

Vincent Salandria Interview by Paul Kurtz

Podcast conducted and produced by [Paul Kurtz](#); broadcast on KYW Newsradio and published on [CBS Philly](#), October 27, 2017 under the title, “[Local Assassination Researcher Has Little Interest In JFK Documents](#)”. Transcript published in *rat haus reality press*, September 21, 2018.



[Complete MP3 recording](#) (20:07, 19.4 MB)

This interview was conducted by Paul Kurtz in his studio at CBS Philly.

Broadcaster Voice It appears as though something has happened in the motorcade route. Something, I repeat, has happened in the motorcade route.

Dan Rather President Kennedy and Governor John Connally have been cut down by assassin’s bullets in downtown Dallas.

Walter Cronkite He is now in the emergency room of Parkland Hospital in Dallas. He is remaining in the emergency room because—

Broadcaster Voice The President is seriously wounded. This information comes from Texas Senator Ralph Yarborough.

Walter Cronkite From Dallas, Texas, the flash, apparently official, President Kennedy died at 1 P.M., Central Standard Time.

Press in Dallas Jail Did you kill the president?

Oswald in Dallas Jail No sir I didn’t.

Press Did you shoot the president?

Oswald I work in that building.

Press Were you in the building at the time?

Oswald Naturally, if I work in that building, yes sir.

Voice Back up man.

Oswald I'm just a patsy.

Paul Kurtz Hi, I'm Paul Kurtz. I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Philadelphia's own, Vincent Salandria, one of the earliest critics of the Warren Report. My purpose was to get his thoughts on the most recent release of documents related to the JFK assassination. Salandria is now 89, but the retired lawyer and Bartram High School teacher is still razor-sharp and steadfast in his conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the patsy he had claimed to be; a pawn of the CIA, and JFK was the victim of a coup d'état that still looms like a dark shadow over the U.S. and the Oval Office. His initial response took me by surprise.

Vincent Salandria As expected in releasing the documents, I'm telling you Mr. Kurtz, that before the Warren Report all I needed was: If you kill Oswald, I know you did it; [at] the highest level of power which you permitted him to be killed. If the government was innocent, if the warfare state was innocent, he would have been protected that weekend. But, go beyond that. I was given the Warren Report and there was no way Specter—who created the magic bullet concept which allowed for the Warren Commission to issue its report of a single assassin—couldn't answer.

Documents are not needed. They have given us all we need to demonstrate it can't be any other explanation for the meaning of Kennedy but that the national security state, the warfare state, in combination with our media and our Wall Street at that time, coordinated by Allen Dulles, they did it. Please no more documents. Don't need them.

Paul Kurtz How difficult has it been making this your—you called it your duty, to get the truth out there and I'm sure you've been vilified and considered a crank and a nut.

Vincent Salandria Not exactly Mr. Kurtz.

Paul Kurtz Okay.

Vincent Salandria As a matter of fact, Philadelphia has been so kind to me. *Philadelphia Magazine* was the only conventional magazine that took up the case very seriously using its excellent investigative reporter—probably the best investigative reporter in the country—[Gaeton Fonzi](#), who did original work on the case.

I worked for the school district of Philadelphia as a school teacher. I was a lawyer at 23 but always wanted to be a school teacher. And was both.

I recall that very early I assessed my view of the assassination [that] the highest level of American power was behind it. How did that come about? I had a then brother-in-law, who is now deceased, Harold Feldman. He was invited to my home the Saturday following the assassination and we talked about Lee Harvey Oswald who was contending, at night, he was a patsy. And we decided that we would know by the end of the weekend whether he was a patsy or whether there was another level of assassination far above a single, lone assassin.

We said that if he is really the sole assassin we could be absolutely assured that the US government would guarantee his safety in order for him to be brought to American justice where we would demonstrate to the whole globe that we had excellent due process and that he was in fact guilty and we would prove it by overwhelming, beyond a reasonable doubt, evidentiary proof.

But, if in fact, he was a patsy, then he would be killed that weekend. Because he was saying he was a patsy and he was not cooperating with the killers. And they would have to kill him.

We went even further than that. We suggested that if he is going to be killed, this is assigned to the CIA and it's a WASP organization and the killer would probably be a Jew in order to point in the direction of the left which was overwhelmingly at that time Jewish.

I can recall sitting in my living room, watching TV with a close friend, a psychiatrist, Alan Crystal, that Sunday afternoon and watching Ruby dispatch Oswald with a revolver.

The next day, as I told you, I went to class. I felt that I was obligated to

tell my students what I thought the case was about. Why? Because I already had focused on our advisors in Vietnam. I thought that this assassination very likely involved war-making. There would be an escalation in Vietnam and my students, at Bartram High School, would be either drafted or volunteer for a group that had seized power by a coup.

So I went that morning and advised the students that in my judgement the assassination had the earmarks of a CIA killing. It created an absolute storm among the parents. But to the credit of the school district of Philadelphia, especially the principal, John Welsh, defended me with the parents saying he considered this an aspect of academic freedom.

I'm telling you that Philadelphia treated me extremely well. And I had all kinds of extraordinary support so that it was not a frightful experience for me.

Paul Kurtz Even nationally?

Vincent Salandria Even nationally. Believe it or not, no one has ever debated me.

Paul Kurtz Why is that? Why do you think that is?

Vincent Salandria Simply because what I did was lay out, not my brilliant research. I took what they gave us. For example, the Warren Report. I examined the evidence, their evidence, all the evidence to convict Oswald. And I tell you how I used it. Arlen Specter came up with the magic bullet theory. Which if you want to discuss, I'll discuss it with you. And it had no evidentiary support at all. As a matter of fact it had overwhelming evidence against it. I'm talking about scientific evidence: Newtonian laws of motion, the law of conservation of mass.

The bullet which they said hit, the magic entry that Arlen Specter contended, hit Kennedy in the back, five and three-quarters inches down from his shirt collar, five and three-eighths inches down from his coat collar; exited from a downward trajectory of over seventeen degrees from the Texas Book Depository building; entering his back, turning in his body without hitting any bone; exiting his neck which meant it was flying upward; turned in mid air; hit Connally in the right area of his back; exited hitting his right wrist; scattering fragments of the bullet in his right wrist and depositing another fragment of the bullet in his left

femur, left leg. Coming out, weighing what an average bullet of that caliber weighs. Coming out, intact and pristine except for a slight extrusion. The same kind of effect you would expect that was fired not into two people, smashing bones and scattering fragments. But what you would expect of a bullet that was fired into cotton.

All of this was their evidence, presented to us in the Warren Report. So when the Bar Association invited Arlen Specter to City Hall to be honored for the work he had done I stupidly brought *The Warren Report* with me, the book, and directed questions to him. He was unable to answer.

After the presentation my colleagues, some of them, gathered around and said, Why don't you write an article? So I decided I would. And I just used the evidence offered by the Warren Commission in its Report to show that beyond a question it proved, not a single assassin, but a conspiracy. More than one person firing upon him in Dealey Plaza.

I sent the [draft of the article](#) to the then Chancellor of the Bar. I said this is a dissenting view of a Philadelphia lawyer other than Mr. Specter on the Warren Commission Report. Whereupon he undertook to have it published in the oldest extant legal journal in the country, *The Philadelphia Legal Intelligencer*. In short, the Chancellor of the Bar published [the first criticism of the Warren Commission](#).

Paul Kurtz The very first.

Vincent Salandria So far as I know, the very first. And after the Bar Association had honored Specter. Nationally, nobody ever debated me. The FBI—I was in the administration of the school district. I understood that occasionally the FBI intruded upon the school district's labor relations and composited dossiers against certain of our employees. With respect to me, never. Some fifteen years ago I asked, through the Freedom of Information Act, for my file from the FBI. They have none on me. But why is this?

One of the articles in my book, *False Mystery*, is [dedicated in part to Robert A. Frazier](#), who was the ballistics expert of the FBI who testified for the Warren Commission and said that the magic bullet could not have been the bullet that they said did that damage. Why? Because [Commission Exhibit 399](#) weighed the same as a pristine bullet of that

caliber and shed, in the body of Connally's wrist and his femur, fragments which could not be accounted for in terms of the weight of Commission Exhibit 399 which is the normal weight of a bullet.

The work that I did, I insist, could have been done by any first year law student with an open mind. And it was done at such a fundamental level that it can not be debated. That's why I think nationally I was never debated. Not because I was so brilliant. I was dealing with some fundamental basic stuff all given to us by the Commission that they could not have it debated.

Paul Kurtz I understand but we've seen a parade of single bullet theory apologists through the decades make their case.

Vincent Salandria Over a half century, Mr. Kurtz. Over a half century. I consider them pseudo debates, phony debates, They're designed by the powers that committed the assassination. And, incidentally, I name them as the national security state. The warfare state mechanisms of our country that has now pushed us into perpetual war that I have said that they were responsible and no other force can be viewed as responsible.

Paul Kurtz Over the past five decades researchers have laid out a convincing case that John Kennedy had been waging peace since October 1962 after he, Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev, and Cuban President Fidel Castro looked into the abyss of nuclear armageddon. The Cuban Missile Crisis lead to a seismic shift in attitudes, a shift that was outlined in [JFK's famous speech at American University](#) on June 10, 1963.

President Kennedy What kind of a peace do I mean and what kind of a peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace – the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living – the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and build a better life for their children – not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women – not merely peace in our time but peace in all time.

Paul Kurtz Why does JFK's murder still matter to us?

Vincent Salandria Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, when he was retiring, said that we are the superpower and a welfare state. We cannot afford to be both.

Therefore, he said he was with the Pentagon, we'd be a super power. Gates tells us, we can't be a welfare state if we're the superpower. Therefore, as the Pentagon budget increases, social welfare decreases.

The school district of Philadelphia, to which I owe so much, having been a student in an ordinary comprehensive high school, being trained so well, I could be admitted to Penn along with, from Southern High School at that time, thirty other people, undergraduates, which forms the Southern Circle Club. I could do it in three years, phi beta kappa key, being able to afford working through—tuition was \$550 a year annual.

Now, the schools have gotten worse. Our infrastructure has gotten worse. We don't have, like Japan and Europe, high speed trains. We have water pipes in the city which dispense lead along with water. Gates told us, we can not address the needs of the poor and the needs of the military. We have to choose. And the choice we've made, I think is tragic.

Paul Kurtz And that choice was made November 22, 1963. John F. Kennedy was [reaching an agreement with Khrushchev](#). He was [making back channel overtures to Castro](#). He was making [his first move to get out of Vietnam](#).

Vincent Salandria Mr. Kurtz you have put your finger on what the meaning of the Kennedy assassination is and why it is important as it is now. Kennedy and Khrushchev—this is, the State Department has issued [these letters that they exchanged; a correspondence](#), a whole book on them. It is quite clear from those letters, Mr. Kurtz, that they were very fond of one another. They had lived through the Missile Crisis wherein we came within hours of bombing and invading Cuba which would have triggered—they had at that time—nuclear weapons and the missiles that were capable of carrying them. It would have triggered, very probably, almost certainly, a thermonuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States. Which [would have resulted in a nuclear winter](#), a change in the climate, making it very uninhabitable for the human race and very likely would have destroyed the human species.

Khrushchev and Kennedy lived through this—came within hours of having this disaster. They understood the critical significance of resolving the Cold War and undertaking to exchange with one another, adversely, but not militarily, a republic that was the United States, relied on not a command or socialist economy, but the United States on a free

market economy and the Soviet Union on a command economy. That was what the adversarial aspect would be in the absence of the Cold War military confrontation. They were working towards that.

President Kennedy For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's futures. And we are all mortal.

Vincent Salandria President Kennedy himself had posited that he might be killed by the national security state as reported in Paul B Fay Jr.'s book, *The Pleasure of His Company*. Given the simplicity of the above analysis, the conclusion is inescapable: the American civilian media failed in the first amendment task of seriously examining the killing of President Kennedy by the military intelligence community. The U.S. media chose instead to serve the interests of state. That rightfully earns media the title of accessories after the fact.

And I want to say that you are an extraordinary reporter in my experience. That, other than Gaeton Fonzi, I've never seen anybody as open to my expressing these ideas as you are Mr. Kurtz.

Paul Kurtz Thank you. I don't know why I haven't—[why] I didn't approach you 15 years ago or on the 50th anniversary.

Vincent Salandria In short, the reason why I was not engaged hostilely or otherwise, nationally, is that if you look at the assassination with the false mystery that it was—it's not a mystery at all. It's so simple and so clear that anybody can debate it and anybody can prevail over the Warren Commission Report which is a myth built on power; power of the national security state, the warfare state and the media's complicity with that state.

But, Arlen Specter himself would not debate this with me. So I was never debated. And I submit to you that any first year law student with an open mind, who would use the data provided by the Warren Commission, would prevail on a debate. And yet, as you point out Mr. Kurtz, over 50 years of intensive debate, I was never invited.