

# **BILLIONAIRE LOGIC AND THE FATE OF JFK**

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*INTERVIEW WITH JOHN CURINGTON,  
RIGHT-HAND MAN AND ATTORNEY TO H. L. HUNT OF DALLAS, TEXAS  
(THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD IN 1963),  
CONCERNING THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY*

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2018

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*Texas oilman H. L. Hunt (1889-1974) of Dallas, Texas, was the richest man in the world in the 1960s—oil, natural gas, land, companies producing food and energy, worldwide.*

*Mr. Hunt was also America's pre-eminent producer and purveyor of conservative, anti-communist ideology, through a daily radio program broadcast, at its peak, on over five hundred radio stations across America called Life Line. Hunt backed politicians who held political views he thought were best for business and for the country, and he was a close associate of J. Edgar Hoover, the long-time director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Hunt had a special phone line to Hoover and they talked frequently back and forth, on matters affecting the nation's business.*

*Hunt's Life Line program was relentlessly critical of President John F. Kennedy—for "creeping socialism," for being soft on*

*America's enemies abroad and their fellow-travellers domestically, for cozying up to the satanic United Nations and the one-worlders behind that organization intent on America's destruction.*

*One of Hunt's sons, Bunker Hunt, helped pay the cost of a black-bordered full-page newspaper ad accusing Kennedy of traitorous actions. Its headline was: "Welcome Mr. Kennedy: Why Are You a Communist?" The black borders were like a funeral notice. This ad appeared in the Dallas Morning News on Friday, November 22, 1963. It was seeing that ad which prompted Kennedy to remark to Jacqueline at their hotel that morning, "We're heading into nut country."*

*November 22, 1963 was the day President Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy visited Dallas, overriding futile private pleas of people like Adlai Stevenson and Sen. William Fulbright to Kennedy not to make that trip, out of concern for his safety. But the trip had been planned and was regarded as politically necessary in the runup to the 1964 presidential elections. H. L. Hunt's political ally and fellow Texan, Vice-President Lyndon Johnson—at that moment under investigation in Congress for a corruption scandal with a growing likelihood of being dumped from the Kennedy ticket in 1964 and ending up in disgrace—had spent the preceding month at his Texas ranch preparing for Kennedy's visit to Texas.*

*And so it was that the President and First Lady waved to the crowds from their open limousine as it took its fateful slow hairpin turn in front of the Texas School Book Depository on Elm Street. Moments later shots rang out and part of Kennedy's head was blown off. The motorcade sped to nearby Parkland*

*Hospital but it was hopeless; Kennedy was dead. Texas Governor John Connally also was shot but survived. Two hours later Vice President Johnson, riding in the same motorcade two cars back, was sworn in as the new President of the United States as a nation reeled in shock and grief. To this day, every American of a certain age and unimpaired memory remembers where they were when they heard the news.*

*An hour after the assassination, Texas School Book Depository employee Lee Harvey Oswald, an ex-Marine and returned defector to the Soviet Union with professed communist sympathies and associations (but oddly not a single known communist friend), was arrested and later that evening charged with the murder of a police officer and of President Kennedy.*

*Oswald was denied a lawyer despite repeated requests heard by reporters. When a delegation of attorneys from the Dallas Civil Liberties Union appeared at the police station intent upon ensuring that Oswald had access to counsel, they left without seeing the prisoner after being told that Oswald had made no specific request to see them (Oswald had not been told they were there). Veteran Dallas Police Captain Will Fritz questioned the accused assassin of the President for twelve hours over two days without recording any of it (there was no tape recorder handy in the police station, he later explained) and also, he claimed, without taking any notes.<sup>1</sup> Oswald's story would not come out*

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<sup>1</sup> In 1997 handwritten notes of Will Fritz from his Oswald interrogations were conveyed by an anonymous donor to authorities and released publicly after the donor had been in possession of them since Fritz's death in 1984. Fritz's claim to have taken no notes

*in court. Less than 48 hours after his arrest, on Sunday morning, November 24, 1963, Oswald was shot and killed while in police custody by Jack Ruby, a Mob-connected Dallas strip club operator friendly with Dallas police.*

*Within hours of the assassination the Federal Bureau of Investigation under Director J. Edgar Hoover, in consultation with the new president, took over control of the investigation from the Dallas Police Department. The FBI immediately assured the nation in definitive terms that the assassination had been done by Oswald acting alone, following which the investigation got underway.*

*Others however, such as some U.S. intelligence insiders seeking a cause of war for a desired invasion of Cuba, wanted it to be believed—and privately Johnson himself let it be known to a few trusted friends and media sources on a strictly confidential basis (such as CBS television news anchor Walter Cronkite), that he too believed—that Castro and/or the Soviet Union were behind Oswald's action.*

*But publicly Johnson appointed the prestigious President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, better known as the Warren Commission, to investigate. The Warren Commission relied in large part upon the FBI's investigation. One of the Warren Commission's seven members, Congressional Representative (and future president) Gerald Ford, secretly informed Hoover's FBI on an ongoing basis via a back channel of the activities of the Commission and the thinking of its*

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is in his testimony to the Warren Commission ("I kept no notes at the time").

*members. Another member of the Warren Commission, former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) chief Allen Dulles who had been fired by Kennedy, is believed to have functioned on the CIA's behalf to shield certain areas of inquiry from the Warren Commission's attention, such as a covert assassination program directed at (foreign) heads of state, which had been run by Dulles, that would later come to light in 1970s Congressional investigations.*

*Evoking a threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, President Johnson and members of his administration persuaded Commission members—most notably Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and respected liberal icon Earl Warren who headed the Commission—that it was imperative for the noblest of motives to find sole and complete responsibility for the JFK assassination began and ended with the dead Oswald.*

*And so it was that the lone-nut explanation of the JFK assassination became the conclusion of the Warren Commission in its final report issued on September 24, 1964, signed unanimously by all seven Commission members, even though at least three of those seven disagreed with the lone-assassin-without-assistance conclusion (Boggs, Cooper, Russell). Meanwhile, the question of Oswald's motive was left unexplained: it was a "mystery."*

*One of the seven Warren Commission members, Senator Richard Russell, said in a television interview in 1970, the year before he died, that he "never believed that Lee Harvey Oswald planned that altogether by himself ... [T]here were so many circumstances there that led me to believe that you couldn't just completely eliminate the possibility that he did have some co-*

*conspirators ... I'm not completely satisfied in my own mind that he did plan and commit this act altogether on his own, without consultation with anyone else. And that's what a majority of the Committee wanted to find."*<sup>2</sup>

*A majority, he said? Disagreed with their own unanimous conclusion? They wanted to find differently than they did? Welcome to the surreal world of American politics of the 1960s.*

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*The "lone nut" conclusion of the Warren Commission was not the assessment of intelligence services of some other nations. Within the first months following the JFK assassination, the KGB (intelligence agency of the Soviet Union) as well as some European intelligence agencies concluded that the assassination appeared to have been a coup and that the deed had been pinned on the former USSR resident Oswald for the purpose of blaming the Soviet Union in the Cold War.*

*"[Soviet Premier] Khrushchev seems to have been convinced by the KGB view that the aim of the right-wing conspirators behind Kennedy's assassination was to intensify the Cold War ... The choice of Oswald as Kennedy's assassin, the KGB believed, was intended to*

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<sup>2</sup> Interview in "Richard Russell: Georgia Giant," a documentary aired Feb. 11, 1970 on WSB-TV, Atlanta, Georgia. Donald E. Wilkes, Jr., "Sen. Richard Russell and the Great American Murder Mystery" (2003). [http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/fac\\_pm/133](http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/fac_pm/133).

*divert public attention from the racist oil magnates and make the assassination appear to be a Communist plot.”<sup>3</sup>*

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*Attorney John Curington (1927- ), whose interview follows this introduction, was H. L. Hunt’s right-hand man from 1960 to 1969. Curington’s office immediately adjoined Hunt’s office in Dallas’s downtown Mercantile Bank Building.*

*Curington grew up in Farmersville, Texas, and graduated from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, followed by law school at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. In 1954 he began working as an attorney for Hunt Oil. By 1960 Curington was working directly for Mr. Hunt, doing things ranging from (as described by Curington) “running HLH Products (the ‘food division’) to covering up tax-evasion schemes, collecting gambling debts, handling matters involving Hunt’s secret family [of which Hunt had two in addition to his public family in Dallas] ... and carrying out covert political operations.”<sup>4</sup>*

*In 1969 during acrimonious disputes between Hunt’s public family and his two other families, Curington left Hunt’s employ. As the family feud escalated, Curington and other aides, having sided with one branch of Hunt heirs, were charged by rival*

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Andrew and Vasali Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 225.

<sup>4</sup> Harry Hurt, *Texas Rich: The Hunt Dynasty from the early Oil Days through the Silver Crash* (New York: Norton & Co., 1981), 188-89.



family members with embezzlement.<sup>5</sup> To give an idea of the world in which Curington operated in that era, here is a description from a 1970s legal brief:

*“The attorneys said that the two men [Curington and John K. Brown] ‘have been H. L. Hunt’s closely associated subordinates all through such periods during which, at his instance, or at the instance of members of his family authorized by him, they have engaged in many confidential and clandestine transactions for him with other persons such as holders and seekers of public office, labor leaders, actual or potential competitors, influential job holders in commercial contracts, professional sports figures and nonbusiness social persons.’”<sup>6</sup>*

*In this context a President was killed in Dallas. Five and a half decades later Curington has a story to tell.*

*Curington’s story comes in the form of a new book, written with Texas regional author Mitchel Whittington, entitled [Motive and Opportunity: The Means by which H. L. Hunt Influenced the Assassination of JFK, King, Bobby & Hoffa](#) (2018, published by 23House, available on Amazon). In addition to vivid day-to-day portraits of what it was like to be the right-hand man to H. L.*

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<sup>5</sup> For fuller details see Hurt, *Texas Rich*, 276-308. After years of legal wrangling, Curington and another aide were convicted on three federal counts of mail fraud with a suspended sentence (“Hunt Aides Plan Appeal,” *San Antonio Express*, April 19, 1975, p. 6).

<sup>6</sup> Martin Waldron, “Family Fight Texas Style,” *New York Times*, April 15, 1973, p. 173.

*Hunt and how billionaire power worked in the 1960s, Mr. Curington maps out his firsthand account of H. L. Hunt's political dealings, and how and why he believes his former boss was involved in the assassinations of JFK (1963), Martin Luther King, Jr. (1968), and Robert F. Kennedy (1968).*

*Thanks to having a mutual friend in common and after he had seen a book I had written with a Texas theme, Mr. Curington granted me a rare recorded interview.*

*Although Curington is ninety, one would not know it in meeting him. I found Curington to be alert and active, of sharp and sound mind. In person Curington is lean, with a mustache and ten-gallon hat, looking like he could have just walked off the set of an episode of the old television show Bonanza. He walks unaided, no walking stick or cane or slow movements, and his hearing and vision are good. Before I met him I returned a phone call from him. A woman who answered said Curington could not come to the phone "because he is out hauling hay." Was that just Texas or was it genes? In favor of the genes theory: Curington told me his grandmother lived to age 116.*

*The interview that follows took place March 1, 2018, in east Texas, and focuses on the JFK assassination. I have added a few notes to explain names and contexts. Mr. Curington has seen and approved this transcript. Here is this living voice of history, Mr. Curington.*

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**GD: Good morning Mr. Curington. I have read the manuscript of your book written with Mitchel Whittington, *Motive and Opportunity: The Means by which H. L. Hunt Influenced the Assassination of JFK, King, Bobby & Hoffa*. I would like to focus on the assassination of John F. Kennedy. You were Mr. Hunt's right-hand man in those years, right?**

JC: Yes. My story goes back to 1960 at the Democratic convention in Los Angeles, California. At that time Lyndon Johnson was going to run for President of the United States. Lyndon was the most powerful politician in Washington. But he was under the guidance of Sam Rayburn, who was a Congressman from Texas and also Speaker of the House for many years.

*(Sam Rayburn was a Democratic Representative to Congress from east Texas 1913 to 1961. He holds the record for longest tenure as Speaker of the House, over seventeen years.)*

Sam Rayburn thought he had complete control of the Democratic convention. Lyndon Johnson thought he was completely in charge of the election and would be nominated. But after two or three days—uh no, I'd say within a half a day—of Mr. Hunt and I being at the Democratic convention, I reached the conclusion, and Mr. Hunt reached the conclusion, that Lyndon Johnson was not going to receive the nomination.

Lyndon Johnson would not accept that explanation from Mr. Hunt or anybody else. If you mentioned it to him there would be a loud cussing tirade, that, you know, we were wrong and

he was right, and he was going to get the nomination. After a few hours period of time it became obvious to Lyndon Johnson that he would not get the nomination, and that John F. Kennedy would. At that time Mr. Hunt came up with the idea or the suggestion that for he, Mr. Hunt, to salvage his own business empire he had to have Lyndon Johnson in office, even if it meant him accepting the Vice Presidency. And the reason for that—Mr. Hunt had enough confidence in Lyndon Johnson, that he, Lyndon, could influence John Kennedy as president and still get what Mr. Hunt wanted, and protect Mr. Hunt's interests in all government activities there.

But at that point the situation is, Lyndon Johnson didn't *want* the vice-presidency, and the Kennedys didn't want Lyndon Johnson to accept it. But politics make unusual bedfellows, and to convince each other that both were needed, it was necessary to sell and convince Lyndon Johnson that he had to take the vice presidency. Mr. Hunt's selling point on that was, without making any direct accusations or finger-pointing, that there were a lot of things that could happen to John Fitzgerald Kennedy while he was in office. Kennedy's health was not good. He had medical problems. He was in a high profile situation where he would be subject to people that wanted him out of office for one reason or another.

But without assuring Johnson in direct words that Kennedy would not live through the first four years, it was certainly put in a language that Lyndon Johnson could understand. And that was an acceptable explanation as to why he finally agreed to take the second spot, on the theory that Mr. Hunt, I think convinced him that he could still pretty well run Washington, and that he, Johnson, could control Kennedy, and in the event

if something did happen to Kennedy, then in that event Johnson would move into the presidency. And if it was late in the presidency, then Johnson would by all means be elected for four more years. In 1964 that would ensure Mr. Hunt of having control of his business activities through a Washington contact for the next several years.

**GD: And you were there at those discussions in 1960?**

JC: Yes, I was present there when those discussions were made.

**GD: Hunt had his *Life Line* radio program, and was attacking Kennedy at the same time—**

JC: Mr. Hunt for several years had developed what I called, or we called, pro-American programs. They were radio programs that originated and were distributed throughout the United States. His *Life Line* program was aired on over five hundred radio stations and at one time was at a daily cost in the neighborhood of five thousand dollars a day, which in today's money would be in excess of fifty thousand dollars a day. And this was Mr. Hunt's own money, you know, he wasn't under any grants, didn't get a contribution from anybody.

The program was designed to educate his listeners as to what was good for the government and what was good for business, and who should be in office and who should be replaced from office. It was Mr. Hunt's thought, if he released this daily radio program, that out of an estimated audience of five million people, there would be a sufficient number of people that would listen to and follow his suggestions or

recommendations as to what should be done, or could be done, to remove those from power that should, in Mr. Hunt's opinion, not be expressing the views that they shouldn't express.

**GD: Then we come down to 1963, and President Kennedy visits Dallas and he is assassinated. President Kennedy is assassinated, in Dallas—**

JC: Yes—

**GD: —which is Hunt's city.**

JC: Yes.

**GD: All the books say that there was a lot of hostility toward Kennedy coming from Hunt's *Life Line* and as well as in the Dallas community. You were there at the time. Is that accurate?**

JC: That's correct. But there's a little bit more foundation to that 1963 assassination that I think might be important to those who would have interest in making an evaluation. Back in 1963 Mr. Hunt and I spent a lot of time in New York. We always stayed at the Waldorf-Astoria. And had made arrangements to lease space at the New York World's Fair. And I believe the concession fee cost Mr. Hunt a million, about a million three hundred thousand dollars. And Mr. Hunt was going to build an amusement compound, but he leased the space primarily to have a distribution for *Life Line* material, which would be printed material, and radio transcripts, and TV transcripts. He knew the Fair would attract millions of

people and it would give him the exposure that he heretofore had not had for that kind of distribution.

But the director of the World's Fair, or the president of it, was a man by the name of Robert Moses. And Moses was a very powerful man from New York. I don't believe he was ever mayor of New York, but he sort of ran New York, you know, <unintelligible> matters there. Moses eventually elected to terminate Mr. Hunt's contract with the World's Fair. And that was after I had gone to Germany and bought several hundred thousand dollars worth of amusement rides to be used at the World's Fair.

*(Robert Moses's termination of H. L. Hunt from the 1964 World's Fair occurred mid-October 1963.)*

Well, by Mr. Hunt getting kicked out of the World's Fair, it not only cost him millions of dollars, but he turned to his old-time friend Lyndon Johnson for help to get reinstated. And Vice President Johnson told Mr. Hunt that the authority to kick him out of the World's Fair came from "a higher authority." And he was unable to help him on that. Well, the only higher authority at that time was John Fitzgerald Kennedy. So I think at that time Mr. Hunt came to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary for Kennedy to be removed from office in some way, and Johnson to move into the presidency.

And then in Mr. Hunt's mind Johnson would and could be reelected in '64 for another four years. So, with Johnson in office, Mr. Hunt felt confident that Johnson would and could control for him some other people that Mr. Hunt considered detrimental to some things—detrimental to his political views

and his business views—Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy, and Jimmy Hoffa, who also met untimely deaths.

**GD: And so *Life Line*, I think you mentioned, was a major—**

JC: *Life Line* had to have a well-maintained office staff in Washington, D.C. It had a crew of experienced speechwriters. It had to have a polished commentator. We had to have recording studios or facilities to duplicate tapes and different <unintelligible> of this. Everything was sent off, sent out to radio stations which numbered in excess of five hundred. They had to be mailed on a weekly basis, the tapes had to be returned, we reused them. It was a very, very large assignment just from a logistical standpoint. The program was produced on a six day a week basis. Fifteen minutes in length. It required a tremendous amount of research and documentation to put our program together. And J. Edgar Hoover, with the information that he had available, furnished quite a bit of information that we used in the *Life Line* program as well as *Facts Forum*.

*(J. Edgar Hoover was the long-time Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1935-1972.)*

**GD: And you said that J. Edgar Hoover and Hunt were in personal contact with telephone conversations frequently?**

JC: I think they could be considered not only good friends but I think they respected each other, that both of them had the same political views, that both of them had the same views as



to who was good or who was not for good, for the benefit of the government.

**GD: And your office was right next to Mr. Hunt's?**

JC: Yes, our offices were contiguous to each other, and very few people ever saw Mr. Hunt without coming into my office first. And as far as I know Mr. Hunt never made any efforts to keep me unaware of what conversations he was having with people. Telephone—our doors were always open, and he could hear anything that I said, and I could hear anything that he said.

**GD: And the conversations—this was happening in 1963 along with other years, but this relationship with Hoover with Hunt was already happening?**

JC: As far as I know, Mr. Hunt always had a close personal relationship and friendship with Hoover, so no, it was not uncommon at all to—for Mr. Hunt to pick up the phone and call Hoover, or for Hoover to pick up the phone and call Mr. Hunt. Now that doesn't mean that they crossed every "I" and crossed every "T" with each other, but they felt free to communicate whenever they felt communication was needed.

**GD: And General Edwin Walker was living in Dallas also?**

*(General Edwin Walker, 1909-1993, was a Dallas-based nationwide conservative cause célèbre after calling for resistance, which turned violent, to the U.S. government in Sept. 1962 in Oxford, Mississippi. President Kennedy had sent five hundred federal marshals to enforce court*

*orders compelling the University of Mississippi to enroll fully-qualified African-American applicant James Meredith who was being refused admission because he was black. In a speech of Oct. 26, 1963, in Jackson, Mississippi, Walker said, "The best definition I can find for Communism is 'Kennedy liberalism' ... [Kennedy is] the greatest leader of the anti-Christ movement."*<sup>7</sup>)

JC: General Walker would be considered a friend of mine, and a friend of Mr. Hunt's. He was a visitor from time to time to our offices. Each time he came in I would visit with him, Mr. Hunt would visit with him, and it was not uncommon for him to pick up *Life Line* materials that we had used in a broadcast, or *Life Line* materials that were available to us that had not been put into a radio transcript.

**GD: And among the conservatives, or the right, or whatever you want to call it, was it correct that General Walker was well-regarded as the most prominent figure in America almost?**

JC: Well I believe General Walker was either a two- or three-star retired general. He had a very good reputation among people that were in the conservative family. I think he was well respected. But he was an individual who expressed his own views and as such he stepped on people's toes, and I think they really forced him out of the military, because he did have

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<sup>7</sup> Edwin Walker, "Why I Went to Oxford," *Fourth Decade* 8/2 (2001), 17-27 at 19, accessible at the Mary Ferrell Foundation website ([www.maryferrell.org](http://www.maryferrell.org)).

very strong conservative, what I call conservative, views there.

**GD: Do you remember whether Lee Harvey Oswald was known to Hunt or Walker before the assassination?**

JC: The only information I have on that is street talk, or whatever was printed in the newspaper. But I think even Marina Oswald, Lee Harvey's wife, did make statements to the effect that Lee Harvey Oswald did confess to her that he took a shot at General Walker. And as far as I know there was never a really thorough police investigation of the shooting. If so, I was not privileged to too much of the investigation. But it seems to me that there was an indication that Oswald was involved, but for reasons unknown to me there was really not much police followup on the shooting.

**GD: Was Hunt aware of what Walker was doing?**

JC: Oh yes, I think he approved. I never heard Mr. Hunt express displeasure with what General Walker said or what General Walker did. I would consider both of them on the same page.

**GD: And Hunt had somebody working for Lyndon Johnson that was reporting on Johnson's affairs?**

JC: We made arrangements to hire a person that was an ex-FBI man. He was a head speechwriter for Lyndon Johnson. But one of his duties was to—and normally that would be done through me—he was to keep me advised on a *<unintelligible>* basis as to who Johnson was talking to, normally the subject matter of the conversation, how long the person might be in

the office, or just any general information that he felt like might be beneficial as to what Johnson was doing or not doing while he was in the office of president.

**GD: That's a lot of information.**

JC: Yo.

**GD: So then we come to—Kennedy is assassinated.**

JC: Yeah. At the time Kennedy came to Dallas in November '63, our offices—when I say our I mean Hunt Oil company offices—were in the Mercantile Bank Building there in Dallas. And the Mercantile Bank Building had windows that were about four by six foot in dimensions, and you could raise them up and be exposed without a screen or anything. And when the Kennedy caravan passed our offices on the day of the assassination, Mr. Hunt and I were in the window looking out, and John Connally was in the front seat of the limousine in which Kennedy was a passenger. He turned up and looked at our building and recognized Mr. Hunt, and he turned around and made a comment to Jack Kennedy. And Kennedy in turn turned up and waved to Mr. Hunt there. So I think there was a recognition of Mr. Hunt on the parade route looking out his office window and being recognized by both John Connally and John Fitzgerald Kennedy there.

**GD: You were standing right there with Mr. Hunt?**

JC: Yeah, he and I were—in fact I've seen one clip, that I can recognize myself in that window and Mr. Hunt is standing by

me there. But it has to be <unintelligible> personal recognition, which was more of an important issue there.

He and I were looking at—then I received a telephone call, I would say within three or four minutes of the shooting. And the person that called me stated that they had just heard that there had been a shot fired at John Kennedy. And I told that person that was impossible, because I had just seen him pass the window three or four minutes before, and that was impossible. But I had a TV in my office, and I did go over to my office and turn the TV on. And after a few minutes there was an interruption in the program, and it, the interruption, stated that yes there had a been a shot fired, and they at that time did not know where the shot was fired, who was hit, or what was involved with it, but as the story unraveled it became clear that yes, Kennedy had been shot, and yes, it was a fatal shot.

**GD: Do you recall Mr. Hunt's reaction to the news?**

JC: I don't think there was any visible reaction. He shared the same view that I did. He did not have a TV in his office. But after the program began to get interrupted with the story, then Mr. Hunt did come into my office and did sit down in a chair and watch the news. But I don't remember him making any comment one way or the other, as to what was happening or not happening.

**GD: But you said he did not make comments very much on things—**

JC: No, no.

**GD: Then—Officer Tippit was shot, and Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested in the movie theatre, and this was on a Friday afternoon—**

*(J. D. Tippitt, 1924-1963, was a Dallas police officer who was shot to death in another part of the city an hour after the Kennedy assassination, by an assailant described as matching Oswald's description near to and immediately prior to Oswald's arrest in a movie theatre.)*

JC: Yes.

**GD: And then the Dallas police—he was being questioned by Captain Fritz—**

JC: Yeah. Will Fritz, he was Captain, head of the Homicide Division of the Dallas Police Department.

**GD: Did you know Captain Fritz?**

JC: Yes. I knew him, was on a first-name basis with him.

**GD: Did you know others in the police department pretty well?**

JC: Well, I guess my best contact, we tried to keep pretty good contact with all the law enforcement people, but I guess my best contact would have been Lieutenant George Butler. He was a frequent visitor to our office, and I was able to do some things for George Butler that he was appreciative of me being able to do, that—nothing illegal or unethical about it—but we just developed a pretty close working relationship. And I was

able to call upon him for information, or his assistance on anything that I needed a little help on.

*("A friend of the late H. L. Hunt, Butler was a confidante of the famed oil tycoon and handled personal investigative assignments for Hunt Oil."<sup>8</sup> Butler is said to have been the officer in charge, under Captain Fritz, of the Oswald transfer in the basement of the Dallas Police Department in which Oswald was killed on Sunday morning, Dec. 24, 1963.)*

**GD: Then there's the story that's been partly reported in the past, that Mr. Hunt asked you to go to the police station and check on the security of Oswald.**

JC: Well, there's a little bit more to that story than just, you know, going down to check on security. Of course at that time Mr. Hunt was a very well-known person, in wide circles, but was well known in the Dallas area, and was well known by a lot of people who listened to his political views. And when the accident happened with John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Mr. Hunt immediately started getting threatening, what I would call threatening telephone calls, in the sense that they would be badmouthing Mr. Hunt for badmouthing the President on previous *Life Line* programs. Nothing more than what I would say random calls from people who shared different political views. But after you get several of those over a short period of time you become a little bit concerned with what their next step might be there.

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<sup>8</sup> Ray Zauber, "George Butler: His Word Was Law," *Oak Cliff Tribune*, Jan. 10, 1980, 1-2.

**GD: So Mr. Hunt was getting threatening calls—**

JC: Yeah.

**G: And did that have anything to do with him asking you to go check the security of Oswald?**

JC: Well, I think so. Because immediately after the assassination, everything started off in slow motion, as far as publicity and information being distributed. On a minute-to-minute basis that information was being upgraded, changed, altered, but presented in a different light. So I think that continuous new information just encouraged people to more and more call Mr. Hunt, expressing their frustration that, one, could he have been involved in the assassination? And two, did he feel any remorse by putting out programs that were detrimental to the Kennedy political agenda there? So Mr. Hunt was nothing more than a person that people could and would express their indication, you know, their concern over him being involved in anything that could have affected the president there.

In my opinion it was nothing more than a normal reaction, you know, to any given set of an event that had worldwide exposure, and of interest to almost every person in the United States.



**GD: In Mr. Hunt's view did he maybe wonder if his *Life Line* program had incited the assassination?**

JC: Well, I think its difficult to express just in a few words what Mr. Hunt put in to the *Life Line* program. But again, Mr. Hunt had no partners, he didn't ask anybody for contributions, he was willing to spend, over a period of time, several millions of dollars to express his *Life Line* views. *Life Line* was developed and exposed to listeners, in Mr. Hunt's mind, to encourage people to become involved in politics. But he wanted those involved to have what I would call a conservative point of view. He was not interested in promoting a liberal point of view. He hoped in presenting his program of *Life Line* that some listener or listeners would understand what the message was projecting, and then that listener would take in hand to correct the problem if in fact there was a problem.

Of course I think Mr. Hunt's primary thought would be that the correction would be in the ballot box, rather than at the end of a bullet.

**GD: There's a common story that's out there, that says there was a Madelaine Duncan Brown, that there was a big meeting of oil men, and some accounts say that you were there. And that's been criticized. Could you sort of give the lowdown on what that was all about?**

JC: Madelaine Brown has contacted me, did contact me, and I have met Madelaine Brown. And I met her at a place outside of the Dallas area. And Miss Brown did talk about a meeting with Lyndon Johnson there, the night before the assassination. She wanted to place me and Mr. Hunt at that

meeting. I was not at the meeting. I personally knew almost every man she stated was at the meeting, but in my opinion those people would not have been in Dallas without contacting Mr. Hunt. And as far as I know none of them contacted Mr. Hunt. I don't believe Mr. Hunt would have gone to that meeting without me being present, either taking him or driving him. So the only thing I can say is, I was not at the meeting, and it would be my best guess that H. L. Hunt was not at the meeting.

**GD: H. L. Hunt—did he work with a committee of others or was he a Lone Ranger type of person?**

JC: Mr. Hunt, as far as I know, acted alone. He relied upon his own judgment, his own instincts, his own background as to what was right or wrong. And just in pretty simple facts, really had no interest in what somebody else might think or might do.

**GD: So he called the shots, there was nobody above him?**

JC: Nobody above him, and nobody below him I don't think made a habit of questioning what he was doing. If they did they lost their position in a pretty short period of time.

**GD: So why would Mr. Hunt be interested in the security under which Oswald was in police custody?**

JC: Well, anything I answer along that line would be just comments and speculations. But because of the increased telephone calls that Mr. Hunt was receiving, and because of the more threatening mannerisms in which those messages

were being delivered, I think in Mr. Hunt's mind he needed to know what was going on to protect Oswald, or how Oswald was guarded, or who could get to Oswald, on the theory that if anybody could get to Oswald, they could also get to him just as easy <*unintelligible*>.

So on a Saturday afternoon—I'm going to guess the time being in the 3 or 4 or 5 o'clock time period—Mr. Hunt did call me and ask me to go down to the police station, and find out what security there was, if any, around Lee Harvey Oswald. Now at that period of time there was television on a twenty-four hour a day basis, showing the turmoil around the Dallas police department. And Mr. Hunt told me, that after you find out the information that I need on security, come back to Mount Vernon and give me a report.

*(H. L. Hunt called his mansion "Mount Vernon." As Curington likes to put it, Hunt's Mount Vernon "was like George Washington's Mount Vernon except Hunt's was five times bigger.")*

So I go there—but at the same time I really had to go to the police station to get a man out of jail, who was a husband of a lady who did laundry and housework for me in my home there in Dallas.

**GD: Her husband was in jail at this moment?**

JC: Her husband was in jail. So I had a legitimate reason, in my mind, if anybody had stopped me, I had a legitimate reason for being at the courthouse and at the jailhouse. And I went down to the jailhouse, and I had a briefcase, had on a business suit,

but I was no different from literally hundreds of other people that were in the lobby and on the street and anywhere else. But I immediately concluded that, one, nobody was interested in what anybody else was doing. They were there on their same mission, and they were paddling their own boat, so I—nobody stopped me or asked me any questions.

**GD: No one at the door asked for ID?**

JC: No. Nobody asked for ID, nobody looked into my briefcase. I even got on an elevator to go up where the man, to get him released from his jail cell—

**GD: On the fifth floor, right? The jail?**

JC: Yeah. And Captain Will Fritz got on the elevator, and he had Lee Harvey Oswald with him. And Captain Fritz, of course we knew each other, and he just looked over and said, “Meet the S.O.B. that shot the president.” Oswald didn’t make a comment, I didn’t make a comment. But anyway that was the gist of the conversation.

But after that I did get the man out of jail. Then I went down to get out of jail. And then by this time it was about 1:30, 2 o’clock in the morning. I had to go to Mr. Hunt’s house. And as I recall, he was still up. Anyway I rang his doorbell and he came to the door almost immediately. He had his clothes on which suggested to me he was still up. And I gave him a report, that there was no security that I could see whatsoever around Lee Harvey Oswald, around the jail.

And he said, if you would, I want you to go out and have “The Man”—he called Joe Civello “The Man”—and have him come over to Mount Vernon. That was the name of his home. And I did that and I went home.

*(Joseph Civello was the leader of the Dallas crime family 1956-1970.)*

**GD: You called Civello in the middle of the night?**

JC: Yep.

**GD: Just called him in the middle of the night?**

JC: It was about 2 o'clock in the morning.

**GD: He's not angry at being called in the middle of the night?**

JC: No. Civello, although he had a pretty bad reputation in the Mafia circles, look, all in all he was a pretty nice kind of a fellow. As far as I know I never saw him take a drink of whiskey, I never heard him use a word of profanity, he tipped his hat to the ladies. Outside of shooting one or two people he had a pretty fair background.

**GD: So there was a meeting of Hunt and Civello set up—**

JC: Yeah.

**GD: You were not at that meeting?**

JC: I was not at that meeting.

**GD: So that was Mr. Hunt's reaction to the security situation?**

JC: Yes.

**GD: And he couldn't wait until the next day to set up the meeting?**

JC: No. He asked for that meeting right then.

**GD: Did Fritz know that you were coming to the police station? I mean, did you contact—**

JC: No, no.

**GD: So that was an accidental meeting?**

JC: Accidental, just a random accidental meeting. I couldn't have timed it, and he couldn't have timed it. Nobody—we just happened to get on the same elevator at the same time.

**GD: Did Civello know Jack Ruby?**

*(Jack Ruby, 1911-1967, operated the Carousel Club, a Dallas strip club. He cultivated relationships with the Dallas police. On Nov. 24, 1963 Ruby shot and killed accused JFK assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.)*

JC: Yeah, they would have had a—I don't know that they would have had a close working relationship, but Jack Ruby would have certainly known Civello and Civello did know Jack Ruby.

**GD: Would you say that Ruby was Mob connected or was he Mob himself?**

JC: Ruby wanted to be something that he wasn't. He wanted to be an active part I think of what I call the Mafia circle. He was on the outside looking in, but he wanted to be on the inside looking out. And he and Joe Civello would have known each other. Whether or not they ever had any business dealings or not I don't know.

**GD: And so after you called Joe Civello at night, in the middle of the night, then they, Hunt and Civello, met early in the morning?**

JC: That's my best recollection, that they met around 7 o'clock on a Sunday morning.

**GD: And then you went to church as I recall, right?**

JC: At that time I was attending the First Baptist Church there in Dallas. After my midnight episode there at the police station, I went home, laid down for probably an hour and a half, two hours, got up, showered, shaved, and dressed, and went to the Sunday morning service at the Dallas First Baptist Church.

**GD: That was Criswell’s church, right?**

*(Rev. W. A. Criswell was a famous pastor from 1944 to 1993 of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, 26,000 members. This was H. L. Hunt’s church. Criswell was evangelical and conservative. He denounced Kennedy and the federal government for forcing an end to racial segregation and taught that African Americans were under a “curse of Ham” from the Bible. “Criswell taught that the Bible, which he held to be unerring, supported existing social and racial hierarchies.”<sup>9</sup>)*

JC: Yeah. Dr. Criswell was the pastor, and of course he and I were on a first-name basis of exchanging pleasantries there. During his Sunday morning service Dr. Criswell—somebody walked up on the podium and handed Dr. Criswell a note. He opened up the note, studied it for a few seconds, and then read it to the congregation. And, to my best recollection, the words that he uttered were that he had just received word that Lee Harvey Oswald had been shot at the Texas police station, and he had no further information on it.

**GD: That certainly shocked the world. Did you know Ruby yourself?**

JC: I had met Ruby. I had been in his Carousel Club from time to time.

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<sup>9</sup> Edward H. Miller, *Nut Country: Right-wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2015), 27. In 1968 Criswell renounced his earlier support for segregation and said, “Never had I been so blind.”



**GD: How did he strike you? Did he strike you as somebody that was impulsive? Or was he competent and methodical in his planning?**

JC: Oh I think Ruby would be an impulsive kind of a person. He would have what I call a good personality.

**GD: After Oswald was killed you have an interesting story of a secret meeting of Mr. Hunt with Marina Oswald.**

*(Marina Oswald Porter, 1941- , formerly Marina Nikolayevna of Minsk, Russia, was the widow of Lee Harvey Oswald. She had two small children and did not speak much English. According to wire service reports at the time sympathetic Americans spontaneously donated ca. \$60,000 to her in the period immediately following the assassination. That is the equivalent of about a half million dollars today. She continues to live quietly in the Dallas area today.)*

That's one more thing. Marina Oswald's visit to Mr. Hunt's office.

Of course at that particular time, right after Oswald's arrest, Marina was in, you know, she was in almost every newspaper and almost every television program. And her appearance was well documented, not only in Dallas but throughout the U.S. In Dallas there are two buildings (*diagramming on paper*), the Mercantile Bank Building, and the Mercantile Securities Building. They're on the same property and they're joined together, but they are only joined together on the seventh

floor. I mean, on the seventh floor of the Mercantile Bank Building, and on the seventh floor of the Mercantile Securities—there's a steel door, and that's the only—and this is about, oh I'm gonna say a twenty-five storey building, and this one about a fifteen—I'm just guessing—but anyway, this door, to my knowledge, had never been closed or locked.

**GD: You can't get between the two buildings other than on the seventh floor.**

JC: No, you can't go from this building to this building, unless you went down to ground level, and got off the elevator, then around the corner, and got on another one, 'cause—

**GD: I see—**

JC: —that's the only way to get to the other building. I'd never seen the door closed there. But on the Saturday morning that Mr. Hunt called me early and told me that he wanted to go in, he told me to go down to the office and lock this door between the Mercantile Bank Building and the Mercantile Securities Building. And to go through both floors of offices—we had two or three floors—to go through all the floors, and if there was a Hunt employee on the job, to send them home, you know, that they just go home.

**GD: Clear the building.**

JC: And then the lobby, where you went into the lobby for the Mercantile Securities—Mercantile Bank Building—in the lobby there was a Skillern's Drug store and two or three other shops open down the deal. But Mr. Hunt told me to go through

the lobby, after I got the doors locked, and after there was no Hunt employee in either building, to stay in the lobby, and if any Hunt employee came to work to send them home.

Which I did. I went down, locked up the building, checked the deal, standing in the lobby there.

There's a black car. Parks right parallel to the curb. A lady gets out of it. Its Marina Oswald. She—and Mr. Hunt told me that there'd be a lady coming in through the building, pay no attention to her, don't speak to her, don't acknowledge her, just let her come in. She just—Marina Oswald came in through the building, went to the elevator, the door closed. I don't have any idea where she went. It would be my best guess she went to H. L. Hunt's office. In about thirty minutes she came back downstairs, got out, walked down the hall, she was in a U.S. Government car, they opened up the back door for her, she got in it and drives out there.

**GD: She was not accompanied by anybody? Nobody with her when she went up?**

JC: No, nobody with her, and nobody got out of the car with her.

Well, after that incident Marina Oswald has been questioned, did she go to H. L. Hunt's office. And her answer has always been no, she didn't know H. L. Hunt, she'd never seen him, never been to his office there. Notwithstanding the fact that I'm saying one thing, and she's saying something else, Marina Oswald *is* the person who got out of that government car, came through the building, and in the almost twenty years I

was with Mr. Hunt I'd never seen that door locked before, never seen it locked again, never had instructions to get all the Hunt employees out of the building, never had instructions to stay in the lobby and tell any employees that showed up to go home—this was on a Saturday morning, some of them came to work there.

So I have no explanation as to what the motive was for Marina Oswald to go into that office. I've not said anything other than Marina Oswald went into the Mercantile Bank Building, and in my opinion she went to H. L. Hunt's office. Mr. Hunt never made a comment to me who it was, what it was, or why or what. But he got to the building before she did, he left about five minutes after she did.

So that's one of those things, just like Joe Civello and the Sunday morning visit and what happened thereafter, I have no explanation whatsoever on that meeting.

**GD: What is your basis for saying it was a government car?  
The car that dropped her off?**

JC: FBI would be my best guess, that somebody with the FBI drove her up there, and took her away from there. And Mr. Hunt would have had the ability to call *<unintelligible>* and send somebody, just say I'd like to talk to her, and bring her up there. Or, he could have asked them to just deliver her to the Mercantile Bank Building, with no explanation as to anything else there.

**GD: How long after the assassination was this?**

JC: If I was just taking a guess I'd say it was within the first thirty days of it. Mr. Hunt believed that if he could talk to two or three people on any subject, he would know much more about them than they knew about themselves. And he did have an unbelievable power on that thing.

And so it'd be my best guess that he, one, would have never divulged his name to her—she would not know—it would be my best guess she had no idea who she was talking to or why she was talking to him. And knowing Mr. Hunt, and knowing the situation of Marina and her children and everything, he could or could not have given her a money contribution.

But I have no reservation, no qualms, no reservation whatsoever: Marina Oswald went into the Mercantile Bank Building. I believe she saw H. L. Hunt, she left, and in fairness to her she may have never known who the man was that she met, or he may have never disclosed to her, or he may not have even asked her any questions that would have aroused her suspicions on why she was up there.

You gotta keep in mind, Greg, even a poker player, an accomplished poker player, has skills that you don't have, and I don't have. There's a lot of things that happen—because they can't happen to *individuals* they'll say, "Well that couldn't possibly happen, you know, 'cause that couldn't happen to me." Well that's completely untrue. But anyway, that's always been one of my more interesting stories—

**GD: Yeah—**

JC: —for the simple fact, I know what happened, but I *don't* know what happened.

**GD: Got it.**

JC: So that is an awkward kind of statement, but I know exactly what happened, but I don't know why it happened, or how it happened, or if in fact it didn't happen.

**GD: You mentioned that it was maybe thirty minutes. That's not a very long time for a visit.**

JC: It would be less than—oh he wouldn't, no, that would be a long time for Mr. Hunt to spend with somebody. I don't believe he'd have had any interest whatsoever in other than a five or ten minute conversation.

**GD: OK.**

JC: Again, you're going back to what most people would do, but you know, he just wasn't most people.

**GD: OK.**

JC: But again, when I make a statement like that, or when I write something like that, when Marina Oswald denies the story, most people hearing my remarks wash 'em off as a fictitious story. Nothing I can do about that. You know, they've got their opinion. But I know—you just don't go lock a door between two buildings that's never been locked before, never

been locked since. You don't normally go in and tell every Hunt employee to go home if in fact they are there. And you don't stay in the lobby and if a Hunt employee comes in to send them home. It would suggest to me that he wanted somebody coming into that office that he didn't want anybody else to recognize or see.

**GD: Did she speak to you or anything?**

JC: No, my instructions were not to look at her, not to speak to her. She didn't look left, didn't look right, I didn't show any recognition whatsoever. She was well dressed, her hair was combed, had on lipstick, she would not be what I would call a pretty woman, but sort of an attractive woman you know, just the way she walked and carried there—she didn't look left, she didn't look right, she punched the elevator door. Of course at that time all of the elevators were on the ground floor. I think there were four there in the lobby. It opened immediately, she disappeared, and came back within a less than a thirty minute period of time.

**GD: Is the fact that she says she never went to see Mr. Hunt—could that be as simple as he asked her not to tell anyone?**

JC: Well, again in fairness to her, she may not have known. But you've been around me long enough to know that I sort of have a grasp of the situation—

**GD: Yes.**

JC: —going around me, you know.

**GD: Yes.**

JC: I'm not going to be in the lobby under a very set of mysterious instructions, see a lady come in that is on the news 24 hours a day 7 days a week, that I don't know who she is, you know.

**GD: Right.**

JC: An orangutang if he had been with me he could have told me who the lady was there.

*(This is one of Mr. Curington's favorite expressions to emphasize something that, in his opinion, should be obvious, some form of even an orangutang could figure that out.)*

So I don't think, you know—I don't have any reservation, conscience whatsoever in telling that story. That's exactly what happened, and I think what happened with Marina Oswald, one, Mr. Hunt could or could not have given her a pretty substantial gift. He could or could not have identified himself. Normally he wouldn't identify himself. But he just had enough ego that in his mind, if he could talk to Marina Oswald for three or four minutes, he could pretty well tell anything she believed as far as Lee Harvey Oswald and Kennedy was concerned.



**GD: And when you saw her, how long did it take for you to say, “That’s Marina Oswald”?**

JC: The minute she was out of the car. Of course I had an opportunity to observe her for about a two hundred foot walk there, so, you know, it wasn’t just a haphazard glance where well maybe it is, maybe it’s not.

But, anyway, I’m the first to admit, that’s my story, she has a different one, but mine’s correct and hers may not be deliberately incorrect, but she may not have known any differently.

**GD: That’s one of these unexplained questions, as to what that meeting was about, but who knows—yeah.**

JC: Yo. But anyway, having said that, you know, we could speculate forever on did this happen or did that happen. The comments that I am making leave just as many unanswered questions as when we started. But I can move that pendulum a little bit, a little bit step further.

**GD: Let’s go back to Civello there in Dallas. Was Civello under any other Mob boss?**

JC: Civello was not a high profile Mafia leader. But he was one of the smarter Mafia leaders, and in a way more cruel. He ran his part of the United States with an iron fist—but in a gentlemanly manner you know. He just had the ability to get things done the way he wanted them done, without a lot of the adverse publicity that some of the people out of Chicago and New York and Los Angeles may have done there.

When the United States was divided there were eight different sections in the United States. It wasn't an organizational chart, but they didn't go out of their geographical area. And it was a gentleman's agreement, this is your area, and you run it. You don't get involved in this place, and you don't get involved over here, and we're not interested in your concerns as to what happens in Louisville Kentucky. You run your business and we'll take care of the rest of it here.

I would guess that Marcello—well I wouldn't have any way of guessing—but it wouldn't be uncommon for Marcello to come to Dallas two or three, four times a year, you know—

### **GD: Marcello?**

*(Carlos Marcello was head of the New Orleans crime family from 1947 to the 1980s, considered one of the top Mob bosses in the United States. Marcello's sphere of operations included Dallas, and according to an FBI informant, Jack Van Laningham, Marcello said, speaking of Dallas, that "all the police were on the take, and as long as he kept the money flowing they let him operate anything in Dallas that he wanted to."<sup>10</sup>)*

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<sup>10</sup> Lamar Waldron, *The Hidden History of the JFK Assassination* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2013), 189; John L. Davis, *Mafia Kingfish: Carlos Marcello and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Signet, 1989); Stefano Vaccara, *Carlos Marcello: The Man Behind the JFK Assassination* (New York: Enigma Books, 2013).

JC: Yeah. It wouldn't be uncommon, you know, to get a call, "Well, Marcello's here if you want to drop by." Nothing planned, nothing formal, nothing regimented or—just a routine thing. Normally it wasn't a formal meeting. It sort of was like saying, "If you and Mr. Hunt—Marcello's going to be in town tomorrow, just stop by the liquor store by the airport"—just very informal, no scheduled meeting, no plan to get together, no drawing up a plan or anything—

**GD: Most people would be scared to meet these guys.**

JC: I had a limited knowledge of a lot of these activities. But astute people don't have to go into a long-winded detailed explanation of what to do or how to do it. Just three or four words gets the message across you know. And I don't think Civello, or Marcello, or H. L. Hunt or anybody else is gonna sit down and write out a plan, and discuss it, and call in people to evaluate it—

Again, I'm making a statement. It has nothing to do with anything. But just suppose that H. L. Hunt did have enough concern that Lee Harvey Oswald needed some way not to testify. All he'd have to say is, "Man if there's any way in the world that somebody could get to Oswald and keep him quiet." That's all that would be said, you know. Civello wouldn't say, "Well what do you want me to do? How much money you gonna—?" Its not that kind of conversation at all. People want there to be something like that, where you want a committee meeting, and you want a faculty meeting, and you want an outlined plan, and you want it written down, and you want to rehearse it and go over it. Its not that kind of a deal at all.

**GD: OK.**

JC: But the people that think they're in the know, they believe they have every answer in the world as to why Jack Ruby should not have been at the spot he was when he shot Lee Harvey Oswald. Again, my opinion. I'm not giving you any evidence whatsoever. But in my opinion, Ruby was given instructions to get rid of Lee Harvey Oswald. He didn't want to do it! But he was afraid *not* to do it. So he left a paper trail as wide as he could, on protecting his image. And everything he did corresponded with the delay that exactly corresponded with what the Dallas police department was bringing on themselves. Not deliberately. But they had the car parked wrong. That cost ten minutes. They had to do something else to change the deal there. So the Dallas police department was making time mistakes there, so when the shooting <*unintelligible*>, Ruby over here was leaving the best defense he could as to where he was and it being impossible for him to be there. But by him building up his defense theory, and the Dallas police department making mistakes, put the two together, unintercooperated (*sic*) by anybody else, to me the explanation is just as simple as two and two is four.

The police department made enough administrative errors that it delayed the meeting about fifteen minutes from the schedule. Jack Ruby didn't know those things were going on. If the Dallas police department had done what they were supposed to do, and not made the errors that they did make, Oswald would have been in the car and disposed of by the time Jack Ruby was building his alibi that he couldn't have been there. Everything just unraveled where, without any

assistance from anybody, just unraveled, to put him where he was able to confront Lee Harvey Oswald and do just exactly what he did.

Now me saying that doesn't make it happen that way. You can accept it or reject it. That's my theory as to what happened there. The Dallas police department didn't plan on making the mistakes it did. Ruby knew what time that he should have been coming out of that deal. He scheduled everything he did, going to the Western Union office, calling somebody, calling in, so it would have been impossible for him to have been there. I don't think Ruby wanted to do the shooting. But then he had no other choice. You know, somebody told him what needs to be done. And he knew if he didn't do it, he could very well have been ground up in a sausage grinder, and all his brothers and sisters and everybody else there.

So its not that simple to just say, "Well I don't believe I'll load my gun this morning and go down and shoot somebody." You don't have that, you know, you don't have that choice there.

**GD: When Ruby was arrested, after shooting Oswald, Ruby said he did it on his own—**

JC: Well, what do you think he's gonna say?! "Oh, me and Joe Civello, the leader, we own the Carousel Club together, and Civello called me this morning—woke me up, just told me to go down and shoot the deal, and I had to do it."

They're not going to say those—

**GD: Right.**

JC: The only explanation I ever heard he made is, he felt sorry for Mrs. Kennedy and he wanted to show his respect for her. Well, again, you make a comment—and I think other people do—that Ruby makes a statement, and that’s exactly what happened. Well what do you think he’s gonna say, when they catch him red-handed there, and throw him to the floor and cuff him up again? You think he’s gonna make a confession at that time?

**GD: No, no. Yeah.**

JC: Again, the only fact I know is that Jack Ruby shot Lee Harvey Oswald. Why he shot him, I don’t know. How he got into that place at the time he did, I don’t know. Why the Dallas police department elected to have administrative problems they did that moment that delayed their transfer fifteen or twenty minutes, why that happened, I don’t know. I only know that Jack Ruby had a matter of seconds—not minutes, not hours, not days—he had a matter of seconds, to do what he did, and he had nothing to do with the Dallas police department delaying their transfer by a fifteen or twenty minute period of time.

Ruby wanted to be a very vocal, aggressive, tough-shooting kind of a guy. But he was really just—I don’t know if the Mafia had a ladder or not, but he’d be about as low on the ladder as you could get. But he wanted to be on the top of the ladder. So anybody under him, or anybody subservient to him, an employee or a dancer or anything like that, he’d put on a pretty good show with them you know.

*(A surprising development is information published in 2013 indicating that New Orleans crime boss Carlos Marcello was the true figure in control of Ruby's Carousel Club in Dallas: "New information for the first time shows that Carlos Marcello and his organization actually controlled the Carousel Club, not Jack Ruby. Ruby was only the club's manager." <sup>11</sup> Earlier, FBI memos made available to the Warren Commission had said that Ruby "was well acquainted with virtually every official of the Dallas police force" and was "the pay-off man for the Dallas Police Department."<sup>12</sup>)*

**GD: OK. Mr. Hunt was not involved with the Adlai Stevenson incident that happened just before Kennedy arrived, was he? Adlai Stevenson arrived in Dallas and had some people demonstrate against him.**

*(Former Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson was the Democratic nominee for president in 1952 and 1956, losing both times to Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower. Stevenson was an intellectual and promoted progressive causes. He was appointed by Kennedy to be US Ambassador to the United Nations. Needless to say he was disliked by the ultraright. On October 25, 1963,*

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<sup>11</sup> Waldron, *The Hidden History of the JFK Assassination*, 121-23. The evidence cited, in addition to some discussion of financial records, is that Marcello told FBI informant Jack Van Laningham that he, Marcello, had set up Ruby in the bar business in Dallas, and how he, Marcello, had later caught Ruby embezzling money.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

*Stevenson spoke in Dallas but was heckled by protesters organized by supporters of General Edwin Walker. The situation became uncontrollable and security attempted to get Stevenson out of the building to his car. On the way to the car more protesters outside were waiting. A woman hit Stevenson on the head with a sign and a man spit in Stevenson's face. Back in Washington, D.C., Stevenson warned Kennedy's staff about an "ugly and frightening" mood in Dallas, and urged Kennedy not to go to Dallas.)*

JC: Well in my book I covered the Adlai Stevenson story. Anytime a person of any renown came into Dallas, especially a political person, all wanted to see Mr. Hunt. Mr. Hunt really had no interest in people of Adlai Stevenson's level or background or anything like that. But as a businessman, if they came to his office he would normally see them if they came to my office first.

Adlai Stevenson did come to Dallas, and did come to Mr. Hunt's office. I did visit with him, and Mr. Hunt stepped into my office, they exchanged a few pleasantries. But that's just the beginning of the story.

There was a person that came into the office the same day that Adlai Stevenson did. And Mr. Hunt had just written and published a book—his book—called *Alpaca*. In my book I've got the name of the person. But he came in and he wanted to meet Mr. Hunt. And he and I were talking about like you and I are, and Mr. Hunt hollered out and said, "John, who's that out there?" Well I had the man's name. And he said, "Well what does he want?" I said, what he wants is an autograph on a copy



of *Alpaca*. Well that's all Mr. Hunt had to hear. He just dropped everything and he came out and he wanted to meet this fellow, and sign and autograph his book *Alpaca*. So he comes out and they visit three or four minutes, probably two minutes, something like that, and Mr. Hunt takes his book and autographs it.

Well when that fellow left our office, he goes down on the street. Adlai Stevenson is still down there. And he goes up and spits in his face. I don't know whether you recall that story or not. It was all over the world.

**GD: Same guy?**

JC: Yeah. Just left our office, went down and spit in Adlai Stevenson's face. Well, it was in all the newspapers and the radio and TV, and he got arrested. Well, Mr. Hunt—and we were watching TV together, and they interrupted to show this deal. Well, Mr. Hunt sort of went into a—he didn't have panics, but he went into a concerned mode. He said, "John," he said, "I've got to get that autographed copy of my book back."

**GD: You were with Mr. Hunt when he saw this on TV?**

JC: Well yeah. Yeah. So I said, well I think I can get it back for you. I knew the bell captain pretty well over at the Baker Hotel. And I had one of the girls in the office—this was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon—I had one of the girls in the office call this fellow. And she just called his hotel room and wanted to know if he'd have a drink with her down in the lobby there. So of course he jumped at the opportunity.

And I took her over there. And I was hid around the corner. She went into the lobby, and he came in. And when they sat down, the bell captain took me up to his room, unlocked the door, and locked me in it. And I went through all of his belongings, and found Mr. Hunt's autographed copy of *Alpaca*, and took it back to him.

**GD: You had pretty versatile job duties.**

JC: Well I could <unintelligible> a phone, break into buildings, embezzle <unintelligible>.

**GD: Did they teach you that at law school?**

JC: No, you learn that through hard knocks.

But anyway, that's an interesting story. And it could have been a little bit—Mr. Hunt's concern over him autographing a book for a person that had just spit in the face, is the same theory he had on Lee Harvey Oswald testifying in court, or James Earl Ray testifying in court that he was influenced by *Life Line*. If the police had gone over there and searched his room and came up with an autographed copy of Mr. Hunt's book *Alpaca*, it would have been on all the news services all over the world.

**GD: Yes.**

JC: And Mr. Hunt couldn't go over and break into his room. And its just luck that he left the room at his hotel, left the book in his hotel room, luck that I knew the bell captain over there that would let me into his room there, you know. Nothing planned—it just fell into place there.

When the lady that I employed—not employed, that I worked with—to have a drink with that fellow—I had her sit where his back would be to the exit door, so when I left she saw me, and she got up, excused herself to go to the girls’ room, and left and she never saw him again.

**GD: She had never met him before?**

JC: No.

**GD: How could he take a call from a woman he’s never met?**

JC: Well, that happens all the time. She just called, and she didn’t say, “Now I’m so and so, and I work for John Curington and he works for H. L. Hunt and we wanna steal your book.” It wasn’t like that. She just said, “I’ve seen you on TV,” or something like that, “and I’d like to have a drink with you.”

**GD: OK.**

JC: That simple, nothing complicated—no planned deal or anything like that. Just an—an orangutang could come up with that kind of a theory.

**GD: Not too complicated.**

JC: Yo.

**GD: The Adlai Stevenson incident happened less than a month before the Kennedy assassination.**

You have to accept this fact: Johnson had worn his welcome out with the Kennedys on the '60's ticket there. He was gonna be—he was not gonna be on the ticket in '64. Bobby Kennedy was going to indict a fellow named Bobby Baker. And that deal was already made. Bobby Baker would in turn turn against Lyndon Johnson, enter into a plea agreement on his deal, just like they're doing on the deal with Trump. Johnson was going to be out in '64. No ifs, ands, buts, and maybes.

And nobody realized this until about the beginning of '63, latter part of '62 or '63. Johnson was losing his skills every day, and Jack Kennedy was gaining more. So Mr. Hunt was almost at the stage where he didn't have much time to fulfill his obligation that Kennedy would not live through four—would not survive four years in the office there. That's really the essence of the Kennedy story. For Mr. Hunt to protect his empire, and to honor his commitment to Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy had to leave office. No ifs, ands, buts about it.

**GD: How could Hunt make that happen?**

JC: Having somebody shoot him with a high-powered rifle. Pretty easy.

**GD: How would Hunt go about doing that?**

JC: I don't think Hunt would have gotten on the telephone and called somebody up. I think he would have had enough power with Sam Giancana or Joe Civello, or Luciano, just to make a

suggestion that he needed a little help, and I think they would run it there.

**GD: So Hunt may not know how they did it—**

JC: No, he wouldn't care how they did it.

**GD: After the assassination, did Mr. Hunt show any signs or unusual knowledge or say anything?**

JC: No. And that wouldn't be unusual at all.

**GD: And you say that Hunt—nobody was above Hunt?**

JC: No. No. No.

**GD: Hunt gave orders, but nobody gave Hunt orders.**

JC: No. No. I don't—Hunt would give orders to Johnson, J. Edgar Hoover—

**GD: He would? He would give orders to these guys?**

JC: Oh yeah, yeah. Well not orders in that—he wouldn't say, "Now Lyndon I want you to—" He might say, "Lyndon, this would help me or help this—" or, "If you see your way clear to—."

Let me give you an illustration. Mr. Hunt and Bunker, they were trying to get a concession in Kuwait. Oil concession. Well how many major oil companies do you think, any time there's an oil concession coming up for the richest oil field in the

world, how many oil companies do you think would be trying to make a bid on that?

**GD: All of them?**

JC: All of them. And back at this time in Kuwait—back at this time there were no public telephones. There was no way to communicate for your personnel, to communicate back to the head offices, from Kuwait to New York or Los Angeles or anywhere, Chicago, anywhere in the world. Every major oil company was over there, and every major oil company had accountants, they had attorneys, they had every kind of personnel in the world because they were changing their bid every day.

H. L. Hunt's over there, again, showing his thinking mechanism against other people there. There were only two or three telegraph companies in the city that they were in there in Kuwait. Every major oil company went every day to send a telegram to their parent company as to what somebody else was thinking, what to bid—they're changing bids, every hour there. Mr. Hunt goes down, finds the head man of the telegraph companies, to make a deal with him. That man furnished him copies of every communication that went out from the major oil companies. So Mr. Hunt is sitting there, looking at everybody's hold cards and playing deals.

What did the man get out of it? Mr. Hunt was able to call Lyndon Johnson, and say I want this man and his family to have a visa or citizenship or whatever it was. A 15 or 20-second communication from H. L. Hunt to Lyndon Johnson got that man and his family citizenship in the United States.

Bunker and H. L. Hunt—eventually they lost it, Kuwait took it away from them—but Bunker, they sold a half interest in it to British Petroleum, and H. L.—Bunker’s income was in excess of three million dollars cash a day for several years there.

So if you don’t think the President, or the Vice President of the United States, can do you a business favor, then, you know, you need to evaluate your economics a little bit further there.

Here’s a man—I would imagine there were fifteen major oil companies making bids on that. Mr. Hunt had a real inexpensive hotel room, looking at everything. He had every communication that went out from every major company to their headquarters there.

**GD: Amazing. Going back to Hoover and Hunt—did they regard each other as equals?**

JC: Oh I wouldn’t think so. No, I would think Hoover would think he had no comparison in the world. I don’t think either one of them would consider themselves equal to the other. I think they each would have thought they were far further along, you know, in their abilities and talents and their skills. That’d be my personal thought there.

**GD: It’s sort of stunning that Hunt and J. Edgar Hoover were in such close communication long term and giving information for the *Life Line* program.**

JC: Well, you have to appreciate Hoover’s dislike for Martin Luther King. And I’m sure Martin Luther King had a strong dislike for J. Edgar Hoover. But Hoover had a file easily that

thick on Martin—he had all of his bad sex habits, every kind of immoral act he ever did, his support by the Communist government. He just felt—and Martin Luther King was getting stronger every day. His followers were—well, eventually Martin Luther King would control the vote if he hadn't of been stopped. Mr. Hunt finally realized there weren't too many Martin Luther King supporters that would listen to *Life Line*. And those that did would become stronger supporters because of the negative comments.

So it finally dawned on Mr. Hunt that he was helping Martin Luther King, building his reputation with those derogatory stories, rather than getting people united to work against him.

**GD: How did he come to that realization?**

JC: Common sense. If you were putting on a program every year, and Martin Luther King has a meeting, and 75,000 people show up, applauding him and clapping him and getting all the publicity, and he has the same meeting in the same town a year later, and 140,000 people show up, would that suggest to you that *Life Line* is being effective, or would that suggest to you that maybe something else should be done?

Well that's the way you evaluate a program like that. An orangutang can do the same assessment—you know, it doesn't take anybody with calculators and computers. If there's more people showing up that you don't want to show up, then what you're doing is not working.

**GD: Hoover—he's the chief law enforcement officer in the United States. So a lot of people would wonder, how could**



**he go along with removing people? I'm asking this as a naive question, but—Hoover was willing to have dark things done?**

JC: Well, in a way he was just like Mr. Hunt. He thought his thoughts were unequal to anybody else's thoughts. And everything he did, in his own mind he thought he was benefitting the American people. So he thought he ought to be patted on the back and say, good job J. Edgar, rather than somebody trying to crucify him, you know. And Mr. Hunt in his own mind believed that everything that *Life Line* said was for the benefit of mankind. You couldn't convince him otherwise.

I know you've never read (*H. L. Hunt's*) *Alpaca*. It's a boring book to read. But what it boils down to—Mr. Hunt had a theory that people with wealth should have a bigger voting right than people without anything.

And in my own mind I believe there were more personal feelings of Hoover and H. L. Hunt on Martin Luther King than anybody else.

I've put out quite a bit of information that says absolutely nothing when you get down to the nitty-gritty of it you know. I mean, I don't know what prompted Jack Ruby to shoot Lee Harvey Oswald. I don't know if Joe Civello had anything to do with it or not. But there's a lot of unusual circumstances that went into effect what was done, that I don't have an answer for.

**GD: Yes.**

JC: But back when we were gonna set up our kill squad (*this is explained in Mr. Curington's book, Motive and Opportunity, see end of this interview*), what we were gonna set up is that there were going to be three or four or five people doing what Mr. Hunt wanted to do and they would be operating independently of each other.

Again, I'm not saying this happened or didn't happen, but somewhere down the road when it dawned on Mr. Hunt that Kennedy simply had to be removed from office—no ifs, ands, or buts—he could have called Civello in, and said, “Man, I'm in a bad spot. If there is any kind of idea you can come up with that would get rid of Kennedy, I'll do you some favors down the road.”

Well, Civello wouldn't know why or anything else, but he could very well know somebody and say, “If you've got a good expert marksman, I've got a parade route, can you send somebody out—” —I'm just talking out loud now—

**GD: Sure—**

JC: —I don't have any basis whatsoever. But those things can be unraveled with three or four or five people. When we were going to get our kill squad in operation, theoretically these three or four or five people would operate independently, with no knowledge or contacts or tie-ins whatsoever with the other four or five. What happened in these deals is just exactly the plan that Civello instructed. When you go home you need to pull up on your computer the CIA and their workmanship

with Sam Giancana on killing Fidel Castro. What they were working on is just exactly the same plan as I'm outlining with Civello and Mr. Hunt.

**GD: Was Civello doing something with the Dallas police department?**

JC: Oh, he would have had contacts there, that would have told him everything that was going on. I could depend on Lieutenant George Butler and Will Fritz—anything of importance I could depend on them to furnish me that information. That goes on every day. Civello would have had contacts there. If there was gonna be a raid somewhere, I think he'd know about it. If there's somewhere gettin' out of hand I think he would know about it. That's going on in every county in the morning. So that's nothing new. People doing something illegal—they'll all have some contacts there in the police department.

**GD: How about Billie Sol Estes?**

*(Billie Sol Estes, 1925-2013, was a Texas businessman known for high-level fraud schemes.)*

JC: Billie Sol Estes came into our office two or three or four different times, and he was a *Life Line* listener. And I may or may not have mentioned this, but Billie Sol made a statement to me one time. We were visiting, we *<unintelligible>* Mr. Hunt, and he says, "John, let me tell you something in business that you'll always remember." I said, well what is it. That's when he was under a hundred different indictments you know. He said, "You can shear a sheep two or three times, but

you can only skin 'em once." I thought that was a pretty wise saying.

**GD: That was his philosophy of business?**

JC: Yo. Of course he ripped off everybody from Wall Street on down. But he was pretty selective. He was smart enough to know that you can only skin 'em one time, but you can milk 'em two or three times.

**GD: There's one question I've got to ask because other people will ask. Many of these important events, you were at the heart of it. It's a long time now, and people might say, why didn't you say something earlier? I mean, when the Warren Commission and the House Committee were investigating—**

JC: It was their job to find out what was involved. Mr. Hunt was well enough known that somebody should have gone and talked to him.

**GD: Yes.**

JC: And they would have talked to me first before they talked to him. I would have answered their questions. But that could have been planned. Johnson—Johnson and Hoover had to present this lone theory shooter in the initial beginning. Johnson had more to gain from the lone shooter than anybody on the face of the earth, you understand that? He didn't want Sam Giancana involved, or Lucky Luciano, or H. L. Hunt, or Joe Civello. He wanted a lone shooter, acted alone, that's the only way he's going to save his own ass there.

**GD: The 1976 House Select Committee on Assassinations, they didn't contact you?**

JC: No.

**GD: What about Garrison, in Louisiana?**

*(Jim Garrison was the District Attorney of New Orleans 1962-1973. In the late 1960s Garrison undertook criminal prosecution of a conspiracy in the death of President John F. Kennedy which Garrison charged involved New Orleans figures in conjunction with the CIA. Garrison was the inspiration for and the central character of the Oliver Stone movie, JFK.)*

JC: Well he came in our office. He became a big pest. I imagine I talked to him maybe twenty-five or thirty times. He had nothing to hang his hat on. Of course he was always trying to get a little money. And Mr. Hunt, as far as I know, never let him have a nickel.

**GD: He was asking Hunt for money?**

JC: Yo.

**GD: For what?**

JC: Well, to help build his case on—

**GD: How's the money going to help build his case?**

JC: Well, you have to have traveling expenses. You have to—and he's on a limited budget with the DA's office—you know he was just an attorney there.

**GD: But he suspected Hunt. How is he asking a suspect for money?**

*("The assassination, Garrison charged, was ordered and paid for by 'a handful of oil-rich psychotic millionaires' ... he refused to say how many 'Texas style' millionaires were involved, although he identified them all as extreme conservatives ... Garrison said he could reveal the latest developments because his investigators were finished in Dallas." The Times-Picayune, New Orleans, Sept. 22, 1967.)*

JC: Well, I never got that feeling in talking to him. Mr. Hunt may have met him a time or two, but he'd <unintelligible> step into my office, when Garrison came in.

**GD: So Garrison was seeking extra funds for the investigation?**

JC: Yeah. He was seeking funds to help him on the investigation. Of course as a district attorney, you know, you have certain things available to you, but if Garrison could pick up ten thousand here, or twenty thousand there, he wouldn't be averse to it, no.

**GD: So Garrison was—**

JC: Garrison wanted to make a name for himself, and he didn't care whose toes he stepped on to do it there. And he got laughed out of the courtroom.

**GD: OK. Thank you Mr. Curington.**

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*The following is from the close of Mr. Curington's 2018 book, Motive and Opportunity: The Means by which H.L. Hunt influenced the assassination of JFK, King, Bobby & Hoffa.*

“Mr. Haroldson Lafayette Hunt died on November 29, 1974, at Dallas' Baylor University Medical Center. His assassin was pneumonia, along with complications from cancer. The open-casket funeral was held at the First Baptist Church of Dallas and was officiated by none other than the Rev. W. A. Criswell himself.

“Mr. Hunt and I had parted ways five years earlier, when I resigned from the company on November 14, 1969 ... Looking back, I had a lot of interesting experiences during the time I was associated with Mr. Hunt. I went to fascinating places, met powerful people, and did things that I would otherwise never have ...

“As I look around me, I find that most everyone else involved from this time is gone—I’m the sole survivor, the last man standing, and I simply want to tell my story. Like I’ve said all along, it’s not my intention to make anyone believe anything. I’m simply telling you the true stories about what happened ...

“There’s one more thing that I should mention—I’ve been hesitant to do so, because quite honestly, even though it’s the absolute truth, it sounds a little far out. My original intent was to leave it out of the book, but as I’m wrapping things up, I believe that it deserves to be written down.

“During the period of time before the 1960 Democratic Convention and continuing after that, H. L. Hunt became more and more interested in what he called a ‘Removal Group.’ That sounded all nice, clean and sterile, but it was far from that. I nicknamed it the ‘Kill Squad,’ because that is what it was really going to be. Mr. Hunt always believed that his programs *Facts Forum* and *Life Line* would, over time, convince a certain type of listener to do things in accordance with the dogma that these programs were putting forward.

“In some of the more serious situations, however, it was clear that *Life Line* might simply be too slow. If Mr. Hunt could develop a ‘Removal Squad,’ then in that event, results could take place almost overnight.

“Remember that Joe Civello, the Dallas organized crime boss, had given Mr. Hunt some information that I have



previously mentioned in the book: It would definitely be possible to kill an important public figure and to keep the assassin from revealing the plan, you would simply kill the killer. If that were impossible, it would be necessary to make sure the assassin pleaded guilty to the murder itself, which would stop any further investigation.

“Based on Civello’s information, a unique plan was developed and organized. Mr. Hunt wanted to establish four separate groups, each operating independently of each other, totally compartmentalized, and with no contact among the groups.

“1) The job of the first group would be to determine who might be a candidate for ‘removal.’ They would make suggestions based on the individual’s political beliefs, their ability to get results that had opposite purposes of H. L. Hunt, and their ability to have an influence on other people.

“2) The second group would then take those names and develop a detailed history of their lifestyle, including where they lived, where they worked, where their family was located and their everyday habits—both good and bad.

“3) The third group would develop a plan of how that person could be most easily ‘removed.’ Mr. Hunt did not want just a shooting death, that would be too messy and draw way too much attention. Instead, the preferred death for the mark would involve an

accident, drug overdose, family matter, or even an unexplained case. That was Mr. Hunt's goal.

"4) The fourth group, based upon all the independent information provided by the other groups, would evaluate the situation and the person, make the final decision as to how it would be carried out, and then arrange for the final event. Afterwards, the affair would be cleaned up in the manner described by Joe Civello.

"What Mr. Hunt hoped to accomplish was to have as much insulation as possible surrounding the removal of a particular person—to have the 'Removal Squad' groups act independently of each other. This would give a high degree of insulation and protection between the group that said, 'This person should be removed,' and the group that said, 'Let's do it.'

"To my knowledge, this entire 'Removal Squad' plan—or 'Kill Squad' as I called it—never moved past the planning phase ... I do have to say, however, that in looking back at history, when JFK was killed, his assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was shot in very short order ... the 'killer was killed,' as Mr. Civello advised ...

"Coincidence? Possibly. Still, it appears that—at least on the surface—there could have been other elements at work in these killings, and some of them could have been provided by my former employer, H. L. Hunt."

*My interview with Mr. Curington focused on the John F. Kennedy assassination. Mr. Curington's book, Motive and Opportunity, also discusses the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1968) and of Robert F. Kennedy (1968).*

*J. Edgar Hoover and H. L. Hunt regarded the successes of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement—and King's even larger vision of a "total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty" by means of a guaranteed income for all Americans paid for by ending the war in Vietnam—as an existential threat to the foundation of the nation. Here is King in his final months before a sniper's bullet silenced the voice with rolling cadences heard across the land ...*

*"We are wasting and degrading human life by clinging to archaic thinking. The curse of poverty has no justification in our age. It is socially as cruel and blind as the practice of cannibalism at the dawn of civilization ... The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty."<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). Jordan Weissmann, "Martin Luther King's Economic Dream: A Guaranteed Income for All Americans," *The Atlantic*, Aug. 28, 2013: "King noted an estimate by John Kenneth Galbraith that the government could create a generous guaranteed income with \$20 billion [1960s dollars], which, as the economist put it, was 'not much more than we will spend the next fiscal year to rescue freedom and democracy and religious liberty as these are defined by "experts" in Vietnam.'"

*Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. Two months later James Earl Ray, a professional criminal, was apprehended in London, extradited back to the United States and charged with the killing of Martin Luther King. In Motive and Opportunity Mr. Curington tells of his personally conveying \$125,000 in cash in a briefcase—equivalent to about a million dollars today—from H. L. Hunt to Percy Foreman of Houston, Texas, the most prominent defense attorney in America, to have Foreman's client, James Earl Ray, plead "guilty." A "guilty" plea closes a case without further investigation or testimony coming out in court. Mr. Curington recounts in his book,*

*"At Mr. Hunt's instruction, I traveled to call on Percy Foreman with a briefcase and laid it on the desk in front of him. 'I have one hundred and twenty-five thousand reasons why James Earl Ray should plead guilty to killing Martin Luther King,' I said.*

*"Foreman looked at me and said, 'Well, just leave them with me, and I'll take a look at them.' I walked out of the room, not having been there more than a minute or two. I left the \$125,000, which would be just under a million dollars in today's money, and sure enough, James Earl Ray entered a guilty plea."*

*Two months after the Martin Luther King assassination, New York Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated on June 5, 1968, at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles moments after Senator Kennedy won the California Democratic presidential primary and seemed poised with the momentum to go on to win*

*the nomination and then the presidency in the general election of 1968.*

*A few hours after my interview with Mr. Curington, my flight taxiing down the runway at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, the lyrics of a song from the late 1960s came to mind, as well as its haunting rendition by Dion: "Abraham, Martin, and John."*

Has anybody here seen my old friend John?  
 Can you tell me where he's gone?  
 He freed a lot of people, but it seems the good  
                   they die young.  
 I just looked around and he's gone.

Has anybody here seen my old friend Martin?  
 Can you tell me where he's gone?  
 He freed a lot of people, but it seems the good  
                   they die young.  
 I just looked around and he's gone.

Has anybody here seen my old friend Bobby?  
 Can you tell me where he's gone?  
 I thought I saw him walkin' up over the hill  
 With Abraham, Martin and John.

[END]