

**The Sorcerer's Apprentices.
James Shelby Downard and the
Mysteries of Americana**



Some conspiracy theorists question not "the facts" so much as reason itself. James Shelby Downard is one of those mad geniuses with a talent for making the most improbable, impossible, ludicrous and laughable speculations appear almost plausible. A self-described student of the "science of symbolism," Downard peels away the rational veneer of history and exposes an abyss of logic-defying synchronicities.

Downard dwells upon a confluence of the familiar and the esoteric that, to him, forms a portrait of political conspiracy the purpose of which is not power or money, but alchemy, the mystical science of transformation. By breaking apart and rejoining elements, it was long ago supposed, alchemy could effect most any miracle (for example, changing base metal into gold). From ancient times through the Enlightenment, science and magic were one and the same. As far as Downard's concerned, the era when science was indistinguishable from sorcery never ended. The Age of Reason and its industrial, post-modern antecedents are facades obscuring the seething dream world of primeval urges that surfaces only in sleep.

Per Downard, the plotters are Freemasonic alchemists scheming for sovereignty over the realm of uncontrollable impulse. The relatively tame domains of politics, economics and ideology are mere means to that end.

"Do not be lulled into believing," warns Downard, "that just because the deadening American city of dreadful night is so utterly devoid of mystery, so thoroughly flat-footed, sterile and infantile, so burdened with the illusory gloss of baseball-hot dogs-apple-pie-and-Chevrolet, that it exists outside the psycho-sexual domain. The eternal pagan psychodrama is escalated under these modern conditions precisely because sorcery is not what '20th Century man' can accept as real."

Drawing up a brief primer of Downardism seems an impossible task, though not quite as daunting as reading Downard's own essays which have been set forth for public consumption largely through the good offices of publisher Adam Parfrey whose small, outre firm, Feral House,

has anthologized Downard's essays in a few anthologies of conspiratorial material. We can do no more than scratch the surface in this forum.

"The United States which has long been called a melting pot, should more descriptively be called a witches' cauldron wherein the 'Hierarchy of the Grand Architect of the Universe' arranges for ritualistic crimes and psychopolitical psychodramas to be performed in accordance with a Master plan," Downard explains.

That Master plan necessitates execution of three alchemical rites: the creation and destruction of primordial matter; the Killing of the King; and the "making manifest of all that is hidden." Shakespeare's MacBeth is a "Killing of the King" drama. MacBeth, who killed his king in accordance with a witches' (alchemists') plot and was himself later killed as part of the same schemata.

The latter day reenactment of the MacBeth ritual, says Downard, was the assassination of JFK in Dealey Plaza, site of the first Masonic temple in Dallas and a spot loaded with "trinity" symbolism. "Three" is, for those not versed in such matters, the most magic of all magic numbers.

Downard's observations include:

- Dallas is located just south of the 33 degree of latitude. The 33rd degree is Freemasonry's highest rank
- Kennedy's motorcade was rolling toward the "Triple Underpass" when he was slain by, according to some analysts, three gunmen. Three tramps were arrested right after the murder. Hiram Abiff, architect of Solomon's Temple and mythic progenitor of Freemasonry was murdered according to Masonic legend by three "unworthy craftsmen."
- The MacBeth clan of Scotland had many variations of the family name. One was "MacBaine" or "Baines." Kennedy's successor was Lyndon Baines Johnson, a Freemason.
- "Dea" in Latin means goddess. "Ley" in Spanish can refer to law or rule. "Dealey Plaza" was "goddess-rule" plaza.

- Blamed for the assassination was a man named "Oz," explained by Downard as "a Hebrew term denoting strength." Divine strength is integral to the King-killing rite.
- "Oz" was killed by "Ruby," just as the ruby slippers freed Dorothy from the land of Oz in The Wizard of Oz, "which one may deride as a fairy tale but which nevertheless symbolizes the immense power of 'ruby light' otherwise known as the laser."
- Dealey Plaza is near the Trinity River, which before the introduction of flood control measures submerged the place regularly. Dealey Plaza therefore symbolizes both the trident and its bearer, the water-god Neptune.
- "To this trident-Neptune site," writes Downard, "came the 'Queen of Love and Beauty' and her spouse, the scapegoat, in the Killing of the King rite, the 'Ceannaideach' (Gaelic word for Ugly Head or Wounded Head). In Scotland, the Kennedy coat of arms and iconography is full of folklore. Their Plant Badge is an oak and their Crest has a dolphin on it. Now what could be more coincidental than for JFK to get shot in the head near the oak tree at Dealey Plaza. Do you call that a coincidence?"
- For those in our audience still too puzzled by the whole "Wizard of Oz" thing to get that last bit: the "Queen" is Jackie and "Ceannaideach" is the Gaelic form of Kennedy.
- An earlier "Trinity Site," in New Mexico, was the location of the first atomic bomb explosion. Chaos and synergy, breaking apart and joining together are the first principles of alchemy. The atomic bomb broke apart the positive and negative (male and female) elements that compose primordial matter. Physicists refer to this fiendish trickery as "nuclear fission."
- The New Mexico "Trinity" sits on the 33rd degree latitude line.
- The Kennedy assassination's true significance was concealed by the Warren Commission headed by Freemason Earl Warren with Freemason Gerald Ford as its public spokesman. The Commission drew its information from the FBI headed by Freemason J. Edgar Hoover and the CIA, which transmitted information through

former director Freemason Allen Dulles who sat on the commission.

- A decade later Ford, when president himself, was the target of an attempted assassination in front of the St. Francis Hotel, located opposite Mason Street in the City of St. Francis, San Francisco. Members of the Freemasonic "Hell Fire Club," site of many a sex orgy involving such luminaries as Freemason Benjamin Franklin, called themselves "Friars of St. Francis."
- The St. Francis Hotel was also the site of sex orgies. On its premises occurred the rape- murder of Virginia Rappe by silent film comic Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle. Virginia Rappe's name is a variation on "virgin rape." The rape of a virgin is an important alchemical sex-magic rite.
- The serpent is a Masonic symbol of King-Killing. The Symbionese Liberation Army, who kidnapped San Francisco newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst, pictured a serpent on their emblem.
- The word "Symbionese" means "joined together."
- Patricia Hearst's grandfather, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, built a vast estate called San Simeon (St. Simon) on La Cuesta Encantada, The Enchanted Hill. On the estate is a "pool of Neptune" with a statue of Venus, the "Queen of Love and Beauty." The Hearst family joined together the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner.

As mentioned previously, we are able only to touch the most superficial aspects of the alchemical conspiracy made manifest in the message of James Shelby Downard. We have ignored his hint that Marilyn Monroe's death was Freemasonically inspired, a conclusion Downard reaches in part because "when she was mortal she was subjected to sexual debauchery, as the innocent are in sorcery rites."

Nor have we covered Downard's argument that the advertising war "between Avis and Hertz Rent-a-Car corporations involves fertility symbolism."

For God's sake, let us hope he's misguided.

MAJOR SOURCES:

This article is based upon the following essays by James Shelby Downard.

"The Call to Chaos." in Parfrey, Adam, ed. *Apocalypse Culture: Expanded and Revised*. Los Angeles: Feral House, 1990.

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"Sorcery, Sex, Assassination." in Keith, Jim ed. *Secret and Suppressed*. Portland, Or.: Feral House, 1993.

"Witches' Plot." photocopied manuscript.