

To the Editors,
National Review

27 January 1976

Sirs:

When a witness tells different stories at different times, some incriminatory and some exculpatory of an accused, what does an impartial fact-finder do? ~~One would think that he would~~ ^{He} cross-examine the witness, confront him with ^{the} his own conflicting ~~statements~~ ^S statements, and ^{try} ~~tries~~ to establish conclusively which ^{of the two} story told by the witness was truthful and accurate.

David Belin in his article in the issue of February 6, 1976 acknowledges (bottom of page 89) that there were "...contradictions between the FBI and the Secret Service reports of Givens' statements, coupled with the statement by a Dallas police official that Givens might change his story for money." Belin ~~proceeds to describe and then~~ quote ^{the testimony} ~~from his examination~~ of Charles Givens. It is perfectly clear, from Belin's own account, that he did not confront Givens with the contradictions in his statements at different times (to the Dallas police, the Secret Service, the FBI, and the Warren Commission), ^{nor} establish which of his stories were truthful. Belin merely accepted the story that Givens gave him ~~under oath~~, although it was in flagrant and crucial contradiction with Givens' affidavit and FBI interview on the day of the assassination, ^{Belin} thus selected the story that incriminated Oswald although in chronological terms alone it was less credible than Givens' earlier story which was not only exculpatory of Oswald but supportive of the independent statements made by at least three other witnesses.

Belin admits in his article in National Review that there were contradictions in Givens' statements and that a police official considered that Givens might change his story for money. But these two curious and singularly relevant facts are not mentioned anywhere in the Warren Report. Why not?

Belin says proudly that before he dismissed Givens he asked him, "Anything else you can think of?" I doubt if Belin expected Givens to admit that he had changed his story (which is the literal truth), whether for money or other considerations.

No, it just won't do. Belin is cornered, on the issue of Charles Givens, and his insistently injured air of innocence

suggests that he has no respect for the intelligence of the American public and that his ingenuity is not equal to the job of exculpating himself.