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Professor Popkin And Oswald's 'Clean' Bullet



A philosophy professor at the University of California thinks it likely that three men—not merely one—took part in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and that Lee Harvey Oswald did none of the actual shooting.

THE PROFESSOR'S NAME is Richard H. Popkin. His article on the assassination is in the forthcoming July 28 issue of the New York Review of Books. Whether or not it gets much national attention, it is a masterpiece of logic. Of course a philosophy professor does have to study logic, though he may not know much about methods of police investigation.

In form, Popkin's article is a review of two recent books, "Inquest," by Jay Epstein, published by Viking, and "Whitewash," by Harold Weisberg, who was his own publisher. Actually, the article is mostly a study of the 26 volumes of testimony, pictures, and the like that were issued as a supplement to the official report of the Warren Commission.

THERE HAVE BEEN a good many books and magazine articles lately about the assassination and the report. Some have been brilliant, some merely quarrelsome or sensational. Popkin's article is much the best of those I have seen.

Popkin analyzes several lines of evidence in detail. The two most convincing for his hypothesis—for it is only a hypothesis and he says so—that three men were involved in the assassination are these:

1) **THE RELATIVELY UNDAMAGED** bullet found in Parkland Hospital in Dallas after the assassination seems to have been a plant. Ballistics tests showed quite definitely that the bullet had been fired from Oswald's rifle. But when and under what circumstances? The official theory is that this

bullet was fired through President Kennedy's body and then hit Gov John Connally of Texas, striking a rib, his wrist, and his thigh bone. But when the bullet was turned over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation late that day it was not only relatively undamaged but it did not even need cleaning. No bits of blood, flesh, or bone were sticking to it. And the man who picked it up in the hospital said he had not cleaned it.

Other bullets were fired from Oswald's gun to make tests, one bullet into a skull filled with gelatine. They all showed more distortion than the bullet picked up at the hospital.

2) **THE PRESIDENT WAS** assassinated on Nov 22, 1963. As early as Sept 25 a series of strange incidents started. As numerous witness later testified, men (or one man) looking more or less like Oswald or identifying themselves as Oswald began showing up at all sorts of places where Oswald could not have been. On each occasion, as was later shown by other evidence, Oswald had been somewhere else.

The philosophy professor sees a distinct pattern in all this. Somebody was trying to plant mistaken testimony that Oswald had been at particular places at particular times when, as could later be established, he was not there. Should Oswald later be brought to trial for some offense, such testimony would cause much confusion.

BUT WHAT OFFENSE would such conspirators have had in mind? They could not have known on Sept 25 that at a particular moment on Nov 22 President Kennedy would ride past a particular building in Dallas.

More about Professor Popkin Thursday.