

About the author

Philip H. Melanson, 38, was an undergraduate at the University of Connecticut when President John F. Kennedy was shot.

"I was in a class from 12 to 1," Melanson said. "When I came out of the class, everyone was listening to the news and running around campus."

Seven years ago, he became interested in the questions surrounding the assassination after reading a student's paper on the subject.

Melanson, chairman of the department of political science at Southeastern Massachusetts University, specializes in national security and public policies of American politics, and in political theory. He has been with SMU since 1971 and became a professor last year.

He lives in Marion with his wife and two children.

work for them by trying to cover up Oswald's links with that agency, Melanson said. The conspirators "knew that the CIA couldn't say, 'This was a low-level intelligence agent, but that has nothing to do with (the assassination), folks,'" said Melanson. "It worked perfectly. To this day, it is like pulling teeth to get documents."

There are still many documents that researchers like Melanson cannot get. For example there is Oswald's 1962 income tax return. While his returns are available for other years, the 1962 return still is classified. Melanson said he believes that this may be secret because it includes references to payments from intelligence organizations. *

As for who these conspirators might have been, Melanson said, that there are an endless number of possible groups who might have wanted to see a shakeup in U.S. leadership. "It is impossible to figure that out from a distance," Melanson said.

Melanson said he hopes to find a publisher for his manuscript in time for the twentieth anniversary of the assassination next year.

PHIL M. SAYS-

NO, I DON'T BELIEVE LHO'S 1962 TAX RETURN
IS MARKED 'PAID BY CIA'

PLM

Nov. 22, 1963: Historian draws own conclusions

"History is not what happened, but what the surviving evidence says happened." The words of David Hackett Fisher, an historian, are taped above Professor Philip H. Melanson's desk.

By Kathleen Megan
STANDARD-TIMES STAFF WRITER
NEW BEDFORD
Nov. 22, 1963

DARTMOUTH — Was Lee Harvey Oswald a violence-prone, confused, muddled Marxist, as the Warren Commission found? Was he a misfit, neverly happy under any system he lived?

Or was he a well-trained intelligence agent, a cool customer, working for the United States, Russia or, maybe, Cuba?

Professor Philip H. Melanson of Southeastern Massachusetts University believes Oswald worked for the Central Intelligence Agency and was the "fall man" for a conspiracy which may or may not have included his working associates.

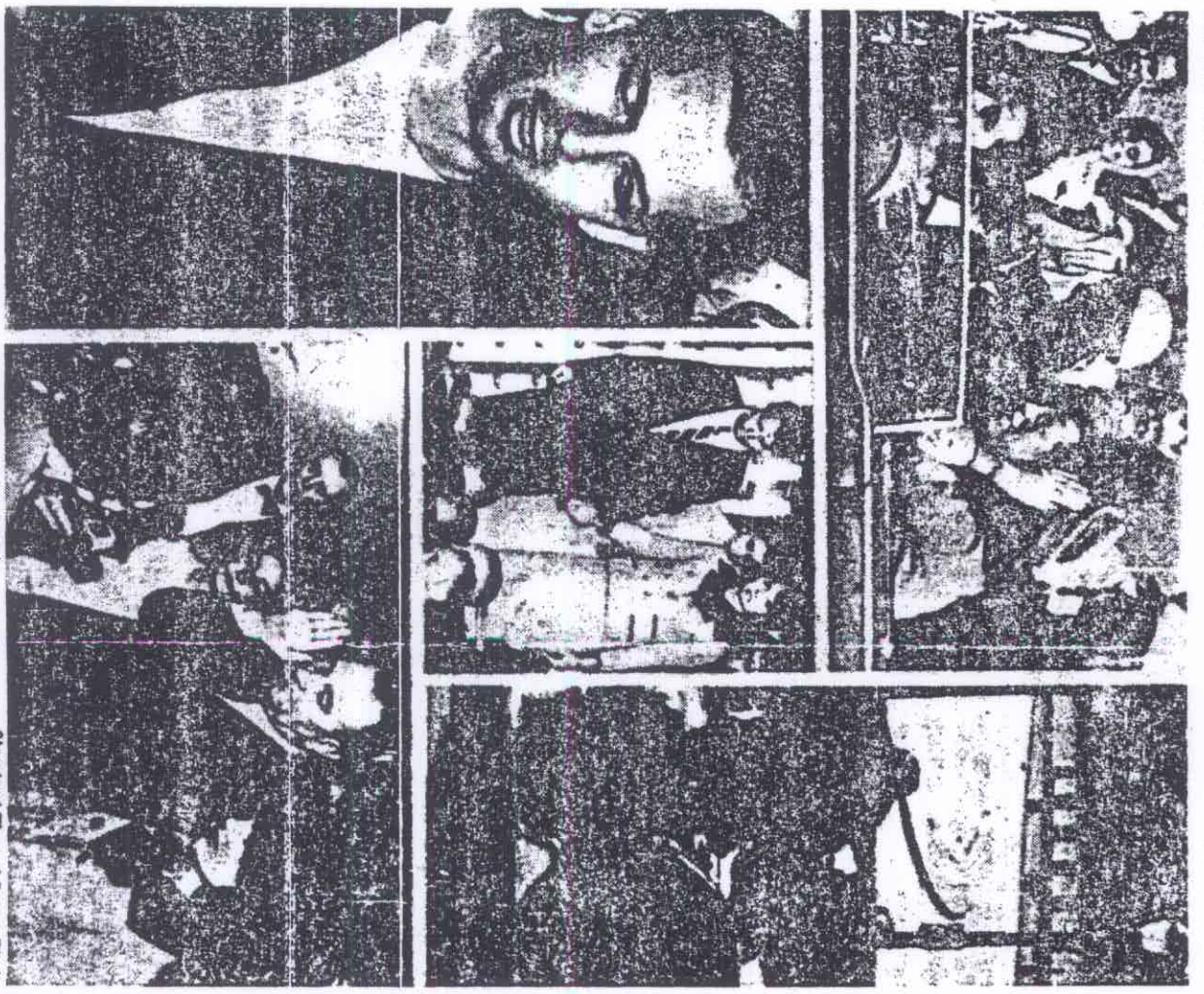
And Melanson believes that the matter of who killed President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963 must be examined to its fullest.

"History is a guide to the future," Melanson said. "If this watershed event is misunderstood, then it is a risk we must know what diseases threaten the body politic," said Melanson. "Do we have a conspiracy or a proliferation of deranged people? I became convinced that this tragic event needed historical repair."

So, in the last five years, Melanson, 38, has traveled twice yearly to Washington, D.C. to research government documents and piece together his own historical account of who Oswald was. Two-hundred five thousand pages of documents later, Melanson has written a 450-page account of the assassination and is looking for a publisher. Melanson says his work is not "a major breakthrough," but is a "unique contribution" to the literature on the assassination because of the very scholarly research it involved.

Melanson examined the same FBI, CIA and National Archive records studied by other writers, but because of his training in research, he said he ferreted out new or different material from the files.

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On Nov. 22, 1963, events came with nightmare rapidity. Clockwise from upper left: President John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline, travel through Dallas in a motorcade just before shooting; bodyguard leaps to the limousine as it speeds away; Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson takes oath of office; Lee Harvey Oswald stands accused; Robert Kennedy and the widow return to Washington.

Standard-Times Library Photo

New Bedford Standard-Times

Research gives author insights to Oswald's motive

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"It was very slow, very unglamorous work, very tiring on the eyes and budget, but very worthwhile. A careful reconstruction is better done that way than getting it from books."

Melanson said the bits and pieces of information he's gathered show convincingly that Oswald was working for a U.S. intelligence force.

For instance, there's the reference in a 1974 Warren Commission report to the commission's effort to "find out what he (Oswald) studied at the Monterey School."

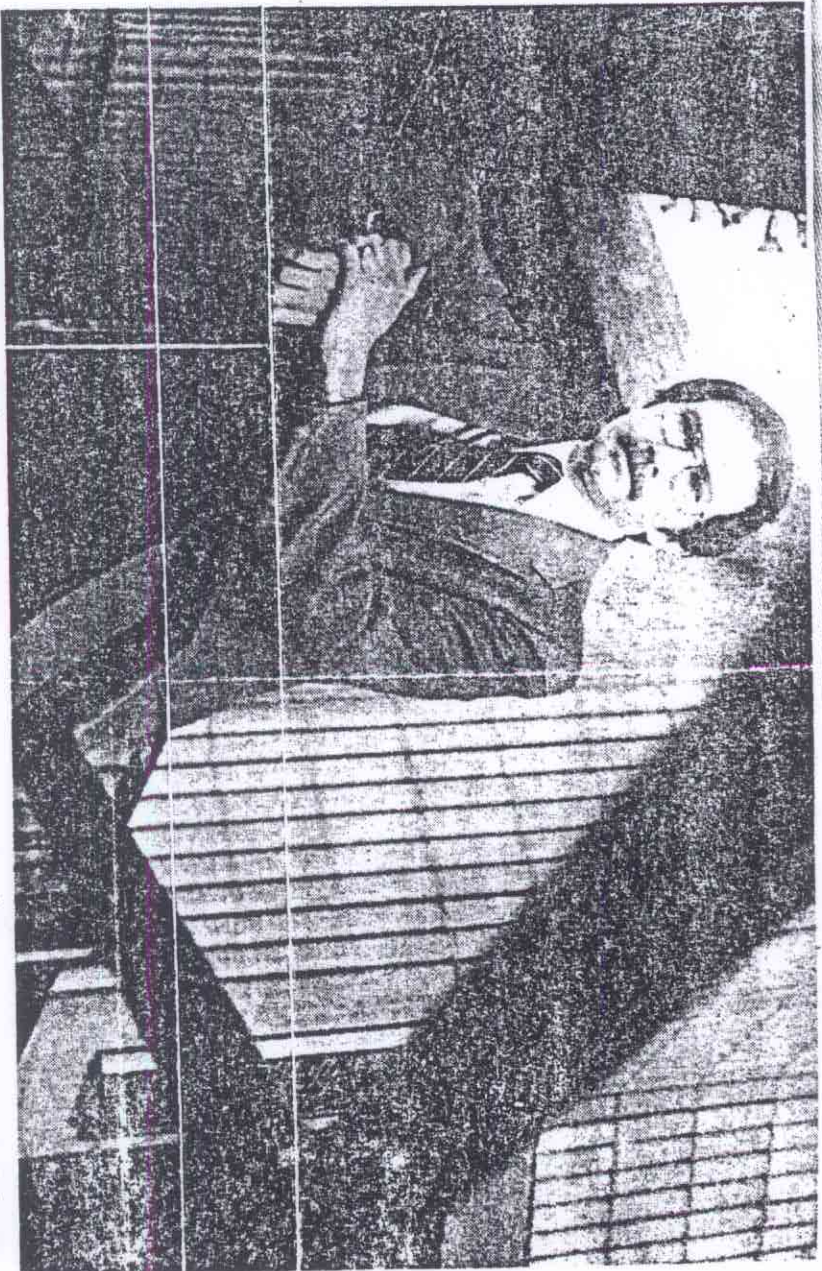
The school, the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., is considered the linguistic West Point for American military and intelligence personnel. More information on what Oswald studied at the Monterey School is not available, but Melanson believes he studied Russian.

While stationed in the Marines in California in February 1959, Oswald flunked the Marine proficiency test in Russian. A few months later, he not only could understand the language, but could speak it fluently. Melanson wrote, "Oswald claimed to have achieved this remarkable progress by listening to Radio Moscow. But Radio Moscow is not noted for talking slowly and in Berlitz-style prose. His sudden mastery would be impossible without tutors of some kind. The marines did not provide them; the Monterey School may well have."

Within months of learning Russian, in October, 1959, Oswald defected to the Soviet Union. Oswald's passport showed that he landed in London and was in Helsinki two days later. Melanson says there was no commuter flight then that could have gotten him there so fast. He either used a private or military aircraft of unknown origin. In addition, the entire trip would have cost at least \$1,500, while Oswald's known savings were \$203.

The year before Oswald's defection there were four American defections to Russia — more than in the previous three decades. The Soviets were suspicious that American intelligence might be planting defectors.

"The suspicions were correct," Melanson wrote. "Despite repeated requests from the State Department, the CIA and military intelligence would not reveal which defectors were real and which were American agents. According, to a former security officer for the state



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Staff photo by Hank Seaman

Department, State decided to conduct its own study of defectors to try to determine for itself which ones were real. One of the cases still being pondered in October of 1963 was Oswald's, and with good reason."

After Oswald's defection, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency did not conduct the usual "net damage assessment," although Oswald was known to have information about the ultra-secret U-2 spy plane. Such reports, designed to assess what secrets a defector might spill, were standard procedure and had been conducted in cases of enlisted men whose potential threat to American security were far less than Oswald's.

"Oswald's return trip to America was as mysterious as his departure," according to Melanson. "His passport did not bear the stamp of the West German checkpoint where his Russian-born wife, Marina, crossed from East to West, although they supposedly traveled together."

Though Oswald was supposed to have been a volatile Marxist, in his personal life, his interest seemed to run more toward spy novels. In addition, he had no friends who

were leftists or Communists. Rather, his friends seemed to have ties to the Right and to government intelligence organizations, Melanson said.

Shortly before the assassination, there were about a half-dozen instances when a man who identified himself as Oswald took part in some incriminating incidences. In one instance, this "Oswald" walked into a car dealership, test drove an automobile, and then angrily complained that if "This were Russia where men are treated like men," he would have work for the money to buy a car. In another instance, "Oswald" walked into a gun shop and ordered a scope mounted on a rifle.

The Warren Commission later discredited all of these incidents because Oswald had a good alibi for each. "There is little doubt that someone staged these dramas," Melanson said, to set up Oswald.

Melanson said he believes Oswald was set up partly because his spy background. The conspirators were clever enough to realize that an intelligence agency like the CIA would do much of their