



RANDOM HOUSE, INC.

201 EAST 50TH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

TELEPHONE 212 572-2855

FAX 212 572-4949

HELEN MORRIS
SENIOR EDITOR

August 12, 1993

Mr. Edgar F. Tatro
51 Edgemont Road
Braintree, MA 02184

Dear Mr. Tatro,

On September 1st, Random House is publishing an important book on the assassination of President Kennedy, *Case Closed* by Gerald Posner. Your own special interest in the subject suggests that you would be interested in Mr. Posner's work, which is featured in the enclosed issue of *At Random* magazine on pages 14-28. There is a graphic appendix to the book, and two of the computer-generated graphics are reproduced here.

Sincerely,

Helen Morris

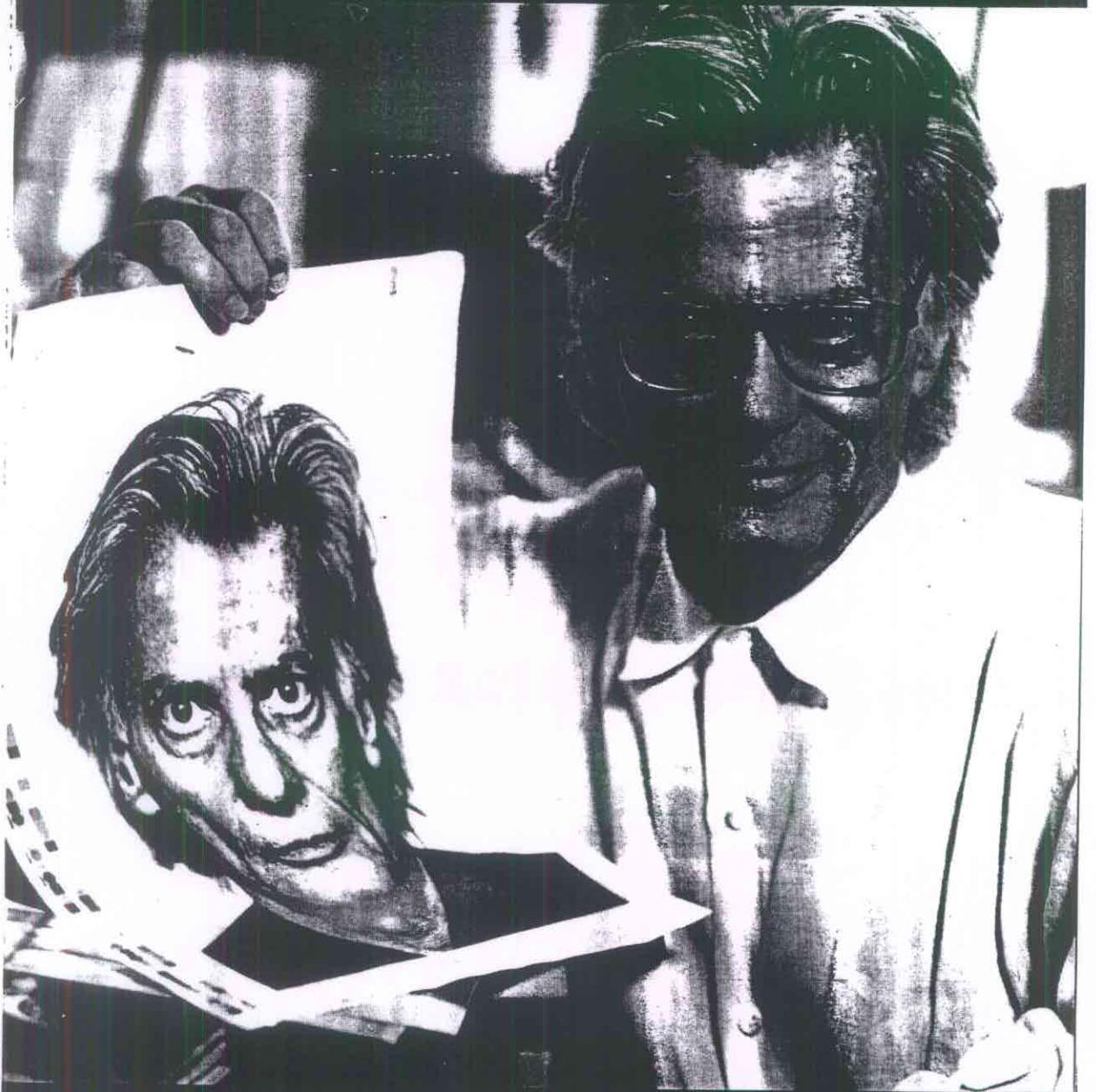
Helen Morris
Editor, *At Random*

encl.



AT RANDOM ^{No 6}

BOOKS AND BOOKPEOPLE FROM RANDOM HOUSE • FALL 1993



ALL PICTURES, NO WORDS: AVEDON LOOKS AT HIS LIFE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

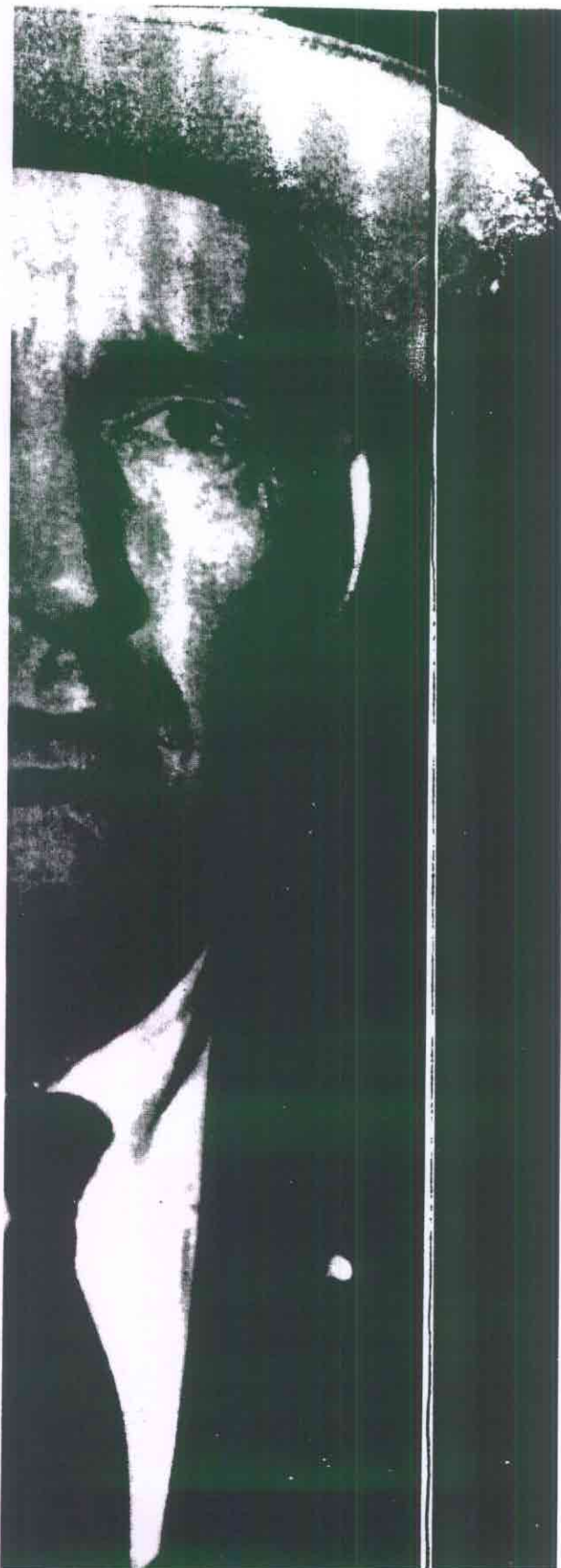
E.L. Doctorow • Naomi Wolf • William Styron • Mavis Gallant • Ron Chernow

THE MAN WHO KILLED KENNEDY

BY CARSTEN FRIES

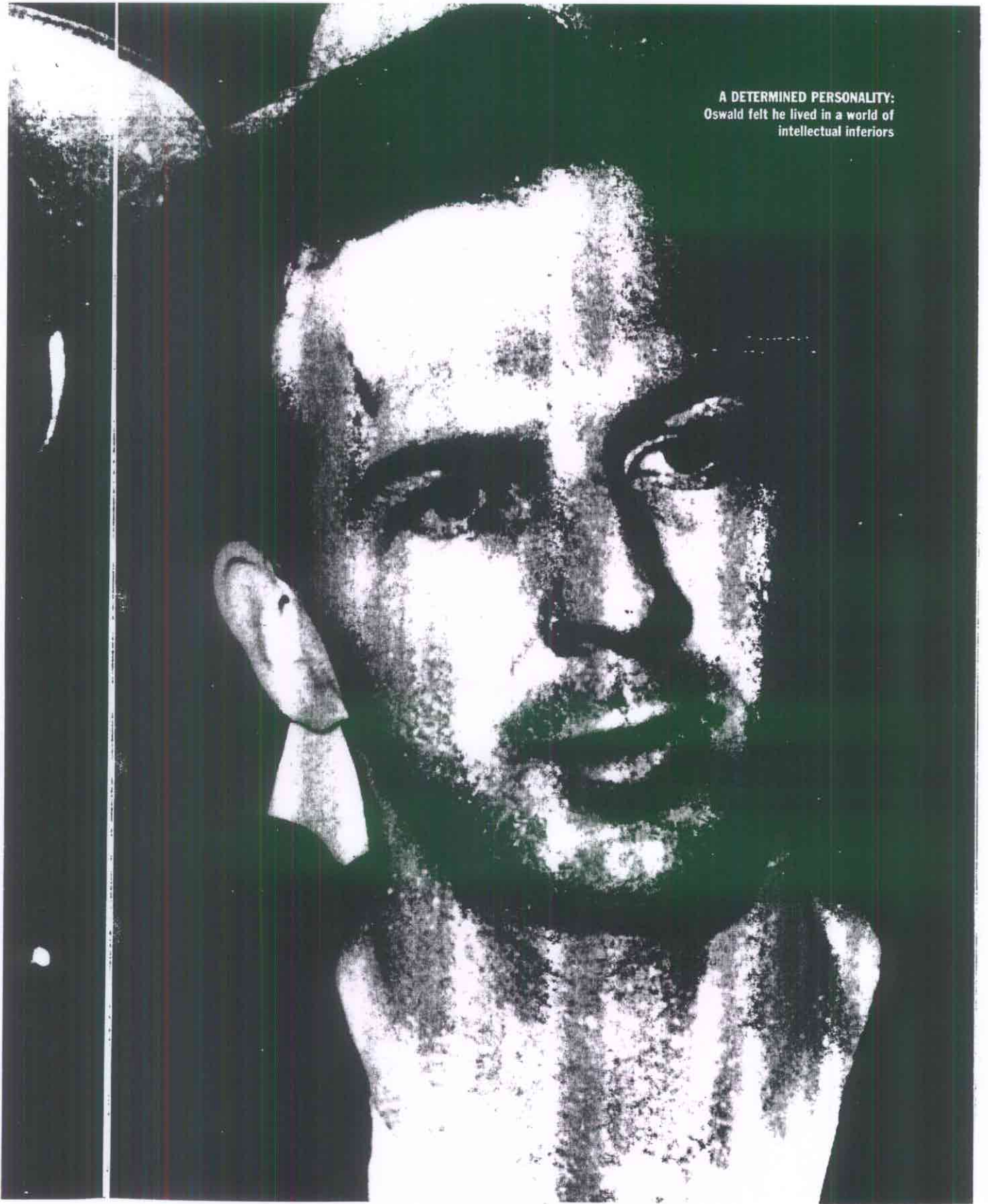
The thirtieth anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Texas, will be commemorated in a fitting way this November: by laying to rest the myriad of doubts that have tormented the American people since 1963 about who killed him and why. It was not the KGB. It was not Castro. It was not the Mafia. It was not the sinister cabal of military and intelligence officials suggested by Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*. It was Lee Harvey Oswald—but it was not the Oswald portrayed in hundreds of books and articles.

Gerald Posner, the author of *Case Closed* (Random House, September) and of this judgment, originally set out to reexamine all the evidence. He interviewed almost two hundred individuals connected to the case, some of whom had never before revealed what they knew. In going back to primary sources and witnesses, he made discoveries, such as the undisclosed files of New Orleans attorney Jim Garrison, that will resolve many controversies. He found flaws in the Warren Commission report. He created his own index to the report and concluded that the only other one, prepared by Sylvia Meagher, reflected her bias that Oswald was innocent. He spent many hours discussing Oswald with his Russian-born



UPI/TELEPHOTO

A DETERMINED PERSONALITY:
Oswald felt he lived in a world of
intellectual inferiors



wife, Marina. And he had a unique interview with Yuriy Nosenko, the KGB officer who was first responsible for Oswald after he defected to the Soviet union (see following excerpt). Nosenko has been in hiding in the U.S. since his own defection.

But most of all Posner came to the conclusion that the character and role of Oswald were drastically misunderstood and purposefully ignored. "While it's important to understand every aspect of the case, including possible conspiracies, the question of why John Kennedy was killed is only answered by studying Oswald's life in detail," he says. From childhood neglect to his less-than-distinguished career in the Marine Corps to his startling defection to the Soviet Union and disaffected return to the United States, Oswald is shown in *Case Closed* as a sociopathic, often violent individual whose day-to-day existence was punctuated by bizarre fantasies. "Oswald felt he lived in a world of intellectual inferiors, and that no one appreciated his intelligence and great worth," explains Posner. "Writers who describe him as a pawn of dark forces have no understanding of the man. He was not weak, but a determined personality who knew what he wanted and went after it."

Gerald Posner is a lawyer whose interest in the assassination reaches back to his time as an undergraduate at Berkeley in the early 1970s. By that time the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin had been under steady assault" he says. "I read many of the leading conspiracy books and later, in law school, closely followed the investigation of the House Select Committee on Assassinations." He began by cross-referencing the leading conspiracy accounts and investigating their theories "as if preparing for a legal case."

Reaction to *Case Closed* is likely to be intense. Posner expects to be the target of personal attacks and of charges that he is part of a continuing cover-up. "The [conspiracy] buffs hold on to their beliefs with an almost religious fervor, oblivious to contrary evidence. It seems to me that what threatens them most is the truth. Many recoil from it, wanting instead to believe anything that raises doubts. The real Oswald is the same disturbed archetype who has figured as the shooter in eight assassinations—or attempted assassinations—of American presidents." ■

Carsten Fries is a production editor at Random House and the managing editor off *At Random*.

An edited excerpt from *Case Closed* by Gerald Posner

THE ORDEAL OF OSWALD'S KEEPER

Yuriy Nosenko sought permanent asylum in the U.S. in January 1964, only two months after the Kennedy assassination. His story stunned the CIA. He claimed to be a lieutenant colonel responsible for compromising Americans visiting Moscow. That meant Oswald was under his jurisdiction when the ex-Marine first defected to the Soviet Union. After the assassination, he was temporarily assigned to investigate whether there was ever any KGB-Oswald relationship. According to Nosenko, although Soviet intelli-

gence kept Oswald under surveillance, it viewed him as mentally unfit, had not debriefed him, and had no relationship with him. If that was true, it meant the KGB and the Soviet Union were absolved of any complicity in JFK's murder. If it was false, Nosenko could be a phony defector, intended, among other things, to deflect the Warren Commission from focusing on evidence of the real Soviet role with Oswald. The overall question of whether he was a bona fide defector or a KGB plant become the most divisive issue within the agency since its estab-

lishment. Is Nosenko a bona fide defector, and is his information about Oswald reliable?

NOSENKO FIRST MADE CONTACT with an American diplomat in 1962, at the Geneva Arms Conference. The CIA dispatched thirty-seven-year-old Tennant "Pete" Bagley and an agent fluent in Russian, George Kisevalter, to meet Nosenko four times at a safe house near Geneva's center.

CIA transcripts reveal that at those meetings, Nosenko provided critical leads on a number of intelligence cases. Among other

disclo
in the
the B
U.S.
surve
point
micro
and s
claim
amba
prom
colun
sexua
by the
Ba
with
and n
Nose
the
Sovi
recru
How
shoc
retur
quar
chief
genc
Angl
vince
what
was a
Th
Angl
defec
had
mont
the e
that
high-
name
the C
Britis
Kim
fear.
tions
emba
year
that
office
No
vince
Golit
the K
intena
Sasha
Nose

n the
nder-
time
swald
sault”
iracy
d the
e on
g the
their

ense.
tacks
over-
eliefs
rary
them
ting
The
o has
—or
s.” ■
—
dom

ide
ation

TACT
at in
Con-
hed
nant
flu-
eval-
imes
eva's

at at
ovid-
er of
ther

NDOM

disclosures, he exposed KGB spies in the U.S. embassy in Moscow, the British admiralty, and in the U.S. Army; revealed new Soviet surveillance technologies; pinpointed the location of hidden microphones in the U.S. embassy; and startled his CIA contacts by claiming that both Canadian ambassador John Watkins and prominent U.S. newspaper columnist Joe Alsop were homosexuals who were compromised by the KGB.

Bagley was ecstatic with the information, and not only considered Nosenko bona fide but the most important Soviet agent ever recruited by the CIA. However, Bagley was shocked when he returned to CIA headquarters because the chief of counterintelligence, James Jesus Angleton, was convinced that no matter what Nosenko said, he was a KGB plant.

The reason for Angleton's distrust was another defector, Anatoliy Golitsyn, who had arrived in America six months earlier. Golitsyn had told the extremely cynical Angleton that the CIA was penetrated by a high-ranking KGB agent code-named Sasha. The possibility that the CIA was compromised, as British intelligence had been by Kim Philby, was Angleton's worst fear. Accepting Golitsyn's revelations without hesitation, he embarked the CIA on a twenty-year hunt for a phantom mole that destroyed careers of good officers and split the Agency.

Not only was Angleton convinced the mole existed, but Golitsyn farther warned him that the KGB would send "defectors" intended to deflect the interest in Sasha. That is how they viewed Nosenko. When Nosenko was

asked if there was a KGB mole in the CIA, he said no. Told of his reply, Golitsyn reached an instant conclusion: "This is disinformation. The KGB wants me to appear bad to you. This is going to damage my leads." Bagley, too, was soon convinced Nosenko was a plant.

Completely unaware the CIA thought he was a double agent, Nosenko prepared for his eventual goal, defection. For the remainder of 1962 and all of 1963, he

In 1964, the CIA drafted 130 questions it intended to ask Nosenko about Oswald but never did. Gerald Posner put these questions to Nosenko and the substance of his answers are included in *Case Closed*

committed to memory the details of more than three hundred new leads and almost two thousand names for the Agency. In January 1964 in Geneva he used his pre-arranged signal to call a meeting with the CIA. The same two agents who had met him in 1962, Bagley and Kisevalter, flew in from Washington.

Nosenko first surprised the agents by announcing, "Gentlemen, I am not going back, so how about that?" Bagley, convinced Nosenko was a fake, tried to dissuade him from defecting, encouraging him to stay in the Soviet Union even though Nosenko had disclosed his knowledge about Oswald. At a second meeting, a week later, the disagreement over his defection continued, with Nosenko increasingly concerned the KGB might

uncover his treachery. Five days later, in the final meeting, Nosenko announced he had received a cable ordering him home immediately. He feared the KGB had unmasked him and his return meant arrest and execution. The story of the cable left the CIA with little choice since the Agency feared the repercussions of losing an agent who might have information about Oswald. Headquarters authorized his defection, and within days he passed through Germany and was in the U.S.

Nosenko's statement about the recall cable has been used to contest his credibility. There was no cable. Confronted with this fact, Nosenko explained he fabricated the story because he feared that otherwise Bagley would not allow him to defect. The story about the cable accomplished its purpose, forcing the CIA to spirit him to the West. "To this day, I do not regret making that false statement," he says. "Without that 'cable,' they would have brushed me off" If he had been a plant, the KGB would almost have certainly provided him with a cable to keep his cover story intact.

When Nosenko first arrived in the U.S., he was placed in a safe house. He did not know that his CIA debriefers were interested only in exposing him as a liar. However, when J. Edgar Hoover learned about him, he immediately obtained access for the FBI. A deep-cover FBI informant at the Soviet mission to the United Nations, code-named "Fedora," personally confirmed to Hoover that Nosenko's defection had caused an uproar in the highest Kremlin circles.

The FBI believed Nosenko about Oswald and supported his request to testify before the Warren

Commission. But Angleton outmaneuvered them. Richard Helms, then deputy director of plans, met privately with Earl Warren on June 24, 1964, and informed him the CIA doubted Nosenko's credibility. Helms warned that if the commission used his information and it was a lie, it would ruin the rest of their work. Nosenko did not testify and is not even mentioned in the commission's twenty-six volumes.

Helms did not tell the chief justice that since early April, with the backing of Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Nosenko had been under hostile interrogation, treated as a captured spy rather than a voluntary defector. The FBI was denied access to him, and his CIA jailers expected him to crack within a few weeks. Robert Kennedy called frequently to discover whether he had confessed yet.

Nosenko's ordeal had started on April 4, 1964, when he was driven to a three-story safe house in a Washington suburb. He was given a medical exam, and then strapped to a polygraph machine. The operator, Nick Stoiaken, knew the CIA thought Nosenko was a liar. After an hour of questions, Stoiaken made a big show of discussing the prearranged results with some of the CIA personnel. Then Bagley appeared and denounced Nosenko as a "liar." Several guards rushed into the room. Nosenko was stripped, inspected inside his mouth, ears and rectum, and then marched into the house's tiny attic that would serve as his prison for more than a year.

The windows were boarded over. The only furniture was a metal bed fastened to the middle of the floor. Guards watched him twenty-four hours a day through a wire mesh built into the door. The room had no heat or air con-

ditioning, and during the oppressive Washington summers it was like a furnace. Nosenko was given little food, allowed to shower only once a week, and not allowed a toothbrush or toothpaste. Human contact was banned. There was no television, radio, reading material, exercise, or cigarettes. He was told he would be kept like that for twenty-five years. The interrogations, which began within days, were extremely aggressive. He was constantly attacked as a KGB plant and told his only chance for freedom was to confess. Over the months, the CIA agents became increasingly frustrated that he refused to admit he was a bogus defector. Robert Kennedy had long since stopped telephoning for an update, and the Warren Commission had released its report. Nosenko was a forgotten man, a prisoner of the CIA.

On August 13, 1965, after sixteen months closeted in the attic, Nosenko was moved by the CIA to a new prison, a top-secret facility constructed especially for him. Located on the grounds of the CIA's training facility, Camp Peary, it made the attic seem luxurious. On a heavily wooded site on the ten-thousand-acre compound, Nosenko was locked inside a ten-foot-by-ten-foot windowless concrete bunker. A single bare bulb illuminated the room's only piece of furniture, a metal bed so small that his feet hung over the edges. The luxuries from the attic—a pillow, sheet, and blanket—were gone. The bunker accentuated the weather, either brutally hot or freezing cold. A ceiling camera monitored him. His allotted food was lowered to the subsistence level. Documents reveal that while the government spent \$1.5 million to construct and man the prison, it spent less than a dollar a day

feeding him.

After four months, he was finally allowed to walk in a small enclosed yard that had been constructed outside his jail. It was the first time in nearly two years he had seen daylight or been in fresh air. The yard was encircled with a twelve-foot-high chainlink fence, and several feet beyond was an eighteen-foot-high fence of solid material. The CIA did not want anyone, even at Camp Peary, to see what had become of him.

He tried to keep his sanity in a variety of ways. When his jailers finally allowed him to brush his teeth after two years in captivity, he was so starved for something to read that he secretly kept a printed piece of paper from the toothpaste package. Though it was only a list of ingredients, he kept rereading it until his guards saw him and confiscated it. Another time he painstakingly created a makeshift deck of cards from shreds of paper napkins. The guards watched him for several weeks and destroyed it on the day he completed it. The same happened to a chess set he fashioned from pieces of lint.

Meanwhile, each subsequent Soviet defector who knew of the Nosenko case vouched for his bona fides. Most of them were quite surprised to learn that the CIA thought Nosenko was a plant, and told the Agency of the KGB's panicked reactions when he had fled to the West. Nosenko had been tried in absentia and was to be executed on his recapture. But to Angleton and Golitsyn, the moment a defector vouched for Nosenko's bona fides, it branded that defector as a plant. Angleton concluded that in the decade after Golitsyn, the Soviets sent twenty-two phony defectors to the U.S. Today, the CIA and FBI consider every one of those defectors as bona fide.

Ir
grow
migt
Bagl
tient
to h:
docu
drug
a sc
amp
Nos
drug
CIA
pani
an i
brea
"I w
drag
wher
hot
reviv
Ir
and
was
conf
after
drug
was i
recal
than
oper
the t
and-
test,
Nos
deme
homo
a lur
strap
ensu
W
coup
ued
two
Nose
polyl
he w
he w
test,
confi
a pl:
insid
penc
Sum
ster
signa

All six directors of Central Intelligence who followed Helms agreed that Nosenko was a bona fide defector. The FBI never wavered from its initial determination of his bona fides. The official CIA position today is that Nosenko is the most valuable KGB defector to come to the West as of 1964.

WHEN OSWALD DEFECTED in 1959, a foreigner could not visit the USSR without a visa and the purchase of a preset package tour. That ensured all foreigners were in regular contact with personnel of the Soviet tourist agency, Intourist, which, according to Nosenko, was an organization made up entirely of KGB informants or agents. An Intourist guide, Rima Shirokova, played an important role in Oswald's first weeks in Russia.

Oswald arrived in Moscow on October 16, 1959. He was taken by an Intourist representative to the Hotel Berlin. Since the KGB had no inkling that he was anything but a student visitor, it had absolutely no interest in him until Rima Shirokova informed them that, on his second day in Moscow, Oswald had told her he wanted to defect and become a Soviet citizen.

From that moment Nosenko took charge of the matter. Although Oswald had declared his intention to defect, Nosenko is adamant the KGB did not interrogate him. Anthony Summers charges that "is transparent nonsense." Garrison says, "The newcomer [Oswald] underwent extensive interrogation, although when, where, and under what circumstances have never been revealed."

"Not true," insists Nosenko. "The KGB was not at all interested in him. I cannot emphasize that enough absolutely no interest."

But what of Oswald's Marine background and his service at Atsugi, where the U-2 spy plane was based? The Soviets had made the U-2 a top priority and finally shot one down on May 1, 1960, less than seven months after Oswald's arrival. "People who raise this point do not understand intelligence work," Nosenko says. "I am surprised that such a big deal is made of the fact that he was a Marine. Even the House Select Committee kept saying to me, 'But he was a Marine—that must have interested the KGB.' I was astonished at their naïveté. So what is the big deal that he was in the Marines? First, he wasn't in the Marines any longer, but even if he had come to us in a uniform, we still would have had no interest. What was he in the Marine Corps—a major, a captain, a colonel? We had better information already coming from KGB sources than he could ever give us.

"If he had been a Marine guard at the U.S. embassy, then we would have been very interested. But that wasn't the case with Oswald.

"As for Atsugi, we didn't know he had been based there. The media section of the KGB would have seen Oswald's public interviews, but they would not necessarily have transferred that information to us. Even if we knew about Atsugi, it is unlikely we would have spoken to him. Our intelligence on the U-2 was good and had been for some time." The Soviets already had considerable knowledge about the plane. They had often tracked its path, speed, and altitude. Intelligence experts on the U-2 concur that Oswald could not have contributed to its eventual downing, as some have suggested.

Based on the information it received, Nosenko's department

vetoed Oswald's request for citizenship. "We had no reason to let him stay," remembers Nosenko. "Soviet citizenship was not some thing lightly given out to foreigners and there was certainly no reason to make an exception for Oswald."

In his diary, Oswald wrote what happened after he received the news that his citizenship request was rejected: "I am stunned....Eve. 6.00 Recive word from police official. I must leave country tonight at 8.00 P.M. as visa expires. I am shocked!! My dreams! I retire to my room. I have \$100 left. I have waited for 2 years to be accepted. My fondes dreams are shattered because of a petty official; because of bad planning I planned too much! 700 P.M. I decide to end it. Soak rist in cold water to numb the pain. Than slash my left wrist. Than plag wrist into bathtub of hot water. I think when Rimma comes at 8. to find me dead it wil be a great shock. somewhere, a violin plays, as I wacth my life whirl away. I think to myself. 'how easy to die' and 'a sweet death,' (to violins)." [sic]

Oswald was rushed by ambulance to nearby Botkinskaya Hospital. Blood transfusions stabilized him.

Prompted by his suicide attempt, the KGB ordered a mental evaluation. Oswald was transferred to a psychiatric ward at Botkinskaya, where he was kept for three days. "We had two psychiatrists, neither of whom was a KGB doctor, examine him," recalls Nosenko. "One was on the Botkin staff and the other came in from outside. I read their reports. Both concluded he was 'mentally unstable.' It made us feel one hundred percent that he should be avoided at all costs." ■

© 1993 by Gerald Posner

AT RANDOM

or citi-
n to let
senko.
t some
oreign-
no rea-
on for

wrote
ceived
enship
"I am
e word
st leave
P.M. as
d!! My
oom. I
ed for 2
fondes
ise of a
of bad
ch! 700
ak rist
e pain.
. Than
of hot
limma
d it wil
here, a
my life
nyself.
. sweet

ambu-
ra Hos-
stabi-

uicide
a men-
s trans-
vard at
as kept
vo psy-
n was a
' recalls
on the
r came
d their
he was
ade us
that he
sts." ■

Three decades of conspiracy theories—all of them wrong



Case Closed begins as a historical study of Lee Harvey Oswald, but in the course of it Gerald Posner explodes the popular conspiracy theories. From home-produced newsletters to such slickly engineered productions as Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*, the Kennedy assassination has spawned a veritable industry of conspiracy theories. Details of apparent discrepancies, supposed cover-ups, and—more bizarre—purported sightings of JFK have been published in everything from supermarket tabloids to "serious" reexaminations from major publishing houses.

Americans are attracted to conspiracies, points out Gerald Posner, especially when they concern the violent or sudden death of a public figure. "Even when the assassin is caught redhanded, as in Sirhan-Sirhan killing Robert Kennedy, there are still some who refuse to believe that he was the lone shooter." For Posner, it is understandable that the more plausible JFK theories should have a grip on the American imagination. "There is also the troubling disparity between the victim and the killer—that a life of great promise could be ended by a man of such seeming ordinariness. Many people want to believe there was more than just Oswald involved in the assassination, since if he acted alone Kennedy was killed for nothing." CF

WRONG: Oswald was one of two shooters employed by a right-wing Texas conspiracy headed by multimillionaire "Mr. X" in order to dominate the world oil market. (Thomas Buchanan: *Who Killed Kennedy*, 1964)

WRONG: Oswald was framed by a conspiracy of right-wing elements including former FBI and CIA officials, Texas oilmen, and LBJ. (Joachim Joesten: *Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy?*, 1964)

WRONG: Author places three shooters at Dealey Plaza, killing the president in their crossfire. (Josiah Thompson: *Six Seconds in Dallas*, 1967)

WRONG: Right-wing conspiracy involving two or more assassins. At first suggests that Oswald was part of the conspiracy, but later that Oswald was a patsy. (Harold Weisberg: *Whitewash*, 4 vols., 1965-74)

WRONG: Oswald had links to the CIA and FBI; multiple assassins, one of them may have been Oswald; an extensive government cover-up and the mob may have been involved. (Robert Sam Anson: *They've Killed the President*, 1975)

WRONG: "Oswald" was actually a KGB double, swapped for the young American when the real

Oswald defected to Russia in 1959. The Soviets killed JFK. (Michael Eddowes: *The Oswald File*, 1977)

WRONG: Jack Ruby fulfilled a Mafia contract hit on Oswald, implying that the mob also orchestrated JFK's death. (Seth Kantor: *Who Was Jack Ruby?*, 1978)

WRONG: Right-wing conspiracy with the CIA—possibly a rogue group inside the agency—involved. (Anthony Summers: *Conspiracy*, 1980)

WRONG: The CIA, together with the FBI and Secret Service, planned the assassination, with Oswald as a patsy. Oliver Stone's movie *JFK* largely follows this theory. (Jim Garrison: *On the Trail of the Assassins*, 1988)

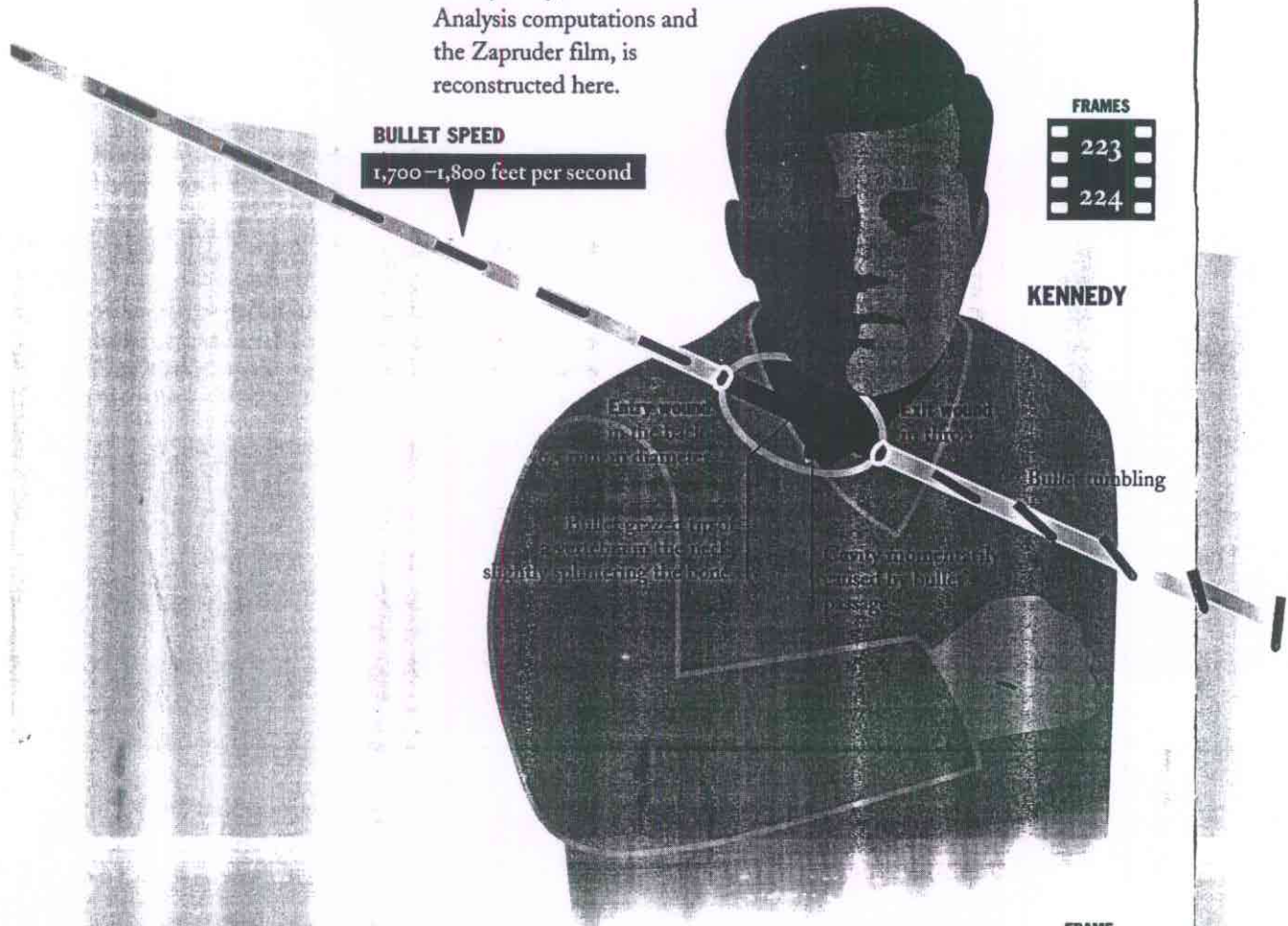
WRONG: Leading suspects are the CIA, FBI, and right-wing Dallas oilmen. Oswald is likely innocent. (Jim Marrs: *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*, 1989)

WRONG: JFK's wounds mean that was shot from the front rather than from the rear (Oswald's position) according to a Parkland Hospital (Dallas) doctor. (Charles Gresham: *JFK: Conspiracy of Silence*, 1992)

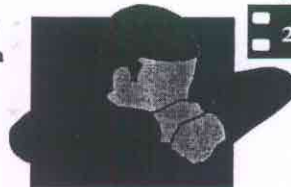
Graphic analysis of Posner's study by John Grimwade and Clive Irving, with the help of the Failure Analysis Associates, on the next four pages

THE SINGLE BULLET

Oswald's second shot, the first to strike, is the most contentious. It is variously called the "magic" or "pristine" bullet by conspiracy theorists, who contend that no single bullet could have so seriously wounded both Kennedy and Connally. The bullet needed no magic and was not pristine. Its trajectory, based on the Failure Analysis computations and the Zapruder film, is reconstructed here.

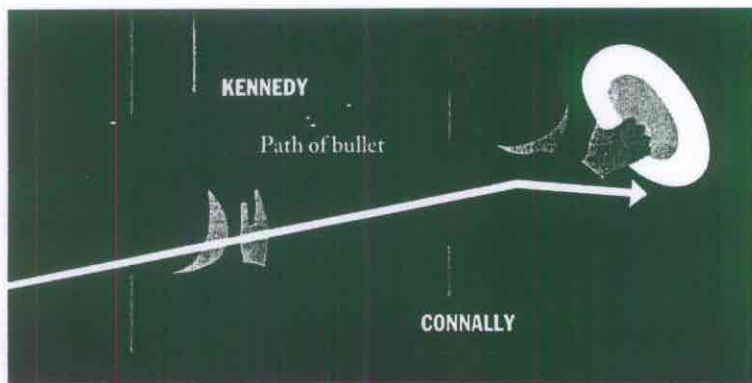


By frame 226 the President began to show a neurological reflex—known as the Thorburn position—to spinal injury. His arms jerked up to a fixed position, hands nearly at his chin, elbows pushed out.



is. It is
 theorists,
 ided both
 ot pristine.

FRAMES



View from above

The trajectory, plotted in accordance with the exact postures of both men, was not significantly altered until the bullet was slightly deflected by Connally's rib.

KENNEDY



Entry wound in right shoulder was 1 1/4" long—the exact length of the bullet—indicating the bullet was tumbling end over end.

1,500–1,600 feet per second

CONNALLY

...the bullet was tumbling end over end...
 ...the bullet was tumbling end over end...
 ...the bullet was tumbling end over end...

Stetson hat

900 feet per second

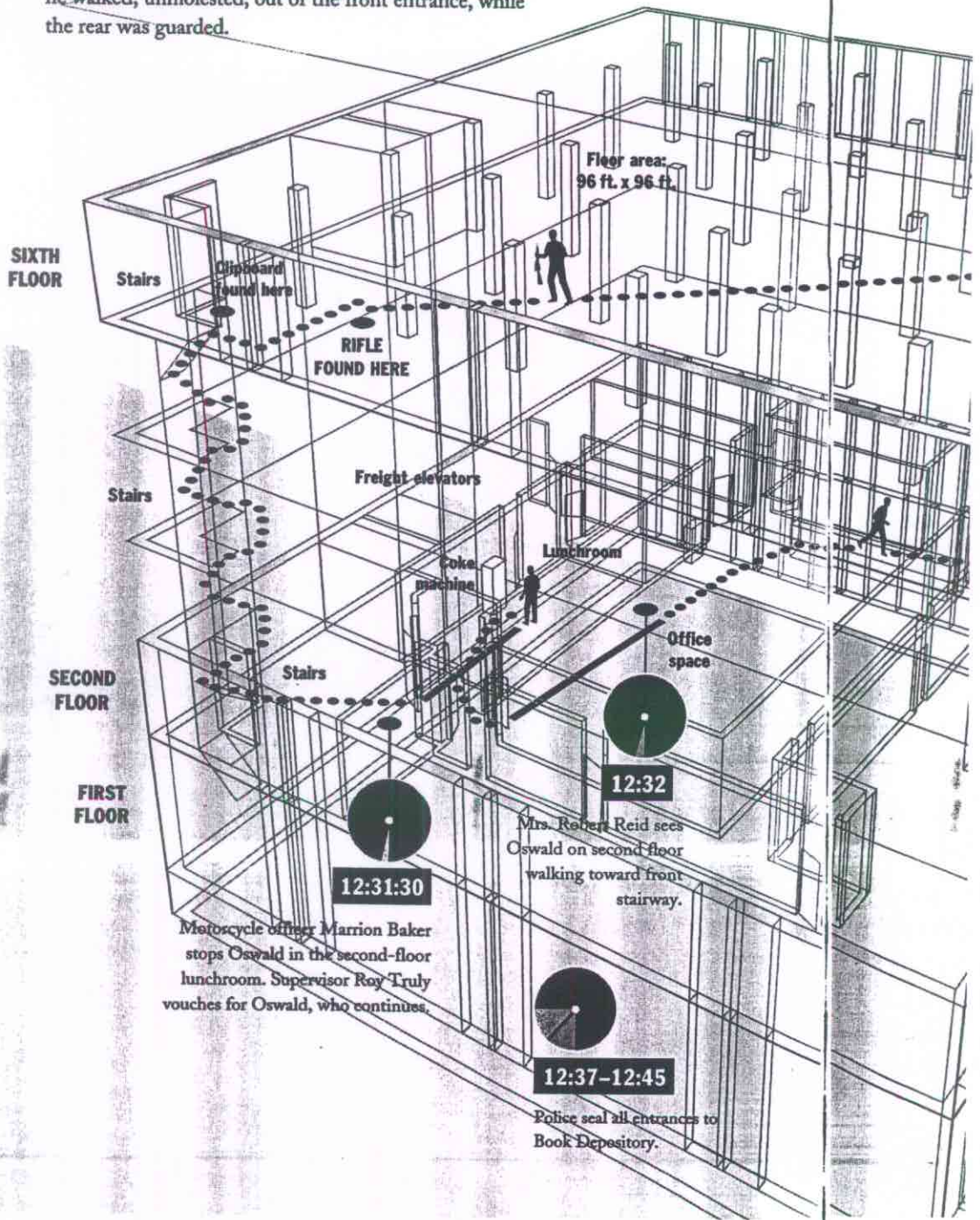
400 feet per second

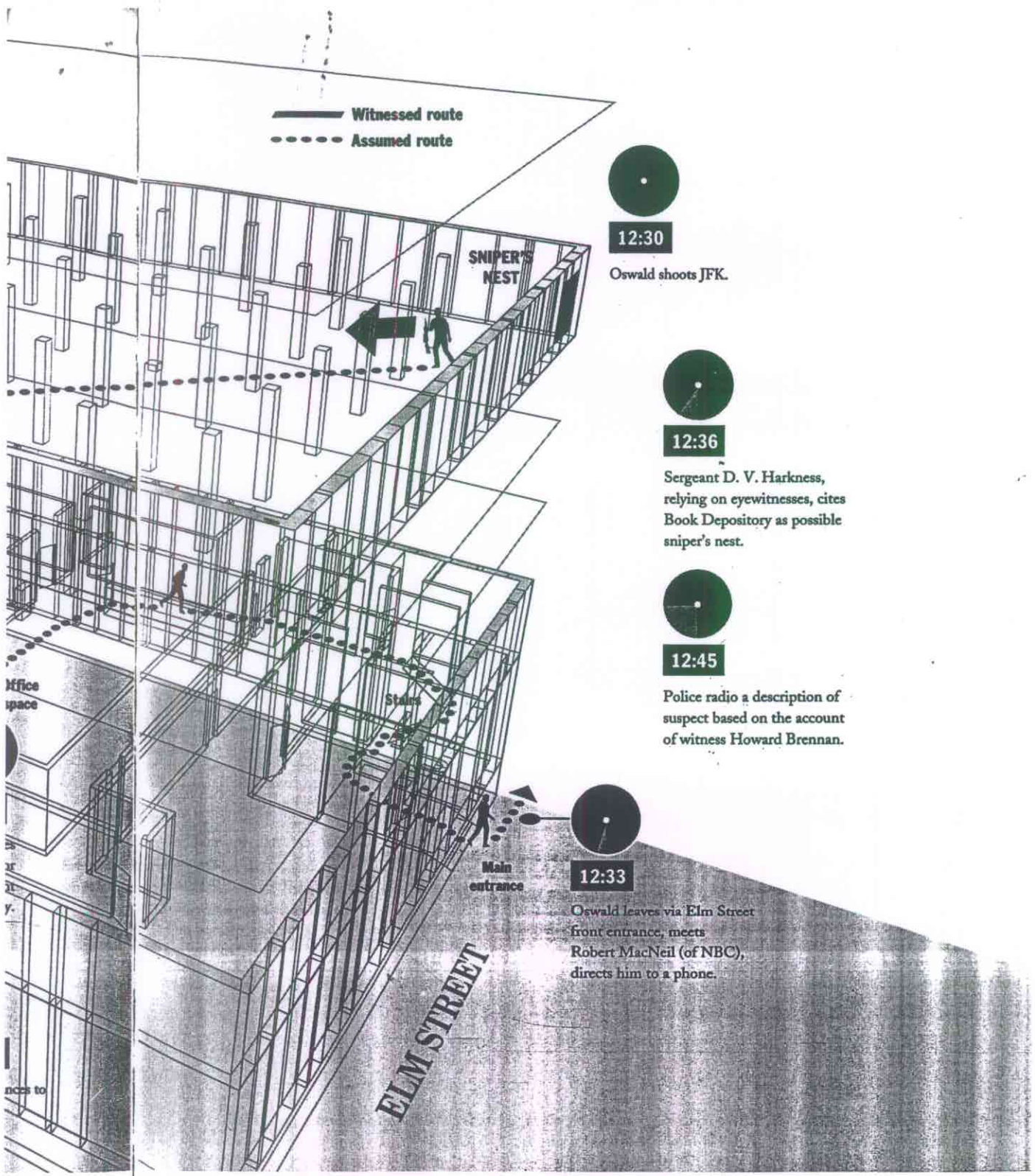
FRAME



THE ESCAPE

Oswald came very close to being captured as he fled from the Book Depository. But within three minutes after his final shot, he walked, unmolested, out of the front entrance, while the rear was guarded.





— Witnessed route
 - - - Assumed route



12:30

Oswald shoots JFK.



12:36

Sergeant D. V. Harkness, relying on eyewitnesses, cites Book Depository as possible sniper's nest.



12:45

Police radio a description of suspect based on the account of witness Howard Brennan.



12:33

Oswald leaves via Elm Street front entrance, meets Robert MacNeil (of NBC), directs him to a phone.

Office space

Stairs

Main entrance

ELM STREET

nces to