

About LBJ

LBJ's last four years

When LBJ left Washington for the last time, in January, 1969, he was depressed, which was not unusual for him. For years he had suffered bouts of depression frequently, usually characterized by heavy drinking and emotional outbursts. Gone was the girdle he had worn to restrain his gut, and soon his slicked-back hair was uncombed almost down to his shoulders.

In early 1970 he was diagnosed with angina. Instead of losing weight as recommended, he started smoking again. It was a habit he had given up years ago when he had suffered a severe heart attack. Racked with pain and guilt, he was not interested in prolonging his miserable life. He underwent psychotherapy to try to alleviate his guilt about, among other things, being responsible for about 8 murders. He even smoked marijuana, but his demons were relentless. He died on January 22, 1973.

Part of what drove LBJ to an early grave was the relentless chorus of war protesters: **Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?** The chanting still rang in his ears even after returning to his ranch in Texas. He had continued to back the war, even though he knew it was unwinnable. He said this to his wife Lady Bird in July, 1965:

Vietnam is getting worse every day. I have the choice to go in with great casualty lists or to get out with disgrace. It's like being in an airplane, and I have to choose between crashing the plane

and jumping out. I do not have a parachute.

Vietnam, however, was not the only thing that tortured LBJ in his final years. It wasn't even the

If we want to understand the events of November 22, 1963, we first need to understand Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ).

worst thing. In the last few years, it has become clear that LBJ was a principle player in the planning and cover-up of the JFK assassination. He was not directly involved in the murder itself. He didn't need to be. There were plenty of co-conspirators to take care of that. His primary role was in the cover-up.

* * * * *

Say What?

Johnson was vain, cruel, loud, devious, and driven. . . . He liked to squeeze their nuts. He would tell them the oil-depletion allowance was in trouble unless they coughed up cash – and milked 'em. That was the difference between Lyndon and me. I wasn't willing to kill for it . . .

-- Richard M Nixon

“[LBJ] would sit on the toilet and defecate in front of aides. During press conferences on his Texas ranch that included female journalists, he would urinate in front of them. . . . [He] particularly enjoyed the discomfort this caused among the Ivy League aides of JFK.”

-- Ronald Kessler

“[LBJ] was an overbearing, coarse, ruthless, sociopathic, lowlife, power-mad monster. Yes, he was a consummate politician, therefore could charm people when he had to, but the mask could easily slip, and often did.”

-- Mack White (Worked at the LBJ Library in 1977)

These Negroes, they're getting pretty uppity these days, and that's a problem for us since they've got something now they never had before, the political pull to back up their uppityness. Now, we've got to do something about this, we've got to give them a little something, just enough to quiet them down, not enough to make a difference.

-- LBJ

I'll have those niggers voting Democratic for the next 200 years.

-- LBJ (on Air Force One, after signing the Civil Rights Act)

To Johnson, loyalty was a one-way street: All take on his part, and all give on the part of everyone else – his family, his friends, his supporters.

--George Reedy

If I can't have booze, sex, or cigarettes, what's the point of living?

-- LBJ

* * * * *

The Duke of Duval and the Box 13 Scandal

LBJ stole his first Senate election in 1948. How did he do it? With the help of George Parr. Parr inherited a large political machine from his father, Archer. It was on the scale of Tammany Hall, or Chicago under Richard Dailey. It covered Duval and Jim Wells Counties in southern Texas. The cabal

controlled elections, public officials, and tax revenue. Parr controlled the votes of Mexicans, and when needed, those votes were delivered to LBJ, even if it meant offering special incentives to get them to the polls. Whether Mexicans in those counties stayed home on election day, did as they were told, or had been dead for years, Parr made sure they voted for LBJ. He didn't hesitate to use bribery and intimidation when required. Immigrants didn't mind much, because it was a way of life they were accustomed to in Mexico.

Luis Salas, deputy sheriff, was one of Parr's top enforcers. Salas was in charge of impoverished Jim Wells County. That placed Salas and Jim Wells County at the epicenter of the infamous 1948 election scandal, commonly referred to as the Box 13 scandal.

LBJ's opponent in the Democrat primary was former Governor Coke Stevenson. He had a solid reputation as an honest, hard-working, principled man. He had fought hard against corruption as governor. He was widely respected, and his popularity was reflected in his moniker: *Mr Texas*. He was also a racist. One of his favorite metaphors was that of a piping hot cup of coffee. When asked a difficult question, Stevenson would deflect it by claiming it was more prudent to let the coffee cool a bit rather than burn his lips on it. He was known in the media as coffee-coolin' Coke. He often, when confronted with a difficult issue, simply did nothing. LBJ called him *Mr Straddler*, and *Mr Do-Nothing*.

While mocking Stevenson, LBJ was embellishing his own military career. He was never a member of the armed forces, but he did ride along as a civilian observer on an air raid on a Japanese airfield in WWII. Although that was the extent of LBJ's combat experience, he used it to manufacture an image of himself as a war

hero. He was awarded a Silver Star for his plane ride – the only person on the mission to receive any sort of medal. In feign modesty, he would say that he didn't deserve it. It was one of those rare occasions when LBJ was being honest. Sort of. But he always wore the medal in his lapel, and he on occasion staged a ceremony as though he were being awarded the medal for the first time. And he sexed up the war records of his staffers and used the myths to full effect in the campaign.

He also liberally lied about Stevenson. And he managed to manufacture excuses to avoid meeting his opponent face-to-face. Although reporters knew full well when LBJ was lying, they didn't challenge him. They were embarrassed for him and ashamed of him, but LBJ was proudly doing what came naturally to him.

LBJ had other advantages over Stevenson. For example, while the former governor traveled in an old Plymouth, LBJ used a helicopter. He also controlled the media over 63 counties in central Texas, including Austin, the state capital. That control derived primarily from having purchased, in 1943, a radio station: KTBC in Austin.

KTBC was purchased cheaply by Lady Bird. LBJ then used his influence as a congressman to pressure the FCC into granting the station its needed license, frequency, and operating hours. In 1945, LBJ again pressured the FCC, this time to vastly expand KTBC's broadcasting range. Then LBJ used his congressional influence to land major advertising contracts, including General Electric and Gulf Oil. It was understood that money spent on advertising at KTBC was essentially buying LBJ's favor and influence in Washington. Those big companies didn't need to hire lobbyists or bribe officials, because they had LBJ protecting their interests. (In the early

1950s, KTBC expanded into television – the only broadcast TV station in Austin. Money poured into LBJ's election campaigns and his pockets.)

All that was about to come to a screeching halt, however, if LBJ lost his senate bid in 1948. He had to win, whatever it took. All of LBJ's lies weren't enough, though, to win the election against the popular Stevenson. Even though Parr delivered 93% of the vote in his territory, LBJ was still behind when polls closed. So, Parr had to pull another rabbit out of the hat for LBJ. On Sunday following election day, Parr's minions decided that the vote total was incorrect, because one precinct in Duval County had not been counted yet. That gave LBJ a few hundred additional votes and a small lead.

However, other vote corrections over the next two days tipped the scale back in Stevenson's favor. With the ball back in Parr's court, he came up with revisions that put LBJ only 157 votes behind. On Friday, Parr discovered 200 more votes for LBJ, putting him ahead again. Those votes had come from Box 13 in Jim Wells County. That's because Parr had already used all the eligible voters in Duval County, leaving no room for additional padding there. So, he used Jim Wells County, specifically the little town of Alice, even though he had a bit less control in that county. He did have deputy sheriff Luis Salas there to protect his interests and to carry out Parr's orders.

However, that tactic raised a number of questions. There were compelling reasons to conclude that those 200 votes derived from voter fraud. All the votes came from a single box; they were all written in the same handwriting, and they were in alphabetical order. Some of those voters would later deny that they had voted. Some of those voters were dead. Was it the handiwork of Salas? No, he had refused to participate because he was afraid of the potential

consequences. The culprit was an attorney, Don Thomas, from the law office of Ed Clark, LBJ's attorney and myrmidon.

Of course, Stevenson wasn't fooled. He sent investigators to Duval County and found that many purported voters had not voted. But when Parr heard about the investigation, it was abruptly halted. Stevenson's lead investigator was stopped by sheriff's deputies, one carrying a submachine gun. Investigators were accused of carrying weapons, which they denied. After they were searched, they were told to clear out of Duval County within half an hour, and they did so. Other investigators were sent to the town of Alice in Jim Wells County, intending to exercise their legal right to view the poll list for Alice. Their request was denied with a simple **no** from Tom Donald.

Stevenson himself then went to Alice, accompanied by lawyers and Texas Rangers. This time, Tom Donald turned over the poll list for a few moments. It was just enough time for Stevenson and lawyers to memorize some of the names and notice a few glaring discrepancies. However, it did no good. Within a month the case went to federal court. Chief suspects Luis Salas and Tom Donald just happened to be in Mexico at the time, and they were therefore unable to give testimony. Poll lists were destroyed, purportedly by a janitor.

Johnson had won. He took his seat in the Senate. He became known as *Landslide Lyndon* and *Lyin' Lyndon*. He joked about dead people voting.

LBJ was eventually found to be behind the murder of Parr. Johnson was willing to do anything to protect his career and reputation. He was responsible for several murders, including his sister and her lover, federal informants, and an inspector for the Department of Agriculture. By the time he became Vice President, he was fully

prepared to help kill his boss and cover up the crime.

* * * * *

Saved by assassination

On November 22, 1963, LBJ was in a great deal of trouble. He was about to be booted off the ticket for 1964. He would have been politically destroyed and personally humiliated by the hated Kennedys. But that wasn't the worst of it. He was days away from being exposed as a wealthy, corrupt politician in *Life* magazine. Investigators in Austin were scrutinizing Johnson's financial records. As shots rang out in Dealey Plaza, Don Reynolds was disclosing details about LBJ's kickbacks and corruption in testimony before the Senate Rules Committee in closed session. LBJ faced the very real likelihood that he was about to spend the rest of his life behind bars.

All those concerns vanished in Dallas on November 22, 1963. Just as LBJ had planned it. Not by himself, of course. One of his co-conspirators was H L Hunt, the Texas oil baron who had advised and funded LBJ's career. In exchange, Hunt was blessed with lucrative government contracts and assurance of legislation favorable to him and the oil industry. Their symbiotic relationship was disrupted by the 1960 election, but both men understood very well that LBJ was still destined to occupy the oval office. Hunt was a major player in funding the assassination of JFK.

* * * * *

Dallas

LBJ was in control of Dallas County leading up to, the day of, and the months following the JFK murder. To understand how, we need to consider a few key LBJ allies. Brothers Earle and Charles Cabell hated JFK, and they were completely loyal to LBJ. Earle was the mayor of Dallas. Charles had

been a CIA agent until he was fired by JFK after the Bay of Pigs. Earle recruited Jesse Curry (Dallas Chief of Police) into the LBJ alliance, providing Johnson the power to control the Dallas Police Department.

On the morning of November 22, 1963, over 1000 Dallas County Sheriff's deputies gathered into their auditorium and received strict instructions for the day. They were ordered to act only as observers in Dealey Plaza. They were told not to take any law enforcement action of any kind under any circumstances. That's why they didn't seal the Depository after the shooting, severely compromising the crime scene. Reporters and tourists were free to roam the building at will, contaminating evidence. They did not conduct a search of the entire building, and the search of the sixth floor was badly mishandled. Evidence was not photographed before being moved and handled by police officers. The strict protocol for documenting evidence and demonstrating a proper chain of evidence was neglected.

Another key LBJ ally was John Rowley (Director of Secret Service). They had been friends since the 1940s. Thanks to LBJ's manipulation of Rowley, there were a number of protocol violations on that fateful morning. The motorcade route included a 120-degree turn at Dealey Plaza, requiring JFK's limousine to slow to less than 40 mph. No agents were allowed to ride on the limousine bumper or walk beside the car at the rear axle. Police motorcycles were repositioned from the sides of the president's limo to behind the vehicle. No Secret Service agents were assigned to Dealey Plaza the morning of November 22, and the Depository had been ignored in security planing and preparation. The reason for these unusual procedures is self-evident. Rowley also was responsible for making sure the president's limousine was cleaned and reconstructed shortly after the

murder, destroying key evidence. He was in a position to make sure JFK's body was removed from Parkland Hospital before an autopsy could be performed. Rowley was the first person to confer with LBJ back at Andrews AFB.

* * * * *

Back at the Ranch

On January 20, 1969, LBJ's political career ended. On January 22, 1973, his life ended. Those intervening four years ended up providing a great deal of insight into the 60 years that preceded them. We now know a great deal more about what LBJ did, because he was a miserable wreck of a man who slid ever deeper into depression and despair. Dealing with that inner turmoil compelled him to seek professional psychiatric help, which required him to reveal his inner demons. It was all very carefully guarded, of course, behind a wall of secrecy guarded by attorney-client privilege and patient-doctor confidentiality. However, one of those lawyers who had worked for years as part of LBJ's legal team, ultimately came to the conclusion that what he knew about LBJ was not protected by attorney-client privilege after all. It's not important to understand the legal reasoning behind that decision. What's important for my purposes here is simply the fact that that attorney, Barr McClellan, was then free to share with us his considerable inside information about LBJ. He did so in his book: *Blood, Money, & Power: How LBJ Killed JFK*.

By the time LBJ overcame his dislike of shrinks, he had stopped grooming himself, looking more like one of the hippies he had despised while in office. He expected visitors at his ranch to simply accept or overlook his idiosyncrasies. But his appearance wasn't the problem. His behavior had grown erratic, unpredictable, often extreme. He was clearly psychopathic.

Treatment began with Admiral George Burkley (LBJ's White House doctor, formerly JFK's personal physician), and that yielded some temporary relief, but Johnson needed more care than Burkley could offer. There was also some relief during the year LBJ spent preparing for the dedication of his presidential library east of University of Texas at Austin. But after all the ceremonies ended in May 1971, Lady Bird brought in Austin's best psychiatrist. LBJ's close friends Ed Clark and Don Thomas were in control of the process, taking whatever steps necessary to make sure LBJ's secrets stayed in the room. One insurance policy they devised was a \$1 million trust payable to the psychiatrist once his work was complete to assure his continued confidence.

Once LBJ felt at ease talking freely (at times under hypnosis), his secrets poured out, finally bringing the tortured Johnson a sense of peace. He also turned to religion, although more for the benefits of confession than the message of fire and brimstone. Then it was necessary for the psychiatrist to tell everything LBJ had revealed to Ed Clark and Don Thomas so they could take appropriate steps to protect the former president. Don Thomas then told much of it to Barr McClellan, probably more than anything else as a way to unload part of the heavy burden LBJ had placed on him.

That's how LBJ's miserable life came to a close. Just as LBJ was forced to face his demons, we must also as a nation face the truth about LBJ. He was a wicked, evil man. The sooner we accept the butt-ugly truth, the sooner we can find some closure regarding LBJ and the JFK murder.

* * * * *

How Guilty was LBJ?

According to some surveys, 70% of Americans believe the JFK murder was a

conspiracy and that LBJ was part of it. What part(s)? They aren't clear on that. Most of them will be by the end of my blog. Legally, if he played any part in the planning, execution, or coverup, he is guilty of conspiracy, and he is guilty of murder. Even if he was aware of the plot and didn't say or do anything to stop it, he is part of the conspiracy. In fact, he played a central, starring role in the cover-up. There can be no reasonable doubt about that much. But LBJ's role involved much more than simply orchestrating the cover-up. He was intimately involved from the very beginning, although usually he delegated to his myrmidons rather than doing things himself directly. Furthermore, if LBJ's involvement was limited at all, it was simply because the conspiracy was big enough so that LBJ didn't need to do much directly. There were plenty of experts of all kinds involved to take care of most of the details and all the dirty work. Still, Johnson's fingerprints are all over the murder.

LBJ had no shortage of motive. Proof of motive abounds. He was at a critical junction in his career and in his life. Had JFK not been killed on November 22, 1963, LBJ was certain to face political ruin, public humiliation, and probably prison. There was no more time, and LBJ knew it. Furthermore, he knew that JFK's premature death was LBJ's only shot at becoming president, which had been his obsession from youth. He had the means in the form of legal control over Texas. His long-time friend and attorney, Ed Clark had been buying politicians and judges for years. He had formed partnerships and alliances with Texas' most wealthy and powerful movers and shakers. Ed Clark protected LBJ, even when that required calling on LBJ's hitman to eliminate potential witnesses. When JFK decided to visit Dallas, LBJ had his golden opportunity. It wasn't a serendipitous happenstance. LBJ had suggested and

supported the Dallas trip. It wasn't the only proposed venue for the murder. Previous plots in Chicago and Miami had failed. Dallas was the conspirators' last chance, but it wasn't LBJ's last choice. The evidence against LBJ is circumstantial, but it is compelling and overwhelming. Many criminal cases have been won based only on circumstantial evidence.

LBJ's most reliable and loyal myrmidon throughout the conspiracy (and from the beginning of LBJ's career) was Ed Clark. He was the only person LBJ truly trusted. Clark seemed to be a magician, almost effortlessly, for example, deciding the outcome of a trial simply by calling a judge. That was possible because of the standard unwritten contract between Clark and his judges, who were required to be available whenever Clark called them, and to be willing to use whatever legal obfuscation seemed appropriate and necessary to effect the desired ruling and make it seem feasible. The other side never knew what hit them. Clark also assumed control over banks to launder LBJ's money, reward the faithful, and provide gifts liberally.

Clark's entire legal firm was LBJ's best weapon. All its associate attorneys were bound by lawyer-client privilege, so they all had some understanding of who their top client was and what their responsibilities entailed, even though only a few learned many of the details. One of Clark's top lieutenants was Don Thomas. As Barr McClellan proved himself trustworthy and capable over the years, he became entrusted with more and more details of LBJ's criminal activities. Thomas eventually confided in McClellan that he (Thomas) was the only living witness to the Box 13 scandal, and that Clark had been the mastermind behind the JFK assassination some ten years earlier. However, McClellan had learned much earlier (about 6 months with the firm) from partner John Coates

about LBJ's role in the murder. McClellan had become a participant in the conspiracy, but no matter how he felt about it, there was nothing he could do or say without violating his oath as an attorney. At least, that's how he saw things at the time. Besides, McClellan hadn't joined the firm until 1966. By then the dirty work had been done, and everybody was reaping the benefits of their hard work. At that time, with LBJ in the Oval Office, Clark could afford to focus his firm on acting presidential and respectable.

McClellan also came to understand a great deal about LBJ's politics. One law partner described Johnson as an *elephadonk*: someone who is a conservative but pretended to be a liberal. McClellan learned that LBJ was forced to support civil rights legislation for political reasons, but he didn't personally believe in it. What he did personally believe in was Texas oil and billionaire oilmen, such as Clint Murchison, H L Hunt, Wofford Cain, D H "Dryhole" Byrd, and Sid Richardson. LBJ protected their interests on the federal level, but even more so on the state level. It was a complex process which left all but a few with glazed eyes, but in its most simple terms, the Texas Railroad Commission controlled how much oil could be produced. They kept production down, which kept prices up, and kept Texas oilmen reaping billions of dollars in profits. On the federal level, LBJ worked to protect the Oil Depletion Allowance, which was a generous subsidy that also swelled oil profits. Oil barons took care of LBJ, and he took care of oilmen.

Long after LBJ had left public office, McClellan and Clark had a bitter parting of the ways. McClellan also had to deal with an inner struggle between his professional oath to keep his mouth shut and his personal desire to do the right thing and tell the truth about what he knew. He eventually decided to go public, but that presented another problem for him: all the documents

supporting his claims had been left at Clark's office. He set about reconstructing the evidence needed, and he was ultimately successful in large part simply because he knew where to look.

* * * * *

LBJ's first Senate term

Although LBJ won his 1948 Senate bid, everybody knew he had stolen the election, so even the few people who supported him did so grudgingly. If he and Clark couldn't figure out a way to overcome his *Lynin' Lyndon* image, he would be a one-term senator. The partners in crime started 1949 in campaign mode, preparing for 1954. The first part of their strategy was to avoid, at all cost, any new scandals. Secondly, LBJ would do his very best to be a good representative of Texas' interests. That took some finessing, because he had relied for his 1948 support on liberal Austin. However, he now represented the entire state, which was much more conservative. So, LBJ simply became more conservative. That meant taking good care of the oil tycoons. LBJ took care of them in the Senate, and Ed Clark took care of them in the state of Texas. Clark was also in charge of making himself and LBJ wealthy in the process, as well as raising campaign funds. Six years was plenty of time for the dynamic duo to turn things around, and by 1954 LBJ was well entrenched in the state and the Senate.

Neither LBJ nor Clark had any respect for the law or politics. They felt emboldened and empowered because they had challenged both head on and walked away with the victory. They felt invincible. Any hesitation that may have been there before the Box 13 scandal was now gone, and they were fully prepared to bribe, intimidate, cheat, steal, and whatever else it took to win. It took a lot. Investigations continued into May 1949, and the LBJ/Clark partnership found itself the victim of

blackmail and extortion. It couldn't be reported, for obvious reasons, so Clark raised the funds necessary to keep troublemakers quiet. It was just part of doing business, and it continued even after all investigations had ended. Clark had agreed to be the fall guy if any indictments were handed down. LBJ had to be protected, and nobody understood that better than Clark.

There were times when witnesses, potential witnesses, and other threats had to be permanently silenced. One example is Sam Smithwick. Coke Stevenson came close to hearing the truth in 1952 when Smithwick (one of Parr's former deputy sheriffs; now a convicted murderer serving time in Huntsville) sent a letter to Stevenson saying he (Smithwick) was willing to testify about the Box 13 scandal. By the time Stevenson arrived at the prison, Smithwick was dead, thanks to LBJ's protector, Ed Clark. It was quickly ruled a suicide, although nobody believed it. That didn't matter, because Clark controlled the legal and judicial systems in Texas.

In 1973 the Box 13 Scandal was still fresh in the minds of the citizens of Duval and Jim Wells Counties. George Parr, the *Duke of Duval*, was facing tax evasion charges. When he failed to appear in court, law enforcement officers began tracking him down. They found him sitting in his still-running Chrysler, slumped over, with a bullet in his head. In 1977 (after the death of LBJ and Stevenson), Salas admitted that he had committed perjury and had participated in The Box 13 Scandal. He also stated that LBJ had been present when Parr tried to recruit Salas for the job. According to Salas: Johnson did not win that election. It was stolen for him.

It is probably true that all politicians, at least successful ones, have something of a killer instinct and a very flexible moral code. But not all of them are willing to kill to get their

way. LBJ and Clark were willing to kill. They learned that about themselves in the 1948 Senate election. They were faced with the end of their aspirations if they lost that election, and they had decided that the end justified any and all means necessary. Losing simply was not an option. They faced a similar crossroad in November 1963. They had grown very comfortable with killing by then, and the stakes had never been higher.

* * * * *

The Pitch-and-Putt murder

LBJ's little sister, Josefa, would probably have been considered ambitious if she had been a man. As a woman, however, she was considered *wild*. She came to be a potential embarrassment to LBJ, and that was something he would not tolerate.

Josefa, five years younger than Lyndon, got married in Austin, and then got a divorce in 1938. That was something respectable women simply did not do in that era. She remarried during WWII, then divorced again in 1949. She resumed her life of prostitution that had begun before her second marriage. She became involved with art and lesbian communities in Austin, finding an outlet for her wild ways in community theater. There, she met Doug Kinser, Mac Wallace, and his wife, Mary Andre. Both Josefa and Mary Andre were sexually involved with Kinser, and Mac Wallace was aware of the sex circle. He had dated Josefa in his college days.

Kinser opened a miniature golf course in Austin, and was in need of operating capital. It occurred to him that Josefa might be able to convince her big brother to provide a loan. Kinser was not involved with politics, and his request was strictly for financial assistance. After all, LBJ was involved in providing government aid for start-up businesses, as sort of an early form of the

SBA. But LBJ viewed his sister's pressure in political terms, and he knew he could have absolutely nothing to do with such a loan.

In 1954, Johnson was still trying to rehabilitate his image after the corrupt 1948 election, and the last thing he wanted was for his sister's scandalous behavior to become public. Reporters were well aware of Josefa's activities, but in those days, they simply didn't write about such personal matters. However, that would no longer protect LBJ from political embarrassment if he were associated with a loan to Kinser. That would end his 1954 reelection campaign and his political career. But even if he did nothing, LBJ still faced that risk, because Josefa and Mary Andre were part of the sex scene centered at Zilker Park, and it was under constant police surveillance. If arrested, the women might very well tell all, without regard for the political damage to LBJ. Johnson couldn't afford that risk.

It became clear enough to LBJ that the only solution was to eliminate the threat permanently. Such dirty work was part of Clark's job, and he would be the fall guy if anything went wrong. LBJ could not be involved. Clark knew just who to call for the sensitive task ahead – Mac Wallace, who was at that time living in Washington and working for LBJ at the Department of Agriculture. Wallace was scheduled to start a new position at the State Department in January, 1952. His plans suddenly changed, however, when Clark called him with a job offer the hitman couldn't refuse. Clark presented it as an urgent matter of protecting Clark and his family from the disgraceful actions of his unfaithful wife, but Wallace understood what was going on and why his intervention was necessary. Although Wallace took his time, planning and meeting several times with his wife, Clark had been busy making sure the hit

would appear to be that of an enraged husband against his wife's lover.

On October 22, 1951, Wallace drove to Kinser's Pitch-and-Put business, walked into the pro shop, argued loudly with Kinser, then shot him several times. Wallace drove away, but he didn't go far, and he wasn't in any hurry, taking time to make a few calls and visit a few people. He had to appear to be fleeing in a panic, yet he couldn't play it so well that he actually escaped. If he were not arrested quickly, there would be an investigation, and that's the last thing Wallace, Clark, or Johnson wanted. Police got the license plate number from customers at the miniature golf place, and county deputies arrested Wallace just southwest of Austin.

Wallace didn't give the police much information, but he did make one big mistake. He mentioned that he worked for Johnson. Clark was able to quash that slip because he had contacts at the DA's office and media outlets. He was able to keep reporters from asking too many questions with the standard *innocent-until-proven-guilty* appeal. Clark assured media owners that they would get all the information they wanted at Wallace's trial, and the owners instructed their reporters to wait until then to file their juicy stories.

Clark quickly arranged for Wallace's release on bail, and Clark put John Cofer (his and LBJ's criminal attorney) in charge of Wallace's defense. A jurisdictional dispute erupted between Austin police and county deputies, but Clint Peoples (a Texas Ranger) stepped in to resolve it. Law enforcement officers quickly lost interest in the case, with the exception of Peoples, who continued searching for the murder weapon for ten years. Three weeks before the trial began (in February, 1952), Wallace quit his federal government job, which made him appear guilty in the eyes of the public.

That's just what Cofer wanted. The District Attorney, Bob Long, was owned by Clark, so he could have made sure Wallace was found not guilty. But Clark wanted Wallace to be convicted, because that solved several problems for Clark and LBJ: the Kinser loan problem disappeared; the sex circle scandal went away; and, Josefa had been warned by her big brother that future embarrassment to him would not be tolerated.

DA Long, as a favor to LBJ, announced that he was unable to determine a motive for the murder. That meant that there would be no juicy details in the trial about the sex circle, and therefore no embarrassment to LBJ. Reporters were furious, but there was nothing they could do. All they had was the case of a husband killing his wife's lover in a moment of jealous rage. Not much of a story. Austin residents weren't too happy, either, when the judge overruled 11 jurors who wanted the death penalty and one who wanted life in prison. The judge (one of many owned by Clark) sentenced Wallace to only five years in prison, then suspended the sentence, allowing Wallace to walk away a free man. Austinites had a pretty good idea of what had happened, and they never forgave LBJ or forgot. They may have supported him, but they didn't like him.

Clark and LBJ owned Wallace from that point on. His federal government career was over, and his best opportunity for any sort of career success was as LBJ's hitman. He accepted that role, and played it well. Meanwhile, Clark arranged for Wallace's employment, keeping him handy for future deep-cover assignments. Five years after his trial, his conviction was overturned.

Cofer, Peoples, and Wallace would all figure prominently in future LBJ murder plots.

* * * * *

Money

The stolen 1948 election left the Johnson people with a mountain of debt. High-priced lawyers and their staffs had put in many long hours on behalf of LBJ. In those days, lawyers didn't typically bill by the hour. Instead, the lawyer produced the desired results, then met with the client to sort out the cost of those services, and usually the attorney had to be content with whatever the client paid. In addition to all the legal fees, many others had contributed money to LBJ's campaign, and they expected something in return. Usually that meant some sort of government payment in the form of favorable contracts or favorable legislation that helped their commercial interests.

Clearly, the process of settling debts was a lot easier because LBJ won. That meant more clients for the lawyers involved, more retainers could be charged, and higher fees could be negotiated. More business leaders would be willing to give or continue support to a known winner, especially once whose position was secure for at least six years. Had LBJ lost the election, paying those debts would have been very difficult, or maybe impossible. With the 1948 win, however crooked, the debts were paid off in two years.

Then, it was time to start planning for the next election. Money poured in, and soon the interest off the cash on hand could be used for investments. It could also begin to flow to Johnson and Clark. Neither man was rich in 1948. LBJ's salary was small, and Clark was still trying to get his law firm on secure footing. LBJ owned a few homes in Austin, and his (Lady Bird's) radio station was making a modest profit. They were both greedy, and they lusted for the wealth enjoyed by many of their clients. In 1950, they were on their way to achieving that wealth. But then they faced a different

problem. Neither of them could afford to flaunt their new wealth.

Yet LBJ did begin to enjoy his newfound money in several ways. His radio station was granted a TV license (by the FCC, which LBJ controlled), and it remained the only TV station in Austin for 20 years. Its offices were moved from a small two-room office into a six-story building (just a block south of the Texas Capitol). At the top was LBJ's penthouse. LBJ's and Clark's apparent wealth did trigger IRS scrutiny at one point, but IRS Director Frank Scofield was subjected to character assassination, blunting that potential threat to LBJ and Clark.

There were a number of successful men who were attracted to LBJ's power and turned to him for favors. LBJ provided whatever they needed, and they provided the cash LBJ wanted. It was usually done with a simple handshake, leaving no money trail to trap the principals. Most of them were smart enough to avoid legal troubles or political embarrassment, but they weren't always successful. When one of LBJ's associates encountered trouble, it was LBJ's problem as well. His sphere of associates included John Connally, Jake Pickle, Clint Murchison Sr, Jim Ling, Fred Korth, Mac Wallace, Billy Sol Estes, and Bobby Baker, among others. They represented Big Oil, construction, defense contractors, and other big business interests.

LBJ continued to enrich his associates, and those associates continued pouring money into LBJ's political warchest. Something had to be done to deal with all the cash. On October 5, 1955, Clark set up a corporation that functioned as a money-laundering device: Brazos-Tenth Street. Rather, Clark arranged for it to be set up by outside attorneys to mask any connection to Clark or LBJ. However, that just happened to be

the location of LBJ's radio/TV station, which made the connection obvious. The radio/TV station was a major problem for LBJ, simply because he was becoming wealthy via a business regulated by the federal-government.

The corporation was profitable and effective. Its primary source of revenue was political contributions, although occasionally profits from the radio/TV station were funneled into Brazos-Tenth Street. 40% of the funds were used for campaign expenses, 20% flowed to LBJ, 20% went to Clark, and 20% were used for corporate business expenses. Eventually it served as a business investment firm. It was managed by Don Thomas, and it functioned extremely well to camouflage the flow of political contributions into the pockets of LBJ and Clark, even though the corporation had no assets or cash of its own. It couldn't be investigated, because Thomas could deflect any questions as a matter of a private business having no involvement with LBJ. Furthermore, as one of LBJ's attorneys, Thomas could hide behind lawyer-client privilege. Behind Thomas was Clark, who was really in charge of the money-laundering corporation.

With his extensive connections throughout Texas, Clark knew well in advance where opportunities for profit existed. Using insider information, he would buy large tracts of land (or arrange for LBJ to buy them), then sell them at a substantial profit when new offices were built, a new highway was constructed, or other facilities or improvements were decided on, usually by the state or federal government.

KTBC, the small radio station bought by LBJ in 1943, thrived, and in 1946 Johnson added a second radio station, KVET. When the TV station, KTBC, was added to the LBJ media empire in 1950, it was well known by anyone wanting to do political business with

LBJ that they first were required to buy advertising on his TV station. His Austin monopoly continued for 20 years because LBJ controlled the FCC. They were not allowed to grant another license until after LBJ had left the White House.

LBJ was very wealthy by 1960, although we still don't know all the details about how he got that way, or just how wealthy he was. Clark and his myrmidons were very good at keeping the money trail away from themselves and LBJ. It is believed that his radio and TV stations provided a weekly revenue of \$10,000. But that hardly explains his net worth of over \$20 million. The IRS couldn't touch him, but only because of illegal, immoral, unethical conduct by Don Thomas, which included a series of fires set by him to destroy financial records that might otherwise become public as part of an IRS audit.

* * * * *

Let the Game Begin

By late 1961, Clark was ready to start focusing on a new game. Although the result would be deadly serious, Clark at this stage could afford to treat it like a game. He had two years to sort it all out and make it work. The seed had been planted in his mind by LBJ, probably at a meeting at the LBJ ranch, far away from the prying eyes or curious ears of any other human. Just the two of them. Each totally committed to and dependent upon the other, and both willing to do whatever was necessary to achieve their objectives. JFK had to go. Both men knew there was no other way for them to achieve ultimate power and avoid disaster.

Clark requested a report on how to protect the VP. That didn't raise any suspicions, and it gave Clark vital information about the protection of the president, which is what he really needed. Thus it began. Up to that point, everything Clark had done was

hidden and protected by attorney-client privilege. The Game would require him to venture outside that comfort zone, that safety zone. The risks were high, but the potential benefits were much higher. Doing nothing was not an option. LBJ was forced to act to protect himself from political destruction and legal nightmare. Furthermore, it was the only way to achieve his lifelong obsession of becoming President of the United States.

Clark paid a visit to John Cofer, Clark's go-to guy in criminal matters. Cofer had defended LBJ in the Box 13 scandal and Mac Wallace in the Kinser murder trial. He would also defend Billy Sol Estes later. Cofer was a clever and experienced defense lawyer. He knew how to exploit every misstep by a prosecutor, turning it into reasonable doubt. He knew all the tricks of the trade. He would plant news stories for the jury to read, either supporting or damaging his client, depending on which outcome Cofer wanted. He sometimes arranged for a relative of a jury member to testify at the trial on behalf of the defendant. He would manipulate the bailiff to find out what jury members were thinking, what points he needed to spend more time on in the courtroom, and how to play on the jurors' emotions. Cofer knew he had Clark watching his back, providing behind-the-scenes support with his vast network of allies in the legal and judicial systems.

Clark's final game plan not only had to end in JFK's death, but it also had to deflect blame from the conspirators, and it had to somehow make Clark even richer. During Clark's visit with Cofer, a preliminary plan began to take shape. Mac Wallace was there, as well. Sam Rayburn, long-time Speaker of the House, died on November 16, 1961. Wallace was at the funeral, studying presidential protection in real time. The sniper's input into the game plan would be crucial to its success.

* * * * *

1963

Both Estes and Baker continued to cause problems for Clark and LBJ during 1963. Those scandals, along with several others, simmered and threatened to explode at any time. Once that happened, there would be nothing Clark or Johnson could do. By then, it would be too late. Pressure continued to mount.

With the foundation laid during 1962, it was now time for Clark to focus on the details. LBJ told Dallas newspapers editors on April 23, 1963, that JFK would visit Texas sometime during the summer. On April 26, LBJ met with some 30 UN delegates at his ranch in Texas, in celebration of United Nations Day. Clint Murchison had asked Clark to arrange a meeting with LBJ, so Murchison was invited to the UN function. He sensed that something big was in the works, and that he would like it, whatever it was. But Murchison was dying to learn the details. If he hoped to get them from LBJ, he was disappointed. He didn't get details from Clark, either, but Clark knew how to satisfy Murchison's curiosity just enough to keep him satisfied for the moment. He did that using subtle signals and gestures, and very few words. It was a code Murchison understood, and he left with confidence that whatever Clark and LBJ were cooking up would suit his taste just fine. He knew he would be expected to pay for such beneficial results, and that was fine with him, as well.

At about the same time, Houston movers and shakers met at Suite 8F to discuss the presidential visit. Clark spoke the same language there that he had used with Murchison, and those power brokers also got the message sans details. They had received similar messages from Clark before, and they had never been disappointed.

Clark's chosen shooters were prepared to do their job in any city. But Clark realized that it had to happen in Texas, because that's where he owned the legal and judicial systems. That didn't necessarily mean Dallas, though. As it turned out, it didn't necessarily mean Texas, either. Chicago and Miami were under consideration as well as Texas. But why, given the obvious advantages of Texas? Probably because there was no way to know when a scandal would erupt and blow all their planning out of the water. Chicago and Miami, although earlier than Dallas, were plans B and C, just in case the hit couldn't be delayed any longer.

Johnson should have been able to easily deliver Texas to JFK in the 1964 election. However, LBJ, Ralph Yarborough (liberal senator), and John Connally (conservative governor) were constantly at war with each other. JFK was slipping in the polls, and he was also realizing that LBJ was more trouble than he was worth. With hints of scandal, LBJ was a constant source of embarrassment to Kennedy. In addition to that, JFK was forced to campaign in a state where it should not have been necessary. JFK apparently knew LBJ would not be on the 1964 ticket, even though it has not been proven. But true or not, Johnson believed it was true, even though Kennedy publicly denied it. JFK went to Texas to try to get Johnson, Connally, and Yarborough to play nice; to raise money; and to shore up support for the election.

Clark met with Wallace again in the summer of 1963 to nail down the details of the murder itself. He decided that a front shot was necessary, in case the rear shot didn't get the job done. Besides, the rear shot would provide diversionary cover for the front shot. The rifles had to be the same caliber, and they had to be easily concealed. Clark decided on collapsible rifles. He also decided that the Secret

Service would provide perfect cover for the snipers. He already had all the information he needed in the form of the protection manual LBJ had provided months earlier. Clark called on his friend Cliff Carter, who promised to provide the Secret Service IDs and badges for the snipers. With that, they would be covered before, during, and after the shooting. They would be able to slip away undetected and, within seconds, reach a secure location, long before local law enforcement could react. Left behind to take the fall would be the patsy, who would then promptly be killed.

There was also the matter of coaching LBJ for the big event. The VP was deliberately not told about the details of the plan, because he had to maintain plausible deniability. Still, Clark was concerned that LBJ might overreact, so Clark diplomatically prepared LBJ for Dallas. Johnson was certainly aware of what generally was about to happen, when, and how. Many of the details he was probably able to piece together on his own. For example, it is well documented that LBJ slumped down in the limo, out of sight, just as his car was about to enter the kill zone. Clark didn't need to tell LBJ that the shots would come from within and around the Texas School Book Depository.

Then there was the matter of how much Clark should be paid for his services. He considered a number of factors and finally settled on a figure. That was good enough for the time being. He expected a lot, and he knew that his big-oil associates could well afford it. Besides, once the job was done, the enormous benefits to them would be obvious, and they would be in a generous mood. That would be the right time for Clark to get specific.

Information about the Texas trip was announced on November 3, 1963, and the days following. JFK would go to Houston to

attend Representative Albert Thomas' appreciation dinner. There would be stops in Fort Worth, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. Clark got the details he needed from Cliff Carter. Clark made sure the motorcade would proceed on Elm Street in front of the Texas School Book Depository.

One last detail needed Clark's attention. That was taken care of when LHO returned to Dallas from New Orleans, with a short stay in Mexico City. He stayed at the Y and started looking for a job. He didn't need to find a job, however; the job found him. He began as a warehouse worker on October 14 at the Texas School Book Depository.

As JFK arrived in Fort Worth on November 21, 1963, there was a party going on at the Clint Murchison Jr estate in Dallas. Privacy was guaranteed there, and it was an occasion for relaxing, drinking, enjoying a good cigar, and having fun. But it was also a business meeting. Although there is no record of what was said, Clark let the men know that everything had been taken care of for some big unspecified event. They didn't know any details, but they would know it when it happened, and they knew to keep their mouths shut. They all did so, never divulging any information that contradicted the Warren Commission's findings. Until, that is, Barr McClellan broke the silence.

* * * * *

November 22

Ed Clark waited impatiently in his office for word from Dallas. As the news came in that JFK had been killed and that LBJ was now the president, Clark pretended to be shocked and grieved, yet serious and in control. He was dying to find out all the details. Had the plan worked as intended? Was the cover-up well underway? What loose ends needed his immediate attention? Well, LHO soon became problem number

one. Unfortunately, Oswald had not been killed by Dallas police officers as intended.

Just as Clark had feared, LBJ wasn't capable of fully suppressing his giddiness, although he did manage to maintain a level of subtlety. He couldn't resist calling Bobby to inquire about the proper procedures and protocol of being sworn in as the new president. Only minutes before, Bobby had heard the tragic news, and LBJ was already rubbing it in. Johnson was officially the president the moment JFK died, and the swearing-in ceremony was not an urgent matter. Even if it had been, it was hardly necessary to call Bobby about it. That was LBJ's first victory lap. His second was insisting on having Jackie stand beside him during the brief ceremony. She was still wearing her blood-stained pink dress, obviously in shock. His third victory lap came in the form of a smile and a wink at Albert Thomas (a Representative who was there to serve as a witness). It is clearly visible in a photograph taken just as the ceremony ended. The photo was not released to the public, but it couldn't be suppressed forever.

Johnson insisted on having JFK's remains placed aboard Air Force One before he would begin the flight back to Washington. Jackie and the casket could easily have flown on Air Force Two. Although he expressed his sorrow and grief to the widow, he was treating her with callous disregard for her fragile state. But this was not just another passive-aggressive victory lap. It was important for him to be in control of JFK's remains at all times. Otherwise, damaging evidence could be exposed, blowing the cover-up.

There were other fires that needed to be put out right away. Henry Wade (Dallas District Attorney) made a public statement to the effect that every member of the conspiracy should be sentenced to the electric chair.

Cliff Carter quickly called Wade to inform him that there would be no talk of any sort of conspiracy. Waggoner Carr (Texas Attorney General) was given the same warning. Both men complied.

Then there was the matter of too many bullets having been fired. The plan was for only one or two shots. But there had been four. That suggested more than one shooter, and Clark simply couldn't allow that idea to get traction. It was imperative that LHO be seen as the only sniper. With the patsy in police custody, he might reveal details that had to be suppressed at all cost.

* * * * *

The Coverup

To deal with the LHO problem, Carter called Murchison and explained the problem in the carefully coded language both men understood. Murchison had friends in the local mob, and they quickly arranged for Jack Ruby to take care of Oswald. LBJ himself called Parkland Hospital and instructed the doctors to try to get a deathbed confession from Oswald. Although that call seemed strange at the time, nobody was about to challenge the president, especially under those circumstances. LBJ made another call. This one went to Will Fritz (head of the homicide bureau) who had been assuring the public of a complete investigation into Oswald and his accomplices. Johnson ordered Fritz to stop talking about or even suggesting any sort of conspiracy. Just like all the others, Fritz did as he was told.

Ruby's single shot to Oswald's abdomen was fatal, and it was clearly a professional mob hit. Clark's first choice for Ruby's defense was Cofer, but that would have been too obvious a connection. So Clark reached out to Joe Tonahill, who had been married to Clark's sister. Joe was a successful trial lawyer in Jasper, TX, and

the two had remained good friends. Ruby understood and accepted Tonahill as his defense attorney, and with Joe in place, Clark had the protection of attorney-client privilege. It was Tonahill's job to keep Ruby under control and make sure the mob hitman didn't develop a burning desire to talk. When Ruby threatened to turn his trial into a circus, Clark had to issue a stern warning to Tonahill to control his client. That's all it took. In less than four months, Ruby was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. The conviction was reversed on appeal, but Ruby didn't live long enough to have a new trial. He died of cancer, taking his secrets with him. Not because he wasn't eager to talk, but because Earl Warren refused Ruby's 15 pleas to be moved somewhere outside Dallas for safety. It was reported that Ruby told a friend that LBJ was behind the JFK murder, but it was never investigated. Warren was satisfied with Ruby's vague answers, and the commission concluded that Ruby had acted alone.

Meanwhile, Clark gained control of the investigation in Dallas. Anticipating the need for a Court of Inquiry, Clark had discussed the procedure with Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr prior to November 22. It was a subtle conversation, but Carr had been briefed on what to do, and he obeyed Clark's instructions, as all his myrmidons did. The nominal head of the investigating body was the law Dean at Southern Methodist University, but he did nothing important. Clark's good friend and accomplice Leon Jaworski was running the show, and, with close coordination with the White House, Carr was in place to suppress any evidence that pointed to LBJ.

At Johnson's request, within three weeks of LHO's murder, Clark sent the presidential limousine to Cincinnati to be refurbished. Although the car had been thoroughly cleaned almost immediately after the JFK

hit, a complete refurbish was necessary to make certain that no incriminating evidence remained in the vehicle.

On Sunday morning, November 25, FBI Director Hoover briefed his friend LBJ at the White House on the investigation. Although the full report wouldn't be ready for a few days, Hoover announced that there had been only one assassin. He had sent 60 agents to Dallas to investigate, and they were certain (only three days after the murder!) that LHO had acted alone. They had not even bothered considering the possible motive. Just as Hoover and Johnson had planned, there was no need to dig any further into anything. Case closed. Hoover's perfunctory investigation wasn't just to provide cover for the conspirators, however. He was also protecting the FBI and covering up its blunders.

The media bought that story, and so did the public. Most importantly, the Warren Commission bought that story. Johnson faced tremendous political pressure to appoint an independent national commission, and he reluctantly agreed. But he made sure it was controlled by people he could count on to bend to his will. Their function was merely to sign off on the FBI's so-called investigation. They weren't there to do any serious investigating on their own. Their function was merely to give the appearance of an independent thorough investigation. They called a lot of witnesses to testify, but they selected and used only the testimony and evidence that supported their foregone conclusion. Any testimony to the contrary was ignored, discredited, marginalized, manipulated, or changed to conform to the FBI's version. When members of the commission wanted to do some real investigative work, they were blocked at every turn. Gerald Ford volunteered his services as the eyes and ears of the FBI inside the commission. Nothing happened in the Warren

Commission that Hoover didn't know about, and Ford was in a position to help steer eager investigators back into their proper role. Leon Jaworski was muscled into the commission by Waggoner Carr, so the Texas Attorney General was able to protect his interests on the commission. Clark also had Don Thomas stationed in Washington, DC for a week to keep an eye on things and make sure nothing got out of control.

Clark had experts lined up. It was easy to find expert witnesses who would say anything Clark told them to say. But they weren't needed. In less than a week after the JFK murder, the cover-up was almost complete. Clark waited for the other shoe to drop, for some big development to deal with, but it never materialized. He and his associates had committed the perfect crime. There were minor issues to deal with over the next several years. Occasionally, witnesses or potential witnesses refused to play along, and they had to be killed. Even if they were fully cooperative and loyal, some still had to be eliminated, just to make sure they would never talk. No big deal. It was just part of the game.

Over time, however, as independent investigations were completed, there developed a general consensus that there had been a conspiracy. There was no consensus, though, on who was involved and why. Even many members of the Warren Commission no longer believed their report.