

Some seventy pages into Judy Bonner's book, one reads that "Tippit... spotted a man walking swiftly toward him" and that after a brief exchange of words "the man pumped three bullets into the officer's body." Yet it has been <sup>always</sup> ~~an~~ undisputed fact ~~for more than five years~~ that Tippit was shot <sup>whom he stopped on viewing him from the rear, in front of</sup> ~~four times~~, by a pedestrian walking ~~in the same direction as the police car and seen only from behind until he was stopped and turned toward the officer.~~ <sup>in another circumstances, the logical inference would be that Tippit recognized the man even from the back</sup>

Those simple facts are acknowledged by defenders and critics of the Warren Report alike and have never been challenged by anyone, including <sup>misstates them</sup> ~~not even~~ Mrs. Bonner. She has merely ~~misrepresented the known evidence~~, out of plain and inexcusable ignorance. Her book, Investigation of a Homicide, which so carefully avoids the <sup>political</sup> word "assassination" in both title and subtitle, is not a work of scholarship or objective inquiry but an unvarnished apologia for the keystone cops of Dallas. <sup>WR</sup> Careless of the elementary facts, making little attempt if any to confront the major criticisms of the official findings, and lacking an index, the Bonner book is written in a naive and banal style which adds insult to injury. <sup>Not content with trying to</sup> ~~vindicate the Dallas Police performance in terms of the serious charges and suspicions voiced everywhere in the wake of the assassination of President Kennedy and the murder of Oswald while he was literally in the arms of police officers,~~ Mrs. Bonner attempts to endow them with <sup>preposterous</sup> ~~purity and heroism~~ which is ~~deeply preposterous~~. Even the supposedly authoritative transcript of the police radio transmissions which appears in an appendix to the book does not dignify it by providing a useful research tool. It does not identify the <sup>speakers by name</sup> ~~dispatchers or the policemen~~ except by number and it covers only a narrow time-span; <sup>using</sup> ~~using~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~paraphrase instead of verbatim rendition~~, <sup>messages, and their</sup> ~~so that it is less~~ usable than any of the three <sup>"official"</sup> ~~versions~~ of the police radio transcript published by the Warren Commission ~~exhibits~~.

Mrs. Bonner's ~~transparent~~ <sup>her book</sup> effort to improve the image of the Dallas Police will not elevate their reputation or her own. <sup>It might</sup> ~~It might~~ best have come never than now.

Brian McConnell <sup>is a newspaper man on the L.D.M. and author of which</sup> ~~book~~, The History of Assassination, contains a section on the JFK assassination which is even more disgraceful than the Bonner book. Although McConnell, ~~a newspaperman with the London Daily Mirror~~, is dealing with a chapter of very recent history and with facts that are virtually household words, he makes a <sup>series</sup> ~~stream~~ of indecent errors. <sup>fact.</sup> He gives Oswald's birthplace ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> New York instead of New Orleans, ~~not once but twice~~; he identifies Marguerite as Oswald's wife, instead of his mother; John F. Kennedy is described as the oldest of the Kennedy sons, instead of the second of four sons; and, in referring to the assassination of Robert

who was in front of the book because in November

*but was soon captured*

Kennedy, he states that Sirhan "escaped", when in fact he was seized on the spot, with the revolver still in ~~his~~ hand. A "historian" who indulges in such gratuitous mutilation of the simplest kind of data is beneath contempt. Need I add that McConnell, naturally and predictably, also swallows whole-hog the contaminated Warren Report? The kindest thing that can be said for his book is that it was written by an imbecile for the edification of idiots.

Albert H. Newman's book, The Assassination of John F. Kennedy, is an entirely different kettle of fish. Although Newman, too, accepts the central findings of the Warren Report, he has ~~conducted an earnest~~ <sup>by read</sup> ~~study~~ <sup>and conducted</sup> the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits ~~as well as~~ <sup>and</sup> carried out personal investigation in Dallas and elsewhere, ~~and~~ <sup>to the best of my knowledge he</sup> is the only author of a pro-Warren Report treatise who has assimilated the testimony and the published documents. Regrettably, his source material does not include the unpublished documents in the National Archives, which ~~to one degree or another~~ <sup>already being</sup> were utilized in books published as early as 1967, by J. D. Thompson and others. ~~This~~ <sup>post office</sup> is something of a handicap to Newman. For example, he makes much of a notice of an attempt to deliver a parcel (~~mentioned in the published exhibits~~), addressed to Oswald at the Paine residence in Irving, two days before the assassination. <sup>publ. is mentioned in the</sup> He frets about the possible evidentiary importance of the mysterious parcel and ~~about~~ the seeming failure of the Warren Commission to investigate the matter. But the unpublished documents in the Archives show that the matter was followed up <sup>and that</sup> the package, on which 12¢ postage was due, was delivered on the 21st or 22nd of November 1963; it contained a magazine or newspaper (Commission document 735, pages 256-257).

*26 volumes with further references*

This information may only serve to disappoint Newman, for it does not advance his imaginative and sometimes even ingenious hypothesis. In a nutshell, Newman's ~~theory~~ <sup>question</sup> attempts to supply the motivation for Oswald's alleged acts, on which he considers the Warren Report ~~to be~~ inadequate and inconclusive, <sup>he</sup> by arguing <sup>as</sup> that all of Oswald's actions were inspired by political dedication to the Cuban revolution and zealous admiration of Fidel Castro. Newman contends that ~~it was~~ because JFK was an enemy ~~of~~ and threat to the Castro regime, ~~that~~ Oswald wished to destroy him—never mind that, as Oswald himself pointed out ~~to Captain Potts~~ under interrogation, Lyndon Johnson in the presidency would be an equal or greater danger to Cuba. The same devotion to Castro motivated Oswald's alleged attempt to shoot General Edwin A. Walker, Newman asserts.

And it is at this point that he parts company with the Warren Commission, for while he agrees that Oswald alone and unaided shot JFK and also Tippit, he is convinced that the Walker shooting of April 10, 1963 was the work of Oswald together with one or more accomplices. Thus, in the best of all possible worlds, we have both a lone assassin and a conspiracy, which ~~one must admit is an original and startling view.~~ <sup>Under Newman's theory,</sup> the hapless Oswald ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> unable to hit a sitting duck of a general even with the help of accomplices, but his dubious marksmanship (which moved acquaintances in Minsk to such pity that they gave him game to carry home from a hunting trip, to spare him mortification) <sup>of returning empty handed</sup> triumphed when he aimed a cheap old rifle at a ~~Presidential~~ <sup>JFK</sup> moving target travelling away from him. After which, without ~~the~~ <sup>and</sup> help of fellow assassins, he proceeded to various miraculous feats such as instantaneous materialization with a bottle of coke already in his hand four floors beneath the sniper's nest, and--having shot a President in the front from behind--~~he managed to~~ <sup>he</sup> let Tippit see ~~him from behind and recognize that his visage corresponded with the description of the suspect!~~ <sup>him from</sup>

Clearly, Newman's hypothesis is built on a basic fallacy--the premise that JFK was ~~assassinated~~ <sup>Killed</sup> by a lone assassin of any stripe. At this point in time, it should not be necessary to belabor the bankruptcy and fraudulence of that <sup>we</sup> "conclusion" ~~by the Warren Commission.~~ But within that fatally defective frame of reference, Newman builds a case that is coherent, sophisticated, inventive, and only occasionally unfair. An idee fixe, whether about Oswald's political orientation or other ~~contradictory, inclusive evidence,~~ <sup>aspects of the case</sup> introduces a danger of conscious or inadvertent blindness to inimical or inconvenient data (and perhaps no one who writes on this hotly contested subject can claim total immunity from such blind spots). An example of Newman's occasional unfairness arises when he argues that Oswald methodically tried to conceal his presence in Dallas from the FBI, as part of his preparations for the murder of General Walker or other declared enemies of Castroism. Newman points out that in New Orleans, Oswald ~~said he had come from Fort Worth~~ <sup>felt told as FBI in notes that</sup> (which some people regard as synonymous with Dallas, ~~in any case~~) and that he ~~registered~~ <sup>freely</sup> at the Beckley Street rooming house as "O. H. Lee". What Newman does not mention is that Oswald gave his real name a week earlier when he registered at Mary Bledsoe's rooming house, only to be evicted abruptly and without explanation at week's end. Oswald might well have suspected that Mrs. Bledsoe had learned of his notorious defection to the Soviet Union <sup>actually</sup> (although she seems to have dismissed him because he drank too much of her ice-water and ~~had~~ <sup>Conducted</sup> phone conversations in a foreign language) and decided that a pseudonym would reduce the risk of ~~another~~ <sup>second</sup> eviction.

Another dubious self-indulgence on Newman's part is his attempt to

invest cabalistic meaning, connected with Oswald's supposed <sup>obsession</sup> preoccupation with Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement, in Oswald's address <sup>numbers</sup> ~~numbers~~ and ~~or in the letters of the alphabet which appear in aliases or~~ <sup>which appear</sup> fictitious names on his documents. Newman cites the recurrence of the digits "2" and "6" in Oswald's addresses (602 Elsbeth Street, 1026 North Beckley) but he doesn't mention the addresses in which the two numbers do not appear together (4905 Magazine, 1501 West 7th St, 2703 Mercedes). Inevitably he also points out that "Hidell" is an anagram for "Fidel", which has become rather a stale item, and then pursues the theme that "D. F. Drictal" (an apparently fictitious name on the mail order for the S & W revolver) is an anagram drawing letters from "Castro" as well as from "Fidel". Unhappily, his <sup>argument</sup> ~~thesis~~ is merely foolish <sup>despite</sup> ~~for~~ all its "logic", since in a rare moment of carelessness Newman has misspelled the name, which is Drittal, not "Drictal" (CE 790). (Psychiatrist Renatus Hartogs fell into a similar trap some years ago by claiming Freudian symbolism in the pattern of Oswald's three shots at JFK and three shots again at Tippit—mere psychoanalytic claptrap, obviously, since there were four shots at Tippit and at least that many at JFK.)

For all the virtues of Newman's book (not the least of which is its excellent design, typography, and index), it is founded on an untenable set of assumptions and might ordinarily be dismissed as an irrelevant if skillful intellectual feat. What does give it a certain positive value is the body of additional evidence Newman has presented against the Warren Commission's reconstruction of the attempt on the life of General Walker.

Albert H. Newman's book is a very different kettle of fish. In style and <sup>thematic</sup> structure, the writing is professional and first-rate in quality. Even the design and typography of the book and its excellent index bespeak the seriousness of the contents. Of all the books which attempt to vindicate or which accept the findings of the Warren Report with respect to Oswald as the "lone assassin," Newman's is the only one which is built on serious and intensive study of the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits and of some, at least, of the critical literature.

Newman took ~~something like~~ five years to research and write his ~~impressive~~ <sup>study</sup> examination of the assassination and the alleged assassin, ~~summing~~ <sup>as basic source material</sup> using ~~as a~~ <sup>conducting</sup> foundation the 26 volumes and personal investigations in Dallas. Regrettably, the scope of his documentary research is narrower than the 1967 books by J. D. Thompson and by this writer, both of which relied to some extent also on the unpublished Warren Commission documents housed in the National Archives. (Regrettably, also, Newman confronts only the 1966 books by Edward Jay Epstein and Mark Lane but does not address himself to the other serious critical works. I don't know whether Thompson and I should feel hurt because Newman did not read or did not feel it worthwhile to comment on our books, or feel complimented because he was not able to refute or overcome our arguments against the WR.) Newman is somewhat handicapped by his lack of access to the unpublished documents, when for example he makes much of a "notice of attempt to deliver a parcel" to Oswald at the Paine residence in Irving, Texas, on 11/20/63, which is mentioned in the published inventories of Oswald's belongings. He frets about the possible evidentiary significance of the mysterious parcel, and is indignant that no one seemed to have found it interesting enough to investigate. But the unpublished documents <sup>(CD 735 pp 256-257)</sup> show that the matter was followed up and that the FBI determined that the package, on which 12¢ postage was due, was delivered to the Irving address on 11/21/63 or 11/22/63, and that it contained a magazine or newspaper.

In providing Newman with this information, I realize that it may only disappoint him, for it does not advance his imaginative and even ingenious theory--that Oswald was part of a conspiracy, to assassinate General Edwin A. Walker, but that (as the Warren Report says) he was the ~~lone~~ assassin of President Kennedy and of J.D. Tippit, "unassisted" in the parlance of baseball. What an original, even amusing, hypothesis! The hapless Oswald with his pathetic "marksmanship" (which moved his friends in Minsk to such pity that they gave him game to carry back from a hunting trip, <sup>to spare him an empty-handed return</sup> ~~on which he had been unable to hit the side of a~~ ~~bar~~) is unable to hit a sitting duck of a general even with the help

of accomplices, but when he is on his own with a rifle described as a cheap old weapon he is blithely able to get a bull's-eye on a moving target travelling away from him, and then to perform various miraculous feats such as instantaneous materialization with a bottle of coke already in his hand four floors below the supposed sniper's nest.

The trouble with Newman's thesis is that it is constructed on a basic premise that is fallacious--the premise that JFN was assassinated by a lone assassin of any stripe. Despite all of the desperate measures to which the Government has resorted in the hope of salvaging the Warren Report (moving the fatal bullet wound up four inches, refusing to produce the spectrographic text findings, prohibiting examination of the autopsy photographs and X-rays, to mention only a few such measures), the Report is hopelessly discredited. Let us not belabor that, at this late date.

Newman's hypothesis, in a nutshell, is that Oswald was motivated in all the actions attributed to him by political <sup>Considerations</sup> ~~aims~~ and zealous admiration of Fidel Castro. He builds a case that is coherent, inventive, <sup>only occasionally unfair</sup> and would be quite persuasive were it not based on a fundamental fallacy and therefore merely an irrelevant if highly skillful intellectual exercise. When there is an idée fixe there is always the danger of inadvertent blindness to inimical or inconvenient facts, and perhaps no one can claim total innocence who writes on this controversial issue. Newman tries to demonstrate that Oswald pursued a methodical policy of concealing his presence in Dallas in order to escape suspicion at such time as he succeeded in plugging General Walker with a bullet, and among his arguments he points out that Oswald registered as "O. A. Lee" at the North Beckley Street rooming house. But Newman <sup>conceals the fact</sup> ~~omits to mention~~ that a week earlier Oswald had rented a room from Mrs. Mary Bledsoe under his real name, <sup>He does not</sup> ~~as to~~ infer <sup>a possible</sup> any relationship between the fact that she abruptly evicted him (because he went too often to her refrigerator for ice-water, and because of her antipathy to Oswald's use of a foreign language when he made phone calls) without giving a reason, <sup>but</sup> which Oswald may have attributed to his notoriety as a defector to the Soviet Union, and his use of a false name with his next landlady.

Another dubious self-indulgence on Newman's part is his attempt to read too much into numbers and letters of the alphabet, to show Oswald's preoccupation with Fidel Castro and with Castro's 26th of July movement. <sup>He cites the</sup> recurrence of the numbers "2" and "6" or digits adding up to "26" in Oswald's addresses (~~602~~ <sup>602</sup> Elsbeth Street, or 1026 North Beckley, <sup>but he</sup> ~~although~~ Newman does not mention all the addresses which did not jibe with "26"

--add here 4905 Magazine St, NOLA, 1501 W 7th St Ft Worth  
2703 Mercedes St

Newman  
He does not resist the temptation to repeat the somewhat stale <sup>interpretation of</sup> ~~point that~~  
"Hidell" as an anagram for "Fidel" and then he makes himself a bit foolish  
by trying to prove that another invented name, "D. F. Drietal," is also  
an anagram, taking letters from "Bastro" as well as from "Fidel." But the  
invented name is not "Drietal" as Newman carelessly <sup>miss</sup> spells it; it is  
"Drittal," as one can see in ~~Commission Exhibit No. 790~~—perhaps an anagram  
for "Dallas" and "ripper" (~~for~~ Jack-the-Ripper), with the double "p" <sup>replaced by</sup>  
~~cryptographed as~~ a double "t." ? Dr. Renatus Hartogs in his 1966 book  
~~Was Two Assassins~~ tried this kind of fun-and-games <sup>on a Freudian level</sup>. He pointed to  
~~citing the supposed significance of three shots fired at JFK and three~~  
~~fired at Tippit,~~ but <sup>as mentioned earlier</sup> ~~he has come a cropper since~~ there were four shots  
at Tippit (and at least that many <sup>shots</sup> at the JFK motorcade), which leaves Hartogs with his  
~~But,~~ to correct myself, Newman's <sup>book</sup> is ~~not~~ <sup>not entirely</sup> an irrelevant intellectual  
exercise, <sup>for</sup> and in one area he ~~provides additional ammunition to~~ the critics  
of the Warren Report who <sup>have</sup> question or reject the allegation that ~~it was~~  
Oswald ~~who~~ took a shot at General Walker and who have cited in considerable  
detail the evidence which controverts that charge. Newman, in his fervor  
to show that Oswald together with an accomplice or two actually made the  
attempt on Walker, does not build any overpowering case but does considerably  
strengthen the evidence for concluding that Oswald was not implicated at all  
in the Walker incident.

Certainly, there is some material basis for Newman's hypothesis about  
the Walker shooting of April 1963 and one can take some pleasure in the  
cleverness with which Newman <sup>blends isolated bits of</sup> ~~builds and spins his evidence~~ <sup>into a coherent theory</sup>. When he ~~next~~ <sup>proceeds</sup>  
tries to argue that Oswald left the Book Depository on 11/22/63 with the  
intention of proceeding to General Walker's residence (in North Dallas)  
via Oak Cliff (south of Beckley Street) in order to shoot him dead, too, <sup>he goes</sup>  
he has no foundation except pure, subjective ~~personal~~ speculation. <sup>hey and</sup>  
This fanciful sub-hypothesis is so bereft of factual justification of any <sup>admissible</sup>  
degree that it can do no more than illuminate the obsessive nature of <sup>limits</sup>  
Newman's detective work and its lack of the prerequisite objectivity.

<sup>Nevertheless!</sup>  
When all is said and done, <sup>is</sup> the Newman book is ~~still~~ the only work <sup>with any</sup>  
<sup>semblance of</sup> ~~of serious scholarship which defends~~ the central conclusions of the  
Warren Report, <sup>and as such it should be read.</sup> <sup>and it is a</sup> Perhaps the best tribute  
that ~~can be paid to Newman is to repeat what~~ a fellow-critic of the  
Warren Report wrote in a recent letter—"I wish he was on our side."

Personally I would <sup>perhaps</sup> not go that far, for Newman's  
very keenness of mind and professional standards  
make it all the less understandable that he has  
Concurred with the specious charges of the WC against Oswald.