

TRANSCRIPT
AND
COMMENTARY BY SYLVIA MEAGHER

Jim Bishop, interviewed by Mitchell Krause on NET Channel 13
10 p.m. Friday November 22, 1968

Bishop ... The Dallas Police Department did its best to solve the crime as quickly as possible, solely to try to erase the stain from the conscience. But then, you must bear in mind that all of us felt this sense of guilt, because as long as Mrs. Kennedy kept that dress on, and those stockings, with the blood of her husband and the brain of her husband, all day and all evening, she was inflicting that guilt on us, because all of us winced, we felt badly...

Comment: Within hours after Oswald was murdered, the Dallas Police declared that the case "was closed." At that time, the results of the autopsy on President Kennedy were unknown to the Dallas Police, and therefore the location, nature and number of his wounds and the direction of the shots were unknown. No prints on the murder rifle linked it to Oswald. No reenactment was attempted to see if Oswald could have fired at the President and reached the second floor in time to be encountered by policeman M. L. Baker, as he was, a little more than a minute after the shots were heard. Nor had the Dallas Police screened the Zapruder film, which presented prima facie evidence that the fatal shot came from the front and right of the car. Also in doubt at the time the Dallas Police "closed" the case was the identity of the "man in the doorway" (in the photograph taken by James Altgens during the rifle fire), who appeared to be identical with Oswald and wearing the same shirt Oswald was wearing when arrested.

While we can only infer the motives of the Dallas Police in declaring the case closed before the minimum investigative procedures were completed (or even begun, in a number of respects), motives other than solicitude for the burdened conscience of the Dallas populace suggest themselves. We should not forget that within days of the assassination of President Kennedy, the most popular wisecrack at Dallas cocktail parties was "We should have invited him sooner."

Krause Are you saying that the act of an assassin is nothing but an extreme extension of feelings that all of us have? of hostility, of animosity?

Bishop Absolutely; absolutely. I have never heard of a normal human being who will not admit that at one phase or other of his life he felt like killing somebody. He didn't do it—but he felt like killing somebody. The difference between that man and Lee Harvey Oswald is that Lee Harvey Oswald felt it was the only way he could pull himself up from the gutter, the only way he could get out of being a human cipher, he was going to become a big digit all in one day. Bang!

Comment: Bishop's assertion that Oswald was intent on becoming "a big digit all in one day" is only his speculation and one that is vulnerable. Bishop should label his speculations as such.

Krauss With those who have been assassinated--politically speaking, all of them were to the left of center, were liberals, in the nomenclature of the day, and some have speculated that this is more than a coincidence. Why...why is it?

Bishop Because the Right extremists are more prone to violence than the Left. If you follow the whole trend of Leftist politics, you will find that they seek ...peace, joy, work. These are their credo--not "kill." But the Rightists believe that anyone who is slightly to the Left of them is an arrant Communist or a Marxist and is out to create a revolution. And how do we eliminate that? We shoot 'em.

Krauss You're saying that this is, in your view, a Rightist kind of action?

Bishop Absolutely.

Comment: Although Bishop's thesis is stated in simplistic terms, I can agree with him. It is a secondary or tertiary argument against the culpability of the Marxist, Oswald. Apparently Bishop can ignore not only a large body of evidence against the conclusion that Oswald was guilty but also the logic which occasionally attaches to his own judgments.

Krauss Do you accept any kind of conspiratorial connotation?

Bishop Oh, no; none whatever. I don't know of anybody in all of my research, and I read sixteen million five hundred thousand words before I started to interview people for this book--there wasn't one word to show that anyone trusted Lee Harvey Oswald. In the Soviet Union, in the United States, his wife, his own brother Edward (sic), no one, no one trusted him--not because of violence, because they regarded him as some sort of naive fool. He couldn't make good in any job he held, he was a failure. He was not a great lover to his wife, or a great father to his children. He could not provide. The best salary he ever made was a dollar twenty-five an hour.

Comment: The meaning that Bishop invests in the alleged lack of "trust" in Oswald is not clear. Probably he does not mean "trust" in the usual sense of property, valuables, or the safety of children entrusted to his supervision; in any case, there is not one jot of testimony suggesting that Oswald was considered untrustworthy by any of his intimates, associates, or acquaintances, or by his employers, in the conventional sense. He was considered by many to be politically untrustworthy, especially after his return from the Soviet Union. But if Bishop really intended to refer to "trust" of Oswald in terms of his capacity for violence, then he has completely inverted the truth. The fact is that person after person who knew Oswald was shocked and incredulous when he was arrested on a murder charge: a New Orleans police lieutenant said that he would have "bet his head on a chopping block" that Oswald had no potential or capacity to commit the assassination or any

homicide. J. Edgar Hoover Himself insisted that there was no indication whatever in Oswald's record of a capacity for violence before 11/22/63. That is borne out in Oswald's Marine Corps and Soviet medical/psychiatric dossiers.

It is not true that Oswald was a failure in every job. He was held in esteem by the Leslie Welding Company, which regretted the receipt of his letter of (voluntary) resignation.

Krauss In your reconstruction of November 22, 1963, you found nothing new in terms of provocative unfinished business?

Bishop Oh, I found a lot that was new. Now, I would have to cull my memory at the moment to think of what I regard as new in this book, but let's start off here—that Lee Harvey Oswald didn't want to escape. No one else has mentioned this before; but a man who has as his entire earthly possessions one hundred and eighty-three dollars and eighty cents does not take what he calls curtain rods (and we know to be a rifle) in one hand, and take a hundred and seventy of those one hundred and eighty-three dollars and leave them in a jar for his wife. Because if you're going to even try to shoot somebody—suppose you miss? Whether you miss or not, you're going to need get-away money...Remember when he tried to shoot Major-General Edwin Walker he left a note for her, saying, here's where the insurance is, and if the press besieges you, here's what to say...He expected to be captured, in the General Walker thing. Now when he tried to assassinate Vice President Johnson in the Adolphus Hotel his wife locked him in the bathroom all day. Now here was the third time around.

Comment: Bishop is not the first one to call attention to the evidence that Oswald made no attempt to escape (although he does seem to be the last one to do so, and has moreover failed to draw the logical conclusion from the data). Many students of the assassination have pointed to the anomaly of Oswald's leisurely, calm behavior and his lack of any attempt to escape. I have emphasized this in Accessories After the Fact (see page 83 fn. and Chapter 3 in general) and I have also noted, as Bishop did not, that with massive evidence to the contrary, the Warren Commission unfairly and misleadingly refers to Oswald's movements as his "escape."

We do not know that Oswald carried a rifle to work on Friday morning. On the contrary, the evidence that he carried something much shorter than the rifle in question is formidable and could not be overcome by the Warren Commission except by an arbitrary conclusion. This is fully discussed in Accessories, Chapter 2.

As to the \$170 Oswald left with his wife: Bishop has completely misrepresented the circumstances. Oswald was accumulating cash in that wallet, which stayed in his wife's bedroom and to which he added money from time to time, or from which he took small sums for his workday expenses.

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The undated note left by Oswald did not refer to "where the insurance is," for the simple reason that Oswald had no insurance. Nor did the note instruct Mrs. Oswald on what to tell the press (it did ask her to send press cuttings, if there were any, to the Soviet Embassy). Bishop's description of the note is one-hundred per cent incorrect.

Finally, Bishop reveals the dormancy of his intelligence and the tenacity of his bias when he glibly asserts that Marina Oswald "locked Oswald in the bathroom all day." Just how would she do that? Bathroom locks are on the inside, and serve to bar intruders from entering, not to imprison the occupant against his will. The biggest ignoramus in the world must at least know that much.

Krause Do you think he expected to be shot, then...?

Bishop No, I don't think he expected to be shot. Bear in mind, he didn't even try to get away from the scene of the crime, he didn't try to get out of Dallas...

Krause Why do you think this was? that he didn't want to get away?

Bishop Because I think he wanted to be known as the assassin—not today, maybe not tomorrow, but in time, under his terms, his way of doing it, his drama. He would play it out to the hilt and then he would concede the point that he had done it...

Comment: Bishop's lack of scholarship and/or malice is particularly evident in his assertion that Oswald would have confessed in due time. The injustice and lack of foundation for Bishop's bland contention is apparent from the testimony of Detective Combest. After Oswald was shot and when he was aware that he was dying, Combest urged him to speak, if he had anything to say, before it was too late. Oswald's response to Combest was that he had nothing to tell. Since he did not use the opportunity to confess when he was in extremis, Bishop's facile belief that Oswald intended to confess at some later time is utterly invalidated.

And so is Bishop.