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HAPPY HUNTING GROUND: AN EX-MARINE'S ODYSSEY IN VIETNAM by Martin Russ (Atheneum: \$5.95).

This War-Is-Hell report of six months in Vietnam by a veteran of the Korean War is a book which raises complex and confusing issues. It purports to be a highly personal account of daily front-line fighting by Marines; a study of this war through the eyes of one man who is there to convey it all to us. Yet Mr. Russ views the horror and misery of Vietnam with a callous Marine coolness that is startling for its lack of point-of-view. He approaches this gravely important material not with the keen analytical eye of a Hemingway nor with the sense of responsible reportage of a Harrison Salisbury—instead, Mr. Russ is an alumnus, a fan, returned to the excitements of a dangerous game in which he seemingly fails to perceive a terrifying moral dimension.

This thick-skinned journal does provide insights into the destruction of a civilian peasant culture and our alienation of the Vietnamese people. According to his re-

ports, the whole notion of pacification, aid, or civic-action work is merely a disguise for military tactics. Villages burned and brutalized, numbers of Viet Cong suspects killed who are actually farmers, huge movements of refugee populations following battles—this much effects even a tough type like Mr. Russ:

"I'm beginning to wonder what good the Marines have accomplished in Vietnam. Certainly they have killed and maimed a good many Viet Cong and North Viet soldiers; but soldiers are not the real threat. To defeat the other side they must kill the people."

The precarious nature of guerrilla warfare is emphasized by incidents which Mr. Russ describes of our own forces fighting each other in the confusion of the jungle or of patrols wandering for days in search of groups which moved freely and visibly around them at night. The conditions of mud, heat, disease, and constant danger which he depicts must stir our deepest compassion for the soldiers in these conditions, whether they be heartless killers or frightened boys. But Mr. Russ' most unforget-

table failure is the long chronicle of men who die terrible and agonizing deaths before his eyes without one sentence stopping to ask himself why. Until reading "Happy Hunting Ground," I would have thought such an immoral act inconceivable.

ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT by Sylvia Meagher, Bobbs-Merrill Co., \$8.50

As if the Warren Report on the assassination of President Kennedy needed any further dissection here is a book that effectively discredits the Commission's findings by analysis of its own weapons, the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits. Mrs. Meagher has performed the Herculean task of sifting through all of this evidence, indexing it, and comparing it to Commission conclusions. Her evaluation of the Warren Report: "...it resembles a tale told for fools, full of sophistry and deceit, signifying capitulation to compromise and the degradation of justice by its most eminent guardians."

It would seem impossible for anyone to maintain unshaken faith in the Warren Report after reading "Accessories after the Fact." Mrs. Meagher begins by evaluating, piece-by-piece, the Commission's material pertaining to the motorcade through Dealey Plaza, and she presents a large body of evidence from the Hear-

ings and Exhibits that contradicts the lone assassin, single-bullet thesis. She reconstructs Oswald's movements immediately before and after the shooting from witness testimony, revealing the official version of the these activities to be a matter of very dubious validity. In regard to the autopsy and medical findings, she displays the cloud of half-truths, incompetence, and hidden evidence which surrounds this whole area of inquiry.

But the real focus of this book is an attempt to present Lee Harvey Oswald as an innocent fall guy. She offers doubts and questions concerning every aspect of the Commission's case against Oswald and provides evidence that he may have been a governmental employee of the FBI or CIA. More significantly, she illustrates the grave weakness of the Report's thesis that Oswald was either qualified or prepared for this feat of marksmanship. In the murder of policeman Tippitt and the assassination attempt upon General Walker, she shows Oswald's possible innocence.

In her persistent defense of Oswald, however, Mrs. Meagher dilutes the power of her attack on the Warren Commission, for, in the first case, she can show only "reasonable doubt," whereas, in the second case, she proves sloppiness, incompetence, and prejudicial investigation. For example, her evaluation of Jack Ruby's

activities and character is granted far less space than Oswald; yet her findings about the "assassin's assassin" have far-reaching implications in support of a conspiracy theory. In this area, she also offers the sensational footnote that a London actuary claimed the odds against 15 assassinations related witnesses being dead by February, 1967, were 100,000 trillion to one.

Of particular interest to Los Angeles readers is the chapter "No Conspiracy?" which deals, in part, with activities of Loran Eugene Hall and Lawrence Howard in Dallas. Both men have been subpoenaed by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison as material witnesses in his investigation and according to FBI reports they appeared at the home of Mrs. Sylvia Odie in Dallas, where Mrs. Odie claims they told her of an assassination plot. Mrs. Meagher points out that the Commission never thoroughly investigated this matter.

Although Mrs. Meagher is given to excesses of humor and rhetoric which are inappropriate to her topic, the bulk of her 477 pages stands as a valid and monumental critique of the Warren Report. The sensible question is whether the omissions, errors, discrepancies, and misrepresentations she has discovered in the Report substantially alter the Commission's conclusions. The answer is: yes.