

**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.



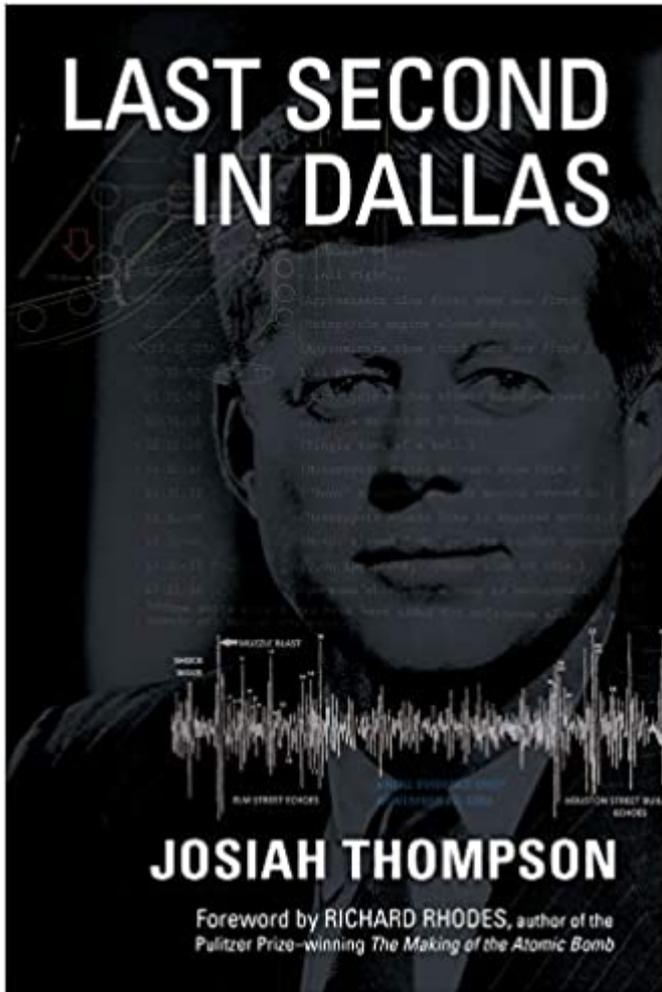
Nobody but Johnson had the means, motive and opportunity to kill Kennedy, and those who knew LBJ left behind a trail of transactions, confessions, and forensic evidence. As members of Kennedy's Secret Service acknowledged after the murder, there were multiple conspiracies to kill JFK in the fall of 1963, 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,

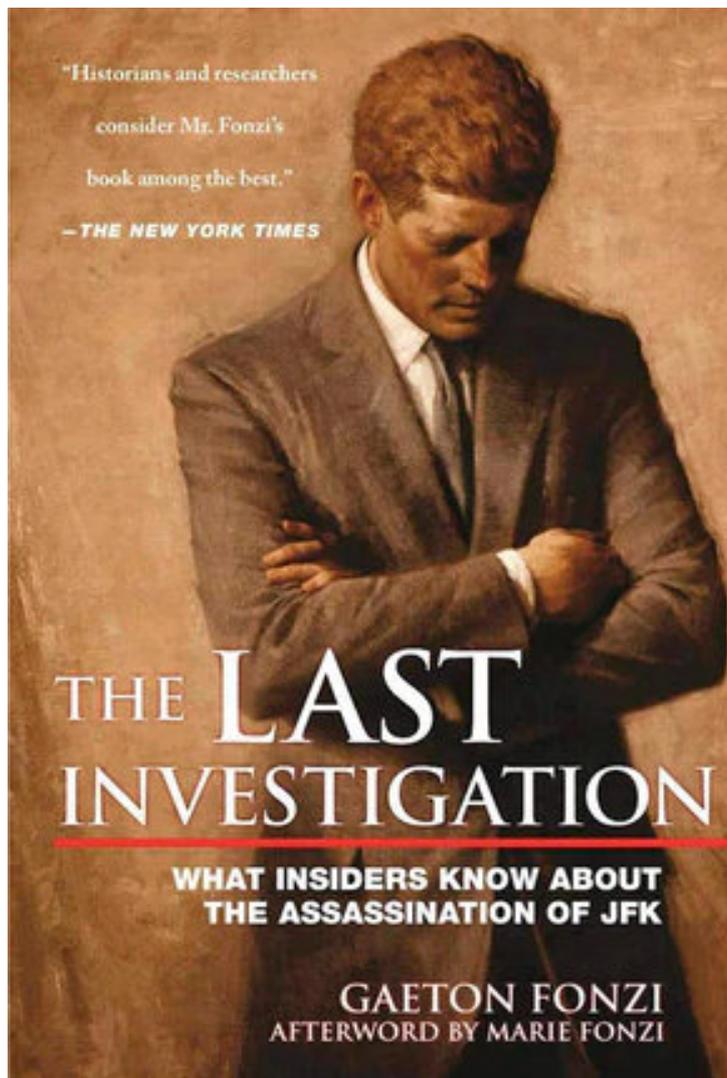
Johnson's attorney and a former lawyer for Brown and Root. The story of the Kennedy assassination is the map of Texas power. The "we" Dylan describes in his song is the bipartisan war industry that depended on Johnson for their work, both at home and abroad.

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.



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

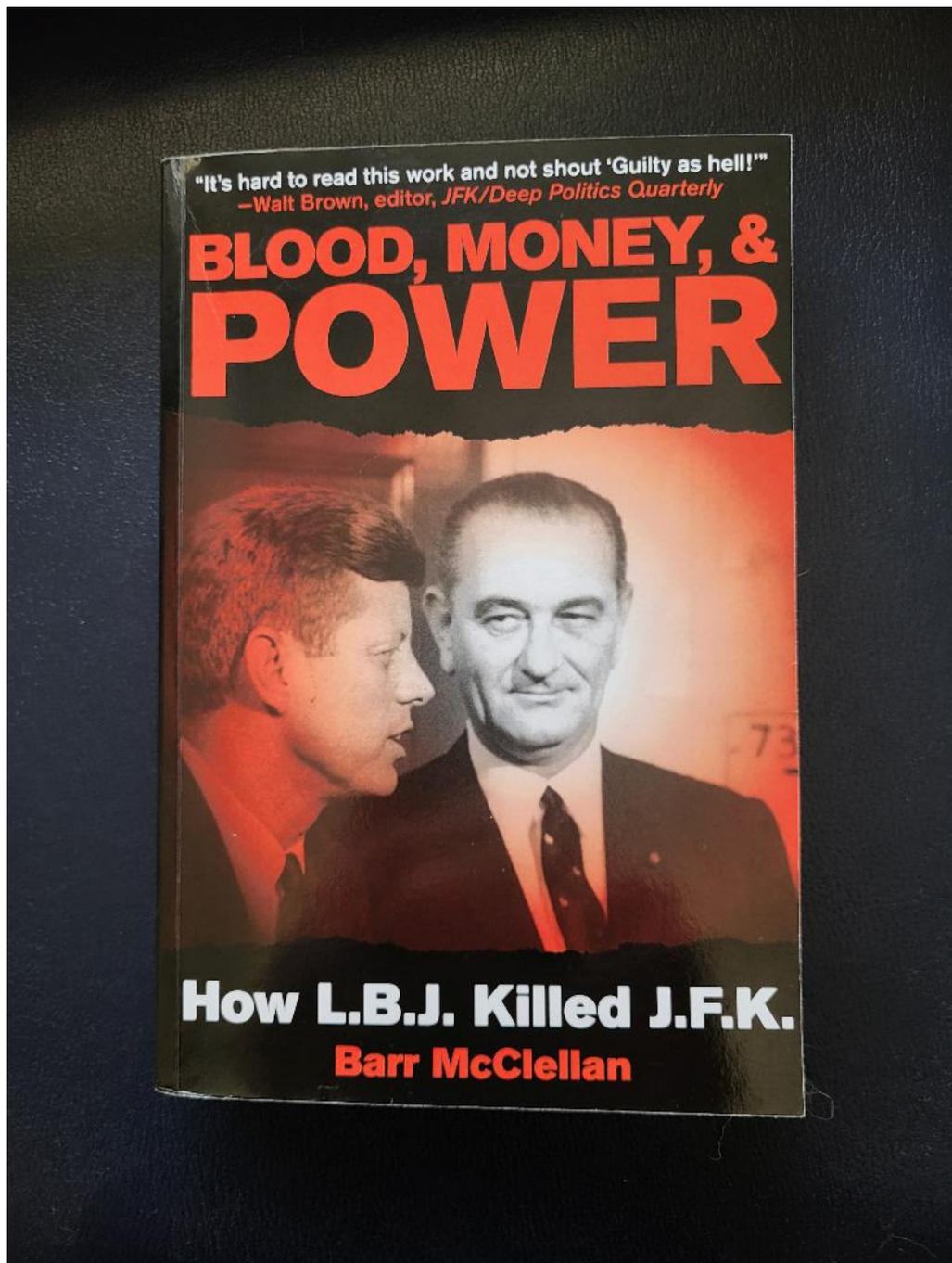
**Allen Dulles,
the CIA,
and the
Rise of
America's
Secret
Government**

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.[\[xvi\]](#) 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

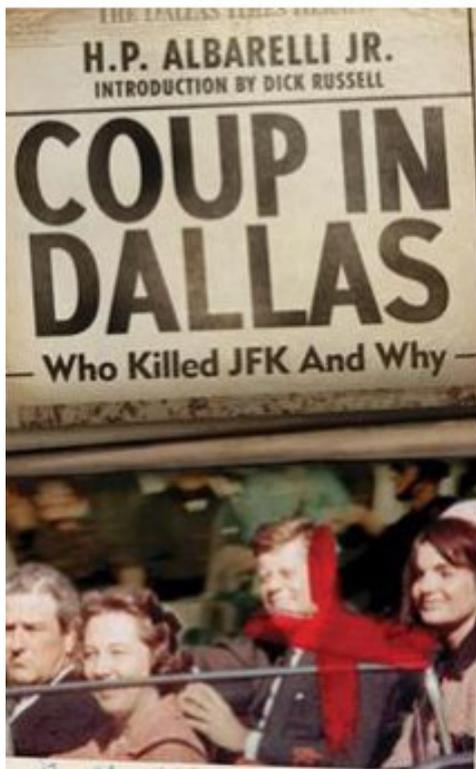
Clare Boothe Luce, former Congresswoman and the wife of Henry Luce, the media magnate who founded *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune* and countless other mainstream media publications, knew a thing or two about power and propaganda. On the way to JFK’s inaugural ball in 1961, Luce asked the new Vice-President, 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

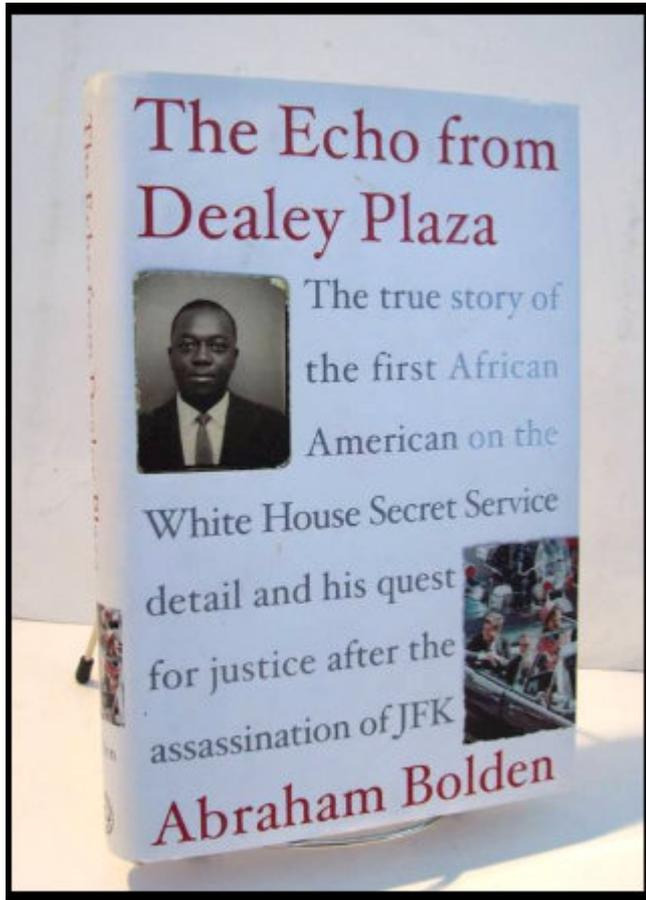
before and where a fingerprint of Johnson's fixer, Mac Wallace, was discovered by police.[\[xxix\]](#)

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. [\[xl\]](#) 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 15th, 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."[\[1\]](#) 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'etat, an act where the means and motive were one and the same: power.



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For More Information

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New Fiction from M.C. Armstrong: Excerpt from Novel 'American Delphi'

Note: M.C. Armstrong's new novel, 'American Delphi,' will be out October 15, 2022 from Milspeak Books. It has been hailed as "riveting, wise, and wonderful." Please feel free to [pre-order here](#), or purchase wherever books are sold.

—

From 'American Delphi' by M.C. Armstrong

"How do you tell the world that your brother is a psychopath?"

"You don't," my mom said. "Get away from the screen and journal about it."

She took this black and white notebook out of her grocery bag and handed it to me like it was supposed to be the answer to all of my problems. So here I sit, notebook and pen in hand, being a good girl while Zach is standing in the kitchen literally jumping up and down about how the world is ending and how America has more cases of the virus than any other country on the planet and how he saw a video of somebody fall off a motor scooter in Indonesia and watched the guy's face go black before vomiting blood and dying right there by his scooter and you would think, by listening to my brother describe the story, that he was talking about a corgi or some Australian getting playfully punched by a kangaroo on YouTube. But this is somebody dying and for Zach it's like the best

thing that's ever happened. It's like it's confirming all of his theories about apocalypse and totally justifying all of the whips, knives, guns, and fireworks he's been collecting in the closet of his crazy-ass bedroom upstairs.

"Buck says the virus is the medicine," Zach said, getting up in my face and breathing his hot breath all over me.

Buck London is Zach's special friend. Buck's an old man who just moved into Orchard Chase and smells like mothballs, and I can tell from Zach's smell that he's been spending way too much time with Buck.

"Get away from me," I said. "You're not practicing social distancing."

"We are the virus," Zach said.

"You are the virus," I said.

"Nobody is the virus," mom said, tossing a salad with a bunch of lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, avocado and falafel (feel awful). Mom said we should use the plague as an excuse to go vegan, but there goes Zach behind her back, just standing, smiling at me as he's shoving disks of salami into his mouth. It's like he's proving this psychopathic suicidal point by eating meat while mom is making a salad, and I said: "NINA!" because I call Mom by her name when she won't listen. But by the time Nina turns around, Zach's pretending like he's tying his shoe and I'm taking a picture of this journal just in case he kills someone someday.

*

Mom said her biggest fear is that I end up a "twentysomething grandma" like Tanya Purtlebaugh. Mom's entire life seems organized around making sure that I don't end up like Mrs. Purtlebaugh, but I said "seems" because Nicole, Tanya's daughter, did just have a baby at seventeen and Nicole's two

years older than I am and her mother is exactly seventeen years older than Tanya which makes her mother thirty-four and that's only three years younger than Mom which, if you do the math (which I do), it's pretty clear: Tanya Purtlebaugh is not a "twentysomething grandma." In other words, Mom's entire mission in life right now (and she's succeeding) is keeping me from having sex so I don't basically have a ME which, if you think about it (and I do), is really sad and it makes sense why she lies and covers up by blaming it all on a "twentysomething grandma" who's not actually a twentysomething grandma.

Mom doesn't want me to see what she calls "the elephant in the room": Her biggest fear is actually another ME. I am the elephant. Mom is afraid she's like the virus and has passed on all her bad decision-making to me and when I told her, in the fall, that I didn't want to play tennis in the spring or take any "private lessons" with Pastor Gary, she flipped out because she basically wanted to ensure that I was constantly quarantined in clubs and sports and stupid boring activities where I was sweating and bickering with other girls instead of having "idle time" with boys, but look at everything now. What happened to the tennis team? Same thing that happened to track, soccer, drama, ballet, baseball, archery, karate, and everything else—canceled.

Everyone's in their room by themselves except Nicole with her screaming mixed-race baby, but guess who's used to being alone? The elephant in the room, that's who.

*

"This is like a taste of being old," Mom said as we drove to the grocery store, Zach riding shotgun, me in the back.

"Nina," Zach said. "Please tell us exactly what you mean because I wasn't listening."

"Okay, Zachary," Mom said. "I mean this is what we've been

looking forward to all day, isn't it? Our one chance to get out of the house, where nothing is happening, just so we can listen to some music in the car and see a few people at a store. Think about how many old people don't have soccer practice, piano, or archery."

I'll give Nina credit: she made me see things differently for a second. There was an old black woman covered in a clear plastic bag in the produce section picking through apples really slowly, and I felt bad because the one place where this old woman gets to go is now invaded with danger, and we are the danger, and I wonder how long until she gives up and has some granddaughter teach her over the phone how to have groceries delivered to her front door by a drone?

"Off your phone!" Mom said to Zach as we passed by the meat shelves which were picked totally clean of everything except the meatless meats. So much for America using this crisis to wean itself off fossil fuels and diseased beef.

"Look!" Zach said.

Passing by a little mirror near the cheap sunglasses, I saw my stupid, long witchy nose. I hate my nose.

"Look!" Zach said.

"Look at what?" I said.

I put my palm up to my nose as if to smash it back into my head. We wheeled past the glasses and down the coffee aisle so Mom could get her "medicine" when Zach showed me a picture from MIMI of the socially distanced sleep-slots for the homeless of Las Vegas, a parking lot that had basically been turned into a dystopian slumber party for all these Black Americans who live in this city with a hundred thousand empty hotel rooms. But because we are America, we force the poor people to sleep in a parking lot, and there was this woman in a white hijab or bonnet standing over the homeless like she

was some kind of monitor to make sure the poor were keeping their distance. Or who knows? Maybe she was nice and asking them if they were okay, or if they wanted soup. What was not okay was the way psychopath Zach was grinning as he was thrusting the screen in my face.

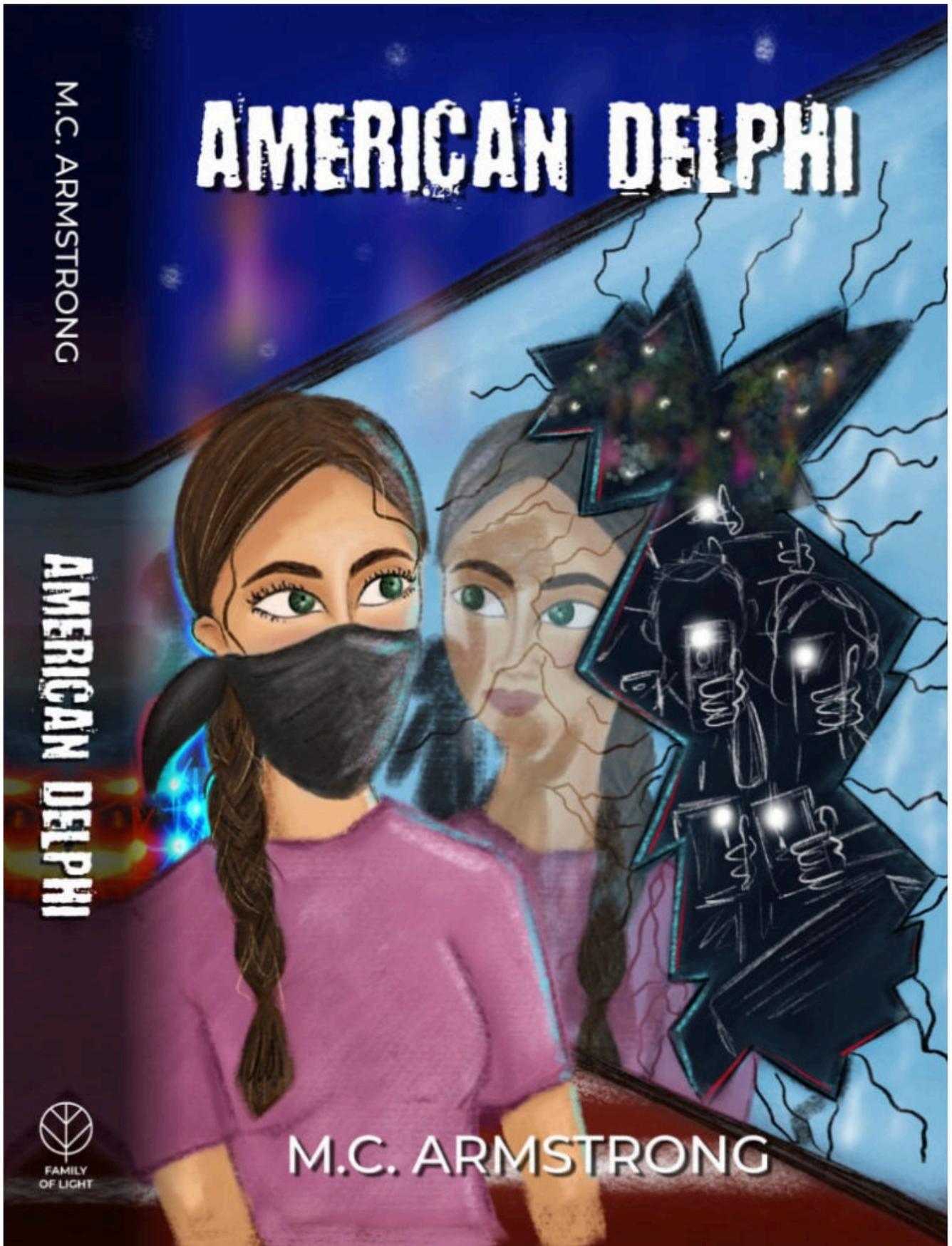
“Why are you smiling?” I said.

“He’s smiling because he’s alive,” Mom said, sweeping three bags of Ethiopian coffee into our loaded cart, and Mom’s answer would have been totally perfect if it weren’t for one thing: IT’S HER ANSWER. NOT HIS! MY BROTHER IS SICK!!!

*

I have a wasp in my room because my window won’t seal. But a wasp is just a bee, so his brain is as big as a flea, which means he won’t fly through the crack, and there’s a yellow jacket on the other side of the window, and he’s just a bigger bee, so he’s dumb too. He doesn’t know he just has to fly in the little slit if he wants to see his friend or fly a little higher to show his friend where the opening is so he’ll stop going crazy and bouncing off the walls. Instead, the yellow jacket just hovers and buzzes while the wasp goes nuts and it’s actually kind of funny. I think the yellow jacket is pretty much watching TV, and the wasp is his show for the night, and I guess I am, too, and it’s like the birds have stopped quarreling and are now laughing like a sitcom audience, like the birds know everything.

What do the trees know?



'American Delphi' by M.C. Armstrong, October 2022. Cover art by Halah Ziad. Milspeak Books.

There goes my brother running through the grass. Wonder where

the psychopath is going with his big backpack. It's like a scene from a movie. The psychopath with his backpack loaded with knives and fireworks walking through this totally dystopian, suburban wasteland of saggy porches and American flags towards this half-moon that looks like a lemon wedge while Toast, the Kagels' new corgador, rams up against the invisible fence with his special red cowboy bandanna around his neck, and how can I tell my brother's a psychopath, you might ask? God. Just look at him baiting Toast by charging the invisible fence. You can totally tell Zach loves electrocuting Toast, and you know what they say about boys who are cruel to animals. Zach is totally toasting Toast so I open up my window and scream at him to stop and when I close it back up the wasp is gone.

Mom's right. This is what it must be like to get old. I have to take my sunset walk and "get my steps in." I walked by Aria's house and then the Kagels. I called Toast to the edge but I didn't taunt him like Zach. We just sort of looked at each other, mirroring one another. Toast blinked. I blinked. Toast tilted his head. I tilted my head. Toast looked right. I looked left. Then I noticed at my feet some magenta letters. Maybe they were mauve. I don't know. The words on the sidewalk were written in this pinkish chalk and it wasn't the first time I'd seen the graffiti. For the last two weeks the parents of all the little kids have been outside drawing pictures of daisies and birds and smiley sunshine faces with their kids, and Zach and I are too old for that, but some of the older kids have been using the chalk to say other things or to mark their times on their bike races since they're being forced to exercise outside for the first time in their lives and they're actually having fun with it, but this graffiti wasn't like that.

This was different:

Go Vegan.

I walked a little farther and read in yellow:

Media Lies.

A little farther in blue:

Big Pharma Kills.

A little farther in red, white, and blue:

Government Lies.

And then in white:

Black Lives Matter.

And after that it was back to magenta:

The Truth is a Virus. The Truth Leaks. Spread Truth.

And I was like, okay. How do you do that?

How do you spread truth?

I kept walking. Now, in purple, but with the same handwriting, they said *We Need Change*. And I'm like, okay. Duh. But then, near the turnoff from Cedar to Byrd—right where you could see this big stack of logs against the side of Buck London's house—there was one more phrase before I turned around and it said: *American Delphi*.

I was pretty much across the street from Buck's, staring at this dark green holly bush he has in front of his house and this stuffed armadillo everyone can see on the chipped paint planks of his porch, but because of the huge prickly holly bush, you can't really see anything else. I couldn't tell if he was sitting on his porch in his underwear smoking a cigar with a one-eyed cat in his lap, or if he was inside on his couch looking at naked pictures of girls. I have no idea why Zach spends so much time with Buck, and I have no idea what *American Delphi* means.

But I am going to find out.

New Nonfiction from M.C. Armstrong: “J.F.K. Revisited: Through the Looking-Glass”

I write this review of Oliver Stone’s new film during the most bizarre month in America since the January of the Capitol riots and the de-platforming of Donald Trump, a president who promised to release the final government files on the assassination of John F. Kennedy. This November, a subculture of Americans known as QAnon gathered in Dealey Plaza. During the same month that Khalil Islam and Muhammad A. Aziz were exonerated in the 1965 murder of Malcom X, QAnon held vigil in Dallas, Texas. The Q crowd sang Michael Jackson’s “We Are the World” as they awaited the resurrection of President Kennedy’s dead son, JFK Jr., at the site of his father’s murder. I think it’s fair to say that what the stories of Q and X tell us, at the very least, is this: America has a problem with truth-telling.

Enter Oliver Stone and *JFK Revisited: Through the Looking Glass*. I locate Stone’s film squarely in the camp of the lawyers, experts, and citizen-journalists who worked tirelessly to absolve Muhammad and Islam. Stone’s argument in this revelatory documentary, is that Lee Harvey Oswald may also be innocent. Aligning himself with the facts revealed by unredacted government documents from the 1990s, as well as the conclusions of the 1976 House Select Committee on Assassinations, Stone argues that President Kennedy was

murdered by a CIA conspiracy. Whereas Trump and his supporters may have indeed *attempted* a coup d'etat on January 6, 2021, Stone argues that the CIA performed a successful coup on November 22, 1963.



Stone brings the receipts when it comes to proving what he calls the “conspiracy fact.” *JFK Revisited* is structured around two parts. The first part, narrated by Whoopi Goldberg, offers a devastating and compelling forensic analysis of the murder. This segment alone is worth the price of admission. The second part, narrated by Donald Sutherland, invites viewers into the “why” of the murder and reveals, through the voice of Robert F. Kennedy’s son, that on the day after the assassination in Dallas, the attorney general’s first reaction was to call the CIA and ask if they had “conducted this horror.” Of course, five years later, RFK himself would be gunned down in Los Angeles during his run for president.

The structure of the first part is chronological and goes

something like this: Here is a vision of America in 1963 just before the assassination (we begin with President Kennedy's famous commencement address at American University, known to some as the "Peace Speech"). The summer is then followed by the fall and the first eyewitness accounts of the murder. Then comes the story of revision, the eyewitnesses to a shooter from the famous "grassy knoll" suppressed or ignored as Lyndon Johnson places Allen Dulles, former director of the CIA, in charge of the investigation into the murder of the man who fired Dulles. After briefly recapitulating Dulles' findings as detailed in the Warren Commission and giving voice to the dissenting members of that body (like Senator Russell Long), Stone follows that dissent as it builds into the 1970s and culminates with the American public witnessing the murder for the first time on national television when Geraldo Rivera asks the African American comedian, Dick Gregory, to narrate the killing as documented by the home movie known as "the Zapruder film." Without citizen-journalists like Abraham Zapruder, it is quite possible that America, to this day, would still be under the spell of the Warren Commission.

Echoing the rhetorical power of Gregory and Rivera, Stone and Goldberg together tell the story of how Stone's own dramatization of the murder, the 1991 movie, *JFK*, catalyzed renewed public interest in the assassination. Just as Rivera's show helped create momentum for the work of the House Select Committee, so did Stone's Academy Award-winning movie inspire a fresh release of JFK files during the Clinton administration. It is through these unredacted primary documents and from the testimony of experts like Cyril Wecht, former president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, that Stone constructs the strongest part of his argument: the refutation of the "magic bullet theory." As part one concludes, Stone reveals that the chain-of-custody on the magic bullet was broken. He shows a future American president, Gerald Ford, altering evidence. He gives voice to three women witnesses from the Texas School Book Depository who were

systematically suppressed from the public record. But perhaps, more important than anything, through this people's history of the Kennedy assassination, Stone demonstrates that there were, beyond a reasonable doubt, more than three shots fired that day in Dallas. And as members of the Warren Commission themselves knew, if there were more than three shots, then there was more than one gunman and, thus, a conspiracy.

Recent peer-reviewed scholarship from Josiah Thompson (*Last Second in Dallas*, University of Kansas Press, 2021) supports Stone's forensic analysis. This achievement of taking the story of the Kennedy assassination from "conspiracy theory" to "conspiracy fact" cannot be understated and could not have happened without a people's movement, a subculture of JFK researchers dedicated to discovering the truth. Much like those committed to the exoneration of Muhammad and Islam, this community has worked tirelessly over the span of decades in the name of justice. *JFK Revisited* is a tremendous democratic accomplishment, especially considering the ongoing obstacles of state propaganda in collaboration with corporate media partners. What remains uncertain, however, and what constitutes the weaker part of Stone's film, is the "why" and the "who." I wouldn't blame viewers who walk away from the two-hour version of *JFK Revisited* still hungry for answers.

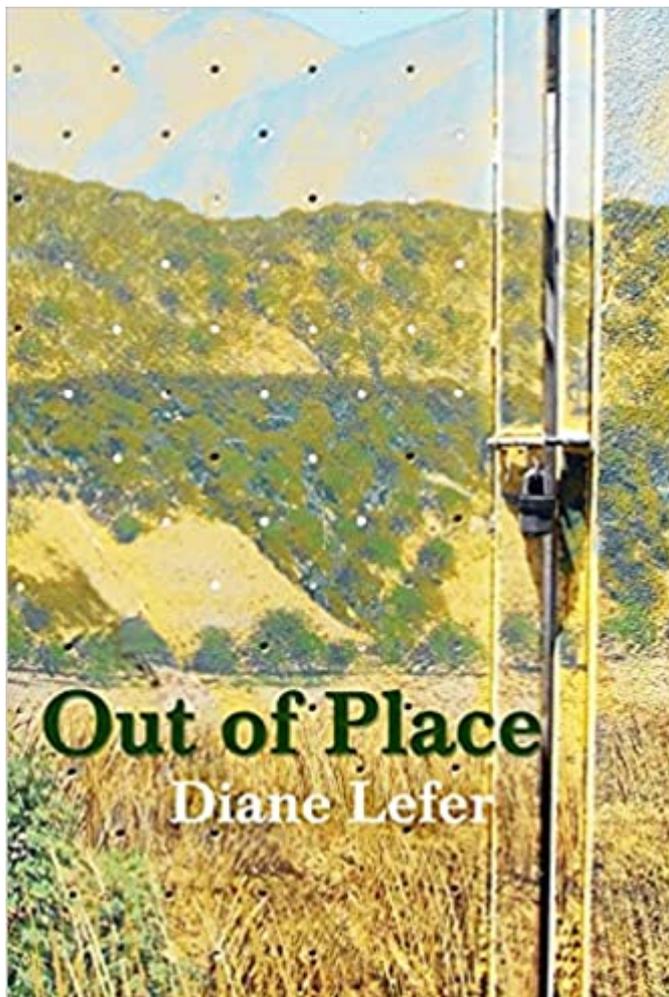
Stone claims Kennedy was killed because the thirty-fifth president wanted to end the Cold War and went behind the CIA's back to broker peace with Russia and Cuba, among others. Stone, a veteran of the Vietnam War, argues through a host of primary documents, that Kennedy wanted to end the war in Vietnam, not escalate it like his successor, Lyndon Johnson. However, if the second part of the film doesn't convince you that a war-crazed CIA was behind the conspiracy, perhaps Stone's soon-to-be-released four-hour version will more thoroughly address that question. Or perhaps the "why" and the "who" will continue to evade the American public until this country has a leader with courage. Donald Trump was not that

president. He did not keep his campaign promise. He caved to CIA appeals and refused to release the final JFK files. Maybe Joe Biden, who often poses with a bust of RFK in the Oval Office, will be that man. Early in his career, Biden often talked about the legacy of the Kennedy brothers and the tragic consequences that followed out of their murders. As late as 2019, Biden went on the record to talk about the way the assassinations of “the late 70s” still haunted the political landscape. Journalists had to correct Biden and remind him that these murders took place in the 1960s. But Biden, at the very least, seems to know that President John F. Kennedy, like his son, is dead. *JFK Revisited* will not be able to convince QAnon supporters that Kennedy and his son are never coming back. But for that small silenced minority of Americans who still read and don't think of truth as some kind of joke worthy of air-quotes, Stone's documentary just might do that thing that our post-truth culture seems algorithmically designed to prevent: It might just change your mind.

New Review from M.C. Armstrong: Diane Lefer's 'Out of Place'

I can't stop thinking about Dawit Tesfaye, an FBI agent in Diane Lefer's excellent new novel, *Out of Place*. Shortly after 9/11 and the launch of the Global War on Terror, Tesfaye, along with his partner, Daniel Chen, are sent by the Bureau to investigate a laboratory in the Mojave called the Desert Haven Institute. Like many of the scientists he interviews at DHI, Tesfaye does not quite fit into the simple monolithic identity categories that suddenly demarcate the cultural landscape of

what many now have taken to calling The Forever War. Like Dr. Emine Albaz, a Turkish Jew who “abused her security clearance regarding US nuclear technology” and just happened to be married to a “jihadi captured on the Afghan-Pakistan border,” Tesfaye challenges the reader to care about someone who is not white or a young adult. More than this, and unlike Albaz, Tesfaye is not a suspect in the War on Terror but is instead part of a new movement within the national security state that simultaneously employs diversity while deploying these diverse forces all over the planet to snuff out a predominantly non-white bogeyman. *Out of Place* may well be the most profound fictional meditation I’ve encountered on the emerging phenomenon some call “intersectional imperialism.”



One of the great pleasures in *Out of Place* is traveling all over the world with Lefer’s characters and savoring granular renderings of Iran, India, Mexico, and that cosmopolitan state

where so many countries converge: California. *Out of Place*, far from a narrow treatise on race and terror, is also a thoughtful story about science and cosmopolitanism and people like Albaz who actually think about concepts like cosmopolitanism: "Careful now," the scientist says to herself. "[S]he was not a rootless cosmopolitan—that old slur against Jews. She was a cosmopolitan who loved her roots." Lefer, reminiscent of authors like Don DeLillo and Michel Houellebecq, affords her characters a fully imagined adult life, replete with interests in science, politics, music, philosophy and sex. One is tempted to describe *Out of Place* as a novel of ideas.

And perhaps it is, but that descriptor, like "cosmopolitan," often comes with a burden, the suggestion that in novels of ideas character does not count and place is a chore. Although Lefer's cast is large and her concern with caste sometimes trumps her fidelity to scene, I was moved by her empathy and dazzled by her ability to web together so many languages and voices, including those of scientists, musicians, programmers, and Zoroastrians. *Out of Place* is a novel that aims for both the heart and mind and I admire that ambition. But, to mix metaphors, it is walking in the shoes of Tesfaye, just after the attacks of 9/11, where I most powerfully feel the arrow of Lefer's compass.

Tesfaye is mixed. "He'd been born, he'd believed for years in what was now Eritrea, but it hadn't been a country then, and later he learned he'd been born in a refugee camp and there were so many stories, so many lies, he wasn't sure over which border, if any, or where." When I was traveling through Iraq as a journalist in 2008, I remember encountering a noteworthy number of Eritrean guards posted at the dangerous outskirts of "coalition" bases. Was this a coincidence, all of these black bodies guarding these predominantly white compounds? This is intersectional imperialism, the weaponization of identity politics by the foreign policy establishment, a term first

defined by Alex Rubinstein. Connected to “seculo feminism,” “rainbow capitalism,” “woke imperialism” and the Intelligence Community’s recent “digital facelift,” intersectional imperialism is a term that is increasingly used in new media environments to caustically describe the contemporary Democratic Party and its strategic use of figures like Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Pete Buttigieg to maintain an imperialist status quo. But as Lefer’s return to the attacks of 9/11 reminds readers, this all began a long time ago. It was Cheney and Bush that sent Colin Powell to the United Nations to argue for the invasion of Iraq. Meanwhile, as America’s dominant political parties evolved their cynical use of diversity to combat the crisis of democracy, working-class immigrants like Tesfaye were forced, every day, to choose a line of work in an increasingly globalized national economy. So how does the reader feel when Tesfaye does the bidding of a police organization whose home office still bears the name of J. Edgar Hoover, the man who sent the hit down on civil rights leaders like Fred Hampton?

Perhaps more than a bit torn.

Perhaps, like all of us, Tesfaye is not simply one thing. Lefer constantly challenges the reader’s readiness to impose monoliths, binaries, and judgments. Maria del Rosario Saavaedra Castillo, one of the DHI scientists, in a conversation with a cartel boss named “El Chato” (who seems interested in repurposing Maria’s research on parasites), describes how snakes can sometimes serve as a “paratenic host. Paratenic means being the intermediary in the life-cycle.” Not only did I feel my vocabulary expand as I made my way through Lefer’s book, but I also experienced a growing sense of awe at the symbolic unity she had achieved through all of these characters and the eleven government “files” she uses to structure her story. In many ways, Castillo, Chen, Albaz, Tesfaye, and all of the other figures who orbit around DHI are paratenic, particularly when it comes to the ways in which

they are used by their host institutions and the people all around them.

In light of America's recent withdrawal from Afghanistan and the conversations about LGBTQ+ rights that emerged during the exodus, Lefer's novel seems timely. This is a book about the people who do not fit into the dominant narrative of The Forever War. A striking number of Lefer's characters are single or alienated from their spouses. The DHI, with its intersection of science and desert, seems to attract this lonely and roaming profile, the descendant spirit of nomads, bedouins, and pioneers. But Tesfaye is a noteworthy exception. His story is bound not just to the FBI, with its secure funding (in contrast to DHI), but also to a fellow Eritrean refugee named Gladys. "Glad," Tesfaye's wife, as her name suggests, is grateful to be in America, away from the country that was not exactly a country, the place where, as a child she had received a clitorrectomy from a number of men who used "a broken bottle" for the task. Her husband "couldn't bring himself to enter her where she was scarred. They held each other at night. He caressed her with hands and lips and tongue, seeking anywhere on her body where she might feel pleasure." Even here, in the American home, far from the maps and territories of war, Lefer's character struggle, mindful, like their author, that the body is a country of its own.

Out of Place will be published September 13th, 2021 and is available [here](#) or wherever books are sold.