

Thanking Europe for No World Wars

The Nobel committee's award of the Peace Prize to the European Union may be head-scratching to some, given the continent's angry economic divisions and NATO's role in recent wars. But the point was to commend Europe for having avoided a repeat of the two world wars, says ex-CIA analyst Paul R. Pillar.

By Paul R. Pillar

The awarding of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union is an appropriate recognition of one of the most significant departures in modern history to advance the cause of peace.

Awarding the prize to the EU is best seen as a big-picture, long-term sort of recognition. It is consistent in that regard with the award of many Nobels in the scientific categories, which often recognize work that was done decades earlier but had significance that would be proven only later.

The committee that decides on the Peace Prize has shown a tendency in recent years to use the prize to make statements about issues of current concern. Maybe there was some of that thinking as well in its decision this year, with the prize intended to compensate for what even committed Europeanists would have to admit has not been one of the EU's happier periods. But that need not detract from the larger significance of what is being recognized.

Some of the initial responses within Europe to the Nobel committee's decision have been colored by whatever gripes about Brussels people happen to have at the moment. These responses are of a piece with what has been an unfortunate tendency lately to think of European integration only in terms of the fiscal and economic crisis in the euro zone.

The common-currency project is not to be equated with the European Union. And although the next steps in that project are uncertain, it should be remembered that the disharmony entailed in a monetary union that precedes a fiscal union is the sort of creative tension that European founding fathers had in mind in using economics to propel political integration.

What is even more worth remembering, and the Nobel prize serves as a useful reminder, is the central idea, founding concept and biggest historic contribution of the whole experiment in European integration: the overcoming of divisions that have, at enormous cost, repeatedly torn the Continent apart. That tearing took the form of round after round of warfare through centuries.

This long, violent history has involved absolute monarchies, modern

dictatorships and democracies alike, culminating in the multilateral bloodlettings of the first half of the Twentieth Century. The harmful impact extending beyond Europe is captured by our reference to these last conflicts as “world wars.”

The European integration project managed to move a substantial portion of the Continent, within just a few years, from the biggest and in some respects most savage of the bloodlettings to a different set of identities that have made unthinkable any new war between some of the nations that had been principal protagonists in the old ones. We should not forget how huge and wonderful a development in human history this has been.

May the European Union not only enjoy an enduring peace in its own lands but also serve as an inspiration in overcoming the destructive consequences of competing nationalisms elsewhere. Congratulations on the Nobel prize, EU; you’ve earned it.

Paul R. Pillar, in his 28 years at the Central Intelligence Agency, rose to be one of the agency’s top analysts. He is now a visiting professor at Georgetown University for security studies. (This article first appeared as a [blog post](#) at The National Interest’s Web site. Reprinted with author’s permission.)

Bill O’Reilly’s Outdated ‘Killing Kennedy’

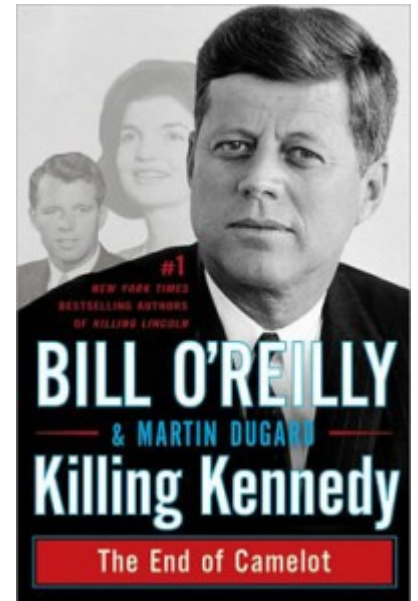
Exclusive: Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly and co-author Martin Dugard are hoping for another financial “killing” with their *Killing Kennedy*. But the new book may have a bigger agenda, solidifying popular history behind the Warren Report on JFK’s murder and tearing down his character, writes Jim DiEugenio.

By Jim DiEugenio

A long time ago, Fox News personality Bill O’Reilly was a high school history teacher. Martin Dugard was an author who had written a few history books, e.g. about Christopher Columbus and Stanley and Livingstone. Last year, the two men collaborated on a book about the murder of President Abraham Lincoln. *Killing Lincoln* proved to be a “killing” in another way, a financial one.

This year is the 49th anniversary of the assassination of President John Kennedy. Several writers and film producers are already preparing major projects for the 50th anniversary next year. It seems that O’Reilly and Dugard decided to get the

jump on the occasion by trying to repeat the success of their book about Lincoln, thus, we have *Killing Kennedy*.



But the Kennedy case is not the Lincoln case. The Lincoln case is one that has settled into history. The incredible thing about the murder of President Kennedy is that, 49 years later, we are still discovering things that the government has tried to keep secret about the case.

For instance, just a few months ago it was learned that the Air Force One tapes at the National Archives were incomplete. They had been edited to eliminate a reference to a query about the location of Air Force General Curtis LeMay as President Kennedy's body was being returned from Dallas.

This made the news since historians understand that LeMay and Kennedy knocked heads during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, but also because there have been reports that, for whatever reason, LeMay was present during the Kennedy autopsy at Bethesda Medical Center that evening.

I mention this not only to show that there are still important secrets seeping out about the murder of President Kennedy, but also because you will not find a word about any significant new evidence in this book. In fact, in regards to the actual murder of President Kennedy, this is a book that could have been written in 1965. I could find very little, if anything, pertaining to the actual assassination that was discovered in later decades.

Which poses a question: Besides the obvious opportunity to cash in, what is the book's purpose? It seems to be to re-sell the Warren Commission Report's initial assessment of the assassination to a new audience in a new millennium, except in an abridged version, jazzed up with some novelistic writing and some juicy tales of extramarital sex.

This book upholds every dubious central tenet of the Warren Report. It says that Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed Kennedy by himself; that Jack Ruby then marched down the Main Street ramp of the Dallas Police station and killed Oswald alone and unaided; and that neither man knew each other or was part of a larger conspiracy.

In other words, even though 4 million pages of material have been declassified since 1964, none of this matters in the least to O'Reilly and Dugard. In *Killing Kennedy*, the Warren Commission got it right way back then and the hundreds of trenchant and book-length critiques of its faulty investigation aren't worth considering.

Indeed, one of the most startling things about the O'Reilly/Dugard book is its heavy reliance on the Warren Report because, since 1964, there have been other major official inquiries that have shown that the Warren Commission was not just a flawed inquiry, but that it was deprived of crucial information. With important pieces of the puzzle missing, the commission's conclusions were surely questionable.

Selective History

Given Official Washington's contempt for New Orleans DA Jim Garrison, I guess it's not surprising that O'Reilly and Dugard never mention his investigation or the discoveries he made about Lee Oswald's activities in New Orleans in the summer 1963. But they also ignore congressional inquiries, such as the 1975 Church Committee review by Senators Richard Schweiker and Gary Hart into the failure of the FBI and CIA to fully inform the Warren Commission of relevant facts.

Then, there was the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), which was in session from 1976-79 and concluded that there likely was a second gunman in Kennedy's murder.

In the 1990s, public interest in the case was renewed by Oliver Stone's movie "JFK" and especially its dramatic use of the Zapruder film of the kill shot knocking Kennedy's head backwards when Oswald was behind, not in front, of the motorcade. That forced the creation of the Assassination Records Review Board, which from 1994 to 1998 declassified about 2 million pages of documents that had been either completely hidden or severely redacted prior to that time.

Much of this information was extremely interesting, shocking or explosive especially as it related to Oswald's curious relationship with U.S. intelligence and right-wing activists.

Yet, in spite of all this, O'Reilly and Dugard term the Warren Report one of the

backbones of their work (p. 306) and treat its conclusions as comparable in certainty to the evidence that John Wilkes Booth killed President Lincoln in 1865.

This indicates two things: 1.) Their research was not in any way complete or in-depth, and 2.) The book was agenda driven from the start. For to eliminate all this new information amounts to depriving readers of new evidence that challenges the Warren Commission's conclusions. The book wipes away all uncertainty about the mystery.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the depiction of Lee Harvey Oswald. Since the time of the Garrison investigation, until the discoveries about the CIA and Oswald in the declassified files of the ARRB, there has literally been a running stream of evidence to contradict the narrow and deliberately constricted portrait of Oswald in the Warren Report.

In fact, it has been revealed that, tipped off by Warren Commissioner (and former CIA Director) Allen Dulles, the FBI and CIA rehearsed their responses about Oswald's ties to the intelligence community. (Gerald McKnight, *Breach of Trust*, p. 323) That portrait was of the sociopathic loner who, frustrated in his own personal and professional ambitions, decided to release his anger by killing President Kennedy.

The problem with trying to maintain that stance today is that there is so much evidence to vitiate it. For example, although the authors briefly mention Oswald in New Orleans, they never bring up the address of 544 Camp Street, the address rubber-stamped on at least one of the pamphlets that was in Oswald's possession in the summer of 1963.

When Garrison discovered this, he walked down to the address and found that it was also the address that housed the private detective offices of Guy Banister, an FBI veteran who had retired and later opened up an investigative service in New Orleans.

Mostly Banister monitored the activities of what he thought were leftist organizations, i.e. socialists, integrationists, communists and pro-Castro sympathizers. He often employed undercover agents to keep tabs on these groups. Both Garrison and the HSCA interviewed several witnesses who stated that they saw Oswald at Banister's. Some of these witnesses said that Banister actually gave Oswald an office.

Therefore, Garrison thought Oswald made a dumb mistake by putting the address where he was supposed to be working undercover on this document. And we know from a declassified HSCA interview with Banister's secretary that Banister was

very upset when he found out Oswald had done this.

What makes this information even more tantalizing are two other factors: One of the pamphlets that Oswald stamped Banister's address on was called "The Crime Against Cuba," a document written by New York activist Corliss Lamont. It became exceedingly popular and went through at least five printings by 1967. But the one Oswald had in New Orleans was from the first printing, which was done in 1961. But Oswald could not have ordered this copy then since he was in the Soviet Union at the time. However, the CIA did order 45 copies of the first edition in 1961. (James DiEugenio, *Destiny Betrayed*, p. 219)

And, two, what makes that fact even more interesting is a discovery made through the declassified files of the ARRB that the CIA had decided to run a counter-intelligence program against the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in 1961. This included electronic surveillance, interception of mail, and, most importantly in regards to Oswald, the planting of double agents inside that organization. (John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA*, pgs. 236-243)

This CIA program was supervised by James McCord (who later surfaced as one of the Watergate burglars) and David Phillips, who was reportedly seen in New Orleans at Banister's office and at the Southland Center in Dallas with Oswald. (Larry Hancock, *Someone Would Have Talked*, pgs. 168, 183) Therefore, from these links, it is possible Oswald got the outdated Corliss Lamont pamphlet through Phillips via Banister.

Most people today would consider the above to be relevant information about Oswald, though not a whiff of it was in the Warren Commission and today, 48 years later, none of it is in the O'Reilly/Dugard book.

The Mexico Trip

The authors also briefly touch on Oswald's purported trip to Mexico City. Yet again, they essentially crib from the Warren Report and ignore the thousands of declassified pages by the ARRB. And this includes the remarkable 400-page *Lopez Report* done for the HSCA in the late 1970s.

O'Reilly and Dugard simply state that Oswald went to Mexico to get a visa to Cuba, which is not entirely accurate. It ignores the fact that Oswald, or someone claiming to be him, also visited the Soviet consulate in addition to the Cuban consulate. The actual objective was to gain an in-transit visa to Cuba with the ultimate destination, Russia.

But this is just the beginning of what O'Reilly and Dugard do with Mexico City. The authors describe an argument between Oswald and Cuban consulate officer Eusebio Azcue. (p. 219) What they do not say is again rather important. Azcue

went to the movies two weeks after the assassination and saw a newsreel of Oswald being shot by Jack Ruby. Azcue was stunned because the man he saw being shot in the newsreel was not the man he argued with in Mexico City. (Anthony Summers, *Conspiracy*, p. 348)

Further, Sylvia Duran, the Cuban receptionist in Mexico City who talked the most to the man called Oswald, later said the same thing. She said the man she talked to was short, about 5' 4" tall, and had blonde hair. (ibid, p. 351) This does not describe Oswald.

There was a third witness in this regard, Oscar Contreras, a young man studying to be a lawyer at National University in Mexico City. Oswald had gone to the university cafeteria and was sitting next to him and his friends. He later struck up a conversation with Contreras about his inability to get a visa to Cuba. Later, Contreras stated that the man he talked to was not the Oswald shot in Dallas. (ibid, p. 352)

In passing, in relation to another subject, O'Reilly and Dugard point up another problem with Oswald in Mexico City. They admit that Oswald did not speak Spanish. Yet, in the tapes relayed to Washington by the CIA station in Mexico City, the man they say is Oswald spoke Spanish well. (Newman p. 335) Making this even stranger is that whoever this man on the tapes was, he spoke very poor, broken Russian. (ibid)

Again, every witness who knew Oswald testified that he spoke fluent Russian. Certifying this problem, when the CIA sent tapes and photos to Washington and they were shown and played for the FBI agents interviewing Oswald, the agents said this photo was not Oswald and the voice on the tapes was not the man they interviewed. (Newman, p. 520)

Any fair-minded reader, when confronted with this information, would conclude something was amiss with the CIA's story about Oswald in Mexico City. But O'Reilly and Dugard just leave this evidence out.

The Case Against Oswald

Which brings us to the authors' case against Oswald. One of the most serious problems the Warren Commission had in making a case against the accused assassin was that the evidence in Dealey Plaza required that the actual shooting of Kennedy take place in six seconds. In the space of those few seconds, three shots were fired. Two of the three were direct hits on a target moving away from the marksman at a slight angle.

But there were two complicating factors in making this case. When the Commission tried to duplicate this feat with first-class marksmen from the armed services,

none of them could achieve the goal. (Sylvia Meagher, *Accessories After the Fact*, p.108)

Secondly, by no stretch of the imagination was Oswald a first-class rifleman. In fact, when author Henry Hurt interviewed dozens of Oswald's Marine Corps colleagues, they were dumbfounded that the Warren Commission could state that Oswald could perform with such shooting skill because the Oswald they recalled was either a mediocre shot or worse.

For instance, Sherman Cooley said, "I saw that man shoot, and there's no way he could have learned to shoot well enough to do what they accused him of." (Hurt, *Reasonable Doubt*, p. 99) And Cooley was an expert hunter and excellent shot. Hurt concluded after interviewing several dozen Marines, "on the subject of Oswald's shooting ability there was virtually no exception it was laughable." (ibid)

How do O'Reilly and Dugard get around this barrier and make Oswald the sole assassin of President Kennedy? They do something that not even Vincent Bugliosi did in *Reclaiming History*. They simply change the facts and write that "Oswald was a crack shot in the military." (p. 15)

When I read that, the book almost dropped out of my hands. A statement like that is not a distortion of the facts. It is a deception. The authors source this to the Warren Report. However, upon finding the relevant section, pages 681-82, the reader will see that nothing even approaching this kind of description appears on those pages.

For example, the Report says that "his practice scores were not very good," and he scored two points above the minimum to qualify in the mid-range level for shooting ability. And from there he got worse before he left the Marines. There is no way, except on Fox News, that this qualifies as being a "crack shot."

How intent are O'Reilly and Dugard on convicting Oswald for the reader? They leave out what many people think is the single most important piece of evidence in the Kennedy murder. Namely, the Zapruder film. The book spends several pages describing the shooting sequence in Dealey Plaza. But I could not find any mention of what the Zapruder film shows: Kennedy's entire body rocketing *backward* with such force and speed that it bounces off the back seat.

This unforgettable sight takes place when Kennedy's head is struck and a burst of blood and tissue explodes upward into the air. To any objective viewer it appears that it was this shot that caused Kennedy's violent reaction.

In fact, when the Zapruder film was shown to the public for the first time in 1975 on ABC, this image created a firestorm of controversy that provoked the

creation of a new investigation, namely the HSCA. Why? Because that sequence indicated a shot from the front, while Oswald and the Texas School Book Depository were behind.

I think I understand why the authors left out this gruesome fact, while including another memorable image from the Zapruder film. In a panic attack, Jackie Kennedy crawled onto the trunk of the car to retrieve a piece of her husband's skull that has just been blown out. (p. 271) If the book had described *both* actions, Kennedy's body rocketing backwards and Jackie retrieving the piece of skull from the trunk, then the overwhelming impression would have been that Oswald was not the assassin, since the laws of physics suggest that a shot from behind would drive Kennedy's head and skull fragments forward.

In describing the other shot that hit Kennedy, the one that has become known as the Magic Bullet, again the authors do something startling. They say that this bullet entered Kennedy at the level of his lower neck. (p. 266) Again, this is a deception. During the investigation by the HSCA, a medical panel reviewed the autopsy photographs of President Kennedy. An artist then duplicated the photos. Anyone can see that this shot did not enter the neck, but President Kennedy's back. (Click here and scroll down <http://www.celebritymorgue.com/jfk/jfk-autopsy.html>)

O'Reilly and Dugard change this evidence for the same reason that Gerald Ford lied about this point in the Warren Report: to make it more feasible that this bullet, allegedly fired from six stories up, could hit Kennedy at this downward angle and still exit from his throat.

In order to preserve the story of the Magic Bullet, the authors then censor more important information. The book describes Dr. Malcolm Perry's attempt to revive President Kennedy at Parkland Hospital by cutting a tracheotomy over his throat wound. (p. 276) What the authors omit is the fact that later on that day, during a press conference at the hospital, Perry said that this wound in the front of the neck was one of entrance and therefore could not have been fired from the rear. (See p. 256 of Dr. David Mantik's essay, "The Medical Evidence Decoded" in *Murder In Dealey Plaza*, edited by James Fetzer.)

But further, O'Reilly and Dugard also say that no bones were struck in Kennedy by this bullet. (p. 266) Yet, as both Dr. Mantik and Dr. John Nichols have demonstrated (the latter at the trial of Clay Shaw) if one follows the measurements for this wound given in the Warren Commission, the cervical vertebrae would have *had* to have been struck. Yet, there is no evidence of this on the autopsy x-rays and photos. This is more evidence of the magical qualities of this bullet.

Method to the Distortions

Before leaving the mechanics of the actual assassination, let me note one more intriguing description given by the authors. Anyone familiar with the circumstances of the Kennedy case knows that in the Warren Commission scenario, Oswald was supposed to have constructed both a barricade of boxes behind him, and a small platform of boxes in front of him on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. The latter was allegedly to conceal him from any intruder; the former was to supposedly rest and/or mount the weapon while awaiting the motorcade.

The problem with this is that fellow worker Bonnie Ray Williams testified that he was eating a chicken lunch on the sixth floor up until about 12: 20. (Meagher, p. 324) And secretary Carolyn Arnold saw Oswald on the second floor at about that same time. (Summers, p. 77) By eliminating this testimony, the authors avoid the obvious question: How could Oswald have moved all of those heavy boxes of books into place in just a matter of minutes? For if Arnold is correct, he could not have been on the landing below the sixth floor waiting for Williams to leave.

To top it all off, O'Reilly and Dugard now add in something that is utterly startling. Forgetting about the boxes in front of their assassin, they actually write that Oswald shot at President Kennedy from a standing position! (p. 264) Yet, photos taken that day reveal that the window at which the alleged sniper was firing from was raised only about 15 inches. (DiEugenio, p. 352) If Oswald were firing from a standing position, it's likely the shot would have shattered the glass in the window, which it did not.

But, as we have seen, with O'Reilly and Dugard there is a method behind their distortions, deceptions and omissions. Here it seems to be that they want to rely on the testimony of Howard Brennan to give a description of the shooter to the police. As many have noted, including ex-prosecutor Robert Tanenbaum, if Oswald was kneeling down resting his rifle on the boxes, how could Brennan give a description of height and weight? (p. 280)

But there is a further problem with the alleged issuing of Brennan's description. As Tanenbaum, former Deputy Counsel for the HSCA, has noted, Brennan allegedly gave his description to the Secret Service a few moments after the shooting. Yet, all the Secret Service agents were at Parkland Hospital with the president. So whom did Brennan actually talk to in Dealey Plaza? (Meagher, p. 10)

Let us now move to the culminating two murders that weekend, those of officer J. D. Tippit and the shooting of Oswald by Jack Ruby. Needless to say, O'Reilly and

Dugard write that it was Oswald alone who shot Tippit and it was the patriotic bar owner Ruby, alone and unaided, who shot Oswald.

Concerning the former, the authors ignore the new evidence in Barry Ernest's book *The Girl on the Stairs*, in which he interviewed a Mrs. Wiggins who was a witness in the Tippit slaying. She certified by both a TV announcement and her own wall clock that the shooting took place at 1:06. She then said she saw the assailant flee the scene.

But the fact that the woman certified the time would eliminate Oswald as the killer, because the Warren Report stated that he left his rooming house at about 1:03, approximately a half hour after the assassination. (See, p. 163 of the Warren Report) It would be physically impossible, even for O'Reilly and Dugard, to get Oswald to traverse nine blocks in three minutes.

Again, the authors avoid this crucial point. Yet they do note something that highlights it. From the scene of the Tippit murder to the Texas Theater, where Oswald was apprehended, is eight blocks. Yet this book says it took Oswald 25 minutes to get there. And they have him running.

Killing Oswald

Killing Kennedy depicts Jack Ruby killing Oswald because of his outrage at what the alleged killer of Kennedy had done. But to eliminate any suspicion that Ruby had help in entering the Dallas Police basement on Sunday, Nov. 24, or had planned on killing Oswald 48 hours previous, the book curtails the picture of Ruby's weekend.

O'Reilly and Dugard note that Ruby was at the midnight press conference held by DA Henry Wade on Friday night after the assassination. (p. 287) But they do not fully inform the reader of what Ruby did there. Looking to the entire world like a reporter in the back of the room, Ruby corrected Wade when he mistakenly named the group Oswald had solicited for in New Orleans. This was an important distinction because the group Wade named, the Free Cuba Committee, was an *anti-Castro* organization. (Summers, p. 457)

Killing Kennedy does not tell the reader that Ruby was also at the police station on Saturday. He was trying to get details of when the police were going to move Oswald to another jail. (ibid, p. 458) Then, on Sunday morning, there is more than one report that Ruby was at the Dallas Police station early in the morning, perhaps as early as 8:00 a.m. One of the sources was the kind of witness lawyers dream of having: a reverend (ibid, p. 460)

From all of the above, it would appear that Ruby was monitoring the station and trying to find out when Oswald was to be transferred. Did Ruby have help getting

into the basement that Sunday morning in order to shoot Oswald? The Warren Report said Ruby came down the Main Street ramp and somehow evaded the guard there, Roy Vaughn, even though Vaughn knew Ruby.

But the HSCA discovered a new witness, one who appears to have been avoided by the Warren Commission. Sgt. Don Flusche told the new inquiry that there was no doubt in his mind that Ruby, whom he had known for years, did not walk down Main Street anywhere near the ramp because he was standing against his car at the time, which was parked across the street. (ibid, p. 462)

So how did Ruby get into the basement? The HSCA concluded that Ruby came down an alleyway at the side of the police station. In the middle of this alley is a door that opens to the ground floor of the building. From there he could have reached the basement. It turned out that the Dallas Police Department's chief of security that day, Patrick Dean, had lied about this issue. He said the door could not be opened without a key. By interviewing three custodians, the HSCA proved this was false. It could be opened without a key "from the direction Ruby would have entered." (ibid, p. 468)

I could go on and on in this regard. The book is literally strewn with errors of omission or commission on almost every page, much of the disinformation focused on solidifying long-term right-wing mythology against Kennedy as historical fact, from laying the full blame for the Bay of Pigs fiasco at his doorstep to discounting his plans for withdrawing U.S. military forces from Vietnam.

On the latter point, at the time of his death, Kennedy had committed not one more American troop to Vietnam than when he was inaugurated. And he was in the act of withdrawing the advisers he and President Eisenhower had committed. It was Johnson who reversed this plan within three months with the writing of NSAM 288. This contained the plans for a massive air, land and sea war against Vietnam that included the use of tactical atomic weapons in case of Chinese intervention. This is something Kennedy would never have even entertained, let alone signed off on.

Regarding both JFK and another historical figure featured in the book Martin Luther King Jr. the authors throw in many stories about extramarital affairs. In using the likes of David Heymann and Seymour Hersh's discredited book, *The Dark Side of Camelot*, they present the most extreme tales in this regard.

I have dealt with this issue concerning Kennedy in my long essay, "The Posthumous Assassination of John F. Kennedy." (See *The Assassinations*, edited by James DiEugenio and Lisa Pease, pgs. 324-73) Concerning King, many people who heard these alleged surveillance tapes, like journalist Ben Bradlee, felt they were created by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Which brings us to a real quandary. O'Reilly and Dugard spend many pages describing the alleged character flaws of Kennedy and King. But they spend next to none describing the much larger flaws of J. Edgar Hoover, longtime CIA Director Allen Dulles and President Johnson. I wonder why and there is a likely explanation.

For decades, it has been a strategic goal of the American Right to tear down the hero status of Kennedy and King, whereas there is no similar political need to disparage Hoover, Dulles and Johnson. So, a book that is designed to do several things at once cement the conventional wisdom about the Kennedy assassination in line with the original Warren Commission findings, pander to right-wing readers and make gobs of money would naturally ignore all the messy evidence of CIA and FBI wrongdoing and highlight the human frailties of Kennedy and King.

Thus, *Killing Kennedy* is just the latest example of O'Reilly's lucrative decision to sell out, even on a topic that once appeared to draw his honest interest. Many years ago O'Reilly was the host of a syndicated program called *Inside Edition* that drew on his past acquaintance with Gaeton Fonzi, the late, great field investigator for both the Church Committee and the HSCA. Fonzi supplied O'Reilly with many interesting stories about the Kennedy case in the early 1990s when Oliver Stone's film was creating a new furor about the case. The stories all pointed toward a conspiracy, and some still exist on YouTube today.

But then, O'Reilly was hired by longtime Republican operative Roger Ailes to work for Rupert Murdoch's Fox network. According to author Russ Baker, O'Reilly wanted to continue his investigative pieces on the JFK case at Fox, but these ambitions were quashed by Ailes, who had cut his teeth in politics as a media consultant for Kennedy's archrival, Richard Nixon.

So today, O'Reilly's work on the Kennedy case is contrary to what he did before. He even suggests the chief motive for his sell-out on page 313. He dedicates the book to his boss, Roger Ailes, whom he obsequiously calls "a brilliant, fearless warrior."

That is a true confession. Too bad it came on the last page. If it came on the first page, we would have known that a supposed homicide investigation was being supervised by a political operative with an agenda to bend the history.

Jim DiEugenio is a researcher and writer on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and other mysteries of that era.

How to Save the Middle Class

Many Americans don't know where the Great Middle Class came from. They see it as a natural outgrowth of "free-market capitalism" when it was really the product of conscious government policies, starting with the New Deal. That confusion must be addressed in this political season, says Beverly Bandler.

By Beverly Bandler

"President Obama is like a pilot who took the controls of the plane in mid-flight after the engines fell out," wrote Jonathan Chait in December 2009. "It's obvious that he didn't cause the problem. But the passengers are going to focus on the fact that the plane was still airborne before he took over, and now, he's crash-landing in the ocean."

Yet, the Republicans continue to agitate the "passengers" who may not understand or may have forgotten what policies from which party brought the nation to this dangerous point: the radicalized GOP (with some help from Democratic enablers).

The conservatives, who were the chief pilots causing the catastrophe, keep reminding the public that the economy continues to struggle under Barack Obama. (And Mitt Romney says that if the voters simply let the Republicans back in the cockpit, all will be okay.)

It is certainly true that the U.S. economy remains in bad shape, as Jeff Madrick noted this month at [The New York Review of Books](#):

"The Commerce Department just reported that GDP [Gross Domestic Product] grew at an annual rate of only 1.3 percent in the second quarter. Job growth has been tepid, with continued high unemployment and underemployment. When one counts all those looking for full-time jobs and unable to get them, the true unemployment rate is close to 17 percent.

"Meanwhile, the US faces looming threats of a new European recession and a slowdown in China and other parts of the developing world. ... But the starkest evidence that something is seriously amiss in the American economy is the dramatic deterioration of the middle class." [10]

The Pew Research Center reports that "Since 2000, the middle class has shrunk in size, fallen backward in income and wealth, and shed some, but by no means all, of its characteristic faith in the future." [15]

So, the obvious needs to be pointed out – *again*: the Republicans and their

“Herbert Hoover/Ayn Rand” mindset have obstructed ruthlessly every Democratic effort to improve the economy, starting with the early 2009 stimulus that while admittedly too small (the GOP fought to keep it that way), is credited with keeping the U.S. out of a second Great Depression. [11]

The GOP became emboldened as a result of the 2010 midterm elections, a bad “gift” reportedly from mostly independent voters who apparently don’t read enough and a Democratic Party that consistently fails to do a good job at public outreach.

The Democratic Party might be taken to task (and rightly so) for underestimating the nature and magnitude of the economic crisis in early 2009, but unfortunately the real problem, in my opinion, was that they also underestimated the nature and magnitude of the political opposition.

Democrats (most notably President Barack Obama) thought they were governing with what has been traditionally the “loyal opposition,” but what they faced for the last four years has been the reincarnation of the Spanish Inquisition. Obama, the Democratic Party and all progressives were to be burned at the stake along with any remnants of the New Deal.

Belief and myth form the basis of today’s authoritarian version of the Republican Party’s alternative reality, a “reality” that continues to trump economic history and empirical studies. The nation and its people be damned.

According to Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman, “Most economists believe the big risk to recovery comes from the inadequacy of government efforts,” an inadequate stimulus. [8d]

There is a broad consensus based on serious analyses that the stimulus, *The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009 (ARRA), a \$787 billion stimulus, was an effective piece of legislation (latter increased to \$840 billion in the 2012 federal budget).

It was admittedly not enough, the GOP and conservative Democrats fought against it but the reality is the stimulus kept the United States out of a depression and significantly improved prospects for recovery. [11]

But there is one fundamental thing that American voters need to understand about the U.S. economy: The middle class is the engine that drives the economy. All other lessons are secondary to that one reality. And, historically, it has been the Democratic Party, with the help of some moderate Republicans, that has grown the middle class.

A study that reviewed 80 years of our nation’s economic history from the Great

Depression and Herbert Hoover, to the Great Recession and George W. Bush, revealed that when it comes to which party is better for the economy, Republicans talk the talk, but it's the Democrats who deliver the goods.

Of the five best economic presidents since Herbert Hoover, only one is a Republican. [6] Author Lew Goldfarb blames the conventional wisdom that Republican presidents are better economic managers on the inability of the Democrats to tell their story." [3]

Reporter Robert Parry, among others, has addressed frequently the Right's skill at "perception management" through their formidable GOP Noise Machine and their consistent determination to reinvent history.[2,13]

Unfortunately, there is no button we can push, no "silver bullet" to fire, that will get us out of an economic mess that is the result of decades of bad policies, but most particularly the one that began in 2000.

We can be certain of this: doubling down on bad conservative ideas that have been discredited and obsessing over the deficit and slavishly embracing the austerity budget in the face of economic history and empirical studies will lead the United States to disaster.

The American public needs to take its share of the blame. More voters need to turn off the television and *read*. And read writers who know what they are talking about. A good number are noted below. Here's one: Jeff Madrick, author and former economics columnist for *The New York Times*. Some points from his latest article in *The New York Review of Books*:

–Median household income, the midpoint income of all American households, was reported by the Census Bureau (whose data is a year or so behind) to be down in 2011 compared to 2010, despite an economic recovery that began in mid-2009.

–More disturbing [median household income] is now down to around \$50,000, which is 7 percent or so below what it was in 2000 and its lowest level since 1996, adjusted for inflation. Incomes are falling still more sharply for black households.

–The Census Bureau also reports on poverty levels, and these too are reason for serious concern. At 15.1 percent, some 46 million people, the proportion of Americans in poverty is now at its highest level since 1993.

–According to a recent Rutgers University report, more than half of those who have received a college degree since 2006 cannot find full-time jobs.

–The reason that the economic recovery is coinciding with middle class decline

is increasingly clear. America is creating jobs, but they are bad jobs: retailing, food preparation, and table waiting, for example, in other words, jobs that don't pay much.

—Despite deficit concerns, robust action in the jobs market will be urgently needed to counter the growing problem of bad jobs over the next presidential term. Only by encouraging much faster growth through new stimulus and public investment will the government have a strong prospect of reversing the middle-class income crisis.

—It should at least be clear to voters that President Obama's proposals as they now stand will still add far more jobs in 2013 and 2014 than would Mitt Romney's. Moreover, while falling short of what is needed, Obama's general approach could be enhanced if the political environment changes. [10]

The estimated 70 percent of Americans who are sane and retain their common sense i.e. those who don't worship at the altar of the Market or of Religious Fundamentalism, that is, Democrats, moderate Republicans, Independents, and the "I don't know where I am's" need to get to the polls this November and vote for Barack Obama and as many progressive Democrats in Congress as they can.

Tribal politics must be put aside. Then, we need to put pressure on the Democratic Party that has the best ideas and is still grounded in real reality but which has been far too timid (or intimidated?) and in a wimp, react-retrench-retreat mode (partly due to the corrupting influence of money in politics), to ditch the obsession with the deficit and the "phantom menace" debt to provide the government help that must be extended.

We need to get the anti-democratic, anti-republican *Citizens United* decision reversed. We need to reverse the anti-government attitudes that have been deliberately promoted for political purposes, but attend to reforming government where it needs it. We need to hold the mainstream, corporate-supported media accountable.

Effective good government is the only thing that will protect us from fundamentalists, market and religious: the corporations and religious zealots (*christo fascists*) who are trying to take over the country and all of us. If government is no longer effective and good, let's make it so.

To say that this will not be easy nor will it be accomplished overnight is an understatement. But, it can be done. And we can do it if we all need step up to the plate *together*. Americans did this in World War II and we can do it again.

Beverly Bandler's public affairs career spans some 40 years. Her credentials include serving as president of the state-level League of Women Voters of the

Virgin Islands and extensive public education efforts in the Washington, D.C. area for 16 years. She writes from Mexico.

- [1] **Amadeo, Kimberly.** About.com/U.S. Economy. <http://useconomy.about.com/>
- [2] **Bandler, Beverly.** "GOP's Strategy of Deception." *ConsortiumNews*, 2012-05-31. <https://consortiumnews.com/2012/05/31/gops-strategy-of-deception/>
- [3] [8] **Bedard, Paul.** "80-year study: Democrats better at economics." *The Washington Examiner*. 2012-08-17. <http://washingtonexaminer.com/80-year-study-democrats-better-at-economics/article/2505194#.UDrFPkRyEVM>
- [4] **Berman, Jillian.** "Middle Class Exit 'Lost Decade' With Little Hope: Pew Report." *The Huffington Post*, 2012-08-22. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/22/middle-class-lost-decade_n_1822661.html?view=print&comm_ref=false
- [5] **Chait, Jonathan.** "Screw Job." How Obama became the unemployment fall guy. (Or, What the Public Doesn't Understand About Economics." *The New Republic*, 2009-12-23. <http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/screw-job>
_____ "Wasting Away in Hooverville." *The New Republic*, 2009-03-18. <http://www.tnr.com/article/books/wasting-away-hooverville>
- [6] **Deitrick, Bob, and Lew Goldfarb.** *Bulls Bears and the Ballot Box: How the Performance of OUR Presidents Has Impacted YOUR Wallet*. Advantage Media Group (July 1, 2012).
- [7] **Hacker, Jacob S. and Paul Pierson.** *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*. Simon & Schuster (September 14, 2010).
- [8] **Krugman, Paul.** (a) "How to End This Depression." *The New York Review of Books*," 2012-05-24. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/may/24/how-end-depression/?pagination=false>
_____ (b) *End This Depression Now!* (Norton, 2012).
_____ (c) "The Optimism Cure." *The New York Times*, 2012-09-24. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/24/opinion/krugman-the-optimism-cure.html>
_____ (d) "What? Huh? US Debt A 'Phantom Menace.'" 2009-11-23. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/11/23/us-debt-a-phantom-menace_n_367489.html
_____ (e) "Supply-Side Virus Strikes Again." *Slate*, 1996-08-16. <http://www.slate.com/id/1910/>
- [9] **Lofgren, Mike.** *The Party Is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*. Viking Adult (August 2, 2012).
- [10] **Madrick, Jeff.** "Our Crisis of Bad Jobs." *New York Review of Books*, 2012-10-02.

<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/oct/02/our-crisis-bad-jobs/>
_____ *Age of Greed, The Triumph of Finance and the Decline of America, 1970-Present.* (Alfred A. Knopf, st ed., May 31, 2011) Vintage; Reprint edition (June 12, 2012)

<http://www.jeffmadrack.com/>

[11] **Matthews, Dylan.** "Did the stimulus work? A review of the nine best studies on the subject." *The Washington Post*, 2011-08-24. <http://tinyurl.com/3opf8tr>

[12] **New Deal 2.0** Roosevelt Institute. <http://rooseveltinstitute.org/new-deal-20>

[13] **Parry, Robert.** "Ryan's Distortion of America's Founding." *ConsortiumNews*, October 6, 2012.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2012/10/06/ryans-distortion-of-americas-founding/>

_____ "A Test for the Right's Machine." *ConsortiumNews*, 2012-09-08.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2012/09/08/a-test-for-the-rights-machine/>

_____ "Palin's 'Death Panel' and GOP Lying." *Consortium News*, 2009-08-11.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2009/081109.html>

[14] **Perr, Jon.** "Which party is best for the economy? It's not even close." *Daily Kos*, 2012-09-02.

http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/09/02/1127055/-Which-party-is-best-for-the-economy-It-s-not-even-closeWorld_MoneyhWatch.com

[15] **Pew Research Center.** "The Lost Decade of the Middle Class." 2012-08-22.

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/22/the-lost-decade-of-the-middle-class/>

[16] **Smith, Hedrick.** *Who Stole the American Dream?* Random House (September 11, 2012)

[17] **Stiglitz, Joseph E.** "Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%." *Vanity Fair*, May 2011. <http://www.vanityfair.com/society/features/2011/05/top-one-percent-201105>

_____ *Freefall: America, Free Markets, and the Sinking of the World Economy* (Hardcover). W. W. Norton & Company (January 18, 2010).

_____ "The Economic Consequences of Mr. Bush." *Vanity Fair*, December 2007.

<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2007/12/bush200712>

~

Aggregate demand is the sum of all demand in an economy. This can be computed by adding the expenditure on consumer goods and services, investment, and net exports (total exports minus total imports). Mike Moffatt, *About.com/Economics*.

Treehouses Block Keystone Pipeline

Some environmentalists are living in treehouses in a last-ditch stand against building a section of the Keystone pipeline through Texas. The protest drew some attention after the arrest of actor Daryl Hannah, but has mostly been ignored by the U.S. news media, writes William Boardman.

By William Boardman

In a remote corner of northeast Texas, there are people living in trees because, they say, they're trying to protect the planet from worsening climate change over the next century. Challenging this treehouse blockade is the advancing Keystone XL pipeline whose owners say they're trying to save the oil industry from worsening economic conditions over the next decade.

The Canadian power company, TransCanada, started building the Texas section of the XL pipeline in early August. Since then, efforts to slow construction by a coalition of landowners, environmentalists and others, calling themselves the Tar Sands Blockade, have gone from protest demonstrations and lawsuits to non-violent civil disobedience actions including an elaborate blockade of treehouses established on Sept. 24 in the path of pipeline construction in Winnsboro, Texas.

Because the pipeline is intended to bring toxic tar sands crude oil, heated and under pressure, from the tar sands of Alberta to the Texas refineries of the Gulf Coast, for export to foreign markets, resistance along the route through the American heartland has grown more intense over the years. And the company and the state have responded with violence, jailing, extreme bail amounts, and over-charging on arrest.

"If Canada proceeds, and we do nothing, it will be game over for the climate," wrote James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, last May in the New York Times. Hansen has been calling for measures to ward off or at least mitigate the effects of climate change since he first testified about the dangers before Congress in 1988.

He concluded his piece in the *Times* saying: "The science of the situation is clear, it's time for the politics to follow. This is a plan that can unify conservatives and liberals, environmentalists and business. Every major national science academy in the world has reported that global warming is real, caused mostly by humans, and requires urgent action. The cost of acting goes far higher the longer we wait, we can't wait any longer to avoid the worst and be judged immoral by coming generations."

Tar sands oil is toxic from the moment it leaves the ground, leaving a devastated environment behind, wasting water in processing, destroying forests, threatening vast water tables with pipeline failures, spreading carcinogens, and finally doing far more damage than regular oil to the atmosphere and the global climate.

The oil industry, having announced plans to invest \$379 billion in tar sands

development, argues that it's all benign.

A Movie Star

With the Tar Sands Blockade tree village in its third week, the mainstream national news media has largely ignored it (although the New York Times carried an article on Saturday). Even on the Internet there has been limited coverage, with such exceptions as firedoglake.com and several environmental websites.

CBS News, USA Today, and People showed some interest in the story when Daryl Hannah was arrested on Oct. 4, but CBS did no original coverage, only running an Associated Press story. All three reports ran Hannah's unattractive mugshot, but none of them mentioned the treehouse blockade or the protestors' underlying motivation, the dangers of tar sands oil.

Hannah was arrested for criminal trespass and resisting arrest for standing passively in front of TransCanada construction equipment, holding up her hands for it to stop. Hannah said a TransCanada private security guard hurt her wrist.

Arrested with her was 78-year-old great-grandmother Eleanor Fairchild, who also stood passively with her hands up. She was charged with criminal trespass even though she was on her own land. TransCanada had taken an easement across her land by eminent domain, so in the eyes of Texas law, that part of her land was no longer hers.

TransCanada's use of eminent domain is under court challenge, but construction continues. The challenge is based in part on the facts that the law intends for eminent domain takings to be for the public good, whereas TransCanada is a multi-billion dollar, private, foreign corporation.

TransCanada also faces a court challenge to its permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for this leg of the pipeline. A Sierra Club suit argues at length that TransCanada did not comply with the terms of federal environmental law, in part by failing to file a proper environmental impact statement. A federal judge denied the Sierra Club's request for an injunction, and the construction continues.

In Winnsboro, TransCanada has now encircled the treehouse blockade and shines floodlights at the protestors all night. Police and private security have been taking cameras away from people on the ground. When an important story is happening out of sight of the media, it's hard for it to make an impression.

William Boardman lives in Vermont, where he has produced political satire for public radio and served as a lay judge.
