

The Washington Post

# BOOK WORLD

DECEMBER 31, 1967

## SPEAKING VOLUMES

(PAGE 8)

said.

It may be the nicest library I  
ever have in Long Beach, California.

—ALICE GLASER

### *Polemical index*

The connoisseur of indices will get a kick out of one of the latest Kennedy assassination books, even if the main text leaves him cold. Not long ago, Edward Epstein expertly reviewed Sylvia Meagher's *Accessories After the Fact: The Warren Commission, the Authorities and the Report*, in these pages, but he left unmentioned the one aspect of that prodigious work that I found most remarkable.

Like those who prefer the pope's nose, rump steak and ox-tail soup at the dinner table, when I read non-fiction I prefer to start with the part that comes off the

printing press last. If it is compiled with skill, an index can tell more about the book, the subject matter and the author than all of the chapters within.

Mrs. Meagher is a mistress of this largely unappreciated art, and it was she who created the new subform: the polemical index. In her previous work, *Subject Guide to the Warren Report* (which was *all* index, from cover to cover), Mrs. Meagher invented the brilliant "negative reference" to subjects which did *not* appear in the Report or the 26 volumes but which she thought *should* have been included.

In *Accessories After the Fact* Mrs. Meagher has polished her technique to the point where you need only read the 12-page index to find out what the other 464 pages contain. Under "Warren Commission," we find a total of 422 page references broken down more or less evenly under the following subheadings: "bias and predisposition," "delays in investigation of evidence," "failure to investigate suspicious circumstances," "illogical and double standard," "impeachment of witnesses," "inadequate and incomplete investigation," "inattention or indifference to evidence," "manipulation and distorted presentation of facts," "and Marina Oswald" (which sounds innocuous enough, but a reader of the book proper will discover that the author considers "Marina Oswald" a nasty thing to say in connection with anybody), "and the FBI," (ditto), "misrepresentation and misleading statements," "methodology" and "omission or suppression of evidence."

One approaches the references to the FBI with great anticipation and finds right off "FBI, alleged intimidation of witnesses," followed smartly by "alleged misreporting." The Dallas Police get off comparatively lightly with an understandable "mishaps to prisoners."

For anybody wishing to keep up with all the voluminous assassinalia, index reading should not be overlooked.

—GEORGE COOK