

The "Assassination" of Marilyn Monroe

Since Marilyn Monroe died in 1962, an unabated stream of books, articles and documentaries have attempted to link her death to then U.S. Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy -- despite the complete lack of any credible evidence.

by Mel Ayton

The purported affair between Marilyn Monroe and Robert Kennedy as well as claims he may have had the actress murdered have once again been resurrected with the publication of Matthew Smith's book *Victim* (2004) and the 2005 broadcast of the BBC's television series "Secret Map Of Hollywood." Their stories follow on from Donald Wolfe's startling allegations in his 1998 book *The Assassination of Marilyn Monroe*.

The myth about the RFK/Monroe affair has entered popular culture and has never been seriously questioned. It is accepted by many writers and authors and has been repeated in television documentaries ever since the publication of Anthony Summers' book *Goddess* in 1986. The possibility that the Kennedys and/or the CIA/Mafia/FBI murdered the actress has also become part of the myth.

Consequently, the American and British publics have become convinced that President Kennedy's brother Robert had a brief affair with the movie actress in the months leading up to her death and may have had a hand in her death.

Although the story has been repeated in many books and documentaries, accounts differ in specific detail. There are common threads: President Kennedy began a romance with the Hollywood actress, then passed her on to his brother Robert who soon tired of her obsessive nature and unstable personality. In the weeks leading up to her death, RFK issued instructions to his aides that he did not wish to communicate with her. Fearing Monroe was about to reveal her relationships with the Kennedy brothers to the press, Robert and his brother-in-law, Peter Lawford, decided to pay Monroe a visit. A violent argument resulted with Monroe physically attacking RFK and threatening him with her intention to tell all. Discarded and emotionally wrought over the break up, she took her own life. Some authors go further and state that either the CIA or the Mafia or the Kennedys with the FBI assisting in the cover-up murdered her. As proof, a number of authors have claimed incriminating audiotapes exist that supposedly record the fatal bedroom death scene in which RFK's voice can be heard.

The story of the alleged RFK/Monroe affair began a few years after her death in August 1962. There had indeed been rumors of her affairs with both Kennedy brothers while John Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe were alive, but published stories of her affair began in 1964 with a pamphlet by a right-wing extremist, Frank Capell. Ex-convict Lionel Grandison, a former coroner's aide who said that the police had falsified Monroe's autopsy, supported his allegations. Los Angeles Police Sgt. Jack Clemmons, the first police officer to arrive on the scene after Monroe's death, supported his claims. It was also given credence by author Norman Mailer, who stated in his book *Marilyn* that there may have been some truth to the story. He later apologized for his speculative comments in a CBS "60 Minutes" interview with Mike Wallace. Mailer's excuse was that he "needed the money." He eventually concluded it was "10 to 1" that Monroe died of an "accidental overdose."

Frank Capell was the person responsible for starting the rumor but he had assistance from those people who hated RFK. One of the Kennedy-haters who pushed the story was right-wing columnist

Walter Winchell, aided and abetted by Kennedy nemesis J. Edgar Hoover. As FBI Assistant Director William Sullivan noted in his memoirs, "The stories about Bobby Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe were just stories. A so-called journalist, a right-wing zealot who had a history of spinning wild yarns, invented the original story. It spread like wildfire, of course, and J. Edgar Hoover was right there, gleefully fanning the flames."

After Norman Mailer's allegations, Robert Slatzer was next in line to promote the story of the Robert Kennedy/Marilyn Monroe relationship. In 1972, Slatzer had approached a writer named Will Fowler with an idea for a book "detailing the murder of the Hollywood actress." Fowler read it and found it to be without merit. He told Slatzer that if the author had been married to the actress then it would make a good story. Shortly afterwards Slatzer got in touch with Fowler again and stated that it had slipped his memory but he had indeed been married to Monroe for a period of 72 hours. It allegedly happened in Mexico on October 4, 1952. Unfortunately, Slatzer could not produce corroborative evidence or a marriage certificate, but he nevertheless stuck to his story and published his book.

For the following 30 years Slatzer appeared on television talk shows, documentaries and videos (e.g.: "Say Goodbye to the President", 1985, "Marilyn Monroe -- The Final Day", 2000) without any solid proof to his claims except for nine photographs of himself and the Hollywood actress taken in the late 1940s and a brief mention in a 1961 Monroe biography.

The genie was now out of the bottle and authors lined up to benefit from the dramatic story that had been sparked, in part, by inconsistencies in the police investigation and contradictions in witness statements. Tony Sciacca (1976) and Milo Speriglio (1982 and 1986), whom Slatzer hired as an investigator followed Slatzer, and both authors took their lead from Slatzer. In the 1980s and 1990s, Anthony Summers, Seymour Hersh (1997) and C. David Heymann (1998) followed with their takes on the RFK/Monroe "affair." They gave credibility to the story by their own reputations as gifted investigative journalists as well as the fact they interviewed hundreds of people connected to the case. Unfortunately, the reliance these authors placed upon some questionable sources is a weak point in their books.

Up to the time of the publication of Summers's book, the story of RFK's relationship with Monroe was based on scurrilous gossip that originated, allegedly, with Kennedy-in-law Peter Lawford. And, following the release of U.S. Department of Justice files in the 1980s, telephone calls from Monroe to Robert Kennedy were interpreted in the worst possible light. Monroe's phone records show eight brief calls (a minute or two) at the end of June and early July. However, researchers soon discovered the telephone calls were actually taken by RFK's secretary, Angie Novello, who has stated Monroe had been upset; she had been arguing with the studio bosses. Doubtless, she was also upset that JFK was distancing himself from her. The calls proved nothing more than the fact that RFK and Monroe knew each other. After all, Monroe was close to Peter Lawford, RFK's brother-in-law. And, as RFK had always protected his brother's secrets, it was entirely plausible these telephone contacts were connected to RFK's efforts to inform Monroe that her gossip around Hollywood about her relationship with JFK was doing great damage to the administration.

By the time the RFK/Monroe story took off, historians had already established that JFK and Monroe had a brief, shallow affair. It is plausible that JFK began his relationship with Monroe in the 1950s when he was a U.S. senator. However, the only thing that can be definitely stated is that Kennedy and Monroe met five times between 1960 -- the year when Kennedy was elected president -- and August 1962 -- the time of Marilyn's death. This was at a party at Peter Lawford's house in Santa Monica in October 1961; a dinner party for the President at the home of Fifi Fell in Manhattan in May 1962; at

Bing Crosby's house in Palm Springs on Saturday March 24, 1962 (according to Donald Spoto this was the only time a sexual "tryst" between the two occurred); at Madison Square Garden for the President's 45th birthday gala and afterwards at a private party (Close friend, Ralph Roberts, said a tryst between JFK and Monroe was "impossible" – he gave her a massage after the party and departed her apartment at 4 a.m. when she "was asleep".); and sometime during the 1960 campaign, which was witnessed by Kennedy's friend, Charles Spalding.

Marilyn's close friend, Susan Strasberg, said Monroe denied any long term affair had existed, "Not in her worst nightmare," Strasberg wrote, "would Marilyn have wanted to be with JFK on any permanent basis. It was okay for one night to sleep with a charismatic president -- and she loved the secrecy and drama of it. But he certainly wasn't the kind of man she wanted for life and she was very clear to us about this."

Historians also considered the possibility that RFK had been dispatched to the West Coast with instructions to ask Monroe to remain quiet about her relationship with President Kennedy. Many assumed RFK was distancing the president from a woman who was becoming obsessive and irrational in thinking there was anything more to the JFK/Monroe affair than a brief liaison.

The publication of Summers's book provoked many respectable writers, journalists, and authors to take another look at the Monroe/Kennedys connection.

Summers's research led him to conclude that Robert Kennedy was with Marilyn Monroe on the day of her death and that it was likely she was romantically involved with him.

According to Summers, there was sufficient evidence to suggest the Mafia and/or Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa were attempting to gather evidence to blackmail JFK and his brother. Hoffa, a prime target of RFK when he was U.S. attorney general, had purportedly used electronic eavesdropping to gather his proof. Summers said Monroe had entered her final year still obsessed by the Kennedys. He alleged Monroe spent her final months as a highly unstable woman who was not in control of her life and was dependent on alcohol and drugs to combat her chronic insomnia. Upset that President Kennedy was distancing himself from her, she began an affair with his brother. When JFK dispatched Robert to the West Coast to stop Marilyn from talking, an angry and bitter argument occurred. Marilyn was either murdered to keep her quiet or she committed suicide and the evidence of the Kennedys' relationship with the actress was removed.

Researchers who examined the conclusions of the original investigation into Monroe's death said there were many inconsistencies in the timing of events and anomalies in the autopsy report. They also pointed to the forensics evidence that they alleged looked suspicious. Consequently, writers used these errors to construct alternative scenarios of how and why Monroe died.

By the 1980s rumors of a cover-up involving the Los Angeles Police Department, the CIA, the FBI, and the Mafia had spread. It was alleged that on the afternoon of her death, either with Peter Lawford or alone, Robert Kennedy arrived at Monroe's house and a shouting match over their love affair took place. Monroe became upset and her psychiatrist was called to calm her down. RFK and his aides left and Monroe remained in a narcotic haze. Robert Kennedy was squirreled out of Los Angeles and a cover-up ensued. Some writers intimated that Monroe might have been murdered to silence her. The reasons for her demise, they alleged, centred around Monroe's desire to hold a press conference to tell of her affairs with the Kennedy brothers and her possession of a supposed diary detailing her relationship with the Kennedys. She was also a purported security risk as RFK had allegedly told her of the U.S. government plots to kill Castro. It is telling that all the books claiming Monroe knew about

the plots to murder Castro were published after the well-publicized congressional hearings into the CIA's illegal activities.

Additional "proof" was given by author Donald Wolfe to show Monroe had secrets that would "shock the world." Allegedly, on the night before she died, she got or made a call to a Mexican fan, Jose Bolanos, who had met the actress when she visited Mexico in 1962. He escorted her to social functions during her stay. When he was told 24 hours later that she was dead, he commented: "I was told something shocking, something that will one day shock the world." So where is Bolanos and his shocking revelation? It is reasonable to assume that if Bolanos had a story that would "shock the world" he would have revealed it by now.

As the revelations about President Kennedy and the CIA/Mafia plots were publicized in the 1970s, they became linked in the minds of many writers with the death of Marilyn Monroe. Further reports of Monroe's connections with the Mafia, through her friendship with Frank Sinatra, led some to believe the Mafia had intended to blackmail President Kennedy. The motive centered on the Mafia's fear that the Kennedy Administration intended to destroy the criminal syndicate.

According to some authors, mob-connected Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa sent his wire-tapper, Bernie Spindel, to bug Monroe's house and the mob deployed Hollywood investigator Fred Otash to make tapes. It was also alleged that Monroe had installed her own recording device to get proof of her relationship with the Kennedy brothers, if and when she decided to tell her story. When JFK and RFK learned about this they allegedly decided the Monroe affair had gone too far. Monroe responded by telling intimates that she planned to hold a press conference.

Bernie Spindel, a known boaster, had stated as early as December 1966 that he had conducted electronic surveillance of Monroe's home and obtained material "which...strongly suggests that the officially reported circumstances of (Monroe's) demise are erroneous". However, he made this statement after a raid on his home by the Manhattan District Attorney's office in which evidence of illegal wiretapping had been seized resulting in the arrests of 28 people. Days later Spindel claimed the tapes had been stolen. The district attorney's office concluded that Spindel's story had been a fraud. Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Ronald Carroll wrote in his report, "Spindel's asserted desire to have the tapes made public appears to have been a ploy...The (Spindel) tapes were in fact heard by staff investigators and none of the tapes contained anything relating to Marilyn Monroe."

Reason and logic seems to escape those authors who believe the tapes actually existed. If Robert Kennedy had been compromised by tape recordings that had been made for Kennedy's enemy, Teamster boss Jimmy Hoffa, or Hoffa's Mafia associates, then they surely would have been used to prevent the corrupt union boss from going to jail. And if the Mafia had come into possession of the tapes, it would have used them to prevent the attorney general's crackdown on organized crime. Nothing of the sort happened because the tapes never existed.

Most conspiracy accounts of Robert Kennedy's relationship with Marilyn Monroe rely on four crucial witnesses: Peter Lawford, brother-in-law to the Kennedy brothers and close friend of Monroe; Robert Slatzer, a self-professed ex-husband; Jeanne Carmen, a supposed friend and neighbor, and Fred Otash who, allegedly, had Peter Lawford's Santa Monica beach house wiretapped. Many others, including Marilyn's housekeeper Eunice Murray, have told writers and investigative reporters that they saw RFK and Monroe together, but they have not testified to an "intimate and close" relationship.

All the RFK/Monroe affair authors have constructed their stories around statements made by these witnesses. Matthew Smith (1996) in his books *The Men Who Murdered Marilyn* and *Victim* (2004) and

Donald H. Wolfe in his 1998 book *The Assassination of Marilyn Monroe* are the latest conspiracy authors to give credence to the four witnesses' accounts.

Smith, Wolfe and Summers believed Slatzer and stated that they had interviewed a number of people who could testify to Slatzer's friendship with Monroe. But author Donald Spoto discovered that none of the people who were close to the actress had even heard of Slatzer. Spoto wrote in his definitive biography *Marilyn Monroe: The Biography* (1993), "...not one of Marilyn's friends, relatives, business associates, colleagues, spouses or lovers could even recall meeting him (much less Marilyn ever mentioning him) nor is he to be found in any of her personal telephone or address books." This was confirmed by Hollywood journalist James Bacon, a friend of Monroe's, who said he talked to her friends and they said they had never heard of him.

During his research, Spoto discovered that Slatzer's claim that he had been married to Monroe was pure invention. Spoto found out that Monroe was in Beverly Hills on the day of the alleged marriage on a shopping spree and she signed a check dated Oct. 4 to pay for articles she purchased. Since Slatzer says that the couple left for Mexico on Oct. 3 and stayed for the following weekend, Spoto's research demolishes the story that should have been investigated by conspiracy writers. Spoto also demolished the story of Monroe's "red diary" that purportedly revealed information about her affairs with the Kennedys and plots to kill Castro. The "red diary" was Monroe's simple address book that was on the table next to her bed after she was found dead. Conspiracy writer Matthew Smith in his book *Victim* claims three sources testify to the existence of the diary – coroner's aide Lionel Grandison, purported Marilyn friend Jeanne Carmen, and Robert Slatzer.

Grandison turns out to be a less than credible source as he was dismissed from the Coroner's Office for "crimes involving the theft of property from dead bodies."

Authors Summers, Seymour Hersh, Matthew Smith, Donald Wolfe and C. David Heymann place heavy reliance on Jeanne Carmen as a witness. Carmen was a late-surfacing, supposed intimate of Monroe. She purported to have been a friend and neighbor of Monroe's when the actress lived in Doheny Drive before she bought her home in Brentwood, a Los Angeles suburb. Carmen began to tell her story after Robert Slatzer published his invented story. Donald Spoto discovered that Monroe's neighbors at Doheny Drive and Monroe's friends at the time had no knowledge of Carmen.

Conspiracy authors bought into Carmen's uncorroborated stories because she was the person who could provide the most salacious details of the alleged RFK/Monroe "romance." Carmen is the source for the oft-repeated story of how RFK and Monroe visited a nudist beach and RFK was disguised in a wig and dark glasses. It was likely a total fabrication, yet the story has been used in nearly every book that purports to reveal the RFK/Monroe affair.

By the late 1990s Carmen apparently decided she was running out of new revelations. She told C. David Heymann that she had had an intimate relationship with JFK. For the previous two decades she had apparently forgotten to tell this sensational aspect of her story. It was, after all, the president of the United States she claimed she had been sleeping with.

Donald Wolfe purportedly found someone who could testify to the fact that Carmen had known Monroe. He was Brad Dexter, an actor and a friend of Frank Sinatra. Dexter could go no further than to say Carmen and Monroe knew each other. There is no indication in Wolfe's book that the actor thought the Carmen/Monroe friendship was anything other than an acquaintanceship.

Curiously, Frank Sinatra's valet George Jacobs said Carmen was Monroe's "best-girlfriend" and one of a number of women Sinatra used for sexual purposes. Jacobs stated that he had heard rumors

about RFK's visits to Monroe's home and that an affair was possible. Jacobs wrote, "Marilyn would tell me breathlessly about Jack though she never mentioned Bobby...the weasel (RFK) wasn't her type....".

In any case, Carmen's statements about RFK should not have been accepted without corroborative evidence. And if Carmen had really been a close friend then why didn't Marilyn's many friends come forward to support her allegations?

Carmen herself produced no factual and verifiable evidence to support her story. She maintained that Monroe had sent her a birthday card shortly before Monroe's death and yet it has never been produced. One would have expected the card would have been kept as a treasured memento especially since it would have been the last correspondence Monroe had sent. Furthermore, no photographs exist of Carmen and Monroe or any documentary evidence to prove they were close friends.

The third main witness to the RFK/Monroe alleged relationship is Fred Otash, who claims to have heard tape recordings of RFK and Monroe. In 1985, the former Hollywood private investigator told *The Los Angeles Times* that on the night of Monroe's death he had received a panicky late-night phone call from Peter Lawford saying Monroe was dead. Lawford allegedly told Otash that Monroe and RFK had a screaming fight about their relationship the evening she died. Otash said RFK arrived at Lawford's house, nervously telling Lawford, "She's ranting and raving. I'm concerned about her and what may come out of this."

Otash went on to tell *The Los Angeles Times* that Lawford begged him to rush to Monroe's house and "pick up any information that linked her to the Kennedys" before it could get into the wrong hands. Otash said he sent an assistant to do the sweep. (The assistant has never been named and has not come forward to corroborate Otash's statement.)

Later, in 1991, Otash told author James Spada, "He (Lawford) told me that Bobby Kennedy had broken off the affair with Marilyn and that she was hysterical and calling the White House and the Justice Department and Hyannis Port, insisting that Bobby get in touch with her. And that the Department of Justice had called Bobby in San Francisco and told him, 'You'd better get your ass down to LA because she's out of control.'"

However, a close friend of Otash, acclaimed novelist James Ellroy, author of *American Tabloid*, said Otash had confided in him his belief that the RFK/Monroe affair was bogus. Ellroy told the *Richmond Review*, "As much research as I've done, one fact stands fast -- I think Robert Kennedy was a great man, perhaps the chief crime fighter of the 20th century in America, and a paragon of moral rectitude. Parenthetically he did not play bury the brisket and pour the pork with Marilyn Monroe...I used to be friends with Shakedown Freddy Otash, private eye to the stars in LA circa 1955 to 1965. God bless him, Freddy died recently at the age of 71...Freddy told me he is convinced that Bobby never had an affair with Marilyn Monroe that, at the time of Marilyn's death, Bobby was interceding on Jack's behalf, trying to get this crazy woman to quit calling the president of the United States at the White House. She just kicked off coincidentally."

Witnesses such as Jeanne Carmen, Robert Slatzer and Fred Otash have little or no credibility. Peter Lawford, on the other hand, is an authoritative source simply because he was the president's brother-in-law and his story cannot be dismissed easily. Unfortunately, there have been so many versions of "his story" that it is difficult to sort fact from fantasy. In the final few years of his life, Lawford was dependent on drink and drugs and was altogether destitute. Perhaps he saw the embellishments to his story as a way of resurrecting his failing career. No one will ever really know. A number of authors

claim to have interviewed some of Marilyn's friends who said Lawford had told them about the supposed RFK/Monroe affair. Incredibly, C. David Heymann claims he spoke to Lawford a year before the actor's death. He said that Lawford described, in full detail, the RFK/Greenson "conspiracy" to subdue Monroe on the afternoon of the star's death. According to Heymann, Lawford told him, "I certainly think Marilyn would have held a press conference. She was determined to gain back her self-esteem. She was unbalanced at the time -- and Bobby was determined to shut her up, regardless of the consequences. It was the craziest thing he ever did -- and I was crazy enough to let it happen."

If Lawford's comments to Heymann are correct -- and until this time he had consistently denied RFK was anywhere near Monroe's house on the day of her death -- then the scenario changes. But this does not mean that the Kennedys had a hand in her death or that RFK was having an affair with the actress. It only means that RFK took the opportunity, on his West Coast trip, to visit with the actress and tell her to stop contacting himself and his brother. There is no credible evidence available that would lead to the conclusion that RFK had engaged in an affair with Monroe or that the Kennedys had her killed in order to silence her.

The first issue to consider in examining Lawford's remarks to Heymann is why the actor chose to make his statements to this particular author one year before his death. If Lawford had opened up to Heymann, it would have been a definite change of heart. Lawford consistently refused to talk about the Kennedys even when they had snubbed him after his divorce from Patricia Kennedy Lawford. On his deathbed on Christmas Eve 1984, Lawford told a *Los Angeles Times* reporter: "Even if these things were true (Monroe's relationship with the Kennedys) I wouldn't talk about them. That's just the way I am."

In the years before his death, drink and drugs had taken their toll on Lawford, who frequently said things in a drunken state to his wives and friends that he later regretted. Deborah Gould, Lawford's third wife for a brief period of time, stated to a reporter that Lawford had informed her that RFK had indeed been at Monroe's house the day of her death and that RFK and Monroe had been having an affair.

Lawford's last wife, Patricia Seaton Lawford, contradicts Gould's statement. Patricia Seaton had been a common law wife to Lawford for 11 years and married him on his deathbed. In statements made to the *New York Post*, Patricia Seaton Lawford said that Gould had invented the stories about the Monroe/RFK relationship. She also told the *Post's* Neal Travis that C. David Heymann fabricated stories about RFK and Monroe in his book, *RFK: A Candid Biography*.

According to Patricia Seaton Lawford her husband discussed the Kennedys and Monroe with her on many occasions. Her account of the Kennedy/Monroe story is credible and authoritative precisely because she was close to the actor for 11 years, unlike Gould who had a stormy and superficial relationship with Lawford for a brief period of time -- their relationship lasted for only a few months. But why do murder conspiracy authors choose Gould over Seaton as a credible source for Lawford's RFK/Monroe story? Simply stated, it is because Gould's account supports the murder conspiracy theory. Patricia Seaton Lawford is adamant that the RFK/Monroe stories have no basis in truth. And, according to author Donald Spoto, all of Peter Lawford's closest friends, including William Asher, Milton Ebbins, and Joseph Naar, "insist the Monroe/RFK friendship was platonic."

To deal with witnesses whose credibility is unsound is one thing. Much more difficult is tracking the changes these sources make to their stories. Surprising new details emerge in the re-telling. One can only speculate that memory improves with age -- or that some sources have an inherent difficulty in sticking to the truth. For example, hairdresser Mickey Song told James Spada of the time he was

asked to add the finishing touches to Monroe's hair for her appearance at JFK's birthday party at Madison Square Gardens. Song said, "While I was working on Marilyn she was extremely nervous and uptight. The door (to the backstage dressing room) was open and Bobby Kennedy was pacing back and forth outside, watching us. Finally he came into the dressing room and said to me, 'Would you step out for a minute?' When I did, he closed the door behind him, and he stayed in there for about fifteen minutes. Then he left and I went back in. Marilyn was all disheveled. She giggled and said, 'Could you help me get myself back together?'"

We are thus left with the impression that Robert Kennedy spent an intimate 15 minutes with the Hollywood actress. However, three years later Song gave an interview to Donald Wolfe and a different impression is gained as to what exactly happened. Song now said, "While I was working on Marilyn, she was extremely nervous and uptight. The dressing room door was open and Bobby Kennedy was pacing back and forth outside, glaring at us. Finally he came into the dressing room and said to me, 'Would you step out for a minute?' When I did, he closed the door behind him for about 15 minutes." So far there is nothing different in this version until Wolfe writes: "While waiting in the hall outside the dressing room, Mickey Song could hear Kennedy and Marilyn having an argument. The attorney general's voice was growing louder and louder, and he was using expletives. When Kennedy came out he said to Song, 'You can go in now', and then unexpectedly grabbed Song by the arm and demanded 'By the way do you like her'? Song recalled nodding enthusiastically that he did. 'Well I think she's a rude fucking bitch!' Kennedy exclaimed as he stormed down the hall." The implication from this account is that Robert Kennedy was angry at Monroe for her tardiness in keeping the president waiting, and not spending an intimate 15 minutes with her.

Wolfe also uses Patricia Seaton Lawford, Eunice Murray, and Murray's son-in-law handyman, Norman Jefferies, as sources for the mythical June 23rd dinner party at the Lawfords and RFK's subsequent visit to Monroe's house the next day. Wolfe wrote, "On Saturday June 23rd...Bobby Kennedy flew to Los Angeles and Peter Lawford arranged for Marilyn and Kennedy to meet. Kennedy was to attend a dinner party at the Lawford beach house, and Marilyn was invited...According to Patricia Seaton Lawford, the purpose of Bobby Kennedy's visit was to stop Marilyn from trying to contact the president...The following day (Sunday June 24, 1962) Bobby paid a visit to Marilyn's home..."

There is certainly no mention of that particular weekend visit in Patricia Seaton Lawford's memoirs. Eunice Murray later retracted her story about Robert Kennedy's "visit" – "I don't recall him being there at all...(in July and August 1962)," she said. In any case Murray's only statement about an RFK visit to Monroe's house was in connection with the day the actress died -- a statement that she retracted before her death. Wolfe's singular source must, therefore, be Norman Jefferies who related his story about the death of Monroe for Wolfe's 1998 book *The Assassination of Marilyn Monroe*. But Jeffries's account lacks credibility, coming as it does 36 years after Monroe's death and, more importantly, many years after his mother-in-law's 'confession'.

The unreliability of Wolfe's sources become irrelevant when various pieces of documentary evidence are considered that prove that RFK's whereabouts during 1962 speak for themselves. Desk diaries, telephone logs for 1961 and 1962, and FBI files (Hoover logged everything RFK did and even had his FBI agents spy on the attorney general in the hope of gathering discrediting information) show that RFK and Monroe met three times at large dinner parties at Peter Lawford's Santa Monica house -- Oct. 4, 1961, Feb. 2, 1962 and June 26, 1962 (he arrived in Los Angeles that afternoon for a dinner party the next evening, returning to Washington D.C. the morning of June 28, 1962). On two other occasions in 1962, when RFK was in Los Angeles (March 24 and 25, and July 26), Monroe was in

Palm Springs and Lake Tahoe. Telephone records document a telephone call on Monday June 25, 1962 that Monroe made to RFK's Washington office to confirm Kennedy's presence at the Lawford's on the following Wednesday evening; she spoke to RFK's secretary Angie Novello and the call lasted about a minute.

If RFK had been with Monroe the previous Sunday then why would she need to call him on the Monday to remind him about the Lawford's party? And why would RFK make two journeys to the West Coast with only a one-day interval in Washington D.C.?

"Sightings" of Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles on the day of Monroe's death have been included in every book that purports to show sinister reasons for her death. Many are credible coming as they do from sources that cannot be dismissed. Daryl Gates and Tom Reddin, ex-Los Angeles Police chiefs, said that "informant sightings" of RFK at the Beverly Wiltshire Hotel on August 4, 1962 had been reported to police.

From the evidence obtained from FBI files and from statements made by RFK's host that weekend, the host's family, and workers on the ranch near Gilroy, Calif., it is impossible that the attorney general could have been in Los Angeles that day. Robert and Ethel Kennedy flew to San Francisco on Friday, Aug. 3, 1962 and were met by their friend John Bates, his wife and family. They all insist that RFK had been in full sight of one member of the family or ranch workers for the full day. Dinner ended at approximately 10.30 p.m. and the party retired to bed shortly afterwards. The nearest airstrip was in San Jose, an hour away by car. The deep canyons in the Santa Cruz Mountains made the ranch inaccessible by helicopter and the ranch was five hours away from Los Angeles by car. On Sunday morning the Bates and Kennedy families attended mass in the town of Gilroy. The Bates family stories have been rigorously researched and, unlike many tales about this sorry event, have the ring of truth.

FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover, who hated Robert Kennedy and had kept a file on Monroe ever since she married Arthur Miller (Hoover viewed the playwright as a left-wing subversive). According to Ed Guthman, a close aide to the attorney general, "It would have been impossible for Hoover not to have known about such goings-on had they occurred and he certainly would have used this information during Bobby's later campaign for office."

Hoover biographer, Curt Gentry, said the FBI knew no more than the average person did about the connection between Monroe and Robert Kennedy. Gentry wrote, "Had he (known more), Hoover would almost certainly have used this information against Kennedy at a later date, when he ransacked his files for every bit of derogatory material he could find." And had RFK contacted Hoover to have the FBI retrieve telephone company records, Hoover would have created a record to protect himself and to use as leverage.

Some writers have used FBI documents to "prove" Robert Kennedy had been having an affair with Monroe, but they fail to discriminate between those reports emanating from agent observations and those resulting from "informant information." It was an informant who prompted agents to report that, "Robert Kennedy was deeply involved emotionally with Marilyn Monroe..." It was the same type of informant information that resulted in an FBI memo concerning John Kennedy's relationship with Inga Arvad to report her as a "German spy." This information, of course, was erroneous.

In his recent book *Victim* (2003), JFK conspiracy writer Matthew Smith published extracts from Monroe's secretly taped sessions with her psychiatrist Dr. Greenson. Assistant D.A. John Miner told Smith he had listened to the tapes (which were destroyed) and reconstructed them from memory. They are altogether inconsequential "free associating" musings -- apart from Miner's detailing of

Monroe's comments about JFK and RFK. Miner tells of how Monroe wanted to break off a relationship with "Bobby", "...but because I know how much he'll be hurt I don't have the strength to hurt him." Yet this revelation comes after decades of conspiracy writers' attempts to prove RFK was the one who was trying to break off the "relationship." Furthermore, because the exact context of Monroe's free associating is never presented, they cannot be credibly used without reference to Monroe's inherited mental illness, her frequent drug use and her ability to fantasize -- (She believed there was a chance she would replace Jacqueline Kennedy as first lady).

The most recent examination of the RFK/Monroe affair was by acclaimed historian Michael O'Brien (*John F. Kennedy*, 2005), who concluded, "Dark suspicions purport to prove that Robert Kennedy also had a passionate affair with Monroe. When the romance soured, the story goes, with the connivance of the FBI, the CIA, or Communists, RFK arranged to have Monroe murdered, and then orchestrated an elaborate cover-up. None of these allegations have been substantiated...suggestions that they enjoyed anything but a polite social relationship are unfounded, as are the scurrilous reports that he was somehow involved in her death."

Ed Guthman traveled all around the country with the attorney general. He was with Robert Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe on at least two occasions. Guthman told author James Hilty, "I know there was no affair." Close friend of RFK's, Kenneth O'Donnell, told writer Lester David, "I knew this man as well as anybody. I was intimately associated with him for years and knew everything he ever did, and I know for a fact that this Marilyn Monroe story is absolute bullshit."

There is no credible evidence establishing that Monroe and the president's brother had an affair and, contrary to the claims made by conspiracy writers, no part of the FBI files can safely substantiate an RFK/Monroe affair. The truth of the matter is that RFK had only a passing acquaintance with the Hollywood actress. Documentary evidence in the form of court transcripts, letters or phone records proving such a relationship do not exist. A letter from Jean Kennedy Smith, RFK's sister, is the only piece of documentary evidence that possibly can be misinterpreted. It refers to Monroe and Robert Kennedy as an "item," but Jean Smith has gone on record as saying the phrase was used as a "joke," no doubt in reference to Monroe's admiration for the president's brother and her determination to impress him with her knowledge of current affairs. Similarly, C. David Heymann wrongly used notes/letters passed between RFK and Pat Newcomb to substantiate an affair between those two. The letters can only suggest a light-hearted communication between friends.

As Donald Spoto has recounted in his definitive biography of the movie star, there are less sinister conclusions to draw when the full circumstances of Monroe's death are considered. And, as Spoto discovered, Monroe's psychiatrist, Dr. Greenson, her physician Dr. Engelberg and the housekeeper, Eunice Murray, are the keys to an understanding of what went on that night. What they did explains all the anomalies and inconsistencies in the evidence and testimony gathered at the time of Monroe's death.



In their accounts to investigators of the early hours of the Sunday morning when the police were called to Monroe's home, these three witnesses put the time of Monroe's death at 3 a.m. At this time, according to Murray, she saw a light shining from beneath Marilyn's bedroom door. This was the first inconsistency in Murray's story -- a new thick-pile carpet had only recently been laid and it was impossible to see light emitting from the room. Thus began the chain of

inconsistencies, which eventually led to the bizarre and untruthful murder scenarios. If Murray had been lying, what was she covering up?

Spoto paints a picture of Dr. Ralph Greenson as a Svengali-like figure who had an unhealthy control over his famous patient. In turn his ego depended on his relationship with the actress. But Greenson, in the name of therapy, was cutting Monroe off from those people she considered her friends, not least baseball legend Joe DiMaggio whom she intended to re-marry. Monroe was determined to rid herself of both Murray and Greenson. She guessed that Murray had been placed with her to spy for Greenson, according to make-up artist Allan Snyder and Marilyn's publicist Pat Newcomb.

Monroe told Murray that she was not needed anymore and there is strong evidence that she was angry and upset with Greenson and saw no place for him in her new life with DiMaggio. This fact alone makes a supposed relationship with RFK preposterous. On the Thursday before her death Monroe told store owner Bill Alexander: "...I'm so happy because I'm going to be married to someone I was married to once before."

As Monroe's masseur and close friend, Ralph Roberts, said: "She deeply resented Greenson's use of her...He had tried to get rid of almost everyone in her life. But when he tried it with Joe (DiMaggio) -- I think that's when she began to reconsider the whole thing." Monroe was rebelling against Greenson who had controlled her life for too long not least in the way he used drugs as a control mechanism.

During her last day alive Monroe engaged in what amounted to a day's therapy session with Greenson, starting at 1 p.m. and lasting until about 7 p.m. with a break between approximately 3 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. By 4 p.m. when she visited the Lawford beach-house she appeared drugged and nervous. From the evidence Donald Spoto gathered it appears likely that in the all-day session with Greenson she discussed the termination of her therapy with him.

At 5 p.m. Monroe took a call from Peter Lawford who was trying to assemble friends for a Saturday night supper. She declined but he said he would call back later. Around this time Greenson contacted Hyman Engleberg to come and give Monroe an injection which would help her sleep. Engleberg declined and Greenson was left to cope on his own. At 7:15 Greenson departed asking Murray to stay over at Monroe's house that night because he "didn't want Marilyn to be alone."

Over the years Greenson and Murray have given inconsistent accounts. As a result, the truth has escaped investigators mainly because of their repeatedly changing accounts of what exactly happened. But two telephone calls, according to Spoto, provide important clues to a final resolution of the Monroe mystery. The first call was from Joe DiMaggio Jr., son of Monroe's second husband, Joe DiMaggio, at 7 to 7:15 p.m. The conversation was pleasant and Monroe seemed in good spirits. The second call came from Peter Lawford at 7:40 or 7:45 p.m. Her speech was now slurred and almost inaudible. She said "Say goodbye to Pat, say goodbye to the president and say goodbye to yourself because you're a nice guy." Lawford tried to call back but the line was engaged. Frantic, he telephoned his manager, Milt Ebbins. Ebbins told him not to go over to Marilyn's -- how would it look?, "You're the president's brother-in-law." Lawford's maid and his friend George Durgom insisted Lawford never left his house that evening.

Within the space of half an hour Monroe had changed from laughing and chatting to a state of dying. Ebbins called Milton Rudin, Marilyn's attorney. Rudin then telephoned Eunice Murray who told him she had checked on Monroe and everything was fine. However, Rudin had the feeling she had not checked at all. Rudin then called Ebbins who reported to Lawford that all was well but still Lawford was worried. Rudin then received a call from Greenson well before midnight to say the actress was dead. He drove to Monroe's house and encountered Greenson and Murray. The head of Monroe's

publicity company, Arthur Jacobs, joined Rudin after he received a telephone call. According to Rudin, Greenson said, "God Damn it he (Engleberg) gave her a prescription I didn't know about." It is likely an ambulance was called around midnight, but by this time the actress was dead and, as California law prohibited the transport of corpses by ambulance, it returned to base.

But the police were not called until much later -- around 4 a.m. -- why? According to Greenson it was because they had to get permission from the publicity department of Monroe's studio -- an absurdity. When the police arrived Eunice Murray was operating the washing machine -- yet another bizarre event in this sorry tale.

Donald Spoto maintains that the most logical reasoning for these strange events that Saturday night was that Greenson had asked Murray to sedate Monroe with a drug laden enema -- this would account for the purple discoloration of the star's colon. He could not reach Dr. Engleberg and, therefore, he had used Murray to carry out the process. The reason for sedating Monroe was to end the conversation Monroe had been having with Greenson -- Greenson perhaps hoped that when Monroe awoke the next morning she would have changed her mind about ending Greenson's services. However, in asking Murray to carry out the act of sedating the Hollywood star, Greenson was committing an unprofessional act and if it were ever revealed it would be the end of his career. Both Murray and Greenson thus had something to hide.

Unaware of exactly how many Nembutal pills Monroe had ingested (she had probably been taking them throughout the day), Greenson sedated Monroe with chloral hydrate. Its interaction with the Nembutal probably tipped Monroe over the edge. The coroner who performed the autopsy found no pills in Monroe's stomach therefore it would seem, at first, unlikely she committed suicide. (However, Noguchi did say that the hemorrhaging of her stomach lining was consistent with oral ingestion of a drug overdose.) Furthermore, there were no signs of needle marks. What the coroner did find was a colonic discoloration consistent with the use of an enema. Monroe frequently used them but, unfortunately, this enema contained chloral hydrate, which is potentially lethal when taken with Nembutal -- a fact that would not have been known to Monroe. But because Greenson was unaware of how many Nembutal the actress had taken, he was not in the position to make an informed judgment when the sedative was administered.

Greenson and Murray needed time to consider the awful circumstances they found themselves in and this would account for the elapsed time between Monroe's death and the arrival of the police.

It is possible Monroe delivered the enema herself. She had been upset when she learned Pat Newcomb had experienced a good night's sleep the previous evening and she hadn't. Perhaps she was making sure she slept that night by administering to herself the chloral hydrate.

The idea that a "hot shot" was given to Monroe is out of the question, according to experts -- it would have resulted in instantaneous death and left a much higher residue of barbiturates in the blood. The only rational alternative reason for Monroe's demise (aside from Spoto's thesis and suicide) is to consider her addiction to drugs as fundamental to the anomalous occurrences in the state of her body at the time of her death. Monroe was a drug addict and drug addicts tend to increase the dosage in their bodies, developing a tolerance for the drug. As the dosage increases, the addict feels no different from when he/she started with the original dose (ably demonstrated with reference to Elvis Presley's drug taking). But now the effects become dangerous or perhaps fatal. Monroe increased her levels to the point where it would not have been difficult for her to cross the danger line. Barbiturates present problems because they are also habit forming, and the fatal dose is not much more than the normal therapeutic dose. Thus they are truly dangerous drugs and are widely used by suicides. They

also present the danger of automatism, that is the patient may take a dose, leave the bottle on the bedside table, and then, when half asleep, forget that the dose has already been taken and take some more.

How to account for the lack of drug residue in Monroe's stomach? An addict's stomach becomes used to the drug of choice and it easily passes into the intestines. Addicts routinely die with no trace of the pills in the stomach and, in Monroe's case, this is entirely consistent with the coroner's report. An empty stomach does not preclude the possibility that she digested the pills over a number of hours and the high levels of barbiturates found in Monroe's liver testifies to this. Noguchi said that those who claim there should have been traces of the yellow dye from the capsules are misinformed. The coroner also said he would call Monroe's death a "very probable" suicide (which, of course, has been challenged by many doctors and toxicologists).

Monroe often took her pills with a glass of champagne. (Although no glass was found in her bedroom, Murray could have removed it when she cleaned the house up after she called Greenson.) Barbiturates and alcohol are eliminated by the same system of enzymes in the liver. This means that consumption of the two chemicals at the same time can lead to a build up of the toxic drug in the liver, resulting in liver failure and death.

It has not helped matters when authors of popular biographies or murder conspiracy books have deliberately or unconsciously ignored, manipulated, or misused facts to pursue their investigation into Marilyn Monroe's death. But matters are not improved when authoritative historians enter the field giving credence to incredible theories. Writing in the *Sunday Telegraph*, British historian, Paul Johnson reviewed C. David Heymann's 1998 biography of RFK. Johnson wrote, "When Jack wanted to discard Marilyn Monroe he passed her on to Bobby, who used her and discarded her in turn. He clearly bears some responsibility for her suicide..." Thus the waters again become muddied and murder conspiracy authors are given credence by a reputable but unwitting historian.

Both Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Kenneth O'Donnell, who were close to RFK until his death, have stated that RFK had a strong marriage but he did stray at times. According to O'Donnell, "Bobby discovered girls." However, as Evan Thomas, an acclaimed RFK biographer, wrote, "A small publishing industry has grown up devoted to proving...that RFK not only slept with Marilyn Monroe, he then arranged to have her snuffed out – and covered up the sordid mess. Although widely believed, these conspiracy theories have no real evidence to support them...One of Kennedy's alleged trysts...was said to have occurred on a date when they were not even in the same country...all that is certain and provable is that RFK knew Monroe and saw her on four occasions, probably never alone."

Key sources like Patricia Newcomb, friend and assistant to Marilyn Monroe, and Ralph Roberts, Monroe's masseur, who was constantly in her company, have been ignored. This is a central weakness in books that posit a Robert Kennedy/Marilyn Monroe affair or seek to popularize murder conspiracies involving the Kennedys. As Newcomb told author, J. Randall Taraborrelli (1997): "I knew Bobby very well, better than Marilyn did in a lot of ways. However, you didn't even have to know him well to know that he would never have left Ethel. And with all those children? Come on. I think she may have come on to him, but I don't believe anything happened between them; just from the little things he said to me about her, I don't think so."

Arthur Schlesinger Jr. interviewed Roberts for his book *RFK And His Times* (1978). Schlesinger wrote, "In other moods she (Monroe) spoke more reasonably. She once mentioned the rumors about Robert Kennedy to her masseur Ralph Roberts (Author's note: Roberts was described by Donald Wolfe as an "honest and straightforward man"), with whom, according to (Norman) Mailer she had a

'psychic communion that is obviously not ordinary...' It's not true,' she said to Roberts, 'I like him (RFK), but not physically.'

No one can state with absolute certitude whether or not RFK took advantage of the Hollywood star's fascination with the Kennedys and then embarked on a short love affair with her. What can be stated confidently is that no credible evidence exists which can tie the Kennedys (nor, for that matter, the Mafia) into a murder plot.

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His latest book, *A Racial Crime – James Earl Ray And The Murder Of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.*, was published in the United States by ArcheBooks in February 2005.

In 2003 he acted as the historical adviser for the BBC's television documentary "The Kennedy Dynasty" broadcast in November of that year. He has written articles for Ireland's leading history magazine *History Ireland*, David Horowitz's *Frontpage* magazine and History News Network.