

A New Look at JFK's Death

Sylvia Meagher (pronounced Marr) is a member in good standing of that diminishing tribe of experts on JFK's assassination. On the eighth anniversary of that wretched event, I thought it would be intriguing as well as instructive to talk with someone who has kept up with developments in this fascinating field of crime detection. Even though the assassination is no longer front-page news, there are apparently thousands of questions left unanswered by the Warren Commission. So people like Mrs. Meagher keep up their private detective work, hoping that their research will someday force the case to be reopened.

Mrs. Meagher's sensitive post in a large international organization prevents her picture from accompanying this interview. I vouch for her existence though. She is the author of the exhaustive "Subject Index to the Warren Report and Hearings and Exhibits" and an assassination book entitled "Accessories After the Fact." She is surely not the Jim Garrison or Mark Lane-type of self-publicist but a serious woman devoted to a rather serious subject.

It is now eight years since John Kennedy's assassination and seven years since the Warren Report was filed. Do you suppose the mystery of the JFK murder will ever be unraveled to your satisfaction?

The final answer becomes harder and harder to obtain with every passing month because of the death of witnesses, the loss of recollection and the preoccupation of people with other questions. These are the common difficulties associated with solving any old crime where the evidence has become dusty and the trails covered.

Have any important pieces of evidence been lost forever which could have helped settle the controversy?

That's almost impossible to say. However, I know there is evidence in existence which has been adamantly concealed although its accessibility should have been granted without hesitation.

For example?

The report of the FBI's spectrographic examination of bullet fragments, bullet smears and the whole bullet found on JFK's stretcher. The results of this report are of the utmost importance in checking out the Warren Commission contention

that all the shots fired on Dealy Plaza came from a single rifle.

The FBI, the National Archives and the government have refused to release this information despite the fact that under no conceivable law or statute governing the classification of documents could such information be legitimately withheld.

Are you implying then that the reason the spectrographic tests are kept secret is

How many people are still actively engaged in researching the assassination?

In terms of professional, qualified researchers, I'd say probably a dozen. Not all of them are known or published. I can mention a very brilliant young man in the Philadelphia area who has written a most impressive book in which he completely destroys the autopsy findings. With considerable new information he has

initial suspicions about Gibbons' testimony, but, far from incriminating Oswald by placing him on the sixth floor, his original story given to the FBI on the very day of the assassination was that he had seen Oswald at 10 minutes before noon on the first floor and that he had left the building at that time to spend his lunch hour with a friend at a nearby parking lot.

When Mr. Gibbons was called to testify before the Warren Commission the next April, he then told for the very first time the story of going back for the cigarettes. Now the lawyer who questioned him was fully aware of Gibbons' earlier testimony because he asked him if he ever told anyone that he saw Oswald at 10 of noon on the first floor. The witness said merely, "No sir," and the lawyer simply accepted that.

In any case, I wrote an article about this inconsistency in August for "The Texas Observer." The editor was so upset at the seriousness of the charges I was making that she sent my article in advance to the two commission lawyers involved. One lawyer declined to comment. The other insisted that what Gibbons said to him in April was more authoritative than anything said previously to the police, FBI or secret service. In private correspondence with me, this second lawyer has only been abusive, angry and hysterical.

If Oswald didn't shoot Kennedy as you believe, he must have been framed. So who framed Oswald, and why?

I only wish I knew. It's our only possible road back to the conspirators if they can be found at all. Now, there's no other link to these people except through persons who knew Oswald and were in position to manipulate him. For he was obviously framed in advance.

People had to make sure he was alone at the time of the shooting and not out there in the crowd being photographed. They had to make sure he carried something into the depository that morning. Therefore I can only postulate that the persons who designed and executed this assassination were persons who had extensive knowledge of Oswald and to a degree were able to influence his movements and activities.

Did Oswald know beforehand that Kennedy was going to be killed that day and that he somehow was implicated?

In my opinion he knew perhaps he had been entrapped into something. This is why he left the depository and showed some hesitation about where he would go. Subsequently, when Oswald was under arrest in the Dallas Police Department, he shouted to reporters that he was a patsy, that he was being framed.

Did Oswald have any last words as he was dying with Ruby's bullets in his stomach?

This involves another deplorable omission from the Warren Report. A police officer said to Oswald as he lay dying, "This is your last chance. Do you want to tell me anything now?" Oswald was aware of the question and indicated he had nothing to say. This may or may not mean anything because guilty men can die refusing to confess. But why was this exchange omitted from the report?

How do you account for the utter success of JFK's assassination? If Oswald and Ruby were framed, then the rest of the conspirators got off scot free. It was a perfect crime.

I account for it by the terrible lethargy of the legal profession, the press and even the public. It's very interesting that one poll showed that three quarters of the American people did not believe the Warren Report, yet almost the same percentage were opposed to a new investigation.

UNCOMMON CONVERSATIONS!

interviews by Philip Nobile

because they would clash with the Warren Report's single weapon-single assassin conclusion?

I'm absolutely convinced of that because I can think of absolutely no other reason why the test results should not have been released or why, for that matter, the Warren Commission took no direct testimony from the FBI expert who conducted the tests.

If you are correct in suggesting these tests would prove that more than one weapon was involved, then there are men in government who know that Oswald did not act alone.

Let's say there are people who should know. I don't want to speculate on whether they have confronted these facts and are deliberately concealing material or whether they just pursue a general policy of not wishing to be bothered by critics. I can't enter into their minds. I can only judge from their actions.

Say we grant the theory that Kennedy was shot at by more than one weapon, what advantage is there to the Warren Commission and the government to insist on one gun and one assassin?

The advantage is that they retain on the books of history the false, fraudulent and cynical conclusion that there was no conspiracy; that the President was tragically killed in a random unavoidable crime. But this is not so.

proved to my satisfaction at least that none of the shots fired at the President and the governor came from the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Book Depository.

There is an architect from the Boston area, a Mr. Robert Cutler, who has recently published a very interesting and technical monograph which postulates shots coming from several different locations.

What is the government's response to this sort of amateur sleuthing? Officials don't pay any attention to you and your colleagues, do they?

I can't speak for anyone else, but my book was ignored by the government and none of my articles, with one exception, has ever caused any official comment.

What was that article all about?

In my book I had questioned testimony contained in the Warren Report by a depository worker, a Mr. Gibbons, who claimed he forgot his cigarettes, went back up to the sixth floor and saw Oswald near the window. The Warren Commission, of course, leaned very heavily on this man's testimony which I felt smacked of perjury and collusion.

Now several years later when I began buying declassified Warren Commission documents from the National Archives and read them carefully for new information, to my amazement and excitement, I discovered considerable new material that not only supported my

Best of OBT

Charge of Light Brigade

By Ed Syers

Used to be, any Texas boy could recite "The Charge of the Light Brigade" from the first half-a-league onward right into the mouth of hell, where they rode back, but not the Six Hundred. We knew there never was another cavalry charge like that one.

We were wrong. There was one in Texas that was bigger, faster, better-riden, as desperate of purpose and as foredoomed to defeat as that which the British chasseurs hurled at Balaklava.

To trace its 700 mile sweep today, you trail dusty names like Council House, Linnville and Plum Creek. You course from San Antonio to Port Lavaca's coast and back to Lockhart, near Austin; then far west to Colorado City.

To find where they fought and why, you visit a quiet Catholic bookstore, a forgotten town, and a hill overlooking a state park's golf course. You turn time back, not long after San Jacinto—four summers, as Indian reckoned it. You see, this cavalry is Comanche.



Syers

This is one in a series of Texas heritage features from the new book, "Texas—Off The Beaten Trail," by Author-columnist William Edward Syers. Published by Texon Press, Waco, in hard or soft-cover, this book combines three paperback editions of OBT which have proven Texas best sellers for a decade and which have been out of print for three years. "Texas—Off The Beaten Trail" may be ordered by readers of Express and News by using the coupon below. It will make an ideal Christmas gift.

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IT IS MARCH, 1840. From the new northwest frontier captain Laman's red-tinted iron-fist Indians to make the boats and watch their town torn apart with a searching fury, then burned.

ers to make the boats and watch their town torn apart with a searching fury, then burned.