

UNCOMMON CONVERSATIONS

interviews by Philip Nobile

SYLVIA MEAGHER (pronounced Marr) is a member in good standing of that diminishing tribe of experts on President Kennedy's assassination.

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 F. Kennedy's assassination and seven years since the Warren Report was filed. Do you suppose the mystery of the JFK murder will ever be unravelled 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.

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 spectographic 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 spectographic tests are kept secret is 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.

Say we grant the theory that President 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

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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.

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 was written a most impressive book in which he completely destroys the autopsy findings. With considerable new information, he has proved to my satisfaction at least that none of the shots fired at the President and Gov. Connally 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?

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

One might wonder why a crime of the magnitude of JFK's assassination hasn't sprung a leak before now — somehow, some place, by someone. But nobody has spilled.

I don't know if anyone has leaked. Maybe somebody did, but leaked to the wrong person and was disposed of. I suppose that in an assassination of a head of state, the men who pulled the trigger aren't left around. In the classic cloak and dagger operation, things are arranged so that no one person knows more than his immediate contact.