

The novel was a mistake, in any event, if only because it is a mistake to pick out a short story as a novel. As a short story it might have been fine, in the grotesque-acerbic note of Flannery O'Connor. As a novel, it is long-winded and colorless. It is doubtless admirable of Mr. Price to eschew his previous appeals, the color and the earthiness of the rural South, but he should not have been satisfied with this attempt, which is half-hearted in every direction.

For one thing, the title! What a wonderful promise, *Love and Work*? Has anyone ever written a novel that did real justice to the role of work in our lives? The moments we give to love and the hours, days, years we give to work—surely they deserve at least equal billing in the novelist's scheme of things. But in most novels people don't work at all. The reasons are obvious, of course, but it remains a glaring deficiency, since work is the backbone of our existence from infancy to old age, predating "love" and often sailing far beyond it.

The hero of Mr. Price's novel is one Thomas Eborn and the story begins most promisingly with a little essay by Eborn on the meaning that work, his work, has in his life. The complication is equally hopeful—Eborn's wife is resentful of the importance he attaches to his work in comparison to the love that he feels for her. It is an offense that threatens her and even to an extent mystifies him, and it seems to me that Mr. Price could well have explored these possibilities to advantage. But having stated the case Mr. Price seems to have exhausted it and he goes off at a tangent, several tangents, that lead nowhere. Eborn's mother dies and he resolves to recreate his parents' lives in fiction. The long sample we are given of this attempt is a failure—perhaps a more telling one than the author intended—and meanwhile the fundamental investigation—work vs. love—play out inconclusively and the novel ends with a scene that suggests Mr. Price forgot where he began. The whole effect is loose-textured and spiritless.

One cannot easily condemn any au-

thor who abandons a vein that looks like a sure thing—Mr. Price's fey children, be they fact or fantasy—to mine a new location. It is courageous of him to try. But a failure is a failure and no writer gains in stature by good intentions. We can only hope that Mr. Price may explore his potentially rich theme again. It may be only a matter of a little more love and work.

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A great deal has been said about the collective guilt we all must share in the recent assassinations of prominent Americans. One suspects, however, that this breast-beating is so much rhetoric, for when it is suggested that more than

one person was *actually* involved in the killings, much time and effort are expended by the government and the mass media to assure us that each of them was but the work of one deranged man.

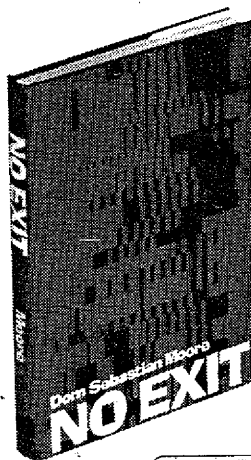
In the case of President Kennedy's murder a prestigious commission established by executive order and headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was set up to reassure the world of this. The near total acceptance and defense of the findings in the Warren Commission Report by the American public has been a constant source of anger and frustration for the few individuals who have carefully studied every item hidden—in addition to all the items missing—in the Report's 26 volumes of hearings and exhibits.

Some defenders of the Report claim that this anger and frustration have caused the Warren Commission's critics to become shrill and irresponsible in their characterizing the Report as superficial, illogical and dishonest. But no one who has read Sylvia Meagher's scholarly and thoroughly researched *Accessories*

DOM SEBASTIAN MOORE

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After the Fact will find shrillness in her 477-page book. Her conclusions faithfully reflect the evidence which the American judicial adversary system would have most likely produced had Oswald been allowed his day in court.

In 1966 Miss Meagher compiled a *Subject Index to the Warren Report and Hearings and Exhibits* (Scarecrow Press: N.Y.), the first time anyone cared to catalogue all the material contained in the Commission's 26 volumes. In *Accessories*, she effectively uses the knowl-

edge acquired from that index to not only show where the Commission erred in its conclusions but how it twisted and distorted testimony and evidence in pursuing its single assassin theory.

Where Miss Meagher's book deals in detail with some 27 subjects before and after the assassination, Josiah Thompson chooses to concentrate solely on the six important seconds in Dealy Plaza. Using sketches of the important Abraham Zapruder film (*Life*, owner of the original print, refused Thompson permission

to reproduce the individual frames), 21 other known still and motion pictures taken in the plaza, and numerous drawings and charts (all conveniently appearing alongside the relevant text), Thompson carefully and systematically shows how the Commission's "single bullet theory" is implausible, i.e., the same bullet which first hit Kennedy could not have also wounded Texas Gov. John Connally.

Once one admits that Kennedy and Connally were hit separately (because the alleged murder weapon could not possibly reload and fire again that fast), then the presence of two gunmen is inescapable and one therefore by definition has a conspiracy. Thompson, after pointing out the Commission's major errors in evaluating those six crucial seconds, shows how available evidence suggests that there were three riflemen firing at the Presidential motorcade.

The first shot, according to Thompson, came from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository (and not necessarily fired by Oswald) missing its mark and wounding Kennedy in the back. The second bullet, striking Connally, possibly came from the roof of the Dal-Tex building situated diagonally across from the Book Depository. A third assassin ("the insurance gun") viewing the scene from behind the fence atop the grassy knoll to the right, slightly in front of the oncoming motorcade, saw Kennedy still sitting upright. He fired almost point blank just a fraction of a second after the gunman in the Book Depository, who realized he had failed in his initial shot, fired his second one. Kennedy's head for an instant began to fall forward, only to be driven back by the force of the fatal shot from the grassy knoll.

Thompson, an assistant professor of philosophy at Haverford College and a former consultant on the assassination to *Life*, is a "third generation" critic of the Warren Commission's Report. He has not only rejected many of the Report's major conclusions but has posed a tight, well-thought-out alternative.

As these two authors—Meagher and Thompson—have noted: unless those Americans in public and private life

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who revered him, those members of the press who respected him, and those members of his family who loved him demand that the investigation of John F. Kennedy's murder be reopened and the truth exposed he will have died in vain and that will certainly be the real tragedy of November 22, 1963.

CORRESPONDENCE

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those very people that Maryknoll had sent us to help, who did not now regard us as guests but as brothers. There was a conflict between the people we loved and wanted to serve and their government. We chose the people; Maryknoll opted for the government. Just as she couldn't have done anything else, neither could we.

As an American, I felt obligated to interfere in the political process of that country, because my government is interfering every day by the rape of the Guatemalan peasantry, sending all types of military aid to prop up a corrupt political system (I am tempted to exclude the person of the President—he is weak) that wouldn't last two or three years without American help. The U.S. gives minimal economic aid to camouflage its real intentions and so deceived the populace as to where its real interests lie: U.S. big business ties with the ruling class of all Latin American countries. As an American, I could have refrained from helping the revolutionary movement had my government promised to abstain from helping the exploiters, but as a Christian, I still had obligations to the exploited.

Finally, a look at what is coming. The majority of Maryknollers in Guatemala have a difficult time with Spanish, do not read the local newspapers in any detail, do not listen to any local radio stations, do not know what is happening in the country. They are caught up by their interest in Huehuetenango to such a degree that it precludes a knowledge of and an interest in, the rest of the country. Since the political murders in Huehuetenango itself so far have been

few and far between, they allow themselves to think that there is no real problem. This in itself is a criticism of the fact that the Maryknollers refuse to teach the people their basic human and political rights. When they begin to do this, they will be confronted with the problem of revolution, which so far is completely academic for them, the government will execute the leaders they form and will expel the Maryknollers from the country. When they do awake, it will be far too late to keep the bloodshed down, or for them to have a purposeful role in bringing Christian principles to bear on the movement. . .

Mr. Chandler feels that the Guatemalan government could have kicked out all the Maryknollers if it had so wished. I do not believe that. This would have complicated its relationship with the U.S. government, to say nothing of its relations with its own people. But if it had, it would have been the best thing that ever happened to Maryknoll. It would have demonstrated that our 25 years of "self-sacrificing labor" isn't as valuable as we would like to think, had the people permitted such a massive withdrawal so easily. And it would have demonstrated from now to eternity to the Guatemalan people and to the world, on whose side Maryknoll takes its stand. Maryknoll has suffered much in this country for its stand. It is going to suffer far, far more in the years to come in Guatemala itself, as the people begin to realize that Maryknoll is always prepared to take the side of the government in its conflict with and exploitation of the people. . . .

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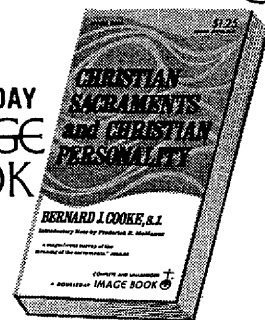
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