

COMMENTARY JULY '64  
Letter to Editor

Leo Sauvage's article "The Oswald Affair" (March) is the type of journal-

ism one sees far too infrequently in the press and on television, and no wonder: such

searching questions and such curiosity have been steadily losing a place of honor in this country for years. A tragedy as great as the murder of John F. Kennedy can not fail to bring our national flaws and strengths with great clarity. One such flaw in our national character . . . is the tendency not only to avoid embarrassing questions, but to "read out" of our national life stream those who are in any way related to such questions. The way we have dealt with the Oswald affair is a case in point.

In an article in the *New York Times* of January 26, for example, an interesting explanation was offered as to the alleged assassin's motive—Oswald was insane. The article went on to state that this is "the only explanation now offered by authorities."

Part of the danger of such an explanation (aside from lack of evidence) is that it fits in too well with Senator Morton's earlier history disavowal of any responsibility for the assassination on the part of "the American system or the American character." Oswald was "a stranger to the American heritage," according to Morton, "because his mind 'has been warped by an alien violence, not a native condition.'" What happened was "not America's fault." Apparently Senator Morton *cannot* believe that being born and raised in a particular country and serving in its armed forces qualifies one as a product of that country's system and heritage. Nor does he give credence to the abundant evidence, statistical and otherwise, showing us to be among the more "violent" of nations. Others, like Senator Gore and the editorial writers for some rather prominent newspapers, agree with Senator Morton. All other things aside, one must raise questions about the nature of the "downing" process here in operation . . . which is similar to the pathological defense mechanism of projection by which one casts out from awareness and consideration possible "bad" personal qualities of one's own and sees them as belonging to other people.

This in turn allows us to find "reasons" . . . to carry out acts of retribution under the moral guise of self-protection. . . . The attention of the country is turned away from the source of the illness and the illness itself, which might be cured if recognized, and focused instead on the "oth-

er," the scapegoat, who is then "blame" assigned to him, very least when the scapegoat is "rationalized." It took the Warren Commission eleven weeks to appoint an attorney for Oswald, with consideration that the pettier of alleged criminals can expect trial in a few days at most.

To speculate that the only possible explanation of Mr. Kennedy's murder was that it was an act of insanity may be comforting, but it covers up far too much and requires thinking about by calling things "insane," the reasons for a person's behavior are automatically assumed to be unreasonable. It is just a short step from this position to believing that no reasonable person could possibly ever understand, much less be led to such behavior. And when we cannot work out the reasons, we usually are not responsible.

If certain authorities choose to believe that Oswald was insane, it is their (and our) responsibility to make known upon what facts they base this judgment and to give us some idea of how the alleged insanity is related to the murder. . . . Insanity does not in itself lead to murder any more than madness springs from insanity. However, both insanity and murder *can* occur within a given political system. That we cannot do anything about it we will see.

Until we know much more about we do about all aspects of our life to this world, it is equally desirable and one of our national and international goals to admit that Oswald was a part of the American system and the character of the American character. . . . But, does.

The great danger is that when we fail to seek out the true source

of a mysterious act, as well as the nature of the mind which is capable of such acts, we are further on the way to producing many other such acts. And in a "downing society," it is possible that each of us at one time or other will be declared "out" written off on no grounds other than the moral case of other people. Then none of us will be either "out" or protected.

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## Awaiting The Report

The Warren Commission's report will soon be out. And even in what seems to be the last few weeks before its publication, it appears that the Commission continues to follow what has become its tradition of peculiar procedures. A UPI dispatch of May 27 quoted *The Dallas Times Herald* to the effect that "it had been informed by reliable sources that the Warren Commission's sole purpose in re-enactment [of the assassination], last Sunday, was to prove" that the bullets which killed President Kennedy "could have been fired only from the Texas School Book Depository Building." And we had naively hoped that the re-enactment's sole purpose would be to establish whatever is the truth.

Similarly puzzling is the fact that no one

seemed eager to provide the public with the likeness of Billy Lovelady. It is, of course, possible that the man seen in the by now famous assassination photograph of the Associated Press was not Lee Oswald but Billy Lovelady, and that therefore, the photograph does not prove that at the crucial time Oswald was not at the location from which the shots are alleged to have come. There is nothing to disprove that the F.B.I. is telling the truth about that photograph. The only question is why the F.B.I. has not re-enacted the situation as shown in it, with Billy Lovelady standing in the doorway of the depository building and with someone taking photographs for purposes of comparison.

Other doubts are aroused by the exchange of serious recriminations between the Secret Service and its now suspended agent, Abraham Bolden. The Service accuses its former employee of attempting to sell official documents to an accused counterfeiter; Mr. Bolden charges that he is being framed because he intended to disclose to the Warren Commission the Service's "laxity" in guarding the late President Kennedy.

Secret Service authorities proudly point to the fact that in 99 years there has never before been a case of one of its agents being prosecuted on criminal charges. To realists, this will merely indicate that for the sake of its public image the Secret Service preferred to deal with internal improprieties outside of public view. The question, therefore, arises why Mr. Bolden was singled out for unprecedented treatment by his employer. Is he an innocent man who is being framed lest he shed embarrassing light on the Secret Service? Or is he a guilty man in an organization which never before publicly compromised its guilty members? What, if not Mr. Bolden's own explanation, explains the Secret Service's breach with institutional tradition and its sudden readiness, even eagerness, to put a blot on its "otherwise impeccable" record? Or is it that anything will be done to suppress any doubt at all with regard to the official version of the

assassination of President John F. Kennedy?

One thing is certain: if the Warren Commission's report will merely be a cover-up job, it will be one prepared as competently as possible. This statement is by no means intended to prejudice anyone's reaction to the report; we merely recommend that one approach it with the always desirable grain of scepticism and also remembering that the procedure of the Warren Commission often appeared to be quite unjudicious. With such sound reservations, one should study the report with an open mind, certainly not discounting any of the possibilities, including that the report is telling the truth.



# The Realist

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## The Crackpot and the Evidence

There seemed to be something absurd about the announcement that there would be a special talk by attorney Mark Lane at the Cafe AuGoGo this month on "Who Killed Kennedy?"—Lane has been independently investigating the assassination—and the apparent absurdity was almost overshadowed by the irony that the regular attraction at the AuGoGo this particular week was Vaughn Meader.

My prejudice was met with allegations—based on documentation Lane presented to the Warren Commission (his testimony was classified as top secret and by discussing it publicly he has been violating the espionage law)—such as the following:

- The police description of Lee Harvey Oswald on November 22nd for the shooting of officer J. D. Tippet went out at 12:43 P.M.; Tippet was shot at 1:18.

- The rifle with which Oswald was supposed to have shot Kennedy was originally identified as a German mauser, 7.65 caliber. When it was discovered that Oswald had purchased an Italian carbine, 6.5 caliber, the story changed. The rifle, now in possession of the Warren Commission, clearly bears the legend: "MADE IN ITALY, 6.5 caliber."

- Not one of the 24 points on which the Dallas district attorney said he had an air-tight case against Oswald remains the same. Example: the D.A. had said that Darryl Click was the cabdriver who had driven Oswald home after the President was shot. There never was a cabdriver in Dallas named Darryl Click. The cabdriver is now named William Waley.

- The Dallas FBI chief said the paraffin test proved Oswald had gunpowder on his hands and face, but the test (which can only reveal the presence of nitrates) actually showed that Oswald did *not* have nitrates on his face, only on his hands. There were traces of nitrate on both hands of many employees of the Texas School Book Depository because they had been moving inventory on freshly-painted plywood boards.

- Louise Markham, a witness to the shooting of officer Tippet, described his assailant as short, heavy, with somewhat bushy hair. The police never asked her for a description—although she did tell them that the man was wearing a light grey jacket—but they arrested Oswald, who was wearing a dark brown shirt, and had been described in the police bulletin as tall, slender, with thin, receding hair. The Dallas police description was claimed to be based on Oswald's absence from a roll call of book depository employees—but there never was a roll call, and if there had been, at least three other employees would also have been missing.

- Oswald had not sought the job at the depository; it was offered to him through his landlady, Mrs. Payne. This is a paradox, since after the scandal of subversion

in textbooks there, the company was mighty security-minded, and Oswald's defection to Russia had gotten much local publicity. Moreover, the route of the Kennedy procession was changed (to go in front of the depository) only at the last minute by the Secret Service upon the advice of the local police and the FBI.

● ~~Bill Markham, the witness' son (his arrest is referred to in this issue of the *Realist* in Harold Feldman's article), jumped, fell or was pushed from a bathroom on a high floor of the prison building, the only one which has no bars on the window.~~

● Warren Reynolds, a parking-lot owner who saw a man fitting Mrs. Markham's description running with a pistol in his hand immediately after Tippett was shot, later was himself shot and left for dead. He lived—and identified the man who shot him. The charges against this man were dismissed because he had an alibi: at the time of the shooting, he was with his girlfriend (a stripper at Jack Ruby's night club). The man has since disappeared from Dallas. The girlfriend was arrested on a disorderly conduct charge. In jail, she ostensibly committed suicide, by hanging herself.

● The Dallas doctors who treated the dying President said that the bullet-hole in his throat was an entrance wound. It would have been physically impossible for this to have been caused by a rifle from the depository since the Kennedy car had already passed the building when he was shot. FBI-briefed, *Life* magazine in

an article titled "An End to Nagging Rumors" in its December 6th issue, asserted that the President was looking backward at the moment he was shot. However, in the November 29th issue of *Life*, those still-photos (from the motion-picture film they had paid so much money for) showed that Kennedy was looking forward, and *Life's* own caption verified this fact.

● If the President had to be shot from the back in order for the bullet to have come from the depository, then the doctors would then have to confess error and say now that the opening in Kennedy's throat was an exit wound. On the basis of a visit by two Secret Service agents to the hospital, the doctors did indeed change their minds. They did so on the basis of (1) an autopsy which they couldn't see because it would violate national security; and (2) the history of the case—namely, that Oswald was behind Kennedy, therefore it had to be an exit wound. *Newsweek* interviewed Dr. Perry—who had performed the tracheotomy on Kennedy, inserting a tube into his throat so that the blood wouldn't interfere with his breathing—and he said that there was much more he wanted to tell them, but he couldn't. *Newsweek* suppressed the suppression.

Mark Lane told me later that his photostat-documents—which were accepted as valid when he testified before the Warren Commission—had been temporarily lifted from the Dallas district attorney's office by someone whose motivation was a certainty that Fidel Castro had told Lee Harvey Oswald to kill President Kennedy and that this truth would never reach the public because Chief Justice Earl Warren is a Communist.