

Prof. Donald L. Wilkes  
School of Law  
The University of Georgia  
Athens, GE 30602-6012

1/30/96

Dear Professor Wilkes,

It is a remarkable coincidence that your article on Hosty's book reached me the day I finished about 70,000 words on it for the record for history. It confirmed to me that some of his lies would be persuasive even among some who have some familiarity with the subject matter but ~~in~~ not in the most intimate detail. Hosty's is I think the most determinedly dishonest of all the bad books on the assassination. I do not recall a single thing in it that is new and dependable. And it is dominated, as he is, by his strongly-held political beliefs that are irrational.

Even his title is a lie. He was taken off the Oswald case as soon as the police learned from Oswald, in Hosty's presence, that Oswald had left that letter for him. Later he was used for a few odds and ends on Oswald's background. Yet the book refers to him as "the lead investigator," too. *Title assignment: Oswald.*

There never was any proof that Kostikov was a "wet ~~her~~ jobs expert. The CIA's own records admit that was a presumption only by those wild political nuts they had in Mexico, which is a long and separate story. They, with Ambassador Mann, tried hard to use the assassination as a means of getting World War III started. But if he had been, Oswald did not "meet" Kostikov. It was another consul who may also have been KGB, as so many of ours are CIA, and the Hosty mind could, of course say it makes no difference; they all are.

Nechiporenko was part of the money-making so many in the USSR went in for as soon as they saw the potential. The KGB in Minsk skinned Schiller and that gave the also greedy Mailer his disaster. I've a long manuscript on that for the record for history. The initial reports on the Nechiporenko book made it clear it was fiction to commercialize the market so I did not get it.

There is much that is wrong with Newman's book. I do not have the time to go into all of it. He knows better than the Duran story he tells. I know that because not being able to travel and thus not having had access to all the records I still have what leaves that without question, the CIA's Box 57 at the Archives, a summary of all Mexico City station communications to and from headquarters. That alleged Duran confession of having had sex with Oswald as beaten out of her when she was arrested, with no charge at all, by the Mexican police, who did that twice at the demand of the CIA hotshots. That scared even CIA HQ but its warning got there too late to avoid the second beating up. Yet based on this Newman says that Castro was "implicated" in the assassination.

Newman is wrong on the Birringer, Odio and other stories, too, and his basic New Orleans line is fictional, that Oswald as "underground" until that Birringer business that in addition Newman misdates. Oswald was never "underground" in any sense.

All of these people, each beginning with his own preconceptions that usually are political, ignore what is most obvious in their attributing the assassination to the Cubans or the Soviets, and that begins with the solution to the Cuba missile crisis of 1962. That threat to the world ended when JFK guaranteed Cuba against any invasion. That public assurance Khrushchev could not make, the reason, one of the reasons he put those missiles there. There simply is no way that Castro would knock off his only real protector.

That crisis ended with the beginning of Kennedy's and Khrushchev's groping toward peace, which each wanted very much. They exchanged some 40 letters the Soviets have been willing to disclose but our State Department is holding some back. There is simply no chance in the world that Khrushchev any more than Castro preferred the hawk Johnson to the dove Kennedy.

I take time for a little more on Newman, whose book does not connect Oswald with the CIA.

He was here, by invitation, for Thanksgiving two or three years ago, before he did his book, after his fine testimony to the Conyers committee on restoring the faith of the people, which I liked. He spent several hours just giving me the eye, rather openly for a man who all those years in intelligence. I told him of a record that had been stolen and how he could replace it, the real number the Texans age the Commission, it was not S172, which Lonnie Hudkins told me he'd made up. It was 119669. He was excited when he called me the following Monday to tell me he'd found it exactly where I'd told him in the Commission's records. He did not send me the copy he'd promised. I also showed him the proof I have from the Navy that Oswald had CRYPTO clearance. It was right at our copier and when I started to make a copy he told me not to, that he'd get his own. There is no mention in Newman's book of either that number Rankin kept secret or of Oswald's high clearances as a marina. Crypto required "Top Secret."

Also by coincidence I had a call yesterday from a man who describes himself as a retired marine officer. He was close to Oswald's age and was in the Jacksonville class behind Oswald. Instead of being sent to Keesler from there he was sent to I think he said Millington, in Tennessee, for the same training. He did exactly the same work Oswald did and he had, had to have for it, CRYPTO and Top Secret clearances. He said he would write me more on this. He knew Oswald at Santa Ana but not intimately. They rode the bus to work together. He also was at H's up to

In the course of pretending to ~~make~~ make the investigation it never made the government went into ~~so~~ so many diversions and digressions there is no limit on what the exploiters and commercializers can get into that has nothing at all to do with the actualities of the crime itself. There likewise is little possibility that even those relatively well informed about the assassination can know ~~enough~~ <sup>enough</sup> to evaluate the clever fakes. Hosty's is rather heavy-handed and openly dishonest but almost nobody can pick it all up. And when most of us are willing to believe the worst about any reds, real or imagined, that makes it easier for them.

The FBI knew Oswald was not a communist and ~~he~~ was in fact strongly anti-Communist. Yet Hosty refers through<sup>out</sup> to him as a member of the party.

I think it was one of the many serious tragedies that the Commission coincided with the Civil Rights Act. Russell was strongly anti-Communist and I believe had been led to believe that Oswald was one. He told me he believed Johnson appointed him to the Commission to keep him from leading that fight in the Senate and that he fooled ol' Lyndon by not leaving that to others and instead spending less time on the Commission. I believe that if he had had the time to go into what he did not have time for he spotted the fact that Marina had been leaned on to get her to lie and that the single-bullet theory was impossible, he'd have picked up much more than was so very, very wrong including labelling the anti-Communist Oswald as a red. It does not take all that time and effort, if anyone on the Commission had the interest, to use the information it had to prove that it knew that Oswald was not and could not have been the assassin. With Russell's correct belief that the basis of the Report was wrong I think that with more time he'd have gone farther.

Hosty, by the way, is 100% wrong on Nosenko. He and Newman should have been asking why those in the CIA who wanted to prevent his defection wanted that so stringly and risked so much in the effort. Also what basis there was in fact for all the incredible abuse heaped on that man, who was as genuine as could be, as not a single one of the many stories made up to keep him from defecting was. I have those records from the FBI. The short answer on Nosenko is that when he told us about those almost 50 bugs the KGB had planted in the embassy walls that could not be detected. that was not throw-away information and he had to be genuine.

Hosty lies also in saying Oswald was sent to Minsk where there were training schools for spies and in saying that Marina's uncle was of the KVD police. He was a forestry expert and worked in that field only. Step by step, he lies about everything almost always just making it up. Please excuse the haste.

Thanks, and best wishes,

*Harold*  
Harold Weisberg

# New light on JFK assassination

THE OBSERVER p. 5 Dec 14, 1995

Donald E. Wilkes

It has been 32 years since the most traumatic day of the century for this nation—that stunning Friday, Nov. 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated in broad daylight by sniper fire while being driven in an open car through the streets of downtown Dallas.

The case of the JFK murder is far from closed. Massive quantities of important new information are now being made public on a regular basis by the JFK Assassination Records Review Board, which was established by Congress in 1992. As a result of the end of the Cold War, other important data is emerging from countries such as Russia, formerly behind the Iron Curtain.

*Passport to Assassination* (1993), by Oleg M. Nechiporenko, a former Soviet KGB officer, furnishes new facts about Lee Harvey Oswald's visits to both the U.S.S.R. and Mexico City. The author demonstrates that the KGB thought Oswald was probably an intelligence agent, although it was unclear for whom he was working; that prior to Nov. 22, 1963, Oswald, whether in other countries or in the U.S., was under far more government surveillance than the CIA, FBI, or other agencies later would admit; that Oswald was not a loner, but rather an operative with numer-

ous connections, frequently in the company or vicinity of known spies; and that many mysteries remain concerning Oswald, including his trip to Mexico City in October 1963, and his stay in New Orleans the previous summer.

Nechiporenko admits he does not know if it was Oswald who killed JFK, although he appears to have doubts. He does claim Oswald once built a bomb in his Minsk apartment.

Norman Mailer's *Oswald's Tale* (1995), claims to prove that Oswald was the only assassin and that he was a Communist, a misfit, and a loner who killed JFK cleverly but with a deranged mind. Mailer's massive work (nearly 800 pages) is a tour de force, but it fails to do what Mailer intended—to convince that Oswald alone did it all, that he really was a Red, that he shot JFK because he was a misfit, and that the various conspiracy theories have no basis.

No matter what Mailer says about Oswald's remarkable life—which was filled with high adventure, far travels, encounters with bizarre characters, strange coincidences, and breathtaking audacity, but lasted only 24 years—the actual events in Dealey Plaza make it unlikely that there was but one assassin. More than three

decades after the Presidential motorcade entered Dealey Plaza, it appears almost certain that shots were fired at JFK's limousine from several different angles, including the right front. The famous Zapruder film plainly shows that immediately after he suffered his fatal skull shot, JFK's head moved backward and to the left, rather than forward, as would have been the case if the shot had come from behind the president (where Oswald was). It is a pity that Mailer would waste his time defending a doomed tale—that there was a single assassin, Oswald.

The best new source of published information on the JFK assassination is John Newman's *Oswald and the CIA* (1995), based on interviews and recently released, declassified documents. Newman is an honest ex-military intelligence officer who has reproduced, or quoted, documents released by the CIA and other agencies under the 1992 JFK Records Act.

In the author's words, the book's thesis is that "the CIA had a keen operational interest in Lee Harvey Oswald from the day he defected to the Soviet Union." Newman also says that "the CIA was spawning a web of deception about Oswald weeks before the president's murder."

The countless government documents Newman has patiently located, correlated, and analyzed make it extraordinarily likely that beginning as early as 1959, when this alleged Marxist inconspicuously joined the Marine Corps, Oswald was involved in some sort of undercover activity for the CIA, the FBI, and perhaps other (foreign or domestic) intelligence agencies.

Referring to deplorable efforts of American intelligence agencies to stonewall the Warren Commission, Newman asks: "What legal term should we use to describe the action of a government agency when it lies to a presidentially-appointed investigation?"

Incredibly, whereas the Soviet secret police carefully preserved their records concerning Oswald while he was in their country, even noting on his file itself that it was not to be destroyed, back here in the United States the Department of Defense secretly and inexcusably destroyed Oswald's military intelligence file in 1973, under circumstances never made clear.

Donald E. Wilkes, Jr., is a professor at the University of Georgia School of Law. The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of The Observer.