WRITER POSTULATES A CONSPIRACY INVOLVING 7 PERSONS

A theory on Kennedy killing

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HE PARIS Express, one of Europe's most important and influential weekly papers, gave prominent display to a series of articles by Thomas Buchanan on the Oswald case (Feb. 20 and 27, Mar. 5), drawing attention to them with three full-page covers, of which one carried the caption: "OSWALD DID NOT SHOOT." Buchanan was introduced editorially to readers as a fine novelist, wartime artillery captain and mathematician who had scientifically assembled the facts about President Kennedy's assassination and with "impressive logic" put forward a theory based upon them. L'Express quoted this letter from "the first U.S. publisher to whom Buchanan submitted his text":

"Your demonstration is brilliant . . . I think no one will disprove it . . . After my first discussion with our vice president we decided, however, not to publish it. I am sure that someone will take the risk . . . Briefly, I suppose we are cowards . . . forgive us."

Buchanan began by examining the official version of the assassination — its many initial changes, its contradictions and absurdities with which GUARDIAN readers are already familiar. He has "too much respect" for the surgeons of "a great U.S. hospital" to believe that they "missed" a bullet wound in Kennedy's back and signed the death certificate without "bothering to turn him over." With regard to the possibility of the sharpshooting performance attributed to Oswald, Buchanan wrote: "If there exists a single man capable of (it), that man would have to be one of the finest shots in the world, not a former Marine with less than average skill."

THE PRINTS: Buchanan pointed out that the only Oswald fingerprints found (palm prints cannot prove identity) were on a box in the room where Oswald worked—a perfectly normal thing. In any case, Buchanan said, if Oswald made the prints on the box just before the crime, he could not have been wearing gloves and consequently would have left prints also on the rifle. (According to the official story he could not have had time to wipe off such prints nor to remove the powder-traces which firing the rifle would have left on his cheek.)

Altogether, Buchanan found in the official story "eight extremely improbable, not to say materially impossible allegations" all of which, however, are essential to the theory that Oswald acted alone. Buchanan then proceeded to build up a hypothesis on the basis of known facts. He posited a total of two assassins and five "accomplices" of whom one was Oswald and "three were in police uni-

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Kamb in Humanite, Paris

Kennedy killing

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form." Here is his reconstruction of the crime:

Assassin No. 1 was concealed by Oswald in the sixth-floor room of the latter's place of work since the previous night, and smoked the cigarettes whose empty package was found there (Oswald was a non-smoker). On the fatal morning, assassin No. 2 took up his position on the railroad bridge from which the Kennedy procession was a perfect target, and fired the first shot, which entered the President's throat. The second shot, which wounded Texas Gov. John B. Connally, was fired by assassin No. 1, who fired again, hitting Kennedy in the back of the skull. The rifle had been brought to him in the morning by Oswald.

The gunman at the sixth-floor window was placed there as insurance against No. 2's failing to get onto the railroad bridge: to create a diversion so the latter could get away; and because it was necessary that shots be fired from the building where the "fall guy," Oswald, was employed. If there were two assassins, there were two weapons, which would explain the confusion in the official stories about "the weapon" and about the telescopic sight being fitted both in Chicago and in Dallas.

ASSASSIN A COP? Since the police immediately surrounded the Book Depository, how did assassin No. 1 get away? "The answer that seems to me to impose itself," Buchanan wrote, "is that he wore a police uniform. And unless he has been killed since, I believe he still wears it." He left in a patrol wagon while Oswald waited in the canteen of the building. How did Oswald get away, with police encircling the building? The answer: "Accomplice No. 2, the police officer who gave the order to let him through."

Oswald left the building at 12:33 p.m.; at 12:36, according to Time, the police broadcast to all patrols his color, height and weight in an order to apprehend him—having "discovered, with a speed unprecedented in criminal history, the guilty man in a murder without witnesses nor weapon." The official explanation of this seems to be that, the police having rounded up from the streets all 90 employes of the building except Oswald, Oswald's absence made them suspicious, whereas presence in the building shortly before aroused no suspicion at all. This, for Buchanan, only pointed to accomplice No. 3—the police officer who broadcast the "stop Oswald" order, and who "already knew the role of Oswald in the conspiracy."

Accomplice No. 4 was not in police uniform but had the job of following Oswald. His existence is indicated by the speed with which the police were informed which way Oswald was going, and the details later given about what was "said" in the bus, where he got off, how far he walked before finding a taxi, and the taxi's number. These details were all supplied by "witnesses" who mysteriously disappeared when reporters sought them. Oswald may have tried to conceal where he was going, but "the police already knew his address." Yet although they knew it, no one awaited him at his home, no one tried to prevent him from seizing his revolver.

TIPPIT'S DEATH: J. D. Tippit, a near neighbor of both Oswald and Ruby, knew the latter well and appears to have also known the former. Tippit was waiting alone in a patrol car—which was not only against the rules, but "inconceivable" in an area that was being combed for an armed murder suspect. For whatever reason Tippit's normal patrol-car companion (never identified) was absent. Tippit would have time to pick up another policeman before 1:15, when he stopped Oswald. But Tippit was accompanied by No. 5, whose risky mission was to intercept the fugitive and do it alone. Oswald, a witness has stated, smiled on approaching him; Oswald had been assured that he would be gotten out of the country, and this was presumably the rendezvous. According to the script of the conspiracy Oswald would try to draw his gun; Tippit would kill him in legitimate self-defense; and "the only suspect, the Fidel Castroite, the fanatical Communist, would be silenced forever." Tippit was too slow on the draw. Accomplice No. 6 followed Oswald to the movie house. The only alternative was then the one which was to have been avoided at all costs—to take Oswald alive.

While the press was being told that one man has planned and executed Kennedy's assassination, the police did not at first accuse Oswald of complicity in that, but concentrated on interrogating him about the murder of Tippit. Until he was shown to the press, Oswald did not know that full responsibility for killing the President was being pinned on him. He insisted on his right to a lawyer, which was denied; if he had seen one, his first question would have been: "What chance have I of getting out of this alive if I name my accomplices?"

Ruby kept him from ever asking the question. Buchanan went no further on Ruby's murder of Oswald, out of respect for Ruby's right to defend himself before a court of justice, a right which he denied to Oswald. (The articles appeared before the Ruby verdict.) Let Ruby be placed in an asylum for life or until he recovers his memory. "On that day, when he remembers names and places, we shall be able to ask him what happened to his old friend 'Needlenose' Labriola, who was killed by strangulation in 1954."