

THE NATION

gerous threat to the President. Ideally, the Secret Service should be able to keep tab on every suspect. But Douglas V. Duncan, head of the Secret Service unit in Sacramento, points out, "We don't have enough agents for that kind of thing."

There will never be enough agents, nor can all the danger be eliminated by passing strict gun-control laws. Such legislation would certainly help counter the rising rate of street crime, but psychiatrists point out that a person who is crazed enough to want to kill a national political figure would somehow find a way to get his hands on a weapon. Ford's proposed gun legislation, now lying fallow in Congress, is aimed mainly at curbing the spread of "Saturday night specials"—cheap, small-caliber pistols. The .45 Colt automatic operated by Squeaky Fromme is not covered by the proposal.

Harrowing Warning. Faced with these harsh facts of political life, Jerry Ford still plans to carry on his work—and his election campaign for 1976—just as before. "You can't shut down the presidency," notes one White House aide. This week Ford will visit New Hampshire to campaign on behalf of Republican Senatorial Candidate Louis Wyman, and on Friday and Saturday he will fly off on another trip blending politics and presidential affairs, touring St. Louis and Kansas City, Mo., and then ending in Dallas. His aides expect that, as always, Ford will be making his handshaking forays into crowds of Americans. "It's a dreadful thing to contemplate," says one top White House assistant, "but every time the President steps off a plane, he risks his life. Yet he can't just put himself behind barriers. That would indicate a complete lack of confidence."

Ford will be going on the trip with more on his mind than Squeaky Fromme and the sight of her .45 coming up through the crowd. Last week, almost unnoticed in the flurry about the incident in Sacramento, federal authorities in Santa Barbara, Calif., jailed two drifters on charges of threatening to kill the President. When police arrested Gary S. DeSur, 31, and Preston M. Mayo, 24, for stealing a television set, they discovered notes outlining a plot to assassinate Ford during his visit to Sacramento. Santa Barbara Detective Robert A. Zapata reported that the notes told how the two men had planned to break into an armory in San Francisco "and get guns, a sniper scope and dynamite."

As the presidential campaign begins to quicken, and the candidates become more prominent, the threat can come from anywhere at any time. Some of the worst products of American society can suddenly lash out at some of the best. **The most harrowing warning came from Squeaky Fromme herself.** In the documentary *Manson*, she coolly pointed out: "Anybody can kill anybody."



LEE HARVEY OSWALD UNDER ARREST IN DALLAS AFTER KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

FBI

The Oswald Cover-Up

What if Aaron Burr had been a bad shot? What if Lincoln had not attended *Our American Cousin*? Such questions, history's most tantalizing and ironic, are also its most academic and trivial—except in some extraordinary instances. One such instance is now coming to light. The FBI is investigating the previously unrevealed fact that a few days before President Kennedy's assassination on Nov. 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald dropped in at the bureau's Dallas office to deliver a threatening note. Not only did the Dallas FBI fail to put Oswald under surveillance, but FBI officials destroyed the note after Kennedy's death and then withheld all knowledge of the affair from the Warren Commission.

Back in 1964, of course, the FBI told the commission that Oswald and his Russian-born wife Marina were no strangers to the bureau. Both had been the subjects of routine interviews the FBI conducted at that time with people who had lived in Communist countries. Dallas Agent James P. Hosty Jr., who had been keeping an eye on Marina throughout 1963, spoke with her early in November. Hosty told the Warren Commission that Mrs. Oswald had been "quite alarmed" by the interview. He did not mention, however, that Lee Oswald later visited his office, delivering a note warning the FBI to leave his wife alone. The bureau, preparing for Kennedy's trip to Dallas, did give the Secret Service the name of a potentially dangerous person in the area, but it was not Oswald.

Earlier this summer, the astonishing tale came to the attention of Tom Johnson, 33, former assistant press secretary to President Johnson and now publisher of the *Dallas Times Herald*. The *Times Herald* held off publishing its discovery for almost two months to give the FBI a chance to determine its accuracy. The story ran last week, under Johnson's by-

line, after FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley issued a statement to the *Times Herald* confirming its scoop. "FBI inquiries to date," declared Kelley, "establish that the note contained no references to President Kennedy or in any way would have forewarned of the subsequent assassination." Kelley added that the bureau's investigations "tend to corroborate that shortly after the assassination, the note in question was destroyed." But he did not say who might have destroyed it.

Index Number. FBI sources close to the investigation believe, however, that the note was more ominous than Kelley implied, and that the bureau's inspectors have learned that Oswald specifically threatened to take action against the Government. Just after the assassination, anguished FBI men in Dallas asked their superiors in Washington for guidance about the note. According to present and former FBI officials, John P. Mohr, then the bureau's administrative chief, told the Dallas agents to destroy it. That probably required considerable ingenuity, because the note had been assigned an index number and filed away. Subsequently, a former FBI official told *TIME*, the bureau deliberately concealed what had happened from the Warren Commission. Said this official: "The truth was that the FBI had information that Oswald intended to take action of some kind." Many agents aware of the cover-up—including James Hosty—were reportedly deeply upset.

Mohr, who retired in 1972 after nearly 40 years with the FBI, denies any knowledge of Oswald's note or its disappearance. So, too, do his former aides in the administrative division: Nicholas P. Callahan, James B. Adams and Eugene W. Walsh. The continuing FBI investigation is especially sensitive because these men now hold three of the bureau's five top jobs. Many agents, in fact, believe that the trio actually runs the FBI—with a little behind-the-scenes counsel from Mohr.