

Behind the Times

EXCLUSIVE

Secrets the FBI, CIA & KGB knew and have never told...

from the explosive new book
**LEGEND: the secret world of
LEE HARVEY OSWALD**

Part 1 of 2 Parts
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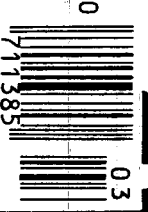
ON THE EARLY AFTERNOON of November 22, 1963, an obscure Dallas stock clerk squinted out of a fourth-floor window in the Texas School Book Depository and, with a gentle tug of his trigger finger, changed the face of our world forever. Americans were left stunned and confused by the brutal assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Almost immediately, a key question emerged: had the killer acted alone, or was he a part of some sinister conspiracy? Today, almost 15 years later, that question still haunts the country's psyche.

In September 1964, the Presidentially appointed Warren Commission released its conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was solely responsible for killing Kennedy. Many Americans promptly rejected this conclusion, believing it to be an officially contrived balm to heal a wounded nation. Their doubts flourished: a Gallup poll in January 1967 showed that 50 percent of Americans believed that Oswald had not acted alone.

Over the intervening years many of the principal figures of those dramatic days have died. Gone are President Lyndon Johnson, Chief Justice Earl Warren, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Oswald-murderer Jack Ruby and, of course, Oswald himself. But they left in their wake an ever-more-tangled web of theories about conspiracies, doctored photographs, doubles for Oswald, and the endless re-juggling of ambiguous evidence. Well over 100 books have been published on the subject, as well as tens of thousands of newspaper and magazine articles. One consequence of this obsessive concern is that in February 1977, according to the Gallup poll, an astonishing 81 percent of Americans believed that Oswald conspired with others to murder Kennedy.

For years Digest Managing Editor Fulton Oursler, Jr., had been fascinated by the cascade of conflicting reports surrounding the findings of the Warren Commission. In early 1975, as fresh information began to seep out of the Senate's Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, and as certain documents began to be available through the Freedom of Information Act, Oursler's interest sharpened. "How could it be," he asked his colleagues, "that there was a major investigation in 1964, and that 11 years later people are *still* coming up with new information?" Oursler believed that "The Digest should attempt a definitive examination of the enigmatic assassin.

His fellow editors agreed—and



quickly concluded that the best author for the subject was Edward Jay Epstein, who in 1966 had published *Inquest*, the scholarly and highly acclaimed analysis of the Warren Commission that became a best-seller. In addition to his reputation as an incisive investigator, Epstein was the author of *Counterplot*, considered to be the most authoritative work in debunking the Garrison investigation of the Kennedy assassination. Last year he also published *Agency of Fear*, a widely admired account of how Richard Nixon had tried to use the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement and the Office of National Narcotics Intelligence to create his own secret police.

In October 1975, Epstein agreed to launch a major investigation into the background of Lee Harvey Oswald. The Digest would make available resources for an exhaustive study that would examine areas of Oswald's life never before touched by journalists or government investigators. In particular, the probe would focus on Oswald's associations with intelligence agencies, his access to U.S. military and reconnaissance secrets, and his clandestine existence in Dallas and New Orleans prior to the assassination.

The result, 2½ years later, is both an important book and a journalistic event. *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* is published by Reader's Digest Press and distributed by McGraw-Hill, and will be released in April at \$12.95. You will find the first of a two-part condensa-

tion beginning on page 81. Part II will appear next month.

From the start, Epstein had at his fingertips the worldwide research facilities of *The Digest*. Research Associate Pamela Butler was placed in charge of the coordination of the research effort. A few months later Nancy Lanoue, a skilled independent researcher, began work on a full-time basis. The Digest's European Bureau, headed by John D. Panizza, provided background reports and checked facts. Senior Editor Francis Schell and Associate Editors Yvonne Fourcade and Ursula Nacache followed leads in France, Germany and the Netherlands. In Japan, Deputy Editor Ko Shioya scoured his country tracking leads nearly 20 years old.

Access was also gained to the tens of thousands of pages of intelligence material in the National Archives that had become available under the Freedom of Information Act. The task was mammoth. In each of the thousands of pages there was the tantalizing possibility of a new name or a fresh clue that would lead to a new piece in the puzzle of Oswald's life. With these bits of information—and with one name leading to another—Epstein began to make contact with former members of intelligence agencies as well as with obscure people who had never been seen by the Warren Commission. An enthralling untold story began to unfold.

In December 1976, Associate Editor Henry Hurt was assigned to find

as many as possible of the men who served with Oswald as radar operators in the Marine Corps. With only counties of birth to go on, the research team made hundreds of telephone calls in tracking down dozens of men in 32 states and several foreign countries. All of them willingly told what they remembered of Oswald as a friend and as a Marine—and most wondered why no one had ever asked them about him before.

"One of the most revealing interviews," says Hurt, "was with Godfrey 'Gator' Daniels aboard his fishing boat in the Louisiana bayou country. It had taken us a while to find him, since the Marine Corps had reported him dead." "Through such interviews, bits of evidence began to coalesce to form the image of a purposeful, well-spoken young man far different from the 'loner' Oswald was depicted to be by the FBI and the Warren Commission.

Perhaps the most mysterious character in Oswald's later life was George De Mohrenschildt, who, the FBI believes, was associated at one



Up-Date

GEORGE BURMAN'S Prof. C. H. Dodd and his *New English Bible* committee were stumped in their search for a more modern version of the words "the fattest calf" in the parable of the prodigal son. Finally, armed with a list of alternatives, the professor went to London's Smithfield meat market. Giving the list to one of the butchers there, he asked, "Which, if any, of these terms would you use to describe an animal about to be slaughtered?"

The butcher read over the list with care, shook his head and returned the piece of paper. "We shouldn't say any o' them, guv'nor," he said. "You see, we've got technical terms for these things. We always calls 'em 'fattest calves.'"

—Quoted in *Entertainment*, South Africa