

PLAYBOY'S HISTORY OF ASSASSINATION IN AMERICA

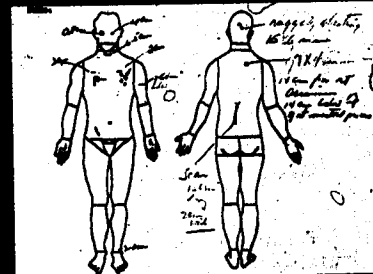
PART V

CRIES OF CONSPIRACY

article
By JAMES MCKINLEY

twelve years after the publication of the Warren report, three things are apparent: (1) the commission concealed or ignored facts, witnesses and evidence; (2) nearly all of the countertheories proposed by critics of the commission now seem impossible; (3) serious physical evidence remains to contradict the theory that Lee Harvey Oswald fired all the shots that killed John Kennedy.

THE BULLET'S PATH



NICK EXPOSED WHITE LINING OF TIE

FBI LABORATORY

According to the Warren Report, a shot from above and behind entered the back of Kennedy's neck and exited just below his Adam's apple. A pathologist's note beside the autopsy diagram supported this. However, the diagram itself shows the wound between Kennedy's shoulder blades and matches up with the shirt and coat he was

wearing when he was shot. This physical evidence shows that a bullet entered Kennedy's back about six inches below the top of his shirt collar, traveled upward and exited just below his collar button, possibly nicking his tie. There has never been an adequate explanation of the conflict between the report and both the clothes and the diagram.

A bad man shot my daddy in the head with a rifle.

—JOHN F. KENNEDY, JR.

TWELVE YEARS AGO, just after release of the Warren Report, almost everyone knew who the bad man with the rifle was. Lee Harvey Oswald had killed President John F. Kennedy. According to the report, Oswald, and Oswald alone, had ambushed the President, in the way described in last month's article on the Kennedy assassination. Surely that was clear, documented in 27 volumes that overwhelmed the early tremors of suspicion about a plot and calmed the first wave of rumors launched by the shock of the President's death and by the nearly incredible end of his accused assassin. True, eccentrics like Bertrand Russell might immediately attack the report from abroad, but that was typical of the Old World, where assassination conspiracies had for centuries been common. Not so, most of us thought, here in the New World. With the exceptions of John Wilkes Booth's band of anti-Lincolnites and Truman's two Puerto Rican attackers, our Presidential assassins had proved, to be lone, maddened men. They were small, white, young, from disturbed homes and possessed by a murderous

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THE MISSING OSWALDS

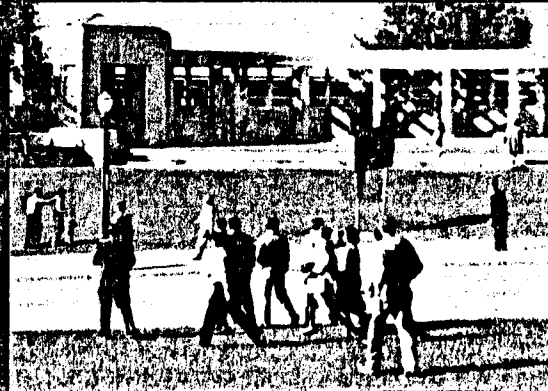


The picture at top left is supposed to be of Oswald in Minsk. Center is the official Dallas police photo of him. Above, Oswald is ostensibly pictured with Marina, again in Minsk. But at 5'11" he should have stood at least six inches taller than she.

Top right is Billy Lovelady, mistaken for Oswald at the time of the shooting. Above right, Lovelady is shown in the doorway of the School Book Depository while Kennedy passes by. A case for Oswald's innocence was based on this picture.



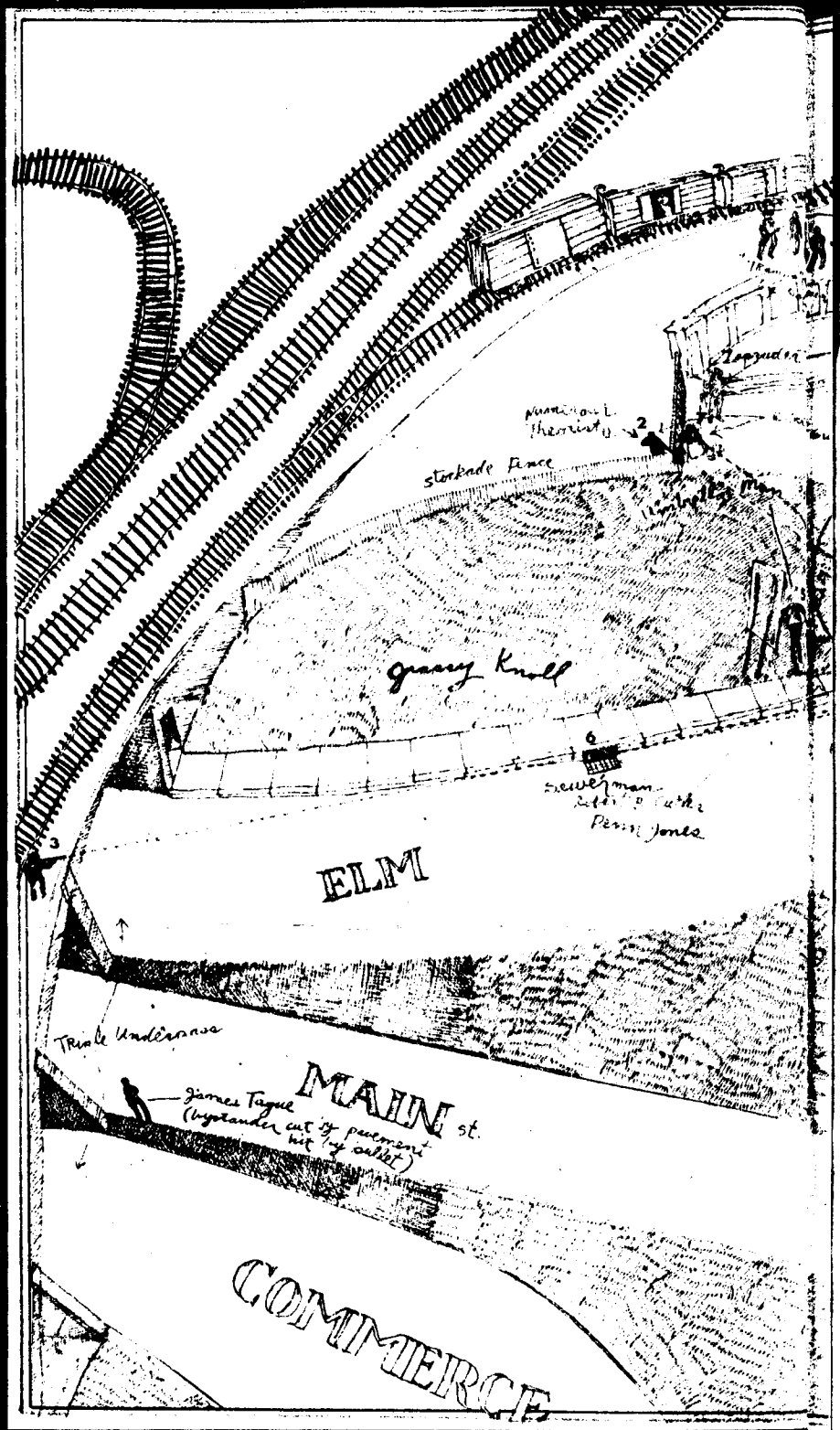
In this Zapruder frame, Kennedy emerges from behind the sign after being hit. Even though the sun was shining, a bystander calmly stood with his umbrella open during the shooting. The umbrella is partially visible in front of the limousine at the right of the freeway sign.

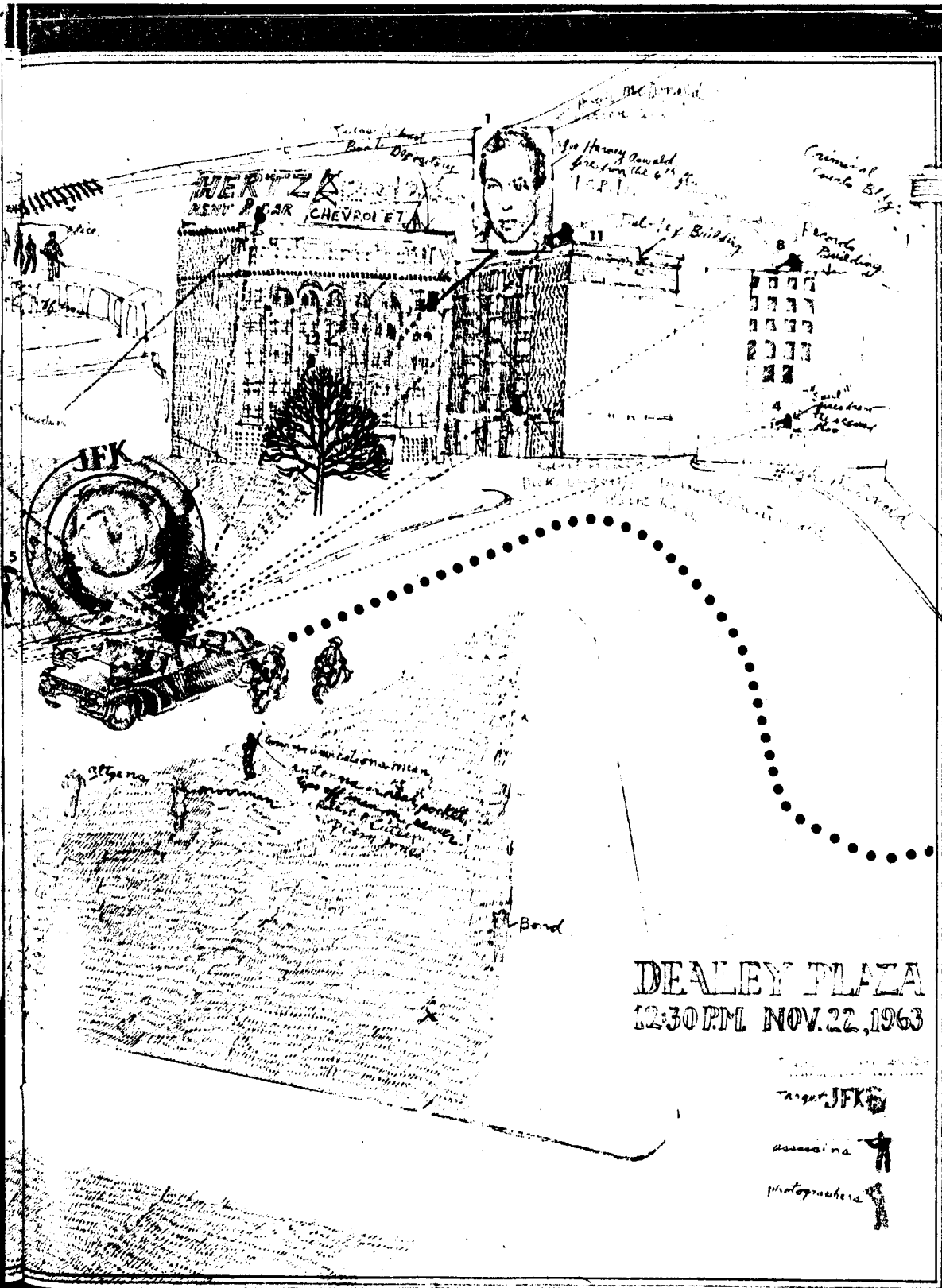


As soon as Kennedy was hit, the man folded his umbrella, watched the motorcade continue down the road and then walked off in the opposite direction. Some people have theorized that he had a gun hidden in the umbrella; others believe it was a signal to gunmen.



The Warren Commission took the discovery of three cartridge cases (above) at the sixth-floor window of the School Book Depository to be proof that three shots were fired, all by Oswald (1). But other theorists, using their own evidence, place a possible 11 additional sniper positions in Dealey Plaza. The most common placement is on the grassy knoll (2) and has been supported, in combination with 1, by Mark Lane. Early speculation placed a gunman on the freeway overpass (3), but no one in the crowd of spectators there saw him. In Hugh McDonald's book *Appointment in Dallas*, Saul (4) confesses that he shot Kennedy from the second floor of the County Records Building. Most mysterious is the man who in bright sunshine had his umbrella open (5) while Kennedy was being shot. Robert Cutler says there was a gun built into the umbrella. With Penn Jones, Cutler believes there also may have been a gunman in the sewer (6). Another explanation of the umbrella is that it was a signal for firing teams initiated by the "communications man" across the street. According to optical technician Robert Groden, shots originated from four locations (2, 7, 8 or 9 and 10); this theory is endorsed by Dick Gregory. Josiah Thompson, author of *Six Seconds in Dallas*, believes there was a gunman in position 1 but also claims two more snipers (2 and either 8 or 11) and a total of at least four shots fired. Forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht agrees with position 1, but his second rifleman is in a different spot (12). Based on the evidence, the shots from behind seem most likely.





DEALEY PLAZA
12:30 PM NOV. 22, 1963

Target JFK
assassina
photographers

GRASSY KNOLL



Many who were present believe that at least one shot came from a fence on the grassy knoll. Above, some people think they can see a gunman behind the fence in this photograph. Right, above, policemen hearing the shot from the knoll dismount and run up the incline to investigate, while people turn in that direction. Right, below, an officer has reached the top but finds no one. One theory has it that the gunman, after firing from that position, got into the trunk of a car and was driven away. Some say he shot from the roof of a car parked behind the fence. Those who believe there was no gunman at that spot say witnesses heard the echoes of the other shots.



cause. Was not Lee Harvey Oswald exactly that sort? Could anyone reasonably doubt he *was* the bad man with the rifle?

Today, seven out of ten Americans believe Oswald was not the only bad man. Since 1965, when the first serious attacks on the report were mounted, skepticism about the Warren Commission's conclusion has risen steadily. Many reasons have been offered. Perhaps the Cold War's climate contributed, with its ceaseless talk of spy conspiracies, with Joe McCarthy finding Reds under every rug. Or maybe, some say, our refusal to believe was born in the exponential increase of madness in the land when the murder of a President was followed by the lacerating atrocities of Vietnam, by more assassinations, by civil riots, by the crippling absurdities of Watergate; finally, by the disclosures of FBI and CIA crimes, until Americans, swirled in cyclones of cynicism, were ready to believe that anything was possible. Perhaps, others suggest, it has from the first been the sheer incongruity of that weak-chinned Oswald's bringing down the hero of PT 109 that galled us beyond belief. But these explanations beg the point.

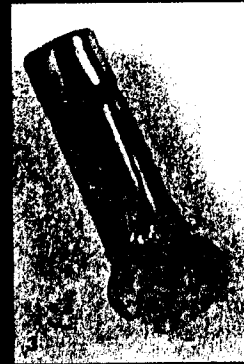
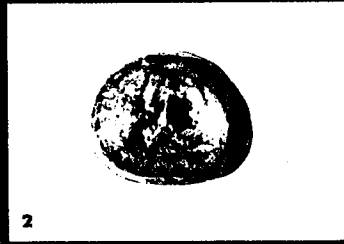
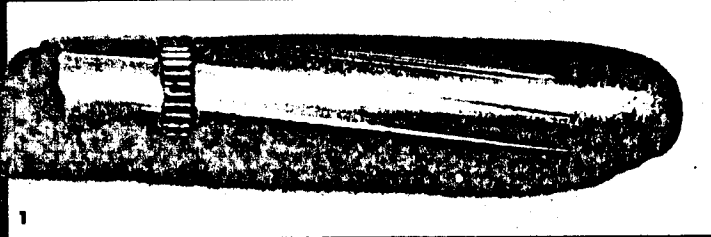
The Warren Report is
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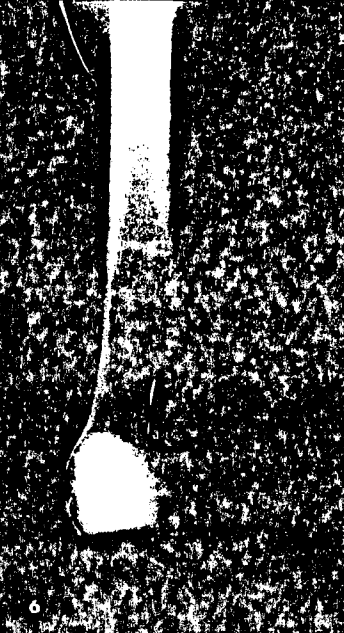
Whether or not Ruby was involved in a conspiracy, he was in the corridor of the Dallas Police Department, above, on the 22nd of November, two days before he shot Oswald. Right, the man photographed in Mexico is identified by Hugh McDonald as 'Saul.' According to McDonald, he confessed to being the hired assassin who killed Kennedy. McDonald claims Oswald was a decoy whom Saul was supposed to kill after shooting the President.



PUZZLING EVIDENCE



The Warren Commission theorized that a single bullet went through Kennedy's neck, Connally's back and wrist, continued on to lodge in his thigh, and later fell out intact onto a hospital stretcher. The bullet (1 and 2) appears to be undamaged only from one angle. Compare the damage with a bullet (3) test-fired from Oswald's rifle into a cadaver's wrist. An X-ray (4) shows the damage to the wrist. A Zapruder frame (5) seems to show Kennedy and Connally being hit simultaneously. An X-ray of Connally's thigh (6) reveals a bullet fragment embedded in the bone. Measurements and estimates yielded these figures: The "magic" bullet was missing 2.5 grains of lead. Reports said 1.5 grains were found in Connally.



THE FATAL SHOT



The Army claimed it conducted tests with Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano to simulate the final shot; the one that killed Kennedy. Above, a human skull was packed with gelatin and covered with

goat hair. The tests graphically demonstrated that the rifle was not only accurate but also capable of producing the type of massive wound that would leave the victim no chance for recovery.

CRIES OF CONSPIRACY

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doubted because its responsible critics have raised vital questions about the commission's blundering. In what follows, we will look, as objectively as possible, at the key elements of the physical evidence and at the plausible possibilities of conspiracy, with the warning that the enormous amount of data on the Kennedy assassination prevents examination of more than the major elements and theories. For, if you reject the Warren Commission's theories, there are no simple answers. For example, in the matter of where guns were fired in Dealey Plaza, you have a wide choice. Or you can choose conspirators from the Russians, Castroites, dissident elements of the CIA and FBI (with Oswald perhaps an agent for each and all) or the Teamsters-cum-Mafia-cum-CIA, or H. L. Hunt-style Texas right-wingers acting for God, country and L.B.J. You can consider anti-Castro Cubans incensed over the Bay of Pigs, the Minutemen, the Klan, an embryonic military junta (assisted by military intelligence and key industrial leaders), the Dallas Police Force or New Orleans homosexuals connected with organized crime and the CIA (the CIA is, understandably, most often mentioned in speculations on the assassination). You even have your choice of Oswalds. In many instances, the theories overlap in rings of persons and places rippling out from the central incident to encompass so much that one wonders if any conspiracy so huge could remain a secret. Three or four men, perhaps—but many more... well, why didn't they just wait and vote Kennedy out?

Yet the fact that the report's critics cannot agree on every specific point (except that Oswald alone didn't do it) should not disqualify their views, especially those buttressed by the persuasive evidence some have unearthed. If some of them are open to charges of being careerists out for a fast buck, or trendy egomaniacs, or paranoids in the twilight of logic, or erectors of vast clockwork systems in which human error does not exist and every act is linked with every other, then they are little worse than the Government itself, which through the Warren Commission failed to answer the question for good and all of who killed John Kennedy. It was, we must remember, the Government that had that responsibility and the resources to discharge it. It was the FBI that, out of guilt or vainglory, decided after Kennedy's death to cover up a threatening note of Lee Harvey Oswald's to agent James Hosty that fateful week in Dallas. It was the FBI, the commission's staff and, to a lesser degree, the Secret Service that, it seems, persuaded some witnesses to agree with the commission's already-conceived view. It was the distinguished members of the Warren Commission who

did not even view, let alone release, the crucial autopsy photos that show exactly how the bullets killed Kennedy. It was the commission's failure to call certain witnesses or to credit only selected others that fueled suspicion of its findings. It was the commission's questionable interpretations of ballistics, its strained reconstructions of the crime, its unwillingness to pick up beguiling threads of inquiry, its seeming blindness to the conspiratorial connotations of Oswald's odd life that aroused the critics.

But before we can talk of conspiracy, or of the one deranged Oswald, we must go back to Dealey Plaza, to the critical physical evidence.

Although it does not mean that Oswald killed Kennedy, there is little doubt that he ordered the Mannlicher-Carcano that did slay the President. The handwriting on the order to Klein's Sporting Goods of Chicago and that on the order for a .38 Smith & Wesson revolver from Seaport Traders, Inc., of Los Angeles have been identified as Oswald's. Both documents bear the name "A. Hidell," which also appeared with minor variations on counterfeit identification found in Oswald's wallet after his arrest in the Texas Theater about 1:50 p.m. on November 22, shortly after Officer J. D. Tippit had been killed with the .38 Smith & Wesson. Both guns were shipped in March 1963 to P. O. Box 2915, Dallas, which had been rented by a Lee H. Oswald, whose signature matched that of A. Hidell. (It is not clear why he used an alias.) In the spring of 1963 in New Orleans, Oswald formed a chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, himself as sole member and A. J. Hidell as president (Hidell had a post-office box there, too).

Among the identification cards found on Oswald were two clever bits of forgery, both in the name Alek James Hidell (in Russia, Marina said, Lee was called Alek). They were a draft card and a certificate of service in the U. S. Marine Corps, each made of prints from doctored photographic negatives that were pasted back to back. Oswald knew quite a bit about photography. In the Marines, he analyzed aerial photos and tracked U-2 flights. His best job in Dallas had been as a photoprint trainee with Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, a graphic-arts firm. Then, too, after he was arrested, he told Dallas police that the photos they'd scavenged from Marina's lodgings in Irving, showing him posed with rifle, pistol and leftist publications, were fakes, that he knew someone had pasted his head on somebody else's body and shot a new negative. The Warren Commission expert said no, but other experts have said yes. (See box, page 204.) But none of that is proof that he killed the President.

For example, did Oswald have the

Mannlicher-Carcano with him that November 22 and did he ever practice with it? Marina said she remembered him working the bolt and squinting through the sight in New Orleans in May 1963. She also said that on other occasions in Dallas, she saw him clean it and work the bolt. Once, she said, he took the rifle concealed in a raincoat, saying he was going to practice shooting. A Russian friend of the Oswalds' (they were often among the *émigrés* of Dallas and Fort Worth) testified that Lee told him of target shooting. One such target, according to Marina, was the virulently right-wing Major General Edwin A. Walker, at whom Lee said he took a shot with the Mannlicher-Carcano on April 10, 1963, after leaving a note in Russian for her with instructions as to what to do if he were caught, along with the pictures of himself with rifle, pistol and *The Worker* in hand. (The gunman fired through the house window, missing Walker's head, not by much, and escaped. The slug was too mutilated to determine if a Mannlicher-Carcano had fired it.)

By far the most intriguing tale, though, is that of Oswald at rifle ranges. On several days in November prior to the assassination, witnesses at target ranges saw a man they said looked like Oswald. That would seem further to incriminate Oswald, were it not that other evidence developed by the FBI for the Warren Commission placed Oswald elsewhere. Were these witnesses simply mistaken, as eyewitnesses often are? Did they want somehow to participate in the crime of the century? Harold Weisberg suggested in *Whitewash*, one of many books he published himself, that they may have been witnesses to the "second Oswald"—the look-alike who acted to attract attention to "Oswald," putting the frame tightly around the decoy. This theory was later supported by Richard Popkin, Robert Sam Anson and others. But serious consideration of that must come after some other matters. For example, did the real Oswald who worked at the Texas School Book Depository have his Mannlicher-Carcano with him at 12:30 p.m. on November 22, 1963?

The Warren Commission was satisfied that Oswald had taken the disassembled rifle to work on the morning of November 22 in a 38-inch-long brown paper bag that he had made earlier of wrapping paper and tape available in the Depository's shipping room. Oswald's right palm print and left-index fingerprint were detected on the bag. Buell Wesley Frazier, who drove Oswald to work that morning from Irving, said Lee had with him a longish, heavy, brown-paper package. Lee said it contained curtain rods. Even though valid questions have since been raised about exactly how Oswald made the bag and got it into the Depository, it seems clear he could have. More

important are the constellations of questions surrounding the weaponry and ballistics of the Kennedy murder, the brightest glowing around the famous "magic bullet." The theory of the commission is that the slug hit both Kennedy and Connally and was finally found little the worse for wear on the governor's stretcher at Parkland hospital. But before that wonder can be explored come simpler considerations. First is the number of shots. Eighty-three percent of the witnesses in Dealey Plaza who offered an opinion reported three. Only seven percent said two (though they included Mrs. Kennedy and Secret Service men, notably Clint Hill). Very few reported more than three, tending to dispute investigators who believe there were several assassins.

Accepting the majority opinion becomes easier, if not necessarily correct, when we recall that three cartridge cases were found next to the wall under the sill of the southeast window on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. There, Dallas police photographs showed, were three boxes stacked to the west side of the partially opened window, allegedly to form a gun rest for the sniper. Other boxes along that side of the building concealed the shooter from anyone else who might be on the floor. According to Dallas police and FBI laboratory reports, only one of the three gun-rest boxes held Oswald's prints—the right-index fingerprint and left palm print. Another small box set back from the window had on it Oswald's right palm print. But, as many observers have noted, Oswald worked in the building, filling book orders from cartons, including those on the sixth floor. Why shouldn't his prints be there? In addition, if he stacked the boxes, why weren't his prints on all of them? Furthermore, there are other photos of the nest that show a different arrangement of boxes. Which, if any, were taken before investigators moved the boxes, and did those square with what people outside saw looking upward? The Warren Commission's best witness to Oswald in the window was Howard Brennan, a steam fitter who was seated on a concrete wall opposite the Depository. Saying nothing substantive about the boxes, he testified that Oswald was standing in the window, with the rifle, leaning against the left sill—a flat impossibility, since the gunman would then have to shoot through the window panes. Still, the testimony of other witnesses, especially that of the 15-year-old schoolboy Amos Lee Euins, suggests that there was at least one man seen in the window—as another witness said, "crowded in among boxes"—and that he had a gun.

When did he fire it, and how many times, and what did he hit? All the theorists including the Warren Commission have been forced to time the shots and to hypothesize about their effect,

based on the film record of the assassination created by Abraham Zapruder, a Dallas garment manufacturer who had stationed himself and his zoom-lens Bell & Howell 8mm movie camera on a concrete pedestal at one end of the Plaza's northern pergola—a structure like a bandstand immediately west of the Depository and next to a grassy knoll that led up to a line of trees fronting a six-foot stockade fence. The fence screened a parking lot next to railway yards. Zapruder's camera, tests later showed, ran at an average 18.3 frames per second. Thus, his film provides both a clock and a visual record of Kennedy's and Connally's reactions during the horror of those six seconds. Indeed, Zapruder's film might have put an end to all the speculations about Kennedy's death had it not been for the traffic sign obscuring the exact location (hence time) of the first shot. As it is, the camera's speed, the sign's obstruction and the rapidity with which the Mannlicher-Carcano could be operated are among the variables that have plagued us. The Warren Commission's staff, as well as conscientious investigators, including Weisberg and Robert Groden, have tried mightily to unravel precisely what happened. But little is absolute except the mathematics. Only the Warren Commission had access to Oswald's rifle. Its tests indicated that it could not be fired and reloaded in less than 2.3 seconds. Our own tests over iron sights at comparable distances with other similar Mannlicher-Carcanos, however, allowed three accurate shots to be fired in as little as 4.4 seconds, though some of the sequences took as long as eight due to the erratic behavior of the weapon.

For a three-shot firing sequence consistent with the Warren Report and the Zapruder film, the sniper must aim and fire the cartridge lying ready in the chamber, bolt a new cartridge in, re-aim, shoot and repeat this—all in less than six seconds (or a second more than the Government's minimum required time). Six seconds was all the time available, because the sniper's view of Kennedy's body from the southeast window of the Depository was obscured by a live oak tree from Zapruder frame 166 until approximately frame 210. Curiously, Kennedy was a fine target before that time, all the way down Houston Street and through the turn just below the window, yet no shots were then fired. There is a moment at frame 186 when a shot might have been fired through an opening in the foliage. Some observers believe one was fired about then, hitting the pavement at the rear of the President's car (several spectators thought, in retrospect, that they saw something splatter) and flinging fragments several hundred yards, one of which may have injured James Tague, who was standing on Commerce Street near the Triple Underpass. More probably, Tague was nicked in the cheek by something—a

bullet fragment or chip of concrete—bouncing up from a Main Street curb about 15 feet away. A section of curbing there, examined belatedly by the FBI, showed under spectrographic testing traces of lead and antimony, two elements common in the lead cores of bullets. No trace of copper was found, meaning the smear could not be from the first impact of one of the Mannlicher-Carcano's copper-jacketed rounds. If from a bullet at all (many articles contain lead and antimony), the smear had to come either from a Mannlicher-Carcano fragment or from another bullet altogether. This last explanation is preferred by those suspecting more than one gunman. Further complicating matters, Mr. Tague thinks he was hit at the time of "either the second or the third" shot, meaning if Oswald was the lone gunman, either what the Warren Commission calls the miss or the fatal head shot. Yet Tague was a long way from the limousine—almost a hundred yards when Kennedy's head exploded. Would a fragment fly that far? Or was there another gun? Do we even know, assuming three shots were fired from the Depository, which of the first two missed? Unfortunately, it's impossible to determine from Zapruder's film, because by the time the President's limousine cleared the oak tree and offered the gunman a good sight picture, the car had also passed behind the street sign. We only know that by frame 225, when the limousine emerges from behind the sign, Kennedy has been hit. His hands move upward toward his throat, his shoulders hunch. In James Altgens' photo taken an instant later at frame 255, we see the Secret Service men crane back toward the unexpected firecracker pop, while Jackie grabs Jack's arm and Connally turns awkwardly to his right. This the commission calls the first shot from the lone gunman and is the magic bullet. The second probably misses, it says. The third, about 4.2 seconds after Kennedy emerges from behind the sign, at Zapruder frame 313, blows out the right side of Kennedy's skull, ending the New Frontier there in the chief city of the old West.

Several quick but significant questions: Could the 1940-vintage Mannlicher-Carcano, which was later found stuck between two rows of boxes near the descending staircase on the southwest end of the building, have all by itself killed Kennedy? Yes. At short range, with the 160-161-grain copper-jacketed bullets, it had more than the necessary penetrating power and accuracy, despite a tendency to shoot high and right (which defect could easily have been compensated for by anyone familiar with the weapon). Is it certain that three shots were fired from that window, as so many witnesses heard? No.

Kennedy may well have been the target of just two shots from there. Even
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ough three expended cartridges were found, one casing was dented at the neck in a way occurring commonly when drying a weapon. It is conceivable that Oswald took the rifle to the Depository with an empty hull in the chamber and a clip containing three live rounds in the magazine. Since one live round was in the rifle when it was discovered, that would mean only two shots were fired from the window, both hitting their mark, one maybe going on to Connally. Interestingly, no other ammunition for the rifle was found among Oswald's possessions.

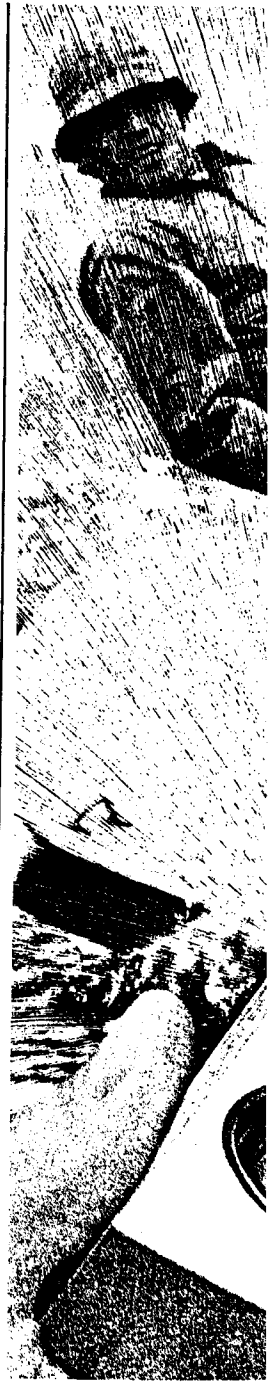
The 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano found at the Depository (at first mistakenly identified as a 7.65mm Mauser, an error that fueled suspicions about a conspiracy, since it suggested two weapons) was directly tied to Oswald by only one palm print, lifted from the underside of the barrel, under the stock's wooden fore-piece. No usable prints were found on the cartridge cases. Thus, the assumption that Oswald used the rifle that day rests much on his ability and opportunity on the weapon itself. Was Oswald a good enough shot? Certainly, for a trained marksman, the distance was not great—about 175 feet when the President's limousine first came from behind the oak tree. Through the scope, it would look no more than 50 feet. Oswald had been trained by the Marine Corps, which boasts of producing the finest marksmen in the world (Charles Whitman, the "Texas tower sniper," was one such). Lee qualified as a sharpshooter with the M-1, though later he dropped to the lowest end of the Marksman scale. Elson Delgado, a Marine buddy, testified that he was a very poor shot. A stronger malediction came from a stranger later. In February 1964, a Russian K.G.B. agent named Yuri Nosenko abruptly defected. One of his statements concerned Oswald, who, Nosenko said, while living in Russia was such a bad shot that when he went hunting, somebody had to go along to provide him with game. Nosenko also assured the CIA that Oswald was not a Russian agent, a possibility that Oswald's own defection to Russia and his espousement of left-wing causes since his return had inspired—especially with Lyndon B. Johnson, who initially feared he was resident by virtue of a Communist conspiracy (L.B.J. also feared a nuclear war should Oswald turn out to be a Russian spook). Exactly why Nosenko defected when he did is unknown, although from a Soviet viewpoint he went on an opportune time, just after Kennedy's death, bearing assurances that the K.G.B. had nothing to do with it. Anyway, the verdict is mixed on Oswald's

marksmanship prior to the Kennedy killing. Certainly he was a trained shooter at distances of up to 500 yards. An additional aid to his speed and aim, if he was in that window, might have been simple adrenaline. Could he have fired the weapon three times within six seconds? In tests run for the Warren Commission's investigation, three National Rifle Association masters shot Oswald's weapon at stationary targets positioned at distances corresponding to Zapruder frames number 210 (175 feet), about number 252 (240 feet) and number 313 (265 feet). These experts even with the inferior rifle succeeded two of six times in getting off three shots in less than six seconds. They hit the first and third targets consistently but often missed the second, because the aiming movement from first to second target required a change of firing position. In 1967, CBS News, as part of its first "inquiry" into the Kennedy assassination, had a tower and a ramp constructed, complete with moving silhouette, to simulate the heights and distances between the Presidential limousine and the Depository window. Marksmen in those tests, conducted with a rifle like Oswald's and ours, could get the three shots off in time, and several hit the silhouette two or three times. Almost half of the tests, though, were invalidated because the rifle malfunctioned. In our own tests conducted with a Mannlicher-Carcano of the same type used by Oswald, malfunctions (either jamming or misfires) occurred more than 50 percent of the time. In sum, all we can suppose is that if Oswald had a good day and the rifle was working, he could have made the shots. We can suppose, too, that the bullet fragments, and the magic bullet, came from the Mannlicher-Carcano. Two good-sized fragments, one from a bullet's nose and another from a base, were recovered from the limousine. Several other tiny pieces were retrieved from the automobile and Connally's wrist (X rays showed more minuscule pieces in Kennedy's skull and in Connally's femur and chest). These fragments, the nearly pristine bullet found at Parkland and the cartridge cases were said by the FBI to have been fired from the Mannlicher-Carcano. Spectrography revealed only that the slugs had similar metallic composition—not surprising, since all were made in 1944 by the Western Cartridge Company of similar materials. Even these facts have been questioned by critics of the FBI investigation (the Warren Commission had no investigative staff and was forced to rely on Hoover's men). One asks why tests were not done to see if the magic bullet went through human tissue, both Kennedy's and Connally's. Or if conclusive neutron-activation analyses were done, for example, on Kennedy's shirt and coat, through which the magic bullet supposedly passed, to determine if metallic residues found on the

back of the garment marked that passage all the way through and, if so, whether the residue was identical in elemental composition with the bullet. Similarly, the spectrographic tests linking Connally's wrist fragments with the wondrous bullet were challenged in another book by Weisberg, *Post Mortem*.

Was Oswald on the sixth floor and did he have access to the window? The commission's witness on that crucial point was Charles Givens, a worker in the Depository who said he saw Oswald about noon November 22, walking from the southeast corner of the sixth floor toward the freight elevators that are on the building's north side. Surely such testimony would be beyond debate, were it not for the fact that Givens first told the FBI that he had seen Oswald on the first floor before the shooting—a story he stuck to until April 1964, when intensive interrogation by commission lawyer David Belin brought forth the new version. Also, since Weisberg obtained documents showing that Mrs. R. E. Arnold, a secretary at the Depository, told the FBI she thought she might have caught a glimpse of Oswald on the first floor around 12:25, Givens' revised testimony is questionable.

Can it be proved that Oswald was on the sixth floor, in or near that window? Three eyewitnesses—Brennan, Ewins and an Arnold Rowland—had good long views of a man with a gun there. But eyewitnesses are frequently mistaken. Predictably, such witnesses offered contradictory stories: e.g., as to just which floor the gunman was on, how tall he was, how long the rifle was, even as to whether he was alone. Rowland, for example, later told the FBI and the commission he'd seen two men, a rifleman in a southwest window and an elderly black man in the southeast (three black men did watch the motorcade from the fifth floor below the nest and after the shooting pointed up at the southeast window above them). Another witness, Mrs. Carolyn Walther, whom the commission never called to testify directly, said she saw the gunman and, beside him, another man with a shorter weapon, but they were on a floor lower than the sixth. This point, whether or not Oswald was accompanied, cried for proof. For a time it seemed that photography would produce an answer. Twenty-two photographers stood in Dealey Plaza with film in their cameras that might be invaluable in solving the murder. One was Robert Hughes, who stood a block away from the motorcade shooting an 8mm movie. As theateful turn onto Elm Street began, Hughes's camera recorded the southeast window of the Depository. Could close examination of those frames reveal how many waited in ambush? One answer came in the recent CBS re-inquiry into the killing. Computer studies of the shape, contrast and depth of the



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THE CUBAN CONNECTION

Just as we were going to press, we were presented with the first plausible motive we'd heard for the killing of John Kennedy. It came in the form of a book by Robert D. Morrow, *Betrayal* (Henry Regnery). It seems Morrow (an electronics engineer), an artist and Mario Garcia Kohly (a prominent Cuban exile who was head of the Cuban government in exile) conspired in 1962 to ruin Cuba's economy by flooding it with \$50,000,000 in phony pesos. That was the only way they could accomplish what Kennedy had refused to do: save America from communism. According to the story, Kennedy learned about the plot and had them busted after they'd worked on their scheme for over a year. Clay Shaw, who was also in on the deal, was infuriated and decided Kennedy had to be killed. In the conspiracy that evolves from this, we have Jack Ruby, Lee Harvey Oswald, David Ferrie and indirectly Officer Tippit, and Morrow, who buys three Mannlicher-Carcanos for firing teams in Dealey Plaza.

Then our research turned up a *New York Times* story of October 3, 1963, in which Morrow, Kohly and others actually were busted in possession of "excellent" plates and large sums of counterfeit Castro pesos. When Morrow told us that he had "shocking" evidence, including a film of a man who was a dead ringer for Oswald training at a paramilitary camp on Lake Pontchartrain, we went to view it.

However, Morrow's film showed no one who looked remotely like Oswald. He had no documents or photos linking Tippit, Oswald, Ruby, Ferrie, Shaw and himself—or any combination thereof. Though Morrow claims in the book to have participated in adventures with Ferrie, he was unable to describe the man accurately. In addition to Morrow's wildly imaginative reconstruction of events leading up to the assassination, a deathbed tape of Kohly, which we heard, has the Cuban saying that *Castro* had Kennedy killed, in direct contradiction of Morrow's claim that his men had done it. ("He was just wrong," Morrow explained.) Presumably as wrong as Morrow's many fudged dates and simple misstatements of a set of facts that have become the foundation for the conspiratorial superstructure.

tiny images (a fraction of a small frame, taken 100 yards away) by the Itek Corporation showed yes, there was movement (hence the gunman) and no, there was no other human being there. But Itek's findings generated skepticism. Itek has as its president a former CIA man, and is it not the CIA that, we learned, hires news correspondents as informers, including Sam A. Jaffe, once of CBS, who said it seemed to him quite possible that the CIA had got him hired by CBS in the first place? If the CIA could get people hired at CBS, could it not also influence the content of broadcasts? If the head of Itek was with the CIA, could Itek's report to CBS have been influenced, particularly since 60 percent of Itek's business was for the Government?

Another movie, this by Orville Nix, aroused high excitement because it seemed to show a rifleman perched on a car parked directly behind the concrete wall bordering the pergola near the grassy knoll. Edward Jay Epstein, whose book *Inquest* best illuminated the commission's procedural inadequacies, brought this theory to national prominence in *Esquire*, while another critic, Jones Harris, who'd discovered the malevolent figure, proceeded, with U.P.I.'s help (U.P.I. had bought the Nix film for \$5000), to subject the film to the greatest possible scrutiny. That's right, they sent it to Itek. Its conclusion was that, because it lacked depth, the figure was really a shadow and the car was parked far back of the pergola. Harris then decided that Itek and U.P.I. had collaborated to suppress the discovery of the real assassin. To answer this, Nix's poor-quality 8mm movie was once more analyzed, this time at Caltech. The results received in February 1975 supported the Itek findings but did not rule out the possibility of a grassy-knoll assassin. As of today, some theorists see three assassins aligned on a walk descending from the knoll toward Elm Street. Two of these, it's said, resemble Watergate plotters E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis.

In an Altgens' photo of the motorcade, if we look past the puzzled Jackie and the President just reacting to his first wound, we see peering out of the Depository's broad entranceway, hard on the right, a face that mightily resembles Oswald's. As soon as the picture was released, people asked if it was Oswald, for, if so, Oswald could not be the killer. Thorough investigation, however, established that the man was Billy Nolan Lovelady, an employee of the Depository. Lovelady himself said "Yes, sir," when asked if that was he. But this was questioned, because an FBI photo of Lovelady showed him in a red-and-white-striped short-sleeved shirt, quite unlike the dark, long-sleeved shirt seen on the man in the doorway. But Oswald, when arrested, was wearing a shirt very like the one on the man in the doorway. Eventually,

Lovelady said he did wear the dark shirt on November 22 but wore the striped shirt for the FBI picture. However, a different photo seems to show him in the doorway wearing yet another dark checked shirt, again raising suspicions about who was where. All this illustrates how any given piece of misinformation can awaken suspicions of startling longevity.

No suspicions in the assassination have had a greater or more deserved life span than those surrounding the next mystery—the magic bullet. The thesis, as formulated by commission attorneys Arlen Specter and David Belin, was simple if farfetched. A bullet penetrated Kennedy's neck, transited the muscle layers, exited at the throat, went on to punch an elliptical hole in Connally's back, there shattering the Texan's fifth rib, before exiting below the right nipple to tear into the back of the right wrist, exit at the palm and finish the remarkable odyssey by lodging in the left thigh and finally falling out to be discovered on Parkland's stretcher. All this with only moderate flattening and the loss from its base of no more than 2.4 grains of metal. (That is possible if unlikely: Only about 1.5 grains of metal either were removed from Connally's wrist or seen by X ray to be still embedded in his chest and femur. But Weisberg maintains the metal missing from the bullet's base was cut out by the FBI for testing and was thus *never* in Connally.) When the wild theory of the bullet's path was proposed, responsible investigators howled. How could it be? More importantly, *why* must it be? Did not the initial FBI and Secret Service assassination reports themselves clearly say that three shots were fired, the first hitting the President in the back, the second striking Connally and the third slamming into Kennedy's skull? Why must there be a magic bullet at all? The answer again came from Zapruder's camera. Quite simply, given the time needed to fire the Mannlicher-Carcano, the film showed that unless one bullet struck both the President and the governor, there had to be more than one assassin. Had to be because between Zapruder frame 225, when Kennedy clearly has been hit, and frame 237, when Connally unmistakably reacts to his wound, there isn't time to reload and fire Oswald's carbine. What was more perplexing, there seemed to be too much time between the reactions of Connally and Kennedy for a single bullet to have penetrated both men. Never mind the bullet's physical condition. Here was scientific proof of conspiracy, not to mention duplicity by the commission, such as ignoring the FBI and Secret Service and saying that Connally had suffered a "delayed reaction" to the bullet marauding through his body. The contention again brought sophisticated optical analysis to

bear on Zapruder's movie. The latest, conducted by the ubiquitous Itek, indicates that Connally may be reacting to his wound as early as frames 223-226, a sixth of a second in which a flipping motion begins in the right hand, with which he holds his Stetson. Other theorists ridicule the suggestion, saying they see no sign of distress in Connally until almost a second after Kennedy is seen reaching for his throat. And how can he still be holding his Stetson in frame 235 if a bullet was coming out of his palm? No firm answer can be given. Men in combat often react late to wounds. Deer run through by high-powered arrows often look up quizzically, then return to grazing before they realize they've been mortally wounded. Yet Connally himself has always vowed he was hit by the second shot, because he heard the first before feeling his wounds (you can't hear the bullet that hits you, since sound travels at only 1100 feet per second, half the speed of the 6.5mm rounds). It is "inconceivable" that he was hit by the same bullet that hit Kennedy. His wife agrees, saying she heard the shot and she and Connally started to turn toward the wounded President, and then the governor was hit. Of course, this also implies two gunmen, for even if a first shot from the Depository missed the car and that was what Connally heard, how then was the President hit *before* Connal-

ly unless by another gun? Certainly, it could be that the Connallys are mistaken. In that case, return for a moment to the physical evidence. Could the notorious bullet do all that the commission asks of it?

Numerous ballistics tests have been made with 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcanos to determine if any bullet could do so much and yet end up mostly un mutilated. The Army fired Oswald's carbine at blocks of skin-covered gelatin and chunks of animal flesh to simulate Kennedy's neck wound. It concluded that the projectile lost little velocity or stability (good penetrating power is characteristic of these quarter-inch slugs), thus accounting for exit holes only slightly larger than the entrances. Testers also fired through a goat's chest cavity, producing back and rib wounds similar to Connally's and slugs a bit more mutilated than the magic bullet. Another test on a cadaver's wrist yielded a much more mutilated bullet but also a much more damaged wrist, which indicated to the commission that the Parkland bullet struck Connally's wrist at relatively low velocity. One would expect that from a bullet that had already transited two bodies, just as, the commission held, the elliptical and ragged entry and exit wounds in Connally argued for a bullet that had begun yawing due to striking Kennedy first. These results at once were

attacked. For example, if the exit wounds in the neck tests consistently were larger than the entry holes, how did that fact square with Dr. Malcolm Perry's insistence right after the shooting that the wound in Kennedy's throat could have been an entry hole? But Dr. Perry had enlarged the "puncture" wound in a futile tracheotomy.

Inevitably, more tests were staged and most of them reaffirmed what we've known since the beginning of firearms: Bullets can do funny things. But this point is crucial and efforts to fathom its mystery continue. Dr. Milton Helpert, the former medical examiner of the city of New York and one of the most experienced forensic pathologists in the world, says, "I cannot accept the premise that this bullet thrashed around in all that bony tissue and lost only 1.4 to 2.4 grains of its original weight." A reasonable analogy is that if you drop someone out of an airplane, he will die when he hits the ground. On the other hand, we know that some people have survived just such falls. And we consider those events miracles. Dr. Cyril Wecht, forensic pathologist and coroner of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, believes not only that the bullet would have been more deformed but that the trajectory of the shot as projected through Kennedy, given the positions of the two men as adduced

PASTE-POT JOB?



Two photos of Lee Harvey Oswald. His wife, Marina, said she took them. Oswald claimed they were fakes, composites of his head on somebody else's body. The FBI agreed with Marina. Other theorists say the shadows under the nose are inconsistent with the other shadows, that Oswald's head in the photo at left is the wrong size for the body and that close examination of the photo at right reveals lines where the head was glued on for rephotographing. Some say Marina lied when she said she took them in March, because the shrubs to the right of the figure do not bloom that early. The Warren Report insists these are of Oswald. They do clearly show a scope-mounted Mannlicher-Carcano, the weapon said to have killed Kennedy. The pistol is allegedly the one Oswald used to kill Tippit.

from Zapruder's film, makes it impossible for it to have hit Connally. Instead, Dr. Wecht says, the bullet that transited the President went over the limousine driver's shoulder and beyond (maybe fragmenting and hitting Tague), then another gunman hit Connally an instant later. Other noted pathologists claim it's quite possible the bullet did all that the report specifies, and besides, it is impossible to deduce precise trajectories from studying wounds.

Gun buffs have long been curious. Suppose one of the 1944 cartridges had lost some zip, was in effect "downloaded." That could cause low velocity and strange ballistics. For their part, scientific folk wonder if neutron-activation tests on Connally's clothes might show if that bullet struck him, leaving the telltale residue. Such tests would reveal in parts-per-million accuracy if the copper traces matched the magic bullet. Unfortunately, Connally's clothes were washed or dry-cleaned before such tests could be made. What about Kennedy's bloody shirt and jacket, two evidentiary items of paramount importance? The Government's reports on them—extract-

ed through Weisberg's Freedom of Information suits—confirm that spectrography revealed traces of copper around the rear holes, indicating that a copper-jacketed bullet had pierced them. The report insists it was the superbullet. Yet, it seems, *no* tests tie those copper traces to the magic bullet. Nor are there, according to these documents, any traces of copper or lead alloys at the front of the shirt collar where, according to the report, the bullet exited. Finally, it seems to Weisberg, based on recently obtained reports, that sophisticated neutron-activation tests were done on the magic bullet and other recovered fragments—but that the FBI, for whatever reasons, has suppressed or distorted the results to conform to the single-bullet thesis. So there remain unanswered questions about the magic bullet—and, as we'll see, about Kennedy's clothes. For now, all we can know is that if that bullet did what the report's theory requires, it was, indeed, a magical projectile.

So magical that one theory maintains it never was fired through anything but cotton, was instead part of a plot calling for the deceptive bullet to be planted at

Parkland Memorial Hospital—the better to incriminate Oswald, the patsy. Didn't the respected journalist Seth Kantor and a witness named Wilma Tice swear they saw Jack Ruby there just after the shooting? He could have done it and, as part of a plot, would deny it later at his trial. Penn Jones, a Texas newspaper editor who has followed a skein of mysterious deaths befalling witnesses, was at the hospital, too, and he has said that in the chaos there, a lot could have happened. Thus, there is debate over whether the bullet really was found on Connally's stretcher. A hospital engineer named Darrell Tomlinson was not sure it was Connally's. Some people theorize that the bullet fell out of a shallow wound in Kennedy's back, a wound that has been covered up by the Government because its existence would again prove the conspiracy the report had to dismiss for reasons of domestic tranquility and world peace.

For those convinced of conspiracy, however, easier hypotheses were at hand. Some of them *knew* the fatal shot came not from the Depository but from the right front, from the grassy knoll. First, they say, more than half the witnesses in Dealey Plaza who had an opinion on the direction of the shots said they came from the knoll or the stockade fence. Wilma Bond's photographs showed people reacting as if shots had come from there. These included motorcycle policeman Bobby Hargis, who charged the knoll, and Presidential aides such as Dave Powers and Secret Service men such as Forrest Sorrels, who was riding in the car ahead of Kennedy's, and numerous ordinary citizens. These opinions have been bolstered ever since the assassination by photos and statements, most of which were debunked by the commission, whose members in several instances failed to question the witnesses or to investigate in detail the evidence advanced for an assassin on the knoll.

For example, Zapruder frames 313-316 unmistakably show the President's head moving backward and to the left as he suffers his killing wound. Groden's blowups and intensifications of these frames have convinced many people, particularly among college audiences who see the film under the auspices of some assassination careerists called the Assassination Information Bureau, that unless Newtonian laws of motion have been repealed, the shot had to come from the right front. This evidence is a staple for knoll-assassin believers. They are not persuaded otherwise by Itek's recent conclusion that Kennedy's head (and most of his brain matter) is first driven forward, very fast, then backward much more slowly. They do not believe that Jackie pulled him leftward and backward, thus changing the head's direction. They do not accept the fact (established in tests

with skulls packed with tissue simulants) that a "jet" effect, a hydrostatic propulsion due to the skull's explosion, threw Kennedy's head back. Rather, they point out that Officer Hargis, who was riding escort to the Presidential car at its left-rear fender, was splattered with blood and brain. That Officer James Chaney, looking at Kennedy from his motorcycle near the right fender, said he saw "the President struck in the face." That Deputy Sheriff Seymour Weitzman found part of Kennedy's skull, perhaps the same piece that Jackie had scrambled onto the trunk of the Lincoln to try to recover, on the south (left) side of Elm Street. That Secret Service agent Clint Hill and eyewitness Charles Brehm saw what they thought was impact debris flying to the left and rear of the car (it seems to have been recorded, too, on Nix's film). That agent Hill and his colleague Roy Kellerman, who was riding in the right-front seat of Kennedy's car, said the fatal shot sounded funny, like a double bang-bang (and Hill thought there had been only two shots, the second in the head). No, they think the shot had to come from the right front, from another kind of gun, perhaps one loaded with explosive bullets (eerily, there is a report that in early 1963, some members of the CIA asked a research-and-development man to sketch an exploding round for a 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano).

Other photographs, too, conjured men on the grassy knoll. Groden has to his own satisfaction identified two shadows in the Zapruder film as more snipers. We have seen the speculations based on the Nix film. Another photograph, taken by Mary Moorman, who stood about 15 feet from the President's car, seems to show a man with a gun standing behind the stockade fence about 14 feet from its corner. The Moorman photo, taken approximately one fifth of a second after Kennedy's head exploded, has been studied intensely. Some experts say the figure is a shadow, others that it is an assassin.

S. M. Holland, a railroad switchman, was standing on the Triple Underpass when the shots were fired. He hotfooted it to the parking lot and found muddy footprints behind the fence. It looked to him like one or two men had paced back and forth behind a car. Holland is positive he heard shots coming from the knoll (others think it could have been echoes).

Holland's story, which he told repeatedly to sundry assassination buffs, including the Warren Commission, fits nicely, if circumstantially, with that told by Lee Bowers, who was ensconced in a railroad switching tower. Before the assassination, he saw what he took to be strange movements of cars and people in the lot and then "a flash of light or smoke or something" that caught his eye.

The claims of Holland and Bowers

excited other investigators, even if they failed to convince the commission that something strange might have been afoot.

The railroad yards themselves inspired another grassy-knoll speculation, for it was from them that the three famous "tramps" were roused after the murder and marched across Dealey Plaza, where they were photographed (see below).

Other theories include the suggestion that conspirators had hollowed out the grassy knoll and then cut down the President from there. Former New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison and Penn Jones say a gunman lurked in a sewer and on signal plugged the President. Much more intriguing is the "umbrella man." Although the day was warm and sunny, a single neatly dressed man stood and watched the President being murdered, while holding an open umbrella above his head. After the killing, he stood watching the motorcade, trailing the dying President, disappear down Elm Street, then folded his umbrella and walked calmly away. He was the only person so shielding himself. Could that have been a signal for shooting to begin? Or did the man have a gun built into his umbrella? Was he acting in concert with a man one assassination theory calls a "com-

munications man," another figure in a photograph who appears to have a "two-way radio" in his back pocket (and who has been identified as a man now a patient in a mental hospital)? It's possible that he was just an eccentric, but the Warren Commission never looked into this.

It did, however, look into and dismiss as meaningless a story three witnesses told of two men, seen at different times. One man, heavy-set, was said to be in a Depository window, then hurrying away from the Depository and finally entering a station wagon driven by a young black man. The other, younger, was seen by Deputy Sheriff Roger Craig, running out of the Depository's Elm Street entrance, down the gentle slope and into a light-colored Rambler station wagon (easily identifiable by its rooftop luggage rack). The driver of the wagon, according to Craig, was "very dark complected, had real dark short hair and was wearing a thin white-looking jacket." Craig said he tried to reach the car to question the men, but the crush of people prevented him, and then the wagon took off down Elm.

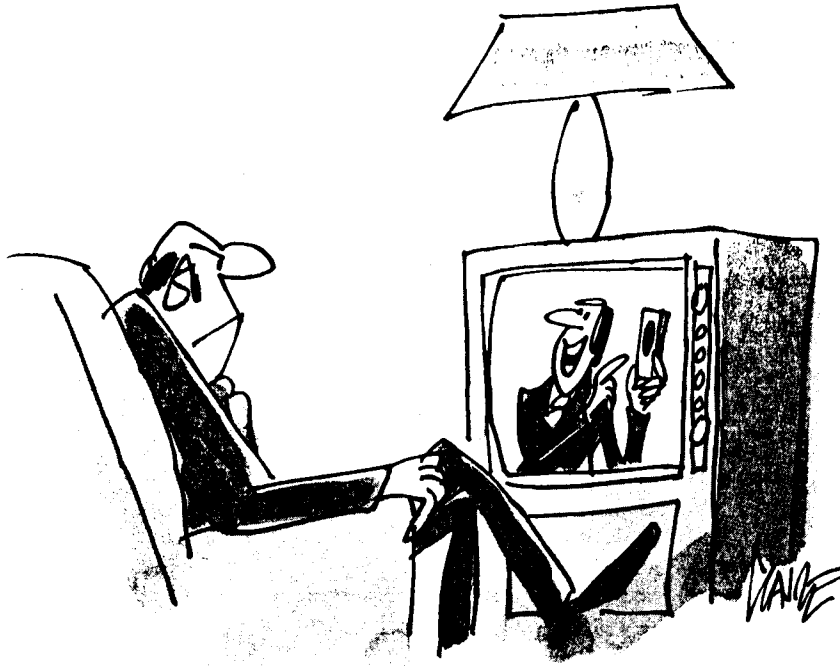
Many people believe these witnesses are describing other assassins, even by the Warren Commission's lights, because they could not be Oswald. He was, the report says, taking a bus and a taxi toward his rooming house. The heavy-set man could be the "Saul" who has confessed in Hugh McDonald's recent book, *Appointment in Dallas*, that he killed Kennedy for money, with Oswald as a patsy. The younger man could be the second Oswald, out on his appointed rounds again, this time as a killer in the Depository. The driver of the station wagon could be a Cuban exile or, if you prefer, one of Castro's men avenging the assassination plots the CIA-Mafia connection concocted for the Cuban leader in the early Sixties. Or they could have been part of a Texas right-wing plot. H. L. Hunt's son Nelson Bunker Hunt partly paid for a scurrilous anti-Kennedy ad that appeared the morning of November 22, and Jack Ruby had driven one of his strippers to Hunt's office the day before, and Mrs. Paine had a light-colored station wagon. Craig himself now is dead, under strange circumstances, as are more than 50 people who allegedly knew something about Kennedy's death. (The actuarial odds against that were calculated at 100 trillion to one.) So huge a conspiracy probably would come apart in time, Joe Valachi-style. But two or three men would need only their anger and a gun. Is there any hard evidence of a second gunman?

The ultimate evidence was the President's body, but the autopsy was botched from start to finish. At Bethesda Naval Hospital on November 22, a team of pathologists conducted the autopsy under

BIT PLAYERS



The clearest picture of the "tramps" ever published. Theorists say the two men at right are Frank Sturgis and E. Howard Hunt, both with the CIA and thus in Dallas to assist in killing Kennedy. Nixon was also in Dallas the morning of November 22, and so may have had an early relationship with the men later hired as White House "plumbers." Others say the tramps are Americans who trained Cuban commandos and then, when the President turned away from liberating Cuba, they killed him. No proof exists for either theory, and since the men don't look like Sturgis and Hunt, and no soldiers of fortune have yet been identified, they may just be well-dressed, well-groomed tramps.



"Remember, folks, more commercials recommend it than any other toothpaste."

conditions of stress, shock and pressure, which apparently caused them to omit some valuable procedures (e.g., dissecting the neck—or back—wound). Two FBI agents named James Sibert and Francis O'Neill observed the autopsy. Their report said of the President's wound, "The distance traveled by this missile was a short distance inasmuch as the end of the opening could be felt with the finger." The agents also called it a "back" wound rather than a neck wound and said the downward angle was 45 to 60 degrees, a trajectory inconsistent with the 20-degree angle from the Depository's sixth-floor window. Secret Service man Kellerman, also present, said the wound was probed and Lieutenant Colonel Pierre Finck, the forensic medicine specialist, told him there was no outlet. How, then, could the same bullet have hit Connally? Furthermore, the FBI men said the doctors were puzzled because they could find no bullet in the back wound, and so Finck and another pathologist, Commander Humes, said "it was entirely possible" the bullet had worked its way out and fallen on a stretcher. How did the report's defenders answer this? The same way they answered so many other things that didn't fit: They said it was a mistake. The FBI and Secret Service agents were laymen, after all. Besides, by morning the autopsy physicians had conferred with the doctors at Parkland and confirmed that the tracheotomy had obliterated Kennedy's throat wound. That gave them the exit wound for the bullet, though it ignored the possibility

the wound marked a bullet's entrance. The fact that the wound couldn't be probed was explained by saying the muscles had closed, a contention strongly resisted by pathologists like Wecht. To those critical of the commission, the conflicting reports smacked of *ex post facto* reasoning.

Another puzzle was the sketch of Kennedy's wounds made by the third physician, Commander Boswell. There the wound is shown not in the neck, about two inches right of the spinal column, but well down on the back (Secret Service agent Glen Bennett, riding in the backup car, said he saw Kennedy hit "four inches down from the right shoulder"), so low that to exit at the throat, piercing the shirt collar and nicking the tie, the bullet would have had to go *upward*. Weisberg still maintains that the front of the shirt and the tie were damaged by surgeons, not by bullets. Is Boswell's sketch mistaken? The doctors say yes, as to location. The sketch was merely a rough. The measurements are found noted on it, placing the wound 14 centimeters (5.6 inches) down from the right mastoid process (the bony point behind the right ear) and 14 centimeters from the tip of the right shoulder. Right in the neck. In any event, the report's supporters say, we have X rays and photographs of the body.

Surprisingly, these visual records were never seen by the members of the Warren Commission. In 1968, awash in criticism of the report, Attorney General Ramsey Clark secured permission for three

pathologists and a radiologist to examine the X rays and photos. They confirmed that the President was shot twice from above and behind, the one bullet most probably going through his neck and out his throat, and the other blowing a large hole in the right side of his skull. A few years later, Wecht examined the materials, the first alternate-theorist to do so. He grudgingly accepted that finding, while reiterating that there might be fragments from other bullets in Kennedy and that the finding did not *per se* preclude another gunman. Wecht also wanted, during later surveys of the material, to examine Kennedy's brain, which should have been preserved for sectioning so a pathologist could trace the exact paths of all bullets and fragments. So it was learned the ghastly fact that the President's brain is missing or hidden. Even without that cerebral aid, Dr. James Weston—the newly elected president of the National Academy of Forensic Sciences—has said he has absolutely no doubt after examining all available autopsy materials that John Kennedy was hit by only two shots, both from above, behind and slightly to the right. One went through the neck. The other entered the skull, distinctly beveling the bone inward. It seems most likely that two shots from above and behind caused Kennedy's death.

Except for the jacket and shirt. Consider first that, as anyone with a jacket and shirt can determine at home, in order for the holes—about five and a half inches down from the collar top—to align with the wound in the neck, the garments would have had to ride up about three inches. In simulating the situation, it is difficult to cause a shirt—let alone a heavier suit coat—to ride up that far. Also photographs of the President at the instant matching the magic-bullet shot show Kennedy's shirt and jacket seemingly unbunched. And even if the clothes had ridden up that far as the President waved, they would have doubled over, which means that a bullet would have perforated at least one garment three times. It didn't. Then there is the disconcerting fact that the holes *do* line up with the wound shown on Commander Boswell's sketch. Finally, one must note the peculiar holes beside the shirt collar's button. They are sharp-edged and elliptical, not ragged or puncturelike, leading people to guess that they, perhaps the tie's nick, too, resulted at Parkland from cutting away the President's clothes to give him air. Then there would be no magic bullet coming out at the throat and there would be another gunman—something even Weston's unequivocal statement does not eliminate. The shirt and jacket alone justify a new investigation. They constitute physical evidence that contradicts the Warren Commission's theory. For that matter, we

have seen several other questions—such as, was Oswald on the Depository's sixth floor?—that a skillful defense attorney could have used to challenge the Government's case against Oswald. And beyond the physical evidence lie hints that make him more than the report would have him, more than the desperate little youth who grabbed for glory.

Thus, to arrive at the end with any understanding of the Kennedy riddle, we need a brief summary of the chief conspiracy suppositions, if only to judge how believable they might be.

The Oswald-Ruby-Tippit Connection: This theory holds that Ruby and Tippit knew Oswald and conspired with him, maybe on behalf of right-wingers in the Dallas police department. Evidence for this theory is skimpy. Unverified tales place Tippit and Oswald in a diner near Oswald's rooming house, and Tippit and Ruby, and maybe Oswald, huddling at Ruby's Carousel Club. Could be. Ruby cultivated cops, but it was probably because he had a long rap sheet. But what if Acquilla Clemens was correct in saying she saw on November 22 two men approach Tippit and then the shorter shoot the cop? The Warren Commission didn't believe that and nine other witnesses put Oswald at the scene or fleeing it (*and we know his gun did kill Tippit*). Did the cops try to kill Oswald in the theater as a part of a plot? A click was heard during the struggle to subdue Oswald. It may have come from Oswald's gun, which still contained a discharged cartridge case. Or it could have been a cop's gun. No one checked their service revolvers. In any event, Oswald was not killed by the police but by Ruby. How did Ruby accomplish that? It's claimed that one of his many police friends tipped him off when Oswald was going to be moved from police headquarters to the county jail. But the precise moment of transfer kept changing, due to epidemic confusion up to the time of the move. Probably Ruby just took the notion about 11:20 A.M. Sunday, November 24. Anyway, there is no firm evidence that Tippit, Ruby and Oswald were conspirators.

The Clay Shaw-Jim Garrison Carnival: Nothing had ever aroused the demimonde of assassination buffs like the announcement in February 1967 that Garrison had solved the case. The assassination had resulted from a conspiracy involving Clay L. Shaw, a retired managing director of New Orleans' International Trade Mart, a respected citizen of liberal views, a homosexual and the man who plotted with Oswald and one David Ferrie. Assassination theorists—even a man who believed the world was run by a conspiracy of intellectuals called the Illuminati—descended on New Orleans. This time they would see the truth.

What they finally saw was the Dien

Bien Phu of official assassination inquiries. Here was a big man with a staff, the power of subpoena and all the things the theorists had said they needed, but all he did was to fall from high seriousness to low farce, taking a passel of legitimate and illegitimate speculations with him. The trouble was that many of the witnesses who testified about Shaw turned out to be either crazy or dishonest. Even gruesome repetitions of the Zapruder film (designed, it appears, to make the jurors want to convict somebody) failed. Shaw was acquitted. Garrison lived on to become an ex-district attorney and the cause of finding conspiracies suffered a monumental setback. A shame, many felt, because some worthwhile leads surfaced, such as a possible CIA link. But the Shaw trial aborted any further official investigation, and it wasn't until later that we learned Shaw and Ferrie had been contract employees of the CIA. Coupled with Ferrie's affection for big Mafia figures and with the CIA-Mob alliance to assassinate Castro, we then had the makings of more plots.

The CIA-Mafia-Big Labor Connection: In addition to being a pilot, Ferrie was a homosexual, a gun enthusiast and was said to be involved in training anti-Castro commandos. An active little man afflicted with a disease that had caused all his hair to fall out, Ferrie also worked for a lawyer who handled the business of Carlos "The Little Man" Marcello, the alleged godfather of Mafia operations throughout Louisiana's Jefferson Parish and environs. It was Ferrie who reportedly flew Marcello home to New Orleans from Guatemala City after Robert Kennedy had Marcello deported.

Understandably, Marcello detested Robert Kennedy. He also hated Jack Kennedy, who had blown the Bay of Pigs, losing the brotherhood's Havana casinos, whores, numbers and dope to the puritanical socialist Castro. Marcello's distaste for the Kennedys was shared by Jimmy Hoffa and probably neither was grieved by Jack's death.

Ferrie was anti-Castro. Oswald pretended to be for a spell during his stay in New Orleans. Could Ferrie have met Oswald? There is no hard evidence. Ferrie was found dead, reportedly of natural causes, only days after Garrison's investigation became public. We can assume Ferrie might have heard of Oswald. Lee was on television and radio during August 1963 as a sane and articulate defender of Castro. The publicity resulted from Oswald's leafletting in behalf of his Fair Play for Cuba Committee in front of the old International Trade Mart. Did anything weld all this to the events in Dallas?

Maybe Ruby did. He was involved with big labor and, through it, with organized crime and, through that (some say), with killing John Kennedy. The

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line begins in Chicago, where he was secretary of the Scrap Iron and Junk Handlers Union, later indirectly allied with Hoffa. He next turned up in Dallas. Had not Ruby spent ten days in 1959 in Cuba with Lewis J. McWillie, a gambler with Mob connections? He also supposedly visited some of Marcello's business associates, the renowned Lansky brothers. Throw in the presence on November 22 in the Dal-Tex building of Eugene Hale Brading (a ridiculous connection, since he went in only to use the phone). Brading had dropped by the offices of H. L. Hunt the same afternoon (November 21) Ruby had and, like Ruby, had a long criminal record. Could he have collaborated with Ruby and Oswald? The possibility is there. The skein of circumstances is stretched. Marcello/Hoffa to Ferric/Shaw to Ruby/Oswald. And all perhaps aided by the CIA, as part of the unholy alliance of Mafia and CIA. All these suggestions have been made at one time or another, but little, if anything, supports them.

The Agent Oswald Question: No theory has received greater play than that Oswald was somebody's secret agent. No amount of caviling can make it go away. Rather, just go down the list and come to whatever conclusions seem warranted. Lee went to Russia with minor radar secrets. Marina Oswald's uncle lived in an apartment building reserved for MVD employees. Lee reportedly associated with Cubans during his stay in Minsk. The Oswalds had less trouble than one would expect leaving Russia, but it did take more than a year; and Yuri Nosenko's defection seemed designed to convince the U. S. that Russia had nothing to do with the assassination. So maybe Oswald was a Russian agent. Arguing against any of that is the sheer insanity of Khrushchev's ordering Kennedy killed. If discovered, that ploy could leave the world a smoking rubble.

There is no evidence, physical or otherwise, to support the Castro-agent theory, except Oswald's huckstering in favor of Havana. Lyndon Johnson, not long before his death, opined that Castro might have been involved. But killing Kennedy, had it leaked, would have sparked an invasion making D day look like a yachting exercise.

There is some evidence that Cuban exiles did away with Kennedy. But it's fragile stuff. A woman named Sylvia Odio, the daughter of Cubans imprisoned by Castro, told the Warren Commission that on September 25, 1963, three men had visited her in Dallas. They said they had come from New Orleans. Two looked like Mexicans and the other was "Leon Oswald." One of the men suggested that "Oswald" could help in the

underground activities against Castro. Mrs. Odio's testimony was corroborated by her sister and she unhesitatingly identified photographs of Oswald as the man who had visited her. But that couldn't be. Oswald was supposed to be on a bus from New Orleans to Mexico on September 25. The riddle remains.

What about Oswald as a CIA agent? Sober analysts assume that if the Russians, as Nosenko said, thought Oswald was an American "sleeper" agent, then maybe he was. More than that, though, the visa stamps in the passport Oswald carried when he defected show him getting from England to Finland at times when there were no commercial airline flights. What about the fact that Oswald's recorded height and eye color vary widely at different times? Likewise, theorists point out, the official Dallas police photo of Oswald shows a man quite different in facial structure from the chubby-cheeked youth pictured in Minsk. Further, one photo of Marina and Lee in Russia shows him very little taller than his 5'3" wife, although *that* Oswald's passport has him 5'11" and the Oswald measured in the Dallas morgue was 5'9". Were there two or more Oswalds, one a CIA man? Or is it simpler? Clerks make errors, people do fib about their size, photo angles can be deceptive and a face's fatness or thinness can change. But ear shape does not change, and the ears of the Dallas Oswald, the Marines Oswald and the Russian Oswald all match. What else? Oswald went to Mexico in September 1963 to seek a visa for Cuba and permission to re-enter Russia. He was refused. The CIA provided the FBI with photos of a burly man, about 35, who looked nothing like Oswald. But through a mistake, later corrected, they said it was he. The CIA theorists pounced. The man had to be (A) another Oswald, (B) the mysterious assassin named Saul, (C) Oswald's CIA contact, or "baby sitter." The CIA vehemently denies this, saying it sent a picture of an unidentified man who *might* have been Oswald, but it didn't know. All of this still leaves only the possibility but no absolute proof that Oswald worked somehow for the CIA. Given his background, it's entirely possible, but it doesn't mean the CIA killed Kennedy.

How about the FBI? Only two verifiable items link Oswald to the FBI. One is that the name, phone number and license number of Agent James Hosty was in Oswald's notebook (but Hosty was assigned to interview Marina). And Oswald sent a note to Hosty (but the FBI had it destroyed; so we'll never know what it said). The real question is why, after the note, the FBI didn't lock Oswald up while the President was in town, a normal procedure with nuts who might try something.

So, while some of these leads need reinvestigation, nothing now proves Oswald was an agent. That may be anticlimactic. But the proper ending to the story can come only if we learn what the CIA, for example, really knows about Oswald. The FBI should open *all* its files on the Oswalds and their acquaintances. There should be a new investigation conducted by a panel with no sins to cover up and no case to prove. Only then would these serious speculations and suspicions be confirmed or confounded. We might then be free of the more idiotic notions that distract us from the plausible alternatives to the Warren Report.

Free of George O'Toole's contention that "psychological stress evaluations" of six words of Oswald's show he was not guilty. O'Toole was, after all, once with the CIA.

Free of Fletcher Prouty's belief in a gigantic plot in which the CIA, FBI, Secret Service, Teamsters, Mafia, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency and the Warren Commission itself are "all pawns" of a gigantic cabal.

Free of Hugh C. McDonald and his Saul, that unnamed, unavailable, unverifiable killer who may well have sprung from McDonald's head, along with his belief that the Russians are all the time giving us the flu by firing small germ-infested rockets into the jet stream.

Free of Gore Vidal's supposition that Oswald's notebooks and diary were, like Sirhan Sirhan's and Arthur Bremer's, written by E. Howard Hunt, and of the cynicism in William Kunstler's statement that the deaths of John and Robert Kennedy ended a danger to the country.

Free of all the nut stuff, of all the paranoia, of all the fantasizing about the malevolent forces that control our destiny. *We* control our destiny, or should. We can find out if Oswald truly was a pitiable young man who took history by the horns or we can learn if he truly was an agent of some kind.

We need to know, and we can. The Texas statute of limitations for conspiracy has expired for any conspirators still resident there. Someone who knows about a plot to kill Kennedy can now come forward without fear of prosecution. We have the physical evidence. We have the other important leads. The necessary legal and investigative staff could quickly be assembled. To these ends we believe there should be a new investigation by an impartial, representative panel of Americans, dedicated only to discovering the facts and destroying the fictions about the murder of our 35th President. We cannot abide less.

This is the fifth in a series of articles on political assassination in America.

