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For Oswald's Family, No Haven

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Fame—or notoriety—carry high price tags. Perhaps the costliest of all is an end of privacy, a denial of dignity.

Mrs. Kenneth Jess Porter has learned this to her obvious distress. She would like to be known by her second husband's name but the world will not have it so. If she lives to be 100—which would take her nearly half way through the 21st century—she will remain "Lee Oswald's widow."

The curiosity that resides in most of us to greater or lesser degree never will leave her alone. The Warren Commission found no evidence that she had guilty knowledge of what her infamous husband planned to do on that terrible day in Dallas, Tex. In strict fairness, she is just another victim among the many who suffered when the assassin's finger squeezed the trigger.

Moving from Dallas to Greenville, Tex., a small town, may help her and her family achieve a measure of the anonymity they seek. But it will be only a matter of degree. Two of her three children are Oswald's and they must share in the anathema attached to the name.

As the family prepared to move, Mrs. Porter asked a question that, happily, most of us never have to consider: "How would you like living in a glass house for all the world to see?"

Back in Dallas, the family of J. D. Tippit, policeman also slain by Oswald, are objects of curious attention, too. And in New York, the widow and two children of President Kennedy make news whenever they appear in public. But sorrowing pride sustains both the Tippits and the Kennedys; their loved ones died doing their duty, their memories honored and respected.

The vast majority of people is untouched by either fame or notoriety. Their deviations from the norm usually amount to nine-day wonders, quickly forgotten as the world moves to new and more gripping events.

It cannot be thus for Marina Oswald Porter, nor for her husband, nor for her children, nor, in all probability, for her children's children. They must bear, with what dignity and fortitude it is possible to muster, the truth implicit in Marc Antony's funeral oration over the body of another assassination victim: "The evil men do lives after them. . . ."