

DOCTORS QUESTION OSWALD'S SANITY

Leaving Clues for Pursuit a Psychopathic Trait

By WALTER SULLIVAN

A number of leading psychiatrists suspect that Lee Harvey Oswald, charged with the assassination of President Kennedy and subsequently murdered, was paranoid or suffered from some other mental ailment.

In a series of telephone interviews yesterday, however, they said the chances of a reliable assessment, probably died when Oswald was shot down in the basement of the Dallas Municipal Building on Sunday.

Dr. Lewis Robbins, medical director of Hillside Hospital, Queens, pointed out that psychiatrists now have only "fragments of facts" to go on. He cited certain suggestive evidence.

It is typical of the psychopathic criminal, he said, to leave a trail that makes his capture easy. In a subconscious way he wants to be caught.

Card Provides a Clue

Oswald carried a card that linked him to the pseudonym under which the alleged assassination weapon was purchased. In a number of other respects he behaved in a manner that facilitated his identification and arrest.

Many criminals evade capture, Dr. Robbins said, but few of those re psychopathic. He noted that photographs of Oswald after his capture showed him smiling.

Other psychiatrists cited what is known of Oswald's history: his fatherless childhood, his life-long aloofness. In manhood, as one of them put it, "he walked around with a load of hate." He apparently resented authority in the Marine Corps, and then in the Federal Government as a whole.

Because the "grass in the other pasture looked greener," said one specialist, "he tried life in the Soviet Union, but that didn't suit him either, so he came back."

Rejected by Russians

The Russians themselves received him cautiously, refusing to grant him citizenship. In Moscow he told an American interviewer that he had been interested in Marxism since he was 15. His associates in school have expressed doubt as to the truth of this statement.

Back in the United States he said he was an official of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, a pro-Castro group, but that

organization denies any knowledge of him.

He seems to have been inordinately fond of weapons. He was court-martialed for possessing a private pistol while attached to a Marine Corps unit that, presumably, was amply armed.

Even if a psychiatrist had known all of this in advance, would he have predicted that Oswald would commit murder? Dr. Robbins said no, and his view was echoed by a number of other psychiatrists, most of whom asked that they not be identified.

All Mad, Says a Doctor

One nationally known psychiatrist said he believed that all assassins of Presidents had been mentally ill. However, he recalled, only one of them escaped death on that ground. That was Richard Lawrence who, in 1835, tried to kill Andrew Jackson in the rotunda of the Capitol. Both Lawrence's pistols misfired. He was committed to an institution for the insane for life.

John Wilkes Booth was shot before he could be captured after he killed Abraham Lincoln. Thus, like Oswald, he died before he could name his fellow conspirators, if he had any. Four accused accomplices of Booth were tried, and three of them were hanged.

This psychiatrist described the Puerto Ricans who tried to kill Harry S. Truman as fanatics rather than lunatics.

Some Doubt Insanity

Not all of those consulted felt that any psychiatric label could be put on Oswald. His violent behavior, said one, was not of itself a mark of mental illness. Paranoids, he added, "are more apt to sue than to shoot."

If one considers all those who resort to violence to be mad, he added, "you would have to bag an awful lot of those people on the turnpikes."

The paranoid has been defined as one who attributes his failures to the enmity of others. As described in the *Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy*, "He displays sullen quietness, behind which lurks naughty disdain."

As one man put it yesterday, the paranoiac "twists actual situations," whereas the schizophrenic "makes them up out of whole cloth."

A specialist who rebels against the use of labels pointed out that such symptoms appear in all graduations. Every one, he said, is a little bit mad.