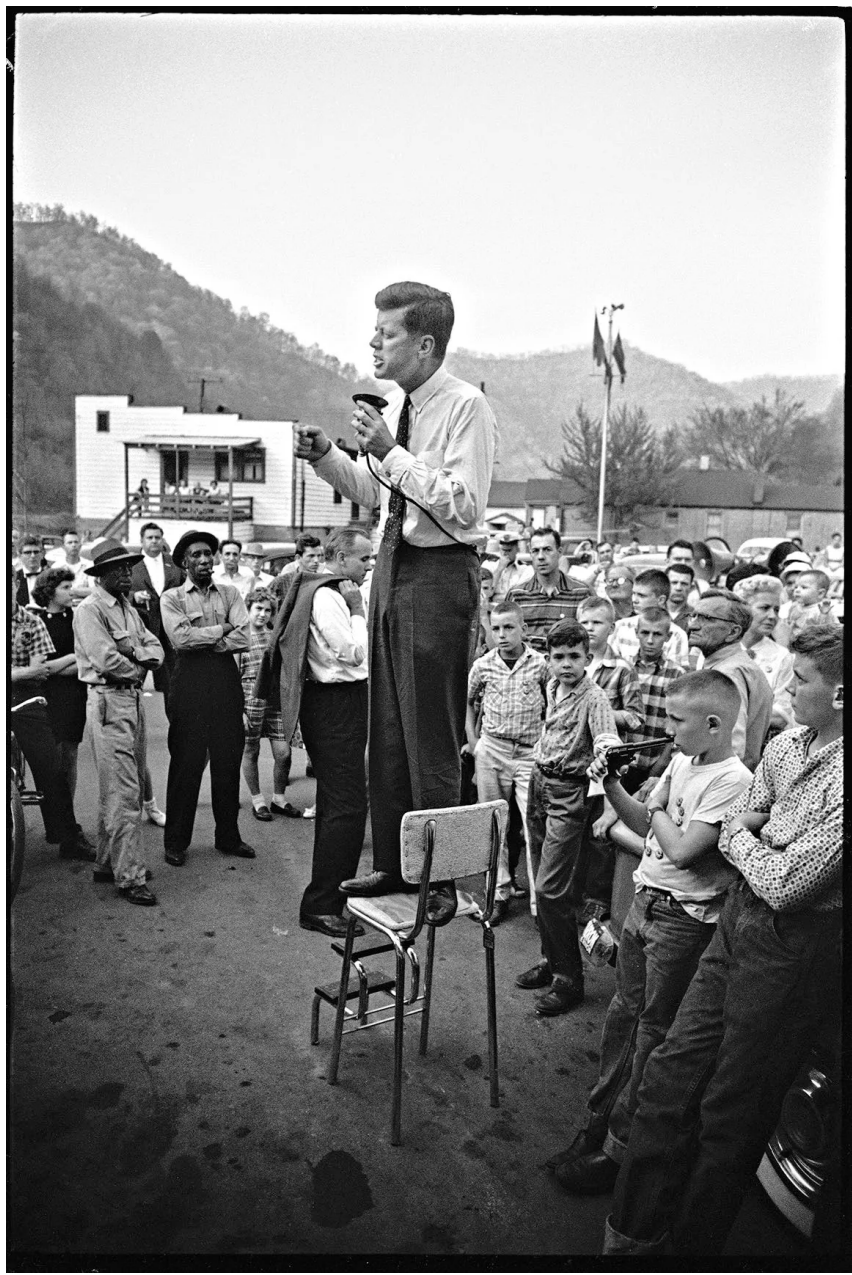
“I wish that our beloved President Lyndon Johnson would have delved deeper into the situation,” Ruby said to the Warren Commission, but the Commission never granted Ruby his request to leave Texas and travel to DC where he felt he could tell the truth.[\[lii\]](#) So Ruby continued to hammer on the president in later interviews.

“The people that have had so much to gain and had such an ulterior motive for putting me in the position I’m in will never let the true facts come above board to the world,”[\[liii\]](#) Ruby said. When asked by a reporter to elaborate, Ruby who was himself about to die in 1967 (right after winning an appeal for a new trial), said, “I want to correct what I said before about the Vice-President.” He then continued. “When I mentioned about Adlai Stevenson, if he were Vice-President, there would have never been an assassination of our beloved President Kennedy.” The reporter asked Ruby to “explain again.”

“Well,” Ruby said. “The answer is the man in office right now.”[\[liv\]](#)

“[T]he man in office right now,” in 1965 when the interview with Jack Ruby took place, was Lyndon Johnson, the architect of the Vietnam War and the man Ruby characterized as a Nazi.

Ruby's response here gives the reader a sense of why Kilgallen was so excited about publishing her book, *Murder One*. Kilgallen's voice, however, was never heard. Like Ruby and so many witnesses in this case, Kilgallen died a premature death. But here, alongside Jackie Kennedy and Evelyn Lincoln, we can see that the women closest to this case all came to the same conclusion. Cumulatively, as a people's history, the story these women tell aligns with the arguments of JFK's Secret Service, LBJ's attorneys, and the CIA agents who were part of the hit team. Their voices, revealed as Bob Dylan's chorus in this space, support contemporary peer-reviewed scholarship and its thesis of conspiracy. John F. Kennedy, the thirty-fifth president of the United States, was murdered by his successor, Lyndon Johnson, in a coup d'état, an act where the means and motive were one and the same: power.





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# The Bloodiest American War Many Americans Have Never Heard Of

The title, which I selected myself, is a trick. Most citizens of the United States of America know their war history. There's even a [popular television brand](#) dedicated to educating US citizens about war, and their country's role in it. So while it may surprise some to learn that the greatest loss of life during a single battle occurred in World War I rather than the Civil War or World War II, it is not as though people are unaware of those three wars, or the basic context: North versus South, Allies versus Germany, Allies versus Nazi Germany.

But “American” refers to the Americas, as a whole. And there’s one war of which few outside South America have heard. A war that occurred during the modern era, and was unlike anything seen during recorded, post-enlightenment history, before or since. While the scope and scale differs from that of the first and second World Wars, the loss of life and culture is comparable in relative terms—even, perhaps, exceeds that inflicted on Germany at the end of that conflict.

This war shares something else in common with World War II—a type of dictator that one sees only occasionally in the world. A visionary tyrant, a leader inspired by some overarching idea that compels everyone around him (or her) to attempt a drastic overhaul of society along moral, ethical, or scientific lines.

The Paraguayan War (or “The War of the Triple Alliance”) pitted Paraguay (substantially larger then than it is today) against Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. It was a battle of ideologies—on one side, a group of countries (the Triple Alliance) made up of what we would now call repressive authoriatrrian regimes. On the other, Paraguay, which was run by an absolutist dictator. Something that all the participants had in common was that all had recently declared their independence from Spain or Portugal as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars, and were coming into their own as nation-states.

Paraguay had a population of 525,000 at the war's outset. The combined population of the Triple Alliance was around 11,000,000. Paraguay was the aggressor, attacking Uruguay, Brazil, and then Argentina in succession until all

three nations were united. The war lasted from 1864-1870, and by its end, Paraguay was completely defeated. 70% of the male population of Paraguay died, including its dictator. Paraguay lost large swaths of its territory to Brazil and Argentina, and its population decreased by over half. It took decades for the small country to recover.

This type of destruction is rare in modern warfare—a harrowing of one's enemies so deep that it creates generational disruption. It seems that quite apart from Paraguay's role of aggressor in the war, a source of hatred for Paraguay and unwillingness on the part of the Triple Alliance to negotiate with them was the nature of Paraguay's dictatorship, and its history. The Triple Alliance all had similar forms of government—authoritarian aristocracy-based systems, recently liberated from a similarly aristocratic Europe, run primarily by European elites drawn from the country that had originally colonized them (Spain in Argentina's case, Portugal in the case of Brazil). They all condoned slavery to varying degrees.



Attempted to  
create in  
Paraguay a  
racial utopia

based on  
Rousseau's  
ideas

Paraguay was different—almost unique in world history. In the wake of its independence from Spain during the Napoleonic wars, Paraguay was ruled by a heavily centralized government that obeyed [the despotic but charismatic progressive leader](#) Jose Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia. De Francia closed Paraguay's borders and instituted a radical set of social and political reforms, ruling until his death in 1840. Following that, his [successor and acolyte \(a nephew\)](#) Carlos Antonio Lopez ruled from 1842 until he died in 1862. While slavery was not abolished until after the fall of the dictatorship in 1870, it operated somewhat differently than in neighboring countries, in that after 1842, children of slaves were automatically emancipated upon reaching the age of 25.

De Francia and his successor, Carlos Antonion Lopez, took long views of Paraguay's development. Under their harsh direction, Paraguay industrialized, fielded a series of schools that catapulted it to the highest level of education in South America at the time, achieved independence in terms of food production, organized their military along European (Prussian) lines, and created the country's first constitution. They also attempted to create in Paraguay a—wait for it—*real racial utopia* based on enlightenment (Rousseau, specifically) principles, wherein whites could not marry one another, but were compelled to marry darker-skinned people. Paraguay was run by nepotistic despots, but was less nation-state than an aspiration toward just and equal society. Its leadership seemed legitimately to desire a distinct, enlightened culture wherein elitism occurred only through a honest competition. When de Francia died, for example, he'd doubled Paraguay's wealth—furthermore, it was discovered that he had neglected to

collect his full salary, several years' worth of which he returned to swell Paraguay's coffers. The nepotistic aspect of the Paraguayan state seemed more a product of access to education and ideological commitment than any egotistical desire on the part of de Francia to perpetuate his blood in leadership roles.

When the dictator's nephew's [son](#) (Francisco Solano Lopez) took over in 1862, he opened the borders and began a serious attempt to organize the smaller South American nations into an alliance that would be capable of resisting larger neighbors like Argentina and Brazil. Lopez also fell in love with the [bad-ass Irish wife](#) of a French officer—this heroine subsequently moved to Paraguay and bore multiple children. The first country Lopez sought to influence was Paraguay's neighbor Uruguay—this country had (at the time) a government friendly to Paraguay's, and enthusiastic about creating a bulwark against South America's traditional powerhouses. Uruguay also controlled access to the Atlantic Ocean, key to expanding trade.

Brazil had other ideas. They succeeded in replacing Uruguay's pro-Paraguay government with a pro-Brazil government, backed by a Brazilian invasion, and Lopez decided the time was right to push back. Despite its small population and relative lack of equipment, Paraguay's militarized society was able to mobilize large portions of its population quickly, and Lopez took the upper hand against its much larger but less-well organized northern neighbor and its Uruguayan puppet. Following a setback against Brazil's superior navy in 1865, and a rebuke from Argentina, Paraguay expanded the war to include its southern neighbor. After this year, the war became a series of catastrophes for Paraguay, punctuated by the occasional defensive victory.



For more details on Paraguay's earliest days of development as an independent nation (which itself offers several fascinating historical lessons and much intellectual food for thought), I recommend the Wikipedia articles that form the backbone of my own research, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Suffice it to say, Paraguay's racial and social utopian dream (or nightmare) was destroyed by Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay working in concert whose superior equipment and population told in the long run. Lopez led a guerilla war but was killed in 1870 in the jungle, his family's dream in ruins. Still, as with many such widespread and creatively ambitious social experiments, the legacy of Paraguay's innovations live on. Paraguay has one of the most homogenous populations in South America—in part a product of that early intermingling of Europeans with black, native, and mixed-race populations—and an unusually long life expectancy (especially given their poverty), along with relatively broad education and literacy rates.

I'm not sure what lesson to draw from the Triple War. On the one hand, I'd like to think that real dialogue between different ideologies and nations should be possible. On the other hand, that "dialogue" always seems to find its purest expression through warfare. And one cannot discount that it's always the purest, most radical believers in progress (the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Lopezs) that seem to initiate these struggles.

We live in a day and age when people casually employ terms like "fascist," "communist," and "dictator," (as I have to a certain extent in this essay), and extrapolate a great deal from those words' associations. Jose Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia lived a frugal life that he seemed unattached to, so

much so that his substantial inheritance went to enriching Paraguay. Nevertheless, his nephew's son was a belligerent war-hawk who brought ruin to his neighbors, and, ultimately, to Paraguay itself. I wonder—countries, societies like that of newly-independent, 19th century Paraguay don't attempt to mask their intentions—they telegraph them to the outside world. The tyrant, the dictator, boldly and proudly tells all who will listen: "this is how society should be—this is how *\*all\** society should be." Are there any nations today that can honestly claim to resemble tiny Paraguay, dreaming of dominion?

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## **Proposal for Primary Reform: Demote Iowa and New Hampshire**

Many Americans have been noticing, with more frequency, the inconvenient truth that our democratic system, by design, is actually not very democratic. The design was planned originally by the Founding Fathers who created the country—many of them owned actual slaves, and neither they nor women nor men below a certain economic class were allowed to participate. Even then, the Electoral College was thought up as a further check by the elites against any occasional rabble-rouser elected by the people but not approved by the elites. That the people have three times voted for a president (1876, 1888, and 2000) yet witnessed the losing candidate inaugurated shows that the system has worked as designed. Among the other quirks that hinder true democracy (such as gerrymandering, voting restrictions, limited voting dates, the existence of the Senate, and others that I have previously discussed in my post [Republican Reactionaries and the Road to Fascism](#)), the entrenched system of the two-party primary

elections needs amended. I will propose one simple incremental change to somewhat ameliorate the representation of our country: get rid of the nauseating quadrennial ritual of the Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary.

## Possible Solutions

There are many solutions to reforming the primary system, which in itself would be just one small step towards a more democratic system as a whole. Many of these ideas have been proposed and discussed for a long time, but never adopted. They include the national primary (hold every state's primary election on the same day), the Delaware plan (hold four groups of primary dates starting with the smallest states and ending with the largest), and many variations of a random rotating primary state order. I ask myself why New Hampshire (which awards only 20 "delegates" for Republicans and 24 for Democrats) has about 1000 times more power in selecting candidates than the most populous state of California (which awards 172 Republican delegates, and 546 for Democrats). Why does California, for example, not hold its primary until June when the candidate has almost always already been chosen by much smaller states? California has almost 40 million people, or 12% of the entire nation, and it is obviously very diverse (only 40% white). For that matter, why do Texas, New York, and Florida (27, 20, and 20 million people respectively) not all hold earlier primaries, perhaps together on the same day as California, to allow a much wider and more diverse set of people choose candidates?

It bears mentioning one more time that political parties were in no way prescribed by the Constitution and were famously warned against by George Washington; yet there has been a de facto rule of the two-party system since Washington retired back to his slave plantation at Mt. Vernon. I have not done any thorough research on how political parties have chosen their candidates, but I think it is safe to say that it has

always been as fraught with corruption as it is today (compare Thoreau's 1849 "[Civil Disobedience](#)", in which he discusses how unrepresentative candidates are chosen by elites and how he is stuck paying taxes for slavery and war against Mexico, neither of which he supported). As for the current system, things are still apparently mostly decided upon by party elites in proverbial smoke-filled rooms, with the voters expected to do nothing more than conform and foot the bill.

## The Iowa Caucus

Let's move on to Iowa. American elections go on much too long (they're virtually eternal at this point) and cost much too much (we could literally feed and educate the starving people of the world for years with the cost of a single American election). Much of the early time and money is dedicated to the strange spectacle of the non-binding caucus of Iowa voters. It is a caucus, not an election, because you have to arrive and participate in the nominating process for hours instead of simply casting a quick ballot. It is non-binding because delegates are allowed to change the candidate they support before the party's convention.

I will grant that it is very difficult to create and maintain a perfect political system, and if we agree that democracy is the best, or least worst, system, then the participatory caucus system of elections may not be in itself a bad thing. Regardless, it does not work for federal elections in a country of 320 million people. Iowa is a state of three million people (less than 1 percent of the nation), and its population is 92% white and much more rural than most of the country. In other words, it barely resembles America as a whole (which is only 63% white and mostly urban). Every four years, would-be candidates spend months and months (years in the case of a Mitt Romney or Hillary Clinton), building up party infrastructure in Iowa and pandering to its local power brokers. Issues like ethanol subsidies, which enrich Iowa's

farmers, become centrally important.

After all this electioneering, one might think the actual results would be of public interest. The Republican Party, in a rare case of common sense, declares a winner based on actual votes. I can easily see that 186,847 people participated in the Republican Iowa caucus and that the winner received just over 51,000 votes. The Democratic Party, on the other, still has not released the vote count over one week later, and it's unsure whether they ever will. I have no idea how many people voted in the Democratic caucus and how many actual votes each candidate got. All we know is that Clinton received 700.47 "state delegate equivalents", and Sanders received 696.92. I have no idea how these numbers were arrived at, nor how one can split a delegate. Furthermore, the Democratic Party awards something called "superdelegates", of which it is estimated that Clinton received six and Sanders zero. What are they and why are they estimated? It seems that this party did not think the whole election was controlled and undemocratic enough, so these superdelegates are a combination of party officials and elected office holders who get to have a bigger vote than a normal person. It's like when the dad's vote counts for two in the family council, because the idea that the kids had a real vote was just a farce. That seems to be what the Democratic Party thinks about its voters.

## **The New Hampshire Primary**

Let's now discuss New Hampshire, the first actual primary election in the nation. New Hampshire is somehow even smaller and less representative than Iowa. Its population is a mere 1.3 million (less than half of one percent of the nation, and less than the population of every borough of New York City except Staten Island), of which 94% is white, and it is also more rural than much of the country. The voters of New Hampshire are famously libertarian-leaning and standoffish in giving their support to the revolving door of candidates that

barge into every little diner in the state every four years. The media and candidate attention given to the New Hampshire primary is as much as every other primary in the nation combined. Why does such a small, homogeneous state continue with such outsized influence?

## **Voter Activism, Apathy, and Moderation**

I did a perfunctory search about the origins of this current primary system, and it seems that it has been in place since 1968, when protests at the Democratic Convention caused the party elites to exert more control. You know, because why would people be protesting instead of accepting the candidate chosen by the elite to maintain the status quo?

There is plenty of blame to go around for the enduring corruption and general weaknesses of American-style democracy: the corporate media, the always-reactionary Supreme Court, high party functionaries, the entire “[power elite](#)” as C. Wright Mills called it. The most blame goes to the individual citizen voter, however. As imperfect as it is, our system still allows us to create from scratch a new government every four years. All it takes is moderate interest in actual issues that will affect our daily lives to enable such an outcome—a scenario I realize is straight out of science fiction.

Another benefit of widening the primary net will also make would-be candidates work slightly harder to appeal to a wider electorate, thus, in theory, even slightly moderating the tone of our political discourse. How does it help American democratic representation if the candidates to lead the country are always chosen by a very small, older, mostly white, mostly rural set of voters? There are many ways to reform our democracy, but demoting Iowa and New Hampshire’s primary place is one step in the right direction.