

Given a license to print money when Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy selected him to write what was taken to be a semi-official account of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, William Manchester has become rich from "Death of a President", his initial income being estimated by the Associated Press and the New York Times at \$2,750,000.00.

His wealth comes from a scurrilous work of conspicuous inaccuracy, often pure fantasy. It drips venom at everyone, passes judgment on every person and thing mentioned, as trivial as the decor of hotel rooms. Hiding behind the Kennedy name, which alone accounts for his wealth, he slanders with impunity, each public reaction making him richer.

Had this rewriting of history while it is still being made come from other auspices, it would have been ridiculed or lambasted. Instead, it is by most taken as gospel and has been treated by the press as though it were actually non-fiction.

The dutiful vice president awaiting the President, as protocol and respect for the office require, he says was "like Grover Whalen", once New York City's official greeter. A Texas host, Max Pick, passing Mrs. Kennedy a compliment, to Manchester "babbled idiotically". Those political friends of Lyndon Johnson are his "tong". "His" President, his presumed idol, is treated but little

better, being ridiculed for nervousness in speaking and for preparing for political life with the study of public speaking. His San Antonio speech on the November 1963 trip that ended in assassination "didn't contribute much eloquence". It was "statistical". To him the president is an actor, not a leader, and he must satisfy the corrupted standards and the superficial tastes of the jet set, entertain and sparkle, not inform and lead a people.

Were a single hair in Mrs. Kennedy's head in disarray because of the wind in the motorcade, she would fear "disgracing" her husband! His account of her clothing is so intimate and emphasized it is a wonder he did not include her undergarments.

All the meaningless but required social pleasantries are recorded and at length, as though they were the real stuff of life, each triviality treated like a decision to drop the bomb.

If there is any significance to the web he weaves around the trip to Texas and the hints and innuendoes he enmeshes, if there is more than meanness and evil of a personal nature intended, it is simply to infer what he dare not say, the libel that those who were Kennedy's hosts were also his assassins and their invitation was then to make the assassination possible. His dubious account of the planning that makes Governor John B. Connally personally responsible for the motorcade route is designed for the interpretation that this was intended to take the President "under the window" in which the alleged assassin lay in wait.

With opinion and adjectives for everyone and everything no matter how inconsequential they are or how inept, inaccurate, unfair or how far beyond his understanding or appreciation, with the indulged

compulsion to pass judgment on each second of each day, each act of each person, whether important or not, with all the treacle added to the venom, the marvel is that Manchester could contain it all in either the third of a million words of his manuscript or the extent of his "research", converted into a sales pitch by the editors of Look: "45 volumes and portfolios of transcribed tapes, shorthand notes, documents and exhibits." From the printed text, these are meaningless and redundant, but to the ignorant and gullible and to scandal-seekers, no doubt impressive.

Missing in the Look puffery is the fact that, as the designee of the Kennedy family, Manchester enjoyed prerogatives denied ordinary writers. He alone attended the star-chamber proceedings of the Commission, which were closed to the press and the public. He alone had a private room in the National Archives where the Commission files are stored. In it he had a cot. From his printed work, he could not have used this office for more than a pad.

But his writing is skillful. He is a craftsman who mastered all the mechanical techniques taught in his writing courses. All of the textbook tricks are in his bag and he uses them, giving detail and specification (without regard for truth and faithfulness) in a way that makes exciting reading if one is not concerned with content. And all the cliches of writing are here, too.

Yet some of it is dull, as this resort to direct quotation that gives the impression he was under the bed in the Kennedys' Fort Worth hotel room at the end of that hard day of campaigning:

"You were great today," he said.

"How do you feel?"

"Oh, gosh, I'm exhausted."

For all his craft, Manchester's "Death of a President" has the subtlety and grace of a back-alley fishmonger, the dedication of a self-appointed professional sycophant, the faithfulness to fact of Ananias, and he wrote it with the pen of Croesus. He becomes a millionaire from this one work, and in so becoming fashioned a national scandal that required the filing of lawsuits against him and his publishers by the Kennedys, without which the magnitude of this scandal would be beyond imagining.

His political scatology is clear. It is a literary Brink's heist. What is not clear because so few know the real evidence of the assassination is that his is preeminently the least accurate writing. His is instant evidence, made with a quick twist of the tongue or the fast flip of a phrase. It is also nonexistent evidence.

To those of us who know the fact of the assassination, he is blatantly, almost totally, wrong and in a way that cannot be accidental. Remember, this is the privileged observer of the Commission's proceedings, the man with the private office in the Archives, the interviewer of 1,000 witnesses - to what we do not know, but hardly to the assassination, about which the Commission on the investigation of the assassination interviewed but 552 - and the man who, like all mortals, had access to the Commission's Report and 26 appended volumes of perhaps 10,000,000 words of evidence. He is also the man who casts modesty aside and proclaims the greatness of his labor and suffering, the intimacy of his detail, the exhaustiveness of his research and study.

He is the man quoted by the New York Times of May 9, 1965, as saying, "I have more fresh material than in those 26 volumes ...

Actually, Oswald is a minor figure in the story." He is the hardest-working man in the world who 13 months later led Jeremy Campbell, of the London Evening Standard, to report that, "After suspending judgment on the identity of the assassin for 12 months he is now convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald did, indeed, shoot President Kennedy in Dallas."

And he is the man who, in December 1966, told Francis Wyndham, of the London Sunday Times:

I am appalled by the people - and this includes Professor Trevor-Roper - who without making any investigations have proceeded to pass judgment about what happened in Dallas. I suspended judgment for a whole year.

Of this there is no hint in his writing.

I walked over the motorcade route seeking out witnesses. Were the witnesses spending their years lining the streets awaiting Manchester? And what did those along the route but not at the scene of the assassination have to offer?

This modest man is "appalled" that there was an official investigation, stunned that anyone other than he had been selected to make the official investigation, and insulted that any "inquiry" other than his is considered. His "suspended judgment" is identical with the initial one. And Trevor-Roper's judgment was not of the assassination but of its investigation.

The least of the slush from which Manchester sluices his gold has to do with the assassination. His account of the "Death of a President" deals only in small part with the murder. Knowing little and caring less of the fact of the assassination, the Washington Post editorialized of Manchester's book on January 13, 1967, that it is not history, not biography, but a "highly personal, subjective,

biased and even inaccurate account of a tragic period ... The Nation's memory of President Kennedy, like its memory of other great men, often needs to be rescued from the recollections of 'friends' ... the truth does the President more credit than Manchester's subjective, purposefully distorted version of it."

Like most great papers, the Post has preferred to regard the Report as a rug under which the dust has been swept. It has not familiarized itself with what really happened when the President was killed. What might they not have said if they had compared Manchester's fictions with the official evidence?

The Commission and its Report, like the murdered President, "need to be rescued" from their "friends".

"Marina Oswald awoke at 6:30 on November 22, 1963," his second *instalment of the* serialization in Look begins. "She nursed the baby while her husband stood at the foot of the bed, dressing in a work shirt and gray trousers."

There were two people who refused to be interviewed by Manchester. Marina was one, President Johnson the other. With Marina silent and her husband dead, Manchester must again have been under the bed, for this account is not that of the evidence or history. It is, however, a fair beginning for the fictionalized version of the assassination that follows.

"For the last time, Lee Harvey Oswald said he really wanted her to buy things - clothes for herself, shoes for little Junie. She ignored him. Silently, she went back to sleep. ... In the bedroom he left \$187 in bills. He kept \$15.10." The implausibility

of this division of his limited resources by the man ostensibly planning the crime of the century, reserving so little for his flight, Manchester dismisses lightly. "That wouldn't take him very far. But he knew he wasn't going far."

Not any of this is true - not a single tiny part of it save Marina's feeding of the infant Rachel. And the truth is all public, both in the printed evidence of the Commission and in the documents near which Manchester had his bed. That bed, in fact, was near the duplicating room in which the Archives would have copied the evidence for him had he this desire.

While in a three-months captivity euphemistically labeled "protective custody" by the government, Marina gave the Secret Service a long, tightly written personal account. It is 48 legal-sized pages and is Exhibit 993, printed in facsimile in Volume 18 on pages 548-95 (18H548-95). One need not read Russian to understand it, for Exhibit 994 which follows is the 46-page typed translation (18H596-642). Marina said, "At 7 o'clock the alarm clock rang, but Lee did not get up. After 10 minutes I awoke him and began to feed Rachel. He said I should not get up, got dressed, said good-bye, and went out. I was busy with our daughter and did not hear when he left the house. But at 7:25, when I went into the kitchen, Lee had already gone."

What she saw and the extent of their conversation with him so late for work - or for his rendezvous with destiny, if Manchester and the Commission are believed - she testified to before the Commission on the afternoon of Thursday, February 6, 1964: "The thing is that I saw Lee in the room and I didn't see him getting dressed in the room. That is difficult for me to say (whether she saw him

put on a jacket). But I told him to put on something warm on the way to work" (1H122). With her wifely solicitude - she also offered to make breakfast - she "ignored" him. She "went back to sleep" by getting out of bed once the baby was fed.

With his ride due to leave from the next block ten minutes after Marina roused him (2H213), Oswald raced through dressing, did not shave, and was there before 7:21 (2H226). There was no opportunity for the dramatic conversation Manchester invents in pursuance of his theory that Marina goaded her husband to madness by ignoring and repulsing him, thus driving him to assassination. Especially not in the official version of the Report (R131) which has him leaving the house at 7:15, or five minutes after Marina awakened him.

The shirt Oswald put on was not a work shirt. It was once a good sport shirt of unusual and distinctive pattern. It was fraying slightly at the cuffs, had been darned at the right elbow about nine inches above the cuff and had again torn above the darn. The two buttons below the collar were missing. It is a multicolor shirt which from a distance gives the impression of brown with spots of a purplish-black suggesting iridescence, and with a pronounced gold fibre running through it. The gold is so prominent that on first examination one expects to feel metallic threads in the material. Close examination shows this is not the case.

Not to Manchester but to me that shirt is a vital piece of evidence because it destroys an essential part of the government's case and may yet prove Oswald innocent. While Manchester used his cot in the Archives, I used my eyes and the evidence. If he likes, I can add to his 45 portfolios a 500-word description of that very shirt that I wrote after examining it under both natural and fluorescent light.

Throughout her many statements Marina made it clear that her residence with Ruth Paine was temporary, until they had accumulated enough money to make a new start, when they did not require the economies of his living in a subdivided fleabag only five feet wide and her staying with a friend. She planned to go to Dallas with him after the holidays, but with the holidays coming that they could spend with friends (18H638) and with Mrs. Paine to help her with the baby (1H28), she thought it best to postpone their move to a Dallas apartment. The baby Rachel had just been born. After Lee got his job Marina remained with Mrs. Paine "because I was expecting, and it would have been better to be with a woman who spoke English and Russian". Marina then spoke almost no English.

On the morning of the third day of her testimony before the Commission, Wednesday, February 5, 1964, Marina made this explicit: In talking of their discussion the evening before the assassination - the time both Manchester and the Commission say Marina refused to talk to him - and of their plan to move to a Dallas apartment, she testified, "I said it would be better if I remained with Ruth until the holidays ... That this was better because while he was living alone and I was staying with Ruth we were spending less money. And I told him to buy me a washing machine because two children it became difficult to wash by hand (sic)" (1H66). While living with Mrs. Paine, Marina used the Paine washer. The machine she wanted was for their move to Dallas. Of this she testified, "He said he would buy me a washing machine."

The closest thing to support for Manchester's romance about their assassination-morning one-sided argument during that part of eleven minutes Oswald could spare from washing, dressing and going

a half-block away, is in a snatch of testimony in a rather odd hearing at the Dallas Naval Air Station the afternoon of Sunday, September 6, 1964. Senator Richard Russell was less than satisfied about some of Marina's testimony and he was, for the first time, pressing her, less than three weeks before the Report was published. He asked if Lee had told her to "buy some clothes for the children and yourself". Marina here was confused, as the interpreter said. At first she replied, "No," and then, "Yes, he did. It was the morning before the tragedy" (6H595). Oswald was not with her the morning before the tragedy. He was the evening before, and it is then they discussed these matters.

He walked a half block eastward on Fifth Street, carrying the rifle and the telescopic sight in the brown-paper wrapping he had brought from the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas the previous afternoon.

Frazier testified that Oswald carried nothing with him the night before the assassination as they drove from work to suburban Irving (2H243), and Troy Eugene West, custodian of the wrapping table on which the paper was kept, said he was there and Oswald did not get any of it (6H360-1).

The rifle and sight could not have been separate, especially not with the manner in which Oswald was seen to have carried his package, whatever was in it. For the sight to be installed accurately, the rifle must be test-fired after it is attached or adjusted by "bore sighting". Once the sight is removed, it must again be fitted properly before it can be depended upon. This could not have happened.

There is no evidence that the rifle was in the package. This is presumed, by both the Commission and Manchester. Testimony is 100 percent to the contrary. The Commission presumes the rifle was

separated into two parts: the works, all the metal parts, the barrel and the sight attached to it, and the stock, or the wooden part.

Manchester simply invents when he says Oswald carried "the rifle and the telescopic sight". He cites no evidence or proof that Oswald carried either, certainly none that he carried them separately in that "bag".

In the official version, the disassembled rifle was still much too long to have been contained in the package described by those witnesses who saw it. In the Manchester version, this package would have been an additional five inches too long.

"... two abrasive stories on the front page" of that morning's Dallas Morning News attract Manchester's attention. He mentions their political content and that of a third story on the inside. Like the Commission, he fails to note the two-column-wide front-page map that represented the motorcade as not going past the Book Depository Building, not going under that allegedly fateful window, not giving the alleged assassin that so-called "perfect shot". This does not mean the motorcade route was not planned to pass that building and under that window, but it does mean that Manchester, like the Commission before him, was conveniently myopic when faced with evidence contrary to the preconception of Oswald's singular guilt. Referring to that morning's map drew attention to the confused and inconsistent printed accounts of the route, from which no assassin could have planned the crime from that building. As many of the accounts said the motorcade would not go under the window as said it would.

That morning's paper also carried a scurrilous ad attacking President Kennedy. In it, according to Manchester, "an organization styling itself as 'The American Fact-Finding Committee' - a local coordinator of the John Birch Society and Nelson Bunker Hunt, the son of H. L. Hunt, it later developed, were the committee's most prominent members - asked the President 12 rhetorical questions."

There was no such committee. It was a fiction devised to make the ad seem respectable and authoritative. It was a front for several cute young ultra-conservatives out to milk the right of whatever they could, and in this case it was the either \$1,462 (5H504) or \$1,465 (R297) they got through Joseph P. Grinnan, Dallas oil operator and local coordinator of the John Birch Society. Hunt's son was another of the four Birchers who put up the cash (the others were Edgar R. Crissey and H. R. Bright), "some of whom in turn collected contributions from others" (R296). The singling out of the name "Hunt" here serves an obvious purpose. The fact is that the "committee" was "a name and only a name", according to the evidence (5H509), that "there was no such organization", that it "was used for convenience on this ad", that the name was never used before or after the ad was placed, and that Bernard Weissman, whose name was placed on the ad because he is Jewish, swore that "as a matter of fact, when I went to place that ad, I could not remember the name. I had it written down on a piece of paper. I had to refer to the piece of paper for the name."

When, after literary devices, Manchester finally gets Oswald and Frazier to near their place of work and they parked Frazier's car, he says, "Then Oswald impatiently got out, carrying his package.

Frazier's attention was diverted, and he followed slowly. By the time he reached the building, Oswald had climbed the loading platform and vanished inside. Oswald's movements in the next few minutes are a matter of conjecture, based solely on circumstantial evidence. Superintendent Roy Truly later recalled meeting him at a book bin and saying, 'Good morning, Lee,' and receiving the customary reply, 'Good morning, sir.' But Truly was vague, and he had no recollection of the package. It is quite possible he was thinking of another morning - that Lee had already ascended to the sixth floor, using one of the two freight elevators or the enclosed stairway in the northwest corner of the Book Depository, to conceal his weapon near the site he had selected."

This is a very big mouthful of distortion, evasion and misdirection of the reader, beginning with the false and prejudicial use of the word, "impatiently", to imply that Oswald was anxious to get on with the dirty deed and to get rid of Frazier. There is absolutely no such evidence. Frazier's "attention" was not "diverted", again the inference being as part of a plan. His testimony is specific: He watched the trains and he remained briefly to run the motor and add a little charge to the battery of his ancient vehicle.

That Oswald entered the building before Frazier is neither sinister nor the point, for Frazier had him in view for two blocks as they walked to the building. He gave the most explicit descriptions of the size of the package Oswald carried and the manner in which he carried it, ruling out the theories of the Commission and Manchester, that Oswald then carried the rifle, to each in a different state of disassembly (2H210-45).

Furthering this deception, Manchester goes into a digression *on*

Truly and whether or not Truly then saw Oswald enter the building and says what is not true, that "Oswald's movements in the next few minutes are a matter of conjecture, based solely on circumstantial evidence" (none of which he cites). Oswald was seen by one man in the entire world as he passed through the doorway that morning. He is Jack Dougherty, who testified April 8, 1964, and was questioned by Assistant Counsel Joseph Ball, who on March 11 had interrogated Frazier. Dougherty said Oswald "was alone". And when asked, repetitiously, "In other words, you would say positively he had nothing in his hands?" he replied, "I would say that - yes, sir" (6H377).

It is only because Oswald was seen entering the building and not carrying anything, precluding his then having carried the rifle or any other package into the building, that Manchester writes around the evidence as he does. The Commission was more honorable. It did not avoid the witnesses, all of whom testified 100 percent contrary to its conclusions, which come from a 100 percent absence of testimony. The Report simply concludes contrary to 100 percent of the testimony and with no evidence at all insists 100 percent of the witnesses were wrong. Manchester simply pretends evidence contrary to his romance does not exist.

Nor need there have been any mystery, save to those such as Manchester who avoid what is inconsistent with their preconceptions, or the Commission, which created great blanks where none should be. There is an attached shed at the rear of the building in which Oswald could have left a package. The Report cites no evidence it was ever searched for this package, especially that particular day. Not until the following August 31, more than ten months after the assassination, when the massive Report was almost ready to go to press,

did the Commission ask the FBI not to conduct a thorough investigation but to interview Truly "to ascertain if he knows of any curtain rods having been found in the TSBD building after November 22, 1963". Why not on that day, too?

The FBI reported, "... he stated that it would be customary for any discovery of curtain rods to immediately be called to his attention and that he received no information to the effect that any curtain rods were found ..." (Exhibit 2640,25H899). All that can be deduced from this is that, in addition to being the superintendent, Truly was also in charge of the department for the discovery and reporting of curtain rods. We do not know that Oswald did or did not leave his package on the first floor, outside the main building, the clear import of 100 percent of the official testimony, and we do know that not until more than 10 months too late did the government seek to learn. And it then did not cause a thorough investigation, what was required the moment Frazier and Oswald were questioned, which was immediately after the arrest on the day of the assassination.

Thus, Manchester's reason for pretending evidence that did exist did not, for declaring falsely that "Oswald's movements in the next few minutes are a matter of conjecture, based solely on circumstantial evidence".

How could Truly have been other than "vague" if he had seen no package or, as Manchester inferentially concedes, he had not seen Oswald that morning? "Vague" here is a propaganda word used as a propaganda device to avoid telling an outright lie. Its use and the misuse of Truly where there is the existing and uncontradicted Dougherty testimony is no more honest than an outright lie. It is intended to convey to the reader falsehood that Manchester does not

want to utter in his own name.

What Manchester ignores - because he has to, his vaunted 1,000 interviews notwithstanding - is that at the moment all three-score employees were reporting to work and using both the stairs and the elevators, not one saw Oswald go up six flights of stairs, and not one saw him walk the full length of the building and its width, from northwest to southeast, yet this is the wide open, uncompartmented floor on which the extra crew was laying a floor. Not one of this crew and not any other employee saw Oswald with a package of any kind; not one of those working on that floor and moving boxes to where the rifle was allegedly hidden saw any kind of package, hidden or open.

What Manchester keeps secret is that, as of the beginning of work at about 8 a.m. and a few minutes later, Oswald was seen by fellow employees - on the first floor.

Half the floor was to be redone at a time. In preparation for the work, the rear, or northern area had been largely cleared of cartons while the southern side, which would face the passing motorcade, was a crowded jungle of cartons and wheeled book trucks.

It was not the north but the west side that was cleared, and this has its own significance, again contradictory to the Commission's and Manchester's theory substituted for fact (3H163-7;17H20). Several witnesses, including Arnold Lewis Rowland, whom Manchester abused as the Commission did, saw a man walking around and with a rifle in the southwest corner of that floor, just before the assassination.

"Oswald built his sniper's perch of boxes in the southeast

corner." He did not have to. That happened automatically as the boxes were moved in the course of work. And ~~of~~ the only so-called eyewitnesses quoted by both Manchester and the Report swore Oswald did not use a rest for the rifle.

"... from which the President would be seen approaching dead ahead and then departing to the right front." Again, fancy language and evasion. Both the Commission and Manchester ignore ~~of~~ the improbability of a single assassin rejecting the straight, unobstructed "dead ahead" shot for one that went at a series of changing and obstructed angles, of refusing the easy shot for the hard one, of not shooting when he had all the approach and all the going away time of the motorcade for the shooting. The motorcade, having come down Houston Street directly toward that "sniper's nest", had made a left turn and was well past it before a shot was fired. It was going roughly parallel to the building, slightly away only at the time of the shooting.

"One pile of boxes hid him from anyone looking out of the windows of the Dal-Tex Building on the opposite ~~the~~ side of Houston Street." This was remarkably foresighted of Oswald, and careful, for it means he did not depend on the eighteen inches of solid brick alone to shield him from observation from the east. The TSBD has an entirely solid wall at that point. Manchester was less foresighted, else he would have consulted one of the many police pictures of this unbroken brick wall and no stacked boxes, such as Exhibit 729 (17H507) and Studebaker Exhibits D, F, G, J (21H646-9).

"Others (boxes) would serve as props when he aimed." But all the few people who said they saw a rifle or a "pipe-thing" in that window at that time, Howard Leslie Brennan, Amos Lee Euins, Photographer Bob Jackson and a few others, either swore the rifleman was erect and braced on no boxes or did not observe the use of any rifle rest. And the bottom of that window, as a result of the strange architecture, was but knee-high from the floor. In fact, eleven columns later Manchester forgets this invention and writes of Oswald "crooking his arm" to support the rifle when he "drew a fresh bead".

"Still others (boxes) would be used to provide a backstop against which ejected shells would bounce as he worked the bolt for each fresh shot." Because Oswald made no effort to pick up the empty shells, which magically also had no fingerprints and just as magically had been in this or another rifle on a different occasion (26H449-50), why should he require a backstop to "bounce" the shells back at him? Recall, Manchester alleges the building was virtually deserted, even if it is not true. Why did he need a "backstop" if, as Manchester insinuates, he wanted the shells to be found and if he were not going to collect them?

"Fifteen minutes before noon the men used both of the building's elevators to race to the street level." This language is almost identical with that of the Report (p.153). What Manchester apparently did not read was the subhead, "Oswald's Presence on the Sixth Floor Approximately 35 Minutes Before the Assassination," and the next to the last sentence of the paragraph from which Manchester paraphrased, "Givens thought this was about 11:55 a.m." And there was a third elevator in the building, in the front. These were the back elevators.

Their departure left the top stories unoccupied. In effect the upper part of the warehouse had now met the Secret Service's definition of the classic sniper's perch - it was a deserted building. ... Now Oswald was alone for a half hour for his final preparations.

Here Manchester quotes Givens's recollection of the time as 11:55.

But not quite deserted. There were numerous other employees throughout the various floors of the building (with remarkably little interest shown by the government and Manchester in the seventh floor), and on that particular sixth floor and only a very few feet away. Had Manchester read and remembered page 68 of the Report, he might have recalled what his tremendous investigation seems not to have revealed, that James Jarman, Jr., a wrapper in the shipping department, and Harold Norman, an order filler, "decided to watch the parade during the lunch hour from the fifth-floor windows." "Meanwhile," Bonnie Ray Williams, "a warehouseman temporarily assigned to" laying the new sixth floor, "had gone up to the sixth floor where he had been working and ate his lunch on the south side of that floor." Leaving behind the bag of chicken bones and the empty pop bottle that later became famous as part of the police case against Oswald as the calm assassin who munched chicken while he waited to murder the President, "Williams went down to the fifth floor, where he joined Norman and Jarman at approximately 12:30 p.m."

Aside from the fact that the building was well occupied, and on the crucial floors, immediately before and during the assassination, this strange Manchester omission has further point. What the Look serialization does not say is that the motorcade was due at this point at 12:25 and at the Trade Mart where the President was to have spoken at 12:30.

Assume that it was not a second later than 12:20 that Williams left the sixth floor. By the official estimate (Manchester does not deign to bother us with details of assembling a disassembled rifle), it took an experienced FBI man six minutes to reassemble the rifle. The Commission and Manchester both speculate Oswald had disassembled the rifle to bring it into the building. This speculation is one of the main bases of their conclusions, for if it did not happen they are both entirely wrong. There was no screw-driver found, so we presume that Oswald was careful and foresighted when it served Manchester's purposes and careless when it did not and that he, with a dime, could have reassembled the rifle in the five minutes between Williams's departure and the scheduled arrival of the motorcade. If we are to believe the witnesses the Commission produced and Manchester accepts, this was all done well before the shooting began. Because Manchester and the Commission require it, the rifle, somehow, unobserved, was reassembled, and in time.

What all of this means is that Oswald had to be so insane he could not remember to bring a screw-driver and so lucky he could expect nobody to be around when people usually were. And so telepathic he could depend on a late motorcade.

Of course, from wherever he was hiding, he had to get either to the sixth floor without being seen, or had he been hiding there, he had to move around and make his preparations in a very short span of time, with men underneath him whose hearing was so acute they could hear the click as the bolt of the rifle operated and the tinkle of the empty shells falling to the floor. This they testified to, and they further swore that neither before nor after

the assassination did they hear anyone moving around or anything else on that sixth floor from which Oswald had had to flee with greater than possible haste to keep a coming rendezvous with Patrolman Marrion L. Baker in the second-floor lunchroom when, no matter how the Commission stacked the reconstruction, Baker always got there too soon.

"Twenty minutes Roy Truly and his boys were in the front of the Depository, listening for the growl of approaching motorcycles." Again, not quite, not true, and not complete. This artful use of language is intended to perpetuate the false statement that the building was "the classic sniper's perch - it was a deserted building". There were employees of a number of book companies housed in that same building, and many of them were at that particular time in their offices or elsewhere in the building. Some were watching or planning to watch the motorcade. And there were "girls", not all of whom were "in front of the building". Precisely "twenty minutes later" Williams was still on the sixth floor, where he remained until he joined Norman and Jarman on the fifth.

"At that moment, an alert policeman, scanning windows, could have altered history." This is completely true, not as Manchester intends but because it is in contradiction to what both he and the Commission claim. "For Lee Harvey Oswald was in position now, clearly visible to those below." Manchester ignores Williams, who until 12:20 was still right where the alleged "sniper's perch" was and saw or heard neither Oswald nor anyone else. This, of course, is one way to solve a Presidential assassination.

"A youth named Arnold Rowland, who knew guns, had been watch-

ing from below with his wife since 12:14 p.m." Actually, the Rowlands had been there much longer. WHITEWASH II has a long chapter on them ("Eyes So Blind"). At 12:14 there was a police radio broadcast that Rowland overheard and repeated with complete fidelity months later. From that recollection, which is entirely confirmed by the police radio log, he later told the Commission exactly where the motorcade was at that instant and what he remembered because he recalled this transmission. "He saw Oswald silhouetted in the window, holding what appeared to be a high-powered rifle mounted with a telescopic sight. One of Oswald's hands was on the stock; the other was on the barrel."

Rowland never saw Oswald. The man he first saw in that very same sixth-floor window at about quarter after 12 and last saw not more than six ~~minutes~~ before the assassination was a Negro. He did ~~not~~ see a white man armed with a scope-equipped rifle. Only not at that window but at the opposite end of the sixth floor, from which the cartoned books had been removed and where there was room to move around. The white man Rowland saw was, he presumed, a Secret Service man. He called this to his wife's attention.

What Rowland really testified he saw is: 1) a white man in the opposite end of that same floor and armed with a rifle; and 2) in the alleged "sniper's perch", at the very time the motorcade was due and too close to its actual arrival to permit reassembly of the supposedly disassembled rifle, a Negro who could not have been the Caucasian Oswald. So, if we are to believe Rowland, as Manchester does and wants us to, we cannot believe anything else that Manchester or the Commission says. Rowland's actual testimony, which is supported by that of others both heard (like Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig) and ignored (like Mrs. Carolyn Walthers) by the Commission,

is evidence of Oswald's innocence. The Commission chose not to believe Rowland. Manchester chose to "improve" his testimony.

Here Manchester introduces Robert Edwards and Ronald Fischer and says, not in quotes, "what attracted Edwards's attention was Oswald's stance. Fischer agreed that it was peculiar. The man they saw was transfixed, staring to his right, away from Main. To Fischer it seemed that 'he never moved, he was just gazing like a statue'." This apparently is a new technique in assassinations, stand erect, in full view, without using a carefully prepared "sniper's perch", and stare only in the wrong direction, that in which your intended victim is going to go, not that from which he is coming.

To the right of a man in that window also is not "away from Main", which runs parallel with the front of that building, but away from Houston, on which the motorcade approached. Had this man been staring "away from Main", his back would have been toward Fischer, not his face. Manchester spent hours sitting in that "sniper's perch", he tells us, which probably accounts for his confusion of the basic geography.

Fischer and Edwards never saw Oswald. Even the Commission acknowledges this, desperate as it was for someone who could make positive identification of Oswald in that window and at that time. In a mislabeled section of the Report captioned "Eyewitness Identification of Assassin" beginning on page 143, in language carefully designed to imply otherwise, it acknowledges that it does not really have a single honest-to-goodness real eyewitness identification. Of Fischer it says (p.146), "He said the man held his attention until the motorcade came because the man: 'appeared uncomfortable,

for one, and secondly, he wasn't watching * * * he didn't look like he was watching for the parade. He looked like he was looking down toward the Trinity River and the Triple Underpass down at the end - toward the end of Elm Street. And * * * all the time I watched him, he never moved his head, he never - he never moved anything. Just was there transfixed."

The conclusion of the Report with respect to Edwards and Fischer (p.147) is this: "Fischer and Edwards did not see the man clearly enough or long enough to identify him."

With Manchester on the job, who needs Presidential Commissions or J. Edgar Hoovers? There is no problem of evidence, geography or eyewitnesses to which his trusty typewriter and facile imagination are not instantly equal.

Manchester concludes this section with the only man the Commission pretends was an eyewitness, Howard Leslie Brennan. Taking Brennan seriously is farcical, for he is one of the least credible "witnesses" in legal history. Commission Member Congressman Gerald Ford called Brennan the Commission's most important witness in his own special report that he wrote (or at least signed) for the Life coverage of the issuance of the official Report. Of Brennan, Manchester here says only that he was "the closest eyewitness". This is strange, considering he is the Commission's only one, no matter how undependable; but perhaps wise, considering what Manchester did with the others. It is Brennan who:

Failed to make "positive identification" of Oswald that afternoon when he was taken to a police lineup (of which, mysteriously, the police have no record), giving fear as his reason, because he

"knew" he was the only man in the world who could identify Oswald and he was worried about what could happen to him and his family. Brennan was untroubled in this fancy by the fact that he stood right next to Amos Lee Euins when Euins gave a report to the police.

(The Commission could not use this because in some accounts Euins said the man he saw was a Negro and in others a white. Yet Brennan said that he was filmed and on TV reporting to a "Secret Service agent". He never volunteered an identification after Oswald's murder ended the cause of his "fear". That he was afraid for his life and that of his family occurred to Brennan exactly when it was suggested to him some time later by government agents.

Saw "Oswald" standing fully erect and shooting when he could not have been because two full thicknesses of the double-hung glass sash would have been in his way. The bullet would have had to smash through both the panes of glass that remained intact.

Saw "70 to 85% of the gun", but saw no telescopic sight.

And many other things in an incredible upsetting of the mathematical probabilities of his making such errors.

From all of this, the Commission, less daring than Manchester in the use of witnesses but as adventuresome in the use of words, says that, "Although the record indicates that Brennan was an accurate observer (sic)", it "does not base its conclusion concerning the identify of the assassin on Brennan's subsequent certain identification of Lee Harvey Oswald as the man he saw fire the rifle" (R145-6). When tested, there was nothing Brennan could properly identify, including the window from which the shots were fired. Neither he nor the others invoked and presented as indubitable and probative eyewitnesses by Manchester is considered one in the Report,

which has not a single one!

At this point in his opus, Manchester invokes journalistic jazz having nothing to do with the assassination, distractions to build suspense and lend a sense of realism, such as when and where FBI Agent James Hosty observed the motorcade ("at 12:24 p.m." and "from the curb" some unspecified blocks away, from which he "then stepped into the Alamo Grill for lunch. He had seen the President. His day, he felt, was made.") It is a hackneyed literary device in a story that, if honestly told, needs none.

Manchester resumes after these digressions with the very moment of the assassination and with a person whose name does not exist in the countless millions of words in the Commission's Report and evidence, with "Spectator Charles Brend". There is, however, a close eyewitness, Charles F. Brehm, who said things not entirely consistent with the official account and who was not called as a witness by the Commission.

But Manchester's resumption of the narrative of events is not to give detail of the actual assassination, which he does not do. It is to assault the Secret Service escort and say that, in effect, they were responsible for the President's death because they did not react fast enough. He eases into this calumny that, were he to be believed, would hound these men and their innocent descendants for the rest of time, with the description of how Secret Service Agent Clint Hill, at the first shot, "saw the President lurch forward and grab his neck". This did not happen. That it did not happen is clearly established by a number of existing pictures, chief of which is the movie taken by Abraham Zapruder and which Manchester said in

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as quoted in the he studied for hours. This is quite a study because the entire assassination, according to the Commission, took but about five to six seconds.

Of two of these Agents, William Robert Greer, the experienced driver, and Roy H. Kellerman, the man in charge of the detail and the only other agent in the Presidential car, Manchester says, "They were in a position to take evasive action after the first shot, but for five terrible seconds they were immobilized."

Manchester says it. There it is. Need or can - dare - mortal challenge him?

Especially after his prefatory selections from unspecified "hunters in the motorcade", all of whom "identified the sound immediately as rifle fire". What difference does it make that most of the federal and local police and private citizens did not? Or that a number of witnesses did not hear one shot the Commission acknowledges was fired? Manchester solves this problem simply: He says it was not fired and ignores those witnesses who heard more shots.

Or that there was a third less than five seconds, as WHITE WASH II: THE FBI-SECRET SERVICE COVERUP, proves.

Between the presumed location of the Presidential car at the time of the first shot (the Commission's presumption is inaccurate and Manchester, not surprisingly, does not here give it) and the time the last shot was possible from that sixth-floor window, that car that Manchester said was going neither more nor less than "11.2 miles an hour", that lumbering, loaded old Lincoln with the pickup of a truck, would have had to travel about twice as far in the same length of time. To do this in five seconds, including reaction, comprehension and acceleration, is an impossibility. The only way

the President could have been saved from that fatal shot, if he had not earlier received one, would have been with rockets or a cloak of invisibility.

"They were in a position to take evasive action after the first shot, but for five terrible seconds they were immobilized," he complains.

Of course, it is possible that by "evasive action" Manchester means weaving and bobbing, swinging the car wildly from side to side, alternately accelerating and braking its great weight and bulk. Perhaps he means cutting into the flat glass of Dealey Plaza, mounting the curb and charging through it like a stage-coach evading Western baddies, scattering people right and left, or running them over and tossing the precious passengers around like corks in a stormy sea. He does not say what kind of "evasive action".

He does not seem to mean Kellerman's protecting the body of the President with his own, for that was also beyond human achievement. To have done that would have required the scaling of the back of the front seat, beginning from a forward-facing and sitting position and surmounting the steel cross-brace that went from side to side in the car atop it (for the President to steady himself with when he was standing); to have hurtled over Governor Connally and the jump-seat he occupied; to have then avoided the President sitting immediately behind the governor (landing in the President's lap would have accomplished nothing with all the shots coming from behind him, as both the Commission and Manchester say); then, having avoided the President, while flying through the air to have in some magical way found a handhold on the smooth, steel surface of the trunklid.

No, that cannot be what Manchester had in mind. Only he knows, and he does not say.

But with this awful accusation against living and dedicated men, it would seem that the man whose supreme powers of divination let him alone know that the car was going at exactly 11.2 miles an hour, that the Oswald's arose at just 6:30, even the precise instant Lee crossed the border from incipient insanity into stark madness, might have found the power, no matter how occult, to suggest, if not to prove, how Kellerman and Greer could have reacted rapidly enough in but the time it takes to draw a deep breath and then, in this same brief interval, to have done enough, this unspecified something, to change the course of subsequent history, and save the President's life.

From the record, the Secret Service escort would seem to be the most valorous and conscientious of public servants. Rufus Youngblood had reacted very rapidly, hurling himself atop the then vice president while at the same time forcing him to the floor. This was an act of the utmost heroism, for Youngblood had no way of knowing the vice president was not also a target and that his own life would not be forfeit.

Clint Hill, in whose charge Mrs. Kennedy was, defied death by lunging from the forward left runningboard of the follow-up car carrying others in the bodyguard and springing to her protection. He grabbed a hand-hold installed for agents riding the rear bumper just as the Presidential car lurched forward; with but five feet between the cars, had he not held fast, he would have been crushed to death. He did hold fast and mounted the trunk of the Presidential car in time, most observers believe, to prevent a fall under the second car by Mrs. Kennedy who, for reasons she does not know, was

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climbing out of the back of her car.

Making Mrs. Kennedy into an artificial heroine suits Manchester's concept of character and drama more than the simple, truthful reporting of her genuine courage in those awful days. Thus, his inference that she may have saved Clint Hill's life, which is consistent with his assault on the Secret Service escort:

Clint Hill had his fingers in the left grip and his toe on the left step 1/6 seconds after the last shot ... The Lincoln sprang forward, dislodging Clint's foot. He was deadweight and dragging. Mrs. Kennedy pivoted toward the rear and reached for him; their hands touched, clenched and locked. It is impossible to say who saved whom ... the film taken by Abe Zapruder (no one else calls him that) is inconclusive ...

The shot called the "fatal" one is Zapruder 313. Hill had reached the Presidential car at 332. In the official timing this is almost exactly one second and Manchester is wrong by half.

A few frames from films by Mrs. Mary Muchmore and Orville Nix are reproduced in Volume 18 and in the UPI-American Heritage book, "Four Days". In the Muchmore film, Hill can be seen as he begins his gallant charge to the Presidential car before Mrs. Kennedy is out of her seat ("Four Days," p.17) and as the bumper of the car from which he has just sprung barely misses his right leg ("Four Days," p.20). Hill was that close to a horrible death. An almost identical picture is identified as Frame 55 in the Commission's exhibits (18H35). The cars are about five feet apart and Hill is already almost at the President's.

Five different published Nix frames ("Four Days," p.21; 18H32-3) show Hill holding onto and on the Presidential car. None show him "deadweight and dragging".

Although Manchester draws upon it extensively, eyewitness testimony is often undependable. Because of the uncertainty in his

own mind about "who saved whom", he might have consulted Hill's testimony before the Commission on Monday March 9, 1964 (2H138-9):

... I had hold of the handgrip with my hand when the car lurched forward. I lost my footing and I had to run about three or four more steps before I could get back up ... Between the time I originally grabbed the handhold and until I was up on the car ... Mrs. Kennedy had jumped up from the seat and was, it appeared to me, reaching for something coming off the right rear bumper of the car (Hill indicated it might have been "a portion of the President's head") ... when she noticed that I was trying to climb on the car. She turned toward me and I grabbed her and put her back in the back seat ...

Greer, the driver, has since been retired for medical reasons, his ulcer not being able to coexist in this stressful life made ever more harrowing by the tragedy with its persistent recollections.

Kellerman was more distraught and disconsolate than the fabled dog unwilling or unable to leave the grave of the master. Through it all, from the time he reported to Washington, he remained by the body. At the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, he and Greer were ever in attendance, save on a few occasions when Greer went for coffee or the three brief intervals when Kellerman was called to the phone. They did something few laymen could abide, observing in all its gruesome detail the cutting apart of the President's body, asking questions so they could understand and report, even studying the X-rays with the surgeons. Troubled that the President had been slaughtered while he was responsible for keeping him alive, Kellerman subjected himself to this additional agonizing experience, a horrible spectacle he will carry in his mind's eye to his grave, because it is what he believed his duty required of him.

He had the foresight to call Clint Hill in to observe the location of the President's wounds before the end of the autopsy examination and Hill, in turn, had the courage to report the rear

non-fatal one was located other than where the official version places it.

Before leaving the hospital with Mrs. Kennedy at about 4 a.m. the next day, when the body had been turned over to the undertaker, Kellerman also collected all the possible evidence he could, including the X-rays and the pictures taken but not developed by the doctors, the shroud in which the corpse had been wrapped in Dallas, and a metallic part broken off the casket in transit.

Such staunch men, men of this great valor and devotion, deserve better than Manchester the all-seeing and all-knowing awarded them on the basis of no fact and no authority other than his own speculation and fancied literary needs.

Only where it is in contradiction to science does Manchester have "delayed reactions", as with Governor Connally, of whom the doctors, contrary to Manchester's personal medical presumptions, said that with the bullet having hit bone the Governor would have known immediately.

It is not out of character for him to have a delayed explosion in the President's head:

Jacqueline saw a piece of his skull detach itself. At first there was no blood. And then, in the next instant, there was nothing but blood spattering her, the Connallys, Kellerman, Greer, the upholstery ...

The most sickening frame of all in Zapruder's film is 313. The explosion that is not visible in 312 or 314 is an unforgettable red halo about four times the President's head. It almost obscures Mrs. Kennedy. The spray of the President's blood and brain is not visible in Frame 312. It has almost entirely disappeared in Frame

314 (mislabeled 315 in the exhibit). The Commission says each frame represents less than an eighteenth of a second.

Thus the Zapruder film, over which Manchester spent so much agonizing time, he says, confirms science and not Manchester.

From time to time Manchester is carried away by the sweep of his own lingo as by his writing he artificially injects synthetic drama and excitement into a subject so stark it requires no literary devices. Accuracy suffers. But in fairness to Manchester's style it must be conceded that accuracy suffers even when there is no conflict with the novelist in him.

In building up to the first shot, after a couple of short sentences for zing in which Manchester says the Presidential car, going at 11.2 miles an hour (it apparently never dawned on him that this was just an estimate of the average speed), had passed the tree when a road sign came between Zapruder and the car.

"Momentarily, the entire car was obscured" from Zapruder. That is Manchester, novelist. Those hours he spent studying the seconds-long Zapruder film were the hours of a novelist, not a historian.

One hundred and sixty of the individual frames of Zapruder's film are reproduced in the first eighty pages of the Commission's Volume 18, beginning with the one numbered 171. From 173, when the tiniest tip of the left front bumper is obscured by the upper left-hand corner of the sign, for the next 75 frames, part of the car is obscured from the lens. But at no point is the entire car obscured.

Of the autopsy examination and report, Manchester says that

"the X-rays show no entry wound 'below the shoulder'", where a number of observers, including, besides Hill and Kellerman, Secret Service Agent ~~Glen~~ Glen A. Bennett and the two FBI agents in attendance, James W. Sibert and Francis X. O'Neill, placed it. This X-ray deficiency, he says, is because, "Admittedly," by whom we are not informed, "X rays of active projectiles passing through soft tissue are difficult to read." There are those who might add that with this bullet having hit no bone, it might be impossible for the path to show on X-rays and others who might wonder if a projectile in motion is other than "active".

Wisdom takes command of Manchester again and he leaves the X-rays. He then says that this single bullet, "continuing its flight", had "passed through Governor Connally's back, chest, right wrist and left thigh", attributing to it a longer career than it enjoyed (for it did not pass through the governor's thigh; it lodged in his tibia), ascribing to the governor what all the doctors doubted he had, "a delayed reaction", and denying to that rare and historic bullet the most unusual element of its unique history, the capacity of remaining through all of this, virtually intact, unutilated and, the word shunned by the Commission but not the doctors, "undeformed".

To satisfy those requirements imposed upon it by the Commission and the even greater ones by Manchester, this bullet also had to have had a built-in intelligence and a self-control more exquisite than anything ever launched from Cape Kennedy. To meet the less exacting history attributed to it by the Commission, this projectile had to have inflicted seven of the eight non-fatal injuries Manchester enumerates but fails to describe. Inside the governor's chest it had to have smashed 10 cm. of his fifth rib and to have

shed fragments detected in X-rays in Dallas by Dr. George T. Shires, exiting the chest through a hole about an inch and a half in diameter that it made; to have smashed his right wrist into many pieces and to have deposited more than three grains of metal in it that were still visible to the doctors by the time he got to the hospital and got attention; and to have imbedded a fragment in the thigh bone that was still there when the governor testified before the Commission on Tuesday, April 21, 1964, five months after the assassination.

The Commission got expert testimony from a number of sources, including the many doctors, who said for a bullet to have performed so spectacularly in such a brief lifetime while remaining virtually pristine was beyond belief, and the FBI firearms expert, Robert Frazier, who testified that a bullet is marked by hitting coarse cloth or leather.

This bullet was marked by nothing but the rifling of the barrel, which is visible and unblemished.

To have met its destiny, this is what, from the evidence with which Manchester does not torment our minds, this remarkable "active" projectile must have done:

It must have entered the President's rear neck and exited the front at about the Adam's apple, nicking the knot of his tie but not a single bone, and in the doing to have defied probability in making a larger hole in entering than it did in leaving.

Upon departing the President's body in steady flight it had, in the space of less than a man's reach, have had to start wobbling to account for the somewhat larger hole it made under the governor's right armpit and while traveling at 2,000 feet per second, faster than the speed of sound.

Upon entering the governor's chest at this great speed, with ever greater perception it had to adjust itself so that it automatically followed the gentle curve of his rib with only its rear end, the part with which it is attached to the shell, the only part not covered with a hardened alloy and the only part that can have struck bone, for the rest is entirely unmarked. At just the precise fraction of a second, so small it is beyond measure, it had to start smashing bone, and in the infinitesimally minute split split of a split second that it took to go 10 cm., or about four inches, at the tremendous velocity of 6,000 times that distance in a single second, to have disengaged itself from the bone without any part other than the back-touching that bone. A faster than fast hop ~~w~~ither backward or at right angles would have accomplished this ~~but~~ seemingly no other maneuver. Even Salome never danced like that.

In less time than can be conceived of, this control system like nothing devised by man had again to take over, continuing a forward direction undiverted by bone or maneuver and only in a precisely straight line that coincided with the line through the President's neck, while at the same time turning again, this time at right angles and in about a quarter of an inch, for in bidding adieu to the governor's chest this quarter-inch-thick bullet made an inch-and-a-half hole.

With this unparalleled and exhilarating experience behind it, the bullet was perhaps better prepared to resume its flight back end forward, for it can be in only that direction that it could have entered the dorsal or upper side of the governor's right wrist, tugging with it fibres of the governor's jacket that with the more

then three grains of its own body it left in the wound it thus made.

Enjoying life and its utter defiance of science, this imaginative "active" projectile instantaneously invoked its arcane magic and sheathed itself in a magic screen that, while smashing the wrist bones with the hardness of bullets shielded the bullet from the scratches of the bones. Simultaneously, in perhaps 1/12,000th of a second, it had to have jiggled some and only while inside the wrist, for the hole there is larger than the bullet. The bullet could not turn for fear of marring itself, which it was not permitted to do. No scratches, remember. No mutilation or deformity.

Upon leaving the lower side of the wrist at the base of the hand once more that hitherto unknown intelligence again assumed command and before the bullet spanned the short airspace between the right wrist and the left thigh of the sitting governor (we assume there was air space; we do not know ^{for} neither the Commission nor Manchester tells us), it again was in flight straight and true and once more backward. With the back end true toward the front and the flight plan identically the same as the one through the President's neck, the bullet imbedded itself or at least a fragment of itself in that tibia and then, either exhausted or with the perfection in braking systems, came to an abrupt halt.

While the motorcade was roaring those five miles to the hospital~~pital~~, this marvelous bullet, otherwise known as Exhibit 399, either rested or began the generation of a controllable reverse kinetic energy. Quietly, patiently, through all that mad dash, through the governor's impetuous but unsuccessful effort to walk out of the car at the hospital, through his being loaded onto the rolling littër and into the hospital's No. 2 Trauma Room and thence

to the operating room where he was transferred to an operating table; through his disrobing by a nurse and an orderly, it was immobile and entirely invisible.

Cunning bullet! Knowing without sight exactly the moment no one would be looking (for none of those who handled and disrobed him, who handled his clothing or who removed that stretcher from the operating room saw it), it then noiselessly discharged that stored kinetic energy in precisely the right amount and escaped the governor's body without detection.

More, this Puck of a Bullet 399, while under its own invisible spell, had to execute a semicircle in the air, again with absolute perfection in direction and control, and lodge itself under the mattress. Not too far under, for it had to come out easily. Not too little under, for it could not yet fall out. Just the right amount under the mattress so that it could be taken to an automatic elevator and placed upon it to await the coming of Hospital Engineer Darrell Tomlinson who, in turn, was to restrict unauthorized traffic.

Before the Commission on March 20, 1964, Tomlinson insisted he knew nothing of the antecedents of this particular stretcher, and there is every reason to believe him. He took the elevator to the first floor and eased the stretcher into the passageway while for an unknown amount of time he went about the business of elevating and lowering those who had such urgent missions as the obtaining of blood. At a time thereafter that he was unable to estimate with precision, but a time long enough so that he felt it incumbent upon himself to specify: that this stretcher was in his absence joined by another and identical one; and "I don't know how many people went

through"; and, "I don't know anything about what could have happened to them in between the time I was gone" on several trips (5H132-3).

A doctor or an intern had to enter the nearby men's room. To do this he moved one of the stretchers. On emerging he failed to remove it from the central part of the passageway where Tomlinson considered it a possible hazard. So he "pushed it back up against the wall". When it bumped, "a spent cartridge or bullet rolled out that apparently had been lodged under the edge of the mat" (5H130).

Thus did magical, self-controllable Pixie-like Bullet 399 emerge into a society it immediately threw into a chaos from which that society has not yet recovered.

On a number of occasions and in varying ways that were anything but monotonous, Assistant Counsel Arlen Specter assured the Commission that this particular bullet, Bullet 399, was proved to have come from Governor Connally's stretcher. The scientific basis in testimony for this assurance is the following statement by Tomlinson:

"I'm going to tell you all I can, and I'm not going to tell you something I can't lay down and sleep at night with either" (5H134).

Wotan in his most imaginative demonstrations of his magical prowesses never endowed a sword or a fire or anything else with the capacities of Bullet 399. And if Bullet 399 did not employ each and all of these supernatural and ultrascientific skills, attributes, senses and intelligences precisely as and in exactly the sequence outlined above, then the Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy is false and William

Manchester has written a novel.

It therefore seems wise to make no further reference to Manchester's report that Bullet 399 went "through" Governor Connally's leg, for there is nothing in either Manchester, great and all-seeing and all-knowing as he is, or in the testimony and other evidence of the Commission upon which we can draw for substantiation. We would have to worry about an additional hole in Governor Connally's trouser leg, and it is not there, and about where and how the bullet secreted itself while lying in wait for the right moment to get under the mattress for Tomlinson to jar it out. We can do just so much with magic and with words.

It also seems appropriate not to clutter the reader's mind, not to detract in any way from the more than amazing career of this one bullet. To follow this accounting with the prosaic scientific opinion of the doctors who tended the governor in Dallas and the three who performed the Presidential autopsy, all of whom declared in one way or another that they "could not conceive" of this career, is to demean a bullet like no other "active" projectile in history - or mythology.

Just enough of the bullet pixie rubbed off on people. When Charles Jack Price, administrator of Parkland Hospital, was a witness on March 25, 1964, a series of exhibits numbered through 35 was entered into the record by Counsel Specter. These are printed on 119 consecutive pages of Volume 21 of the Commission's evidence beginning on page 150. But these begin with "Price Exhibit No. 2". There is none numbered "1". On the first page of his testimony (6H148), Price said he had gotten from those involved in the case

written statements prepared as soon after the event as possible. One from Tomlinson, is not included, nor is any report of any interview with him by government agents. Price ended his testimony by saying, "I wanted to be sure that there was no hint that the record had been altered here," which Specter assured him was "absolutely right" (6H152).

Specter, who is now the crusading "reform" District Attorney of Philadelphia, having found that post easier to obtain after he switched to the Republican Party, and who is now being considered a possible mayoralty candidate, devised the one kind of language needed to cope with this unpredictable and inconsiderate bullet, the one not applied to the bullet in its own "active" career: Substitution.

When all the doctors insisted this particular bullet had no magic, no self-control, no invisible shields or built-in computers, and could not have inflicted all seven non-fatal injuries (one fewer than Manchester in a burst of generosity attributed to it), Specter asked them about "not this bullet, doctor, a bullet", could "a bullet" have done these things? Since "a" bullet of modest velocity can go through two men, the doctors had no difficulty saying "a" bullet could.

The Commission's conclusions were further facilitated by several other fortuitous events. Dr. Shires, who was in charge of the governor's case and who alone among the doctors reported the bullet fragment in the chest (6H111), was not troubled to make the trip to Washington to appear before the members of the Commission. The Commissioners seem not to have been informed of this chest fragment.

The FBI appears to have made no scientific examination of the foreign matter on this bullet, nor was it directed to by the Commission, which also was not vexed by Firearms Expert Frazier's testimony that before it reached him the bullet had been wiped off.

The spectrographic analysis of Bullet 399 and the various bullet fragments recovered from the two bodies and found in the car were not officially entered into evidence, nor was the testimony of the spectrographer, the last witness to appear before the Commission, prolonged by any questions about it.

The FBI is suppressing this spectrographic analysis despite requests by the author going back to May 23, 1966, and in the face of the October 31, 1966, order of the Attorney General that all the evidence considered by the Commission be transferred to the National Archives.

With this happy combination of events working for it, the Commission felt that in its Report it could conclude that "there is very persuasive evidence from the experts to indicate" (not including Bulwinkle) that Bullet 399 did enjoy its spectacular and historic and fortunately brief "active" career and did inflict all seven non-fatal injuries, from which it emerged virtually intact, unmutilated and undeformed.

And thus it can be understood that with all 60,000^{words}/of his Look serialization, 17,000 in that issue alone, Manchester found it expedient to dwell on the sensational lifetime of Bullet 399 for but two sentences.

Thus also was Manchester able to find space for the expression

of his fascinating imagination and to titillate us with things he saw that the motion picture film in recording the tragedy missed. For example, of the late President's fine sense of how to go away:

Now, in a gesture of infinite grace, he raised his right hand, as though to brush back his tousled chestnut hair. But the motion faltered. The hand fell back limply. He had been reaching for the top of his head. But it wasn't there any more ... (omission in original).

Beautiful writing, isn't it. Better than history. Better than fact, or reality, too.

There is no end to Manchester's consummate skill. Dropping venom as easily as in real life he drops names, he polishes off what little he had earlier left of the reputations of the Secret Service escort by embroiling two non-existent factions he felicitously identifies as "loyalists" and "realists" in an equally non-existent squabble ending in a non-existent anarchy at the hospital and thereafter.

Turning to the Dallas police, who more than earned attention he did not give them, he found a "failure" of their communications equipment not recorded in the police radio logs that, he wants us to believe, caused another delayed reaction, this time at the hospital. Yet in some mysterious manner in the five short minutes between the assassination and the arrival of the motorcade at the hospital, the doctors were alerted by the public address system in the hospital and the stretchers were on their way out. But, his generosity demands he record, this "played no role in the passion of John Kennedy".

The same derelict Secret Service escort "should have thrown up a security screen". The security they imposed, not worthy of Manchester's mention, was tight enough that an overzealous FBI agent

who failed to identify himself was flattened, in front of a Congressman and others, who promptly offered the Secret Service agents statements in their defense. In sidestepping this unpleasantness, Manchester's delicacy equals that of the authors of the Report, who also skirted it.

Having found too little security, Manchester found too much medical attention. The fourteen doctors were "too many". "Only three" were "absolutely necessary". These were a surgeon, Dr. Malcolm Perry, the anesthesiologist, Dr. Marion Jenkins, and Presidential physician, Admiral Burkeley. To avoid the number the doctors found necessary, Manchester would apparently have had the single surgeon simultaneously perform a tracheotomy, unassisted, on the neck, while applying other emergency measures, injections, transfusions, cut-downs, heart massage and whatever else seemed called for and at points as far away on the President's six-foot body as his feet. The gauges and meters and other devices were to read and adjust themselves.

If a single bullet could do what 399 "did", why not a self-automated emergency room? Is a computerized bullet more essential to a \$2,750,000.00 book than a self-propelled hospital?

Manchester's virtuoso displays neither begin nor end with the second, ^{installment of the} serialization.

In the first he

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bottom
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A little of Manchester - and a little is more than enough - rubbed off on the editors of Look, who entitled this ^{installment} serialization "Parkland Hospital: Case No. 24740". They like their title so much they devoted an entire expensive black page to it, with the printing in white and red. Case No. 24740 is not the President; it is Governor Connally!

There is no secret about it. The hospital's "Registration of Patients" sheet, No. 01811, is printed in facsimile on page 156 of Volume 21. On it the President is noted as case 24740 and for some mysterious reason, although both men were admitted to the hospital almost simultaneously, a patient with a bleeding mouth and one with severe abdominal pain are listed as next having been admitted. Then comes Case 24743, John Connally.

But in his March 25, 1964, testimony, Charles Jack Price, administrator of the Dallas County Hospital district, which includes Parkland Hospital, testified to an error. Assistant Counsel Arlen Specter asked him, "No. 5 (24743) is marked John Connally and No. 2 (24740) is marked John F. Kennedy, and how should they have been marked?" Price testified, "The first patient in the hospital was Governor Connally." Specter asked, "So he should have been No. 2 (24740)?" Price agreed and added, "The President should have been No. 5 (24743)."

Price gave the Commission a "corrected copy" (6H150).

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Although the Commission failed to account adequately for all the bullets that are known to have struck at that instant and for all the damage known to have been inflicted with the three bullets it acknowledges were fired in the assassination, Manchester goes them one better and ordains that but two were dispatched. One, he says, was not a bullet but an empty cartridge that Oswald had in the breach of his weapon. This is an insanity not the Report, not the Commission staff, not any of the amateur psychiatrists other than Manchester attribute to him.

To history we shall have to leave an accounting of how James T. Tague was wounded in front of the police who duly recorded it, instantly on their radio and later in more conventional manners, or what caused his blood to flow, and of the impact that was immediately photographed on the curbing of Main Street, where Tague was standing and of the spectrographic analysis made by the FBI when they dug up this curbstone and took it to Washington.

The "Aldredge strike" that I discovered in the Commission's files, confirmed by the FBI after the Report was issued, is duly recorded in WHITEWASH II. Others that evidence indicates could have struck Elm Street near Houston and on the south side halfway toward the underpass will also have to await future accounting.

If Manchester does not, those of us less gifted and imaginative will have to confront the expert J. Edgar Hoover. Two bullets at least are accounted for by 399 and the shot that exploded in the President's head and there dissipated all its energies. And Tague, for sure, was wounded and did bleed. This the Report attributes to a bullet that missed the motorcade and that it calls a "missed" shot. Hoover could not associate# this "missed" shot with

either of the other two (21Hh:75-7). Even if the incredible official accounting is accepted for the fatal and the non-fatal bullets, how are we to ignore the blood shed by poor Tague?

Thus we learn how to become a multimillionaire while writing of the assassination of an American President and without being termed a "literary scavenger". That epithet is reserved for those who say the government has told less than the truth. It is not addressed to Louis Nizer, who wrote an introduction to the Doubleday edition of the Report; to Congressman Ford whose name appears on a book on the Commission's work entitled "Portrait of the Assassin"; to those many former members of the Kennedy staff ranging from his top advisers to the Nanny of his children; or to those who today speak and write in support of the government's account of the crime of the century. If it is not applied to them, can it properly be addressed to Manchester simply because he is a millionaire-to-be? Or because his account is longer, more fanciful, more of the spirit of dirty pictures?

Simple justice demands that the slanders be reserved for those other than the authors of slanders and without discrimination because of wealth.

By now it can be understood that the Kennedys had to file suit against poor Manchester, who was immediately sickened by the action. One unkind enough to practice the amateur psychiatry in which he was so expert with Oswald might conclude that, as Oswald in Manchester's science suffered a rejection psychosis, Manchester, too, felt spurned when the family of "his" President was dissatisfied

with his work in which everyone is demeaned, not excluding "his" President who, for example, despite their "relationship", Manchester paints as a mean, petty and ill-tempered man, chewing out General Godfrey McHugh because the weather changed after the forecast was received.

(That "relationship" of which Manchester now boasts in his public statements was that of the tongue and the ass.)

At the time of her emotional trauma when Mrs. Kennedy decided she wanted an account of the assassination written for popular consumption by a writer in whom she had confidence, no one in official or semi-official capacity dreamed that the government's last word on the assassination would be less than definitive, subject to any question whatsoever. The then Attorney General, Brother Robert F. Kennedy, quite properly disassociated himself from control over the investigation made by his Department of Justice. Had he not, there would have been and there would have lingered the question: Was the investigation motivated by a spirit of vindictiveness? He certainly never suspected that his Department of Justice would perform in a manner warranting the most serious criticism.

Nor could anyone predict that Manchester would conceive his role as that of a Kennedy spear for the impaling of those he decided were their enemies, social or political.

The jet-set thinking that permeates the lengthy press accounts of the suit before and after it was filed in no way account for the filing of that suit. To even consider this action, Mrs. Kennedy had to relive in her mind those dreadful few seconds when she looked powerlessly at her husband's head from less than two feet away as it exploded all over her. She is the only really close

eyewitness to his murder in the world. She had further to be prepared to face a live reliving of that horror in open court and under the most competent and rigorous cross-examination by the most skillful of lawyers. Not even the woman whose calm bravery in that time of great tragedy captivated the world could initiate this action for frivolous reasons.

Had she not done this - had she not filed these suits - the unavoidable scandal would have been monumental. In the settlement she emerged with these public statements, also incorporated in the book and the magazine, respectively:

Harper & Row wishes to make it clear that neither Mrs. John F. Kennedy nor Senator Robert F. Kennedy has in any way approved or endorsed the material appearing in this book. The author, William Manchester, and the publishers assume complete and sole responsibility.

Look wishes to make it clear that neither Mrs. Kennedy nor Senator Kennedy has in any way approved or endorsed the material appearing in Look articles based upon The Death of a President. The author, William Manchester, and the publishers of Look assume complete and sole responsibility.

Otherwise, because of the spectacular inaccuracy of Manchester's account of the assassination, the family of the murdered President would have seemed to sponsor the unofficial whitewashing of it.

That this was innocent, that any other writer in Manchester's position, given human fallibility and the complexity and contradiction in the evidence, would also have erred, whether or not from irresponsibility, ego, sloppiness or malice, would not have been understood. From this neither the political futures of any Kennedys nor the national honor would have emerged untainted.

Today there is no one who does not know that Manchester speaks for himself alone and not for the Kennedy family.

With what he says, this is a blessing.