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The strange death of Senator Paul Wellstone

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Today we announce the publication of *AMERICAN ASSASSINATION: THE STRANGE DEATH OF PAUL WELLSTONE*, which I have co-authored with Don "Four Arrows" Jacobs and which is being published by Sander Hicks of Vox Pop of New York City.

In the course of its 200 pages, this book establishes (a) that the Bush administration had powerful motives for taking him out (Chapter 2), (b) that the NTSB report cannot be sustained (Chapter 7), and (c) that the Senator's death was no accident (Chapter 8).

As a student of the assassination of JFK, I was probably more attuned (not to say, "sensitive") to the possibility of deceit, deception, and distortion by the FBI and by the NTSB than were other local residents in processing information about the crash.

Killing someone, even a president or a senator, is not the hard part. The hard part is covering it up. The hard part is convincing others the death was the work of "a lone, deranged gunman", for example, or that a crash must have been "an accident".

A cover story is indispensable. If you only confront them one-by-one, they tend to be persuasive. If you aren't looking for small signs that something might be wrong, you are likely to miss the larger ramifications of the situation you are in.

Patterns are most important. Once you become aware of the variable techniques that can be used to mislead the American people--the destruction of evidence, the fabrication of evidence, the biased use of evidence--they become easier to identify.

In the case of JFK, it was indispensable to take control of the body. The Secret Service illegally removed the body from Parkland Hospital in Dallas and it was flown to Bethesda Naval Hospital, where it was completely under military control.

Most Americans remain unaware to this day that the Presidential limousine was returned to Michigan where it was stripped to bare metal and completely rebuilt. That vehicle was a crime scene on wheels. That was the destruction of evidence.

In the case of this crash, the bodies and the plane were a package deal. The FBI arrived with preternatural speed. Gary Ulman, the airport's assistant manager, only identified the site at 11 AM. FBI from St. Paul were on the scene by noon. By my calculations, that means they had to depart as the plane was taking off.

When I learned that day that the plane was still burning, I wondered how they could actually know that the man was dead, since they had not recovered any bodies. Burned beyond recognition, they had to be identified by dental records.

The FBI kept tight control of the crash scene. Even the AP reporter said that he had only been allowed fifteen minutes to do his thing. You might think the more photographs, the better the record of the crash scene. That didn't happen here.

In the case of JFK, the FBI spent weeks gathering photographic evidence. A film taken facing the grassy knoll was turned over and simply disappeared. Even a chunk of skull found in the grass the following day and given to the FBI was lost.

Different circumstances require different treatment. No one would have believed that JFK was not killed by a conspiracy if it had not been done in public. In that case, it was crucial to manufacture evidence that would support the official account.

Distracting attention from the most important alternatives can be especially beneficial. The Warren Commission focused its attention on Lee Harvey Oswald, not on who killed JFK. The NTSB did not consider the possibility that this was no accident.

It simply took the FBI's word for it. Carol Carmody, a former employee for the CIA who headed the team that studied the Wellstone crash, reported that the FBI had determined that there were no signs of "terrorist involvement" in the crash.

That was odd, since it is the responsibility of the NTSB, not the FBI, to investigate the cause of the crash, which it would not determine for more than another year. How could the FBI rule out any parties without knowing what caused the crash?

Even shadowy "terrorists" would have to use specific means, such as small bombs, gas canisters, or high-tech weapons. An assassination does not require "terrorists". And there was actually a connection between the copilot and Zakarias Moussaoui!

None of this appears to have bothered Carmody, who had also headed up the team that investigated the Carnahan crash two years earlier. Intriguingly, the Wellstone case has been suggested as refining the technique used on Carnahan.

Carnahan's plane went down three weeks before the election; his wife survived him. The people of Missouri preferred to vote for a dead man than return John Ashcroft to the Senate. Sheila was killed with Paul and could not stand in for him.

Most Americans do not know that a crash scene can only be investigated as the scene of a crime if it is declared a "crime scene" by the Attorney General. And, equally surprising, NTSB reports are not admissible as evidence in courts of law.

The NTSB only considered the accident alternatives, namely: the plane, the pilots, and the weather. They would eventually clear the plane and the weather. That left the pilots holding the bag. Yet the principal pilot was exceptionally qualified.

One of its members conceded they had no idea what caused the crash. An EMP device could not only have destroyed the plane's electronics and disabled its electrical systems but also "cooked" its pilots, as if they were inside a microwave oven.

The NTSB report concludes that the passengers and crew were killed by the impact and a "postimpact" fire. But how did the NTSB know there had been no "preimpact" fire? The fire burned for hours, making evidence of an earlier fire difficult to find.

There was no call of distress. If the plane was hit by an electromagnetic device, the effects could have destroyed its navigational aids, capacity for communication, stall warning alarm, and other crucial systems. It would have stopped digital clocks.

An electrical fire would almost certainly have occurred. Which makes the bluish-white smoke from the crash especially significant. If the fire had been caused by kerosene-based fuel, then it would have burned black. But it burned bluish-white.

Which means that the fire was not caused by kerosene-based fuel. And the NTSB conducted simulations using similar pilots and flight plan with a weaker engine.

Even when flown at abnormally slow speeds, the pilots were still able to power up.

The NTSB couldn't cause the plane to crash. The carbine that Oswald was said to have used is not a high-velocity weapon. Yet JFK is supposed to have been killed by the impact of high-velocity bullets. In that case, Oswald cannot have killed him.

But logic and evidence are not the strong suit for the American media. It is easier

to dismiss analyses at variance with the government's position as "kooky theories" by "conspiracy wackos" than to come to grips with the evidence. That's hard work.

And pseudo-authorities are available to reassure the public that nothing is amiss. 60,000 documents and records have been released since Gerald Posner published CASE CLOSE. His work has been refuted, but Keith Olbermann still fawns over him.

Conspiracies are as American as apple pie. They only require two or more persons planning a crime and, to be prosecutable, taking some step to commit it. When two guys knock off a 7/11, they are engaging in a conspiracy. It happens all the time.

Most American conspiracies are economic, like ENRON and WorldCom. Insider trading is a simple example. The question is not whether conspiracies occur. The question is whether conspiracy occurred in a specific case, such as the death of JFK or Wellstone.

The most telling evidence of conspiracy is a cover up. The JFK autopsy X-rays were altered to conceal a massive blow-out to the back of the head. Another brain was substituted during a supplemental brain exam. The Zapruder film was recreated.

None of these things could have been done by the Mafia, which could not have extended its reach into Bethesda Naval Hospital to alter X-rays under the control of the Secret Service, Navy medical officers, or the President's personal physician.

Nor could pro- or anti-Castro Cubans have substituted another brain for that of JFK. Nor could the KGB have secured the Zapruder film to work with it. Nor could any of these things have been done by Lee Oswald, who was incarcerated or already dead.

The pilots were not responsible for John Ongaro's anomalous cell-phone call with its

roaring, humming, and oscillating sound, which an expert on electromagnetism, John Costella, has advised me could very plausibly have been caused by an EMP weapon.

The pilots could not have arranged for the FBI to reach the scene so rapidly, for the announcement of "no terrorist activity", for excluding non-accident alternatives, or for the NTSB to draw conclusions that were even contradicted by its own evidence.

The pilots were not responsible for the insider's report to Michael Ruppert that this had been a hit, that this "current crop of reinvigorated old white men" were "nobody to screw around with", and that there will be "more strategic accidents".

Surely it makes more sense to suppose that two highly qualified pilots would have responded to the stall warning alarm if they had neglected their airspeed and their altitude unless they were incapacitated and there was nothing they could do about it.

The American public depends upon the press to keep them informed. If they are not being told the most important developments in the most important case in the history of the republic about JFK, we can hardly expect them to be informed about Wellstone.

Four Arrows and I are trying to figure out what happened using scientific standards of reasoning. We do not want to be taken in by our government again. So I ask a simple question. If you haven't studied the evidence, how can you possibly know we're wrong?

Just to give you an inkling of what we have uncovered, consider a phone conversation between Four Arrows (FA) and Frank Hildrup (FH), the lead investigator for the NTSB, on Thursday, 19 February 2004. Their rather remarkable exchange took place as follows:

FA: Why was the FBI not listed as party to the investigation in the final NTSB report on the Wellstone case?

FH: *They were not a party to the investigation.*

FA: *Then what were they doing on the scene for about 8 hours prior to the arrival of the NTSB team?*

FH: *I can't say for sure, since I only took over on Monday; but maybe they were there responding to the--you know--the conspiracy theories.*

FA: *How could there have been any conspiracy theories operating before the plane crashed?*

FH: *Well, uh, of course, that's true. Well, the FBI might have been there to identify the bodies as they sometimes do in airplane accidents. I'm not really sure but there is someone with the FBI I can call who was there. I'll get back to you about this.*

FA: *I'd really appreciate it. Don't you think it strange?*

FH: *Well, I just know everything is above board but I do want to find out.*

FA: *One more question. Why no public hearing for this incident?*

FH: *We only have hearings for high profile cases.*

There are severe limits upon investigations by citizens of this kind. We do not have the powers of the FBI and other agencies at our disposal. We know we are capable of making mistakes. But we believe that something very wrong has happened in this case and that the nation deserves to know what we've found at this stage of inquiry.