



# ENFANT TERRIBLE: The Times and Schemes of General Elliott Roosevelt

*Chris Hansen*

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Elliott Roosevelt was the second surviving son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Scandal trailed him like wake turbulence all his life. Congress investigated him eight times, from 1934 to 1973. He skated every time. In ribald detail, this book describes: The “Texas Cabal” – How Elliott helped Texas oil oligarchs buy FDR’s favors and set the direction of American “pay-to-play” politics for decades; The “Air Mail Fiasco” – Elliott’s plan to create an American “Aeroflot” to control all air travel and make himself rich as Croesus; “I Wanna be a Captain Too” – the 1940 election controversy over Elliott’s sudden commission in the Air Corps; Elliott’s secret reconnaissance flights over Greenland and the Sahara; The best work he ever did: the birth of photographic reconnaissance in North Africa, Italy, and England – by a non-pilot in draft category 4F (unfit); “Bombers for Stalin” – how Elliott secured the Soviet-American shuttle-bombing project – and how initial Allied Euphoria turned into Cold War; “Babes, Booze, and Brass” – how Howard Hughes purchased and used Elliott; How Elliott talked his father into buying the ill-fated Hughes F-11; “Blaze the Flying Dog” – the 1945 scandal that enraged the nation; Elliott’s disputed role in the death of Joe Kennedy, Junior; The Hartford Loan Scandal, a de facto extortion racket that could have run FDR out of office if the details had become known; The true story of the 1947 Hughes-Roosevelt hearings that transfixed the nation; “Four out of Five can’t be wrong” said his enemies, referring to his wives; but Elliott’s “fifth term” was the charm; How assorted thugs from foreign dictators to the Mafia used Elliott Roosevelt; The alleged plot to kill the Bahamian prime minister over a casino deal; A Great Mystery: Elliott the dead murder mystery writer; ...and more Schemes, Scams, Scandals never told before. From the Preface: Although it follows the thread of one man’s life, this book is not about one single subject. Instead, it links together a number of seemingly unrelated issues and events by examining the career of a now mostly forgotten Air Force officer – who just happened to be the son of the president. Following this highly twisted track, we can travel from the rum-running days of Prohibition to the sand seas of the Sahara; from the hot embrace of Howard Hughes’s starlets to Greenland’s ice fields; from Texas oil tycoons battling federal taxes to inebriated world leaders carving up Europe. We end with a remarkable profusion of swindlers, gangsters and dictators settling their scores. There’s a lot of dubious entertainment along the way – fast women and faster airplanes, booze, dirty politics, dirtier money; even an unsettling number of very large dogs. At times the reader is likely to be shocked and appalled. The writer was. But we will also see how the United States learned how to map the world and conquer the oceans by air, and with its closest ally create the new science of air reconnaissance, the definitive tool of world domination. We will watch America’s brief romance with Marshal Stalin flourish and then founder. We will uncover more than the proverbial iceberg-tip of the corrupt and volatile mix of politics, the defense industry, and organized crime. All along, we shall have a front-row seat to the furious but now dimly remembered battle over the Roosevelt legacy; with luck we can rip open some wounds that have, even after seventy years, by no means healed. This is emphatically not a political book, but inevitably some will think so because of its revelations of criminal conduct in the Roosevelt family, including some directly attributable to the president. However overwhelming the amount of shady deals described herein, there were many additional alleged schemes whose pursuit seemed unlikely to lead anywhere, and most evidence has at any rate probably evaporated by now. These are not political issues. On the contrary, it is striking just how politically flexible, even chamele...

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