

10 June 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR : The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Book Review: Portrait of the Assassin by
Congressman Gerald R. Ford with John R.
Stiles

1. This memorandum is for information only to bring to your attention a forthcoming book concerning Lee Harvey Oswald by Congressman Gerald R. Ford with John R. Stiles, entitled Portrait of the Assassin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965).

2. Mr. Stiles is a long time political associate of Congressman Ford and was his special assistant throughout the Congressman's tenure as a member of the Warren Commission established to report on the assassination of President Kennedy. This book is written not so much to tell the story of the assassination of the President as to present a study of Oswald as a person and to describe his trips and activities insofar as they are known. The book is comprised in very large measure of extended extracts from the published records of the Commission. The testimony and views of Oswald's mother, wife and brother, as well as others who knew him, are set forth in some detail. Some emphasis is laid on Oswald's stormy relations with his wife and his forceful reactions to difficult periods in that relationship.

3. Congressman Ford tells of some of the problems the Commission faced in developing the evidence in the case, but the book is not critical of the Commission or of its conclusions. Portrait of the Assassin contains very few references to CIA (pages 13, 17-19, 21, 23-24, 61, 152-3, 291, 352, 460), and these are unobjectionable. Only slight mention is made of the charge put forth by Oswald's mother and others that Oswald may have been a CIA agent. In his conclusions, Ford stresses the importance of "meaningful human relationships", and that these are what Oswald lacked.

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4. The first chapter of Portrait of the Assassin, entitled The Commission Gets Its First Shock, deals with the charge, seriously advanced by Texas law enforcement officials, that Oswald was in fact an FBI agent and sets forth some of the Commission's deliberations as to how best to prove the truth or falsity of this claim which was also being raised by certain other individuals and public media. As Congressman Ford and the Commission Report and testimony point out, the charge was never sustained. However, some of the writing in Chapter 1 is possibly loose enough to allow for quotation out of context for those who seek to damage the image of the FBI. In February, when CIA saw the galley proofs of this book, this information was called to the attention of the FBI on a confidential basis. However, no action was probably taken by them, because there appears to be no change in the published version from the text of the galley proofs.

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