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p. TW50**BOOKS****Startling Revelations
Of the Oswald Story**

AUTHOR EDWARD EPSTEIN

Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald. By Edward Jay Epstein; Reader's Digest Press/McGraw-Hill Book Co., 382 pp; \$12.95.

*Reviewed by
John Barkham*

“**L**EGEND” is the term used by intelligence services to denote “an operational plan for a cover or a cover itself.” In the murky subterranean world of espionage and counter-espionage “legend” means a phony story or explanation. Edward Jay Epstein uses it here to characterize the hidden story behind Lee Harvey Oswald’s assassination of President Kennedy in November, 1963. If Epstein is to be believed, the assassination was the final act in a sequence of events known in whole or in part to the CIA and the FBI. The act itself, far from being isolated, was merely the tip of an espionage iceberg that extended into the inner circles of the CIA, FBI and the Soviet KGB, according to Epstein.

The story uncovered by Epstein is a sensational one that will further startle readers already shocked by recent revelations concerning the CIA and FBI. Were it the work of anybody but an Epstein, it might be taken with a grain of salt. But Epstein, as

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proven by his book on the Warren Commission, is one of this country’s most acute researchers and his documentation here is impressive. He examined thousands of previously classified papers, interviewed scores of persons, including a Soviet Intelligence officer who defected to the U.S., after the Kennedy assassination, and the mysterious George De Mohrenschildt, of Russian birth but an Oswald contact in the U.S., who committed suicide after the first day of what was to have been a four-day interview with Epstein.

Oswald, it seems, was no simple-minded amateur revolutionary who wavered between living in the the Soviet Union and the U.S. but an agent involved with the KGB since 1959. Both the CIA and the FBI had him under surveillance. According to Epstein, Oswald also had links to Cuban Intelligence. He believed that violent revolution was necessary in the U.S. and, as part of his plan to precipitate it, took a shot at General Edwin A. Walker in Dallas, but missed.

By far the most intriguing figure in Epstein’s book, however, is a Russian agent named Nosenko, till now not mentioned in the case, who defected to

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LEE HARVEY OSWALD

the U.S. in January 1964. After the assassination he was held incommunicado by the CIA in a windowless room for three years without breaking under repeated interrogation. Was he a genuine defector, or had he, as some suspected, been sent over by the KGB as a double agent to supply a "legend" (or misinformation) on the Lee Harvey Oswald case?

TO THIS DAY his story has not been shaken. The Warren Commission never questioned him although he was in CIA hands at the time. Epstein suggests that the CIA and the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover both felt that they preferred to keep a damaging skeleton in the closet rather than have it publicly exhibited. Nosenko, we are told, is still in

Collar Man



J. C. LEYENDECKER'S Glamorous "Arrow Collar Man" received 17,000 love letters one month in the early 1920s, more than Rudolph Valentino got at the peak of his career. Illustration is from "America's Great Illustrators," by Susan E. Meyer, published by Abrams (\$14.95).

the U.S., living comfortably under an assumed name on a good salary as a legitimate defector.

One reads Epstein's damaging revelations with a sinking feeling that the era of dirty tricks, shady cover-ups and public misinformation, far from being over, still goes on. Will the full story of what preceded and followed the Kennedy assassination ever come to light? It seems we shall have to rely on private investigators like Edward Jay Epstein rather than our law enforcement agencies to unearth the "moles" and exhume the truth.

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Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case. By Allen Weinstein. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; 704 pp.; \$15.

THIS is probably the definitive book on The Case. As Allen Weinstein, professor of history at Smith College, calls the Hiss-Chambers trial that gripped the nation's attention from 1948 to 1950. The two principals — Alger Hiss, former State Department official and President of the Carnegie Endowment, and Whittaker Chambers, confessed ex-Communist and senior editor at Time Magazine — confronted each other in court not merely as legal adversaries but as ideological symbols of Western freedom and Communist totalitarianism.

Chambers, pudgy and untidy, maintained that Hiss, clean-cut and genteel, had been his Communist associate before he (Chambers) defected in 1938. Hiss sued for slander. He was later convicted of perjury, sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and served 44 months in a Federal prison. The Case divided the country into two passionately partisan groups — those who believed Chambers to be telling the truth about Hiss and those who-maintained, some to this day, that Hiss was innocent.

Thirty years have passed. Chambers died in 1961, but Hiss at 76 still maintains his innocence. Thus the controversy lingers on. Which of the two lied at the trial? Professor Weinstein spent four years examining 40,000 pages of previously secret FBI and Justice Department papers and interviewing 80 persons, including Hiss and several former Soviet agents. Though he began his long investigation inclined to believe that Hiss was innocent, he ends his penetrating study convinced that "the new evidence has reinforced the previously known facts which prove Hiss is guilty of perjury."

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