

Rearview Mirror: Looking Back at the FBI the CIA and Other Tails

William Turner

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The CIA's motto, "the truth will set you free," has been dishonored by "deception, duplicity, dirty tricks and deadly deceptions," according to this memoir. Turner, who was an FBI agent for ten years, alleges that the FBI's ineptness at the Ruby Ridge siege and the standoff with the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas continues the pattern of corruptness. His book is a forum for his assaults on these agencies, as well as for his provocative, controversial views on the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy. Turner's disconcerting investigations are reasoned, and his lucid writing is not the rambling of an irrational conspiracy nut.

Turner quit the FBI in 1961, disgusted by the arrogance and eccentricities of its director, J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover, Turner notes, was a master media manipulator, who covered up his reluctance to confront organized crime by exaggerating the dangers of American-style communism. After unsuccessfully calling for a Congressional investigation of the FBI, Turner joined the staff of Ramparts magazine, edited by legendary muckraker Walter Hinckle. Turner used Ramparts to attack Hoover and the abuses of the FBI until the magazine's demise in 1969, caused in no small part by its support of increasingly unpopular causes, notably the Black Panthers and Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara.

President Kennedy was murdered, posits Turner, by an unholy alliance of big interests and the CIA, which viewed the president as a threat to their plans to depose Castro. Ironically, the author continues, JFK was secretly seeking better relations with Cuba, while at the same time his brother was helping to plan a second invasion, to occur after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear destruction. Lee Harvey Oswald, the reputed assassin, was an FBI informant; the president was killed by an unknown gunman firing from behind the notorious Grassy Knoll, the author concludes.

Robert Kennedy's assassination, Turner asserts, was a "Manchurian Candidate" style murder, in which the hapless Sirhan Sirhan was hypnotized into shooting Kennedy and then forgetting who was behind the killing. The Los Angeles Police Department, which held jurisdiction for the Sirhan trial, covered up the fact that at least ten shots were fired.

Turner will win no friends among the numerous honorable agents of the FBI and CIA, but readers of his memoirs will question their own notions about these historical traumas whose ultimate truths may never be known.

KARL HELICHER (July / August 2001)

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