

Miami Jury: CIA Involved in JFK Assassination

By [The Spotlight](#)

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Not a single major newspaper nor any national news broadcast has ever reported that on Feb. 6, 1985, a jury in Miami concluded that the CIA was involved in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

This is remarkable, if only because the verdict came in a court case featuring two international celebrities: Water gate burglar E. Howard Hunt — perhaps the most infamous CIA operative in history — and his courtroom nemesis — attorney Mark Lane. Lane’s ground-breaking best-seller, *Rush to Judgment*, had convinced millions of readers there had been a conspiracy in the JFK assassination, the Warren Commission’s claims notwithstanding.

Scattered news reports did mention Hunt had lost a libel case against The SPOTLIGHT. However, no media reported what the jury forewoman had told the press:

Mr. Lane was asking us to do something very difficult. He was asking us to believe John Kennedy had been killed by our own government. Yet when we examined the evidence closely, we were compelled to conclude that the CIA had indeed killed President Kennedy.

Until 1992, when Lane recounted the trial in *Plausible Denial* and put forth additional compelling evidence of CIA complicity in the crime, the only substantive news reports about the trial appeared in The SPOTLIGHT. In issue No. 7 for 1985 (Feb. 18), The SPOTLIGHT announced its victory, detailing the remarkable events that led to the trial.

The affair was set in motion on Aug. 14, 1978, when The SPOTLIGHT published an article by former CIA official Victor Marchetti who revealed the CIA intended to publicly “admit” Hunt had been involved in the JFK assassination, acting as a “rogue” agent without CIA sanction.

A top CIA liaison to anti-Castro Cuban exiles in the early 1960s, Hunt was unknown to the public until the Watergate scandal that toppled President Nixon in 1974 brought Hunt ill fame. Then, after Watergate, when the Rockefeller Commission investigated CIA misdeeds, two eccentric writers alleged Hunt was one of three “tramps” photographed in Dallas minutes after the JFK assassination.

Subsequent investigation refuted the “Hunt as tramp” theory. However, scandal sheets had hyped the story and many came to believe Hunt had a hand in Dallas.

In 1976, growing skepticism about the Warren Commission’s claim that a “lone assassin” had killed JFK forced the House of Representatives to convene a new assassination inquiry.

In the midst of the House investigation, an unusual development occurred:

As Marchetti's SPOTLIGHT article reported, an in-house CIA memo, ostensibly written in 1966 — some 12 years previously — was leaked to congressional investigators.

The memo stated Hunt had been in Dallas on the day of the JFK assassination, and that CIA officials were concerned the agency would one day have to explain Hunt's presence there.

The SPOTLIGHT subsequently learned CIA Director Richard Helms and the CIA's chief of counterintelligence, James Angleton, had signed off on the memo.

Marchetti suggested that because the CIA perceived Hunt to be a villain in the public's eye as a consequence of Watergate, the CIA had decided to sacrifice Hunt and "admit" he had been involved in the assassination.

The CIA would claim Hunt was acting on his own and that the CIA, as an institution, had no part in the president's murder. This would satisfy public demand for a resolution of the JFK controversy and the CIA itself would be absolved. Hunt would be left to fend for himself.

The SPOTLIGHT felt the article served as warning to Hunt about CIA intentions and Hunt himself admitted the story seemed plausible. Yet, Hunt still filed suit against The SPOTLIGHT.

When the case went to trial in federal court in Miami, the jury found in Hunt's favor, ordering The SPOTLIGHT to pay Hunt \$650,000 in damages. However, an error in the jury instructions resulted in the verdict being overturned. After the case was ordered for retrial, Lane stepped in for The SPOTLIGHT's defense.

The highlight of the trial was when Lane presented the jury the testimony of Marita Lorenz, an ex-CIA operative who had worked with Hunt in plots against Fidel Castro.

Miss Lorenz testified that on Nov. 21, 1963 — the day prior to the JFK assassination — she arrived in Dallas in a two-car caravan from Miami. Accompanying her were several CIA operatives, armed with telescopic rifles, including Frank Sturgis who (years later) participated with Hunt in the Watergate burglary.

She didn't know the purpose of the mission, but upon arrival, the travelers met with Hunt, who acted as their paymaster, and also Jack Ruby who, days later, killed the accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

Uncomfortable, sensing something "big, very big," was impending, she left Dallas that same day. Later Sturgis told her how big the mission had been: the assassination of President Kennedy.

The jury listened carefully to her testimony, already suspicious of Hunt after his performance under Lane's cross-examination. Lane pointed out inconsistencies in conflicting stories by Hunt over the years about where he had been on Nov. 22, 1963. However, Hunt insisted to the jury that he was in Washington, D.C. with his wife and three children that day.

Hunt's case collapsed when he was unable to explain, when questioned by Lane, why his teenage children had asked him if the rumors he was involved in the events in Dallas were

true.

Obviously, if Hunt were in Washington on Nov. 22 he couldn't have been in Dallas.

Not surprisingly, the jury found in favor of The SPOTLIGHT. Yet, the major media said nothing about the stunning, historic revelations of this trial.

It was clearly the CIA's counterintelligence chief, James Angleton, who leaked the CIA memo placing Hunt in Dallas. In fact, Angleton's confidant, reporter Joe Trento (deposed by Lane in the Hunt case) has said — based upon what Angleton told him — that Hunt had been in Dallas and that it was Angleton who sent him there (Angleton's own denials notwithstanding). Three conclusions can be reached:

- The CIA had planned to throw Hunt to the wolves but evidently he and the CIA reached an accord since Angleton's loyal, longtime deputy, Newton Miler, was dispatched by the CIA to testify against The SPOTLIGHT in Hunt's defense;
- Because The SPOTLIGHT exposed the intended CIA scheme to "admit" Hunt's complicity in the assassination, the operation was shelved; and,
- If there's anybody who knows what really happened in Dallas, it's Hunt.

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