



## American Tabloid

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Everyone has their pet theory regarding the assassination of John F. Kennedy. For those who accept the idea of a conspiracy, there is also the issue of the nature of such a conspiracy. AMERICAN TABLOID may be said to be about a Mafia-centered conspiracy to kill Kennedy. It would be more accurate, however, to say that the novel is about the myriad complicated events that lead to the creation of a conspiracy to kill Kennedy. The conspiracy, furthermore, that the book concerns itself with is one to kill Kennedy in Miami, a plan that is abandoned. Only a few hints come to this novel's characters, at the end of the story, about who may be involved in the Dallas conspiracy.

In this sense, AMERICAN TABLOID is a tabloid tease, giving hints, buildup, gossip, and violence in great abundance instead of what is ostensibly the main story. AMERICAN TABLOID is also like a tabloid in that it exposes the kinds of living and the kind of world that the mainstream press deals with in euphemisms and allegedlies. The reader is indelibly impressed with the sordidness of the late 1950's and early 1960's, a time frequently misrepresented in various outbursts of nostalgia as the period to which American society would do well to return (an epigraph addresses this issue directly). The novel is like a tabloid in its short-attention-span chapters and its reliance on the forms of conversation rather than on the forms of narration. Ellroy's work is a masterpiece of style. Its enormously complicated plot—presumably based largely on fact—is a compulsive joy. The terrifying Pete Bondurant, the Machiavellian Kemper Boyd, and the idealist-with-a-death-wish Ward J. Littell, among many others, are unforgettable.

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