“Yeah, the government’s sure been good to you,” Chuck retorted sarcastically.

“Hey,” Mooney said sharply. He leaned forward and knotted his hands into two tight fists. “Forget about the fuckin’ G-men . . . I’m talkin’ CIA. They’re different. Like night and day. We’ve been partners on more deals than I have time to tell you about. You should know that by now, for Christ’s sake.”

“I guess I’ll never understand, huh?” Chuck challenged, irritated by Mooney’s cavalier know-it-all attitude. Glowering, Mooney stood up from his chair, cigar in hand, and marched across the room. When he reached Chuck, he lowered his voice and hissed, “Maybe this will help.” He fixed Chuck in a steely, impenetrable gaze. “We took care of Kennedy . . . together.” He lifted his cigar to his lips and a cruel smile curled like an embrace around it.

There was a deadly silence in the room as Mooney stalked back to the comfort of his chair. Chuck felt as if his mind had just gone blank, become an empty slate of
a sudden outburst of patriotism on the part of a two-bit racketeer.

Mooney told Chuck that he'd kept Johnny Roselli as his liaison to Marcello, Trafficante, and the CIA, while concurrently directing his lieutenants to put Ruby in charge of overseeing the Outfit's role in the assassination, collaborating in Dallas with the government agents.

So it came to be that another Jack Ruby—a smart, clever man, one very different from the person erroneously portrayed by the media as an overzealous yet bumbling nightclub owner—played a major role in the events surrounding the murder of the President.

Ruby, Mooney told Chuck, had been a logical choice. The guy had previously demonstrated his extreme loyalty and ability to work with the CIA during the planning for the Bay of Pigs invasion. Mooney said he'd heard through Lenny Patrick that Ruby actually had come into his own while collaborating with his intelligence buddies; over time, the Dallas gangster had formed fast friendships with undercover agents—men like Lee Harvey Oswald. Indeed, at one point, Ruby went so far as to give CIA operative and Outfit pilot David Ferrie a job in his Carousel Club.

But there was another reason Mooney said he selected Jack Ruby for the job: His relationships with Dallas law enforcement officers were unusually good. Since first coming to Texas, true to his Chicago Outfit training, he'd massaged the local cops and politicians, gradually getting to know most on a first-name basis. These friendships, Mooney said, had been extremely useful in overcoming problems "with the local cop in the street" in the aftermath of the assassination.

As the person representing the Outfit in Dallas, the task
had quite naturally fallen to Ruby to silence Oswald when he was unexpectedly captured alive. "Having Oswald alive ... and in custody ... put us on the spot, real good," Mooney said, chuckling. Chuck, for his part, didn't see the humor.

Utilizing his associations with the Dallas police force, Mooney explained that Ruby was able to gain entry to the police station—an astounding feat for a person the press later referred to as a "half-witted strip club operator"—both immediately after Oswald's incarceration and, more critically, during Oswald's transfer.

The look on Oswald's face at the sight of a man he knew, should have tipped the cops, Mooney admitted. "Shit, I heard they were queer for each other," Mooney said. "They sure as hell were friends. . . . Oswald knew what the story was when he saw Jack comin' at him. He knew he'd been made the patsy already and then he knew Jack was gonna take him out . . . but what the fuck was he gonna do about it then?" Mooney shrugged impassively. "It was too late."

Chuck knew from years of association with the Outfit that a guy in Ruby's position would have to go to any lengths to kill Oswald, who had the knowledge to blow the lid off the entire operation. There wasn't an Outfit guy alive who didn't think it was better to die in prison as a murderer—to be executed in the chair for that matter—than to die at the hands of one of Mooney's vengeful enforcers for a screwed-up job. The gruesome memory of Action Jackson's torture and murder still lingered. Ever the loyal Outfit guy, Jack Ruby did what he had to do.

Mooney said that the "alleged lone gunman," Lee Harvey Oswald, like Ruby, had ties to both the CIA and the Outfit. Oswald had been connected to the New Orleans Mob from the time he was born; his uncle was a Marcello lieutenant who had exerted a powerful influence over the fatherless boy. Early in life, Oswald had formed a powerful alliance with the U.S. intelligence community. First, as an impressionable young man during a stint in the Civil Air Patrol with homosexual CIA operative and Outfit smuggling pilot David Ferrie—a bizarre, hairless eccentric whom Mooney said he and Marcello frequently used to fly drugs and guns out of Central America. And later, when serving in the marines during the late fifties, when Oswald attended a series of intensive intelligence training sessions run by the Office of Naval Intelligence in a top secret Japanese spy base. The short of it, Mooney said, was that Lee Harvey Oswald was a CIA agent.

Oswald had been a spy for the U.S. government in the Soviet Union, and had been trained to speak fluent Russian. He was not a Castro sympathizer nor Communist at all, as the misinformation that spewed forth from government agencies in the wake of the assassination had the public believing. In truth, Mooney said, "Lee Harvey Oswald was a right-wing supporter of the 'Kill Castro, Bay of Pigs Camp' . . . CIA all the way."

After serving the CIA and its military intelligence division in the Soviet Union, Oswald had returned to work at a company involved in top security projects for the U.S. government. Once back in New Orleans with his Russian wife, he was directed by the CIA to a man very well known to Mooney, former Chicago FBI agent and Commie-buster Guy Banister.

Banister's Camp Street detective offices were a front for CIA covert domestic operations as well as clandestine Outfit and Cuban exile operations—just as had been the case with the Miami-based detective agency in which Rich-
and Cain had worked following his stint with the CIA, where he trained Cuban exiles. Likewise, Mooney said Bob Maheu’s Washington–Las Vegas detective agencies served a similar purpose. All were fronts, designed to cloak illegal CIA-Outfit activities and draw top-notch agents for the CIA.

When Oswald was sent to Dallas by his intelligence superiors, he met with Mooney’s Dallas representative, Jack Ruby, at Ruby’s Carousel Club and reestablished his relationship with David Ferrie. Oswald was also put in contact with another of Mooney’s associates, a man Mooney dealt with through both his Haitian and Dallas dealings, the Russian exile and CIA operative, geologist George DeMohrenschildt. “That guy helped me make a lot of money in oil, man oh man, did he have the contacts with Texas oilmen back then. He introduced me to a lot of ‘em, too.”

Over the years, Chuck had heard the names of many oilmen mentioned by his brother as “business associates,” among them Syd Richardson, H. L. Hunt, Clint Murchison, and Mike Davis—a man who was later rumored among Outfit guys to be connected romantically with Phyllis McGuire. Chuck had also heard the names of several Texas politicians, including Lyndon Johnson and John Connally, said by Mooney to have received substantial Outfit and oil-money backing.

Mooney now confirmed that the dollars raised for the hit on the President—each man involved in the assassination plot received fifty thousand dollars; Mooney said he personally received “millions in oil”—had come from wealthy right-wing Texas oilmen. Precisely who these financiers were, however, Mooney never disclosed. And following a code well-ingrained over many years in the Outfit, Chuck never asked.

Mooney told Chuck he sent Johnny Roselli to New Orleans to check out Oswald early on. “When I told Marcello what the deal was, he said he liked the way Oswald looked for the job and so did Banister. Roselli came back with the same impression. . . . ‘He’s perfect,’ that’s what Roselli said after he met him in Banister’s office,” Mooney recalled. Roselli returned to Banister’s New Orleans office several times in preparation for Dallas, his last trip being in October of 1963.

Contrary to popular opinion, Oswald, Mooney added, had been a bright kid. His downfall had been his unyielding patriotism and malleability; he was easily manipulated.

In early spring of 1963, when the decision was reached by Mooney and his CIA associates to finalize plans for their elimination of the President, Oswald was the natural choice as fall guy. “They’d already laid the groundwork to make him look like a Commie nut, by goin’ to Russia and with all that pro-Castro shit. He was perfect . . . he acted like a Commie . . . he smelled like a Commie . . . so they figured it would be no problem to convince people he was a Commie.”

As he’d done with the Castro assassination attempt and other covert operations previously, Mooney told Chuck he relied on Roselli as his main conduit to the CIA—but only after he said he held an initial meeting with Guy Banister, Bob Maheu, and former CIA deputy director Charles Cabell, then employed in Maheu’s detective firm. There was also a man Mooney described as a “covert operations specialist” and some top brass in U.S. military intelligence from Asia in attendance.
After this meeting, Mooney said that Roselli met "several times" with members of the original group as well as the CIA's Frank Fiorini. Roselli also continued to serve as Mooney's go-between to Marcello, Trafficante, and Hoffa, men who were equally eager to see their nemesis, Jack Kennedy, eliminated.

Mooney said that the entire conspiracy went "right up to the top of the CIA." He claimed that some of its former and present leaders were involved, as well as a "half dozen fanatical right-wing Texans, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, and the Bay of Pigs Action Officer under Eisenhower, Richard Nixon."

The more Chuck understood about Mooney's plot and its multitude of players, the more apparent it became that there were few, if any, lines of demarcation between the Outfit and the CIA. There were no black hats and white hats; that was all a sham for, as Mooney put it, "saps to cling to." In many instances, the Outfit and the CIA were one and the same.

Such was the case, according to Mooney, with Frank Fiorini, Mooney's lieutenant who worked simultaneously with the government intelligence agency and would go on to become embroiled in Richard Nixon's Watergate fiasco under the alias Frank Sturgis.

The same held true of Richard Cain. Cain was an operative and Outfit man who secretly had worked as a spy for Mooney in Chicago Sheriff Richard Ogilvie's department. Cain was now the man whom Mooney intended to make his confidante, international traveling companion, and CIA deal-maker.

From Mooney's point of view—one that Chuck couldn't help but embrace when faced with the facts his brother threw down before him—the CIA and Outfit had become so intertwined that to say there had been a conspiracy between the two overlooked the mere fact that they had become—for all practical purposes—one.

For all its apparent simplicity, Mooney said the Dallas assassination had taken months to mastermind; dozens of men were involved and the hit had been planned for several different cities—Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Dallas. But ultimately, the President had been lured to Dallas, the city affording the best opportunity for a successful assassination. Mooney said both "Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson knew about the whole damned thing," having met with him several times in Dallas immediately prior to the assassination. What exactly was discussed between these men, Mooney didn't say.

"The politicians and the CIA made it real simple," Mooney explained. "We'd each provide men for the hit... I'd oversee the Outfit side of things and throw in Jack Ruby and some extra backup and the CIA would put their own guys on to take care of the rest."

According to Mooney, the nuts-and-bolts planning had involved some of the top people on the Dallas police force; most conveniently, the mayor, Earle Cabell, was the brother of former CIA deputy director Charles Cabell. As the man responsible for citywide security, the mayor provided the police protection for the presidential motorcade. Mooney grinned. "They made sure it was so loose down there on the day of the hit, shit, a four-year-old could've nailed Jack Kennedy."

Chuck would later learn through the Outfit grapevine that Mooney solicited professional killers from several quarters. Killers, who the guys said, were required to be 'top-notch marksmen': two of Marcello's men, Charles Harrelson and Jack Lawrence, as well as two of Traf-
ficante's Cuban exile "friends." It was rumored that one of these exiles was a former Havana vice cop turned mobster and the other a radical-turned-corrupt U.S. Customs official.

From Chicago, Mooney brought in Richard Cain, Chuckie Nicoletti, and Milwaukee Phil, all having worked previously on "the Bay of Pigs deal." Mooney said that both Cain and Nicoletti were actual gunmen for the hit, being placed at opposite ends of the Dallas Book Depository. In fact, he asserted it was Cain, not Oswald, who'd actually fired from the infamous sixth-story window.

Mooney also alleged that the CIA had added several of their own "soldiers" to the team, using Roscoe White and J. D. Tippit as the actual gunmen—along with Frank Fiorini and Lee Harvey Oswald, the man Mooney said they intended to frame as the lone assassin.

During the operation, Mooney said the CIA upper echelon sequestered themselves in a hotel, surrounded by electronic equipment. With the aid of walkie-talkies, the men were able to secure their firing positions and learn of Oswald's whereabouts immediately following the hit. Mooney's backup, Milwaukee Phil, stood armed and ready to handle any last-minute interference with the shooters.

To eliminate Oswald, Mooney said the CIA had selected White and Tippit, who both—like Richard Cain, who'd served in Chicago's Sheriff's Department—held positions in law enforcement, on the Dallas police force. Under the guise of self-defense and in the line of duty, they were to murder the "lone gunman." However, Tippit had wavered, Mooney said, allowing Oswald to escape. Thus, White had been forced to kill his partner. "Probably the only real screwup in the whole goddamned deal."

"And the rest is history," Mooney said, grinning. "For once, we didn't even have to worry about J. Edgar Hoover.... He hated the Kennedys as much as anybody and he wasn't about to help Bobby find his brother's killers. He buried his head in the sand, covered up anything and everything his 'Boy Scouts' found. But there was a line into the CIA. If somebody knew too much, the CIA found out about it and took care of the problem." When Mooney used the phrase "took care of the problem," Chuck caught the tacit message being conveyed.

From what Mooney said that day, the CIA had indeed stepped in with immense efficiency and removed all traces of conspiracy. As for any evidence that Chicago's Mob boss was a participant in the events of November 22, 1963, Mooney said he was well insulated, thanks to his practice of delegating the details to his trusted lieutenants. Mooney—like the higher ups in the CIA—cared very little about the minute details of the plot's inner workings; the results were all that mattered. He'd met one last time in Dallas, right before the hit, with the top guys in the CIA group, some politicians, and the Texan assassination backers, and that was that.

Chuck had listened appalled while Mooney unveiled the story of the President's murder. Now, his brother suddenly looked away, falling quiet as he apparently searched for the right words. He turned back to Chuck and went on. "The hit in Dallas was just like any other operation we'd worked on in the past... we'd overthrown other governments in other countries plenty of times before. This time, we just did it in our own backyard."

He said the murder of President Kennedy was little different from the plot to kill Castro, the murders of Viet-
nam’s leaders, that of Panama’s president—or any of the other dozens of military/CIA-sponsored coups propagated throughout the world.

“On November 22, 1963,” Mooney stated with chilling authority, “the United States had a coup; it’s that simple. The government of this country was overthrown by a handful of guys who did their job so damned well . . . not one American even knew it happened. But I know. I know I’ve guaranteed the Outfit’s future . . . once and for all. We’re set here in the United States. So, it’s time to move on to greener pastures. Spreadin’ the Outfit’s power and makin’ a fortune in deals overseas are two of the best reasons I can think of to leave the country.” He paused and smiled somewhat sheepishly. “And I guess we could add that it’ll be damned nice not being tailed by the G.”

Just days later, Mooney was in Mexico and Chuck was left alone with his terrible secret.

Thanks to his brother’s revelations, Chuck felt he would now live forever in the shadow of fear. And that fear—the fear that came with knowing the truth—gripped him