



Ephemera



BOOKS ART CINEMA THEATRE MISCELLANY

Books:

INQUEST by Edward Jay Epstein. New York: Viking. 224 pp. \$5.

WHITEWASH by Harold Weisberg. Hyattstown, Md.: Harold Weisberg. 208 pp. \$4.95. (paper)

RUSH TO JUDGMENT by Mark Lane. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 395 pp. \$4.95.

TIME OF ASSASSINS by Ulov G. K. Leboeuf. Levittown, N.Y.: Ulov G. H. Leboeuf. 4 Vols. I: 495 pp., II: 387 pp., III: 691 pp., IV: 460 pp. \$24.

OSWALD: PATSY WITHOUT PORTFOLIO by Leopold Zajtig. Vanitas. 29 pp. \$85.

Reviewed by Jacob Brackman
and Faye Levine

IT IS SCARCELY to be wondered at that an event like the murder of a young and attractive President of the United States, coming at a historio-cultural moment characterized by sophisticated disbelief in the reality (as opposed to the cinematic verity) of cloak-and-dagger political conspiracy, should have occasioned a spate of disagreement as to the simple facts of what occurred. The traditional question of "Who done it?" seems to have been supplanted largely by the more perplexing problem: "What was it?" and "Which side are you on, boy?" The American public, itself without investigative tools to appraise the witnessed drama, must seek independent explications, be they criminological, political, or psychological. Is it a case for Dick Tracy, the CIA or Norman Podhoretz?

Thus far the consensus has attributed the Kennedy murder to one lonely, alienated psychopath. Once we accept the premise of Oswald's insanity, his every action becomes, in a sense, credible. Hence a boring and unreadable quantity of literature, notably the War-

ren Commission's 26 volumes, dedicated to a predetermined verdict of guilty for Lee Harvey Oswald. Unhappily, the works of the opposition have been little better. Edward Jay Epstein's *Inquest* is merely a legal-pedantic close analysis of the workings of the Commission (So what? one is inclined to ask), and Harold Weisberg's *Whitewash*, a literary-pedantic analysis of the Warren Commission's collection of red herrings. One had hoped that Mark Lane, in *Rush to Judgment*, would at last provide something more nourishing than his already familiar theory of Oswald's innocence. (Impeccable documentation of 72 unnatural deaths—including the Oswald bus driver, both police officers who accompanied Officer Tippit, and 14 newsmen who interviewed Jack Ruby—linked intimately to the events of November 22 might be expected to serve as introduction to a tenable conspiracy theory...) But no, he too shares that overweening reluctance to point an accusing finger.

It is therefore with gratitude that one completes a new work, Ulov G. K. Leboeuf's *Time of Assassins*, four volumes bound in unorthodox slick paper (it may be that the necessity to publish privately his unprecedented iconoclastic study occasioned certain money-saving measures). It would appear that Leboeuf's Franco-Russian parentage, combined with a rigorous grounding in applied sociology at the Austrian University and his subsequent residence in Levittown (to study first-hand the peccadilloes of the American psyche) have provided him with a breadth of vision and perspective equal to his undertaking.

Alone among the assassination authors, Leboeuf has had the courage not only to fly aggressively in the face of official arguments, but also to offer a recognizably new theory of his own. During three years of painstaking research, Leboeuf read the Warren Commission's 26 volumes 13 times through, studied the published works of Epstein,

Weisberg, Lane, Salandria, Cook, Ford, Buchanan, Yossarian, and Holmes—as well as all their first drafts—and spent six months with FBI officers as they gathered their information on bi-weekly forays to Jack Ruby's strip emporium. Furthermore, Leboeuf made an impressive collection of hitherto unexplored documents, including the Dallas-Irving 1960 tax assessor's records and 1960-1963 telephone directories, the ledgers for the month of November, 1963, and several Irving retail stores, including Hutchison's grocery (scene of the much-discussed milk and cinnamon roll purchases), the Sports Drome Range, the Ford-Lincoln agency, and the notorious Tsien-Huang's hand laundry.

The massive evidence in these four volumes bespeaks a scholarly patience and attention to manifold ramifications which must be commended. Where he falls short (as in the thinly veiled suggestion that Aldous Huxley, also dying on November 22, was in fact poisoned by a female FBI agent working as a servant in the Huxley household as part of a scheduled psychedelic purge), one has the feeling that he has not had time to amass sufficient evidence and has decided, perhaps unwisely, to commit himself in print on the basis of intuition—as yet unproven, but not irrevocably so!

This lapse of scholarly caution is no doubt regrettable, but nevertheless relatively to be welcomed in the current lily-livered literary atmosphere. Several bold flights of speculation, such as the ingenious linking of the eastern seaboard blackout (the blackout which Leboeuf maintains was effected by LBJ for a giant laser beam test, began at 5:27 p.m. and ended at 5:27 a.m. "You could set your watch by that thing!" he quips, in a rare playful moment), with George Hamilton's evasion of the draft and Ben Bella's ascension to power (II: 289-96)—or his striking establishment of identity between the Polaroid Land cameras which photo-

graphed JFK in the emergency room at Parkland Hospital, Adlai Stevenson in his last moments with Marietta Tree, and Malcolm X upon entering the ill-famed Harlem ballroom (II: 34-44)—are almost breathtaking in their incisive acumen.

AN INTERESTING form of argument is used by Leboeuf with reference to bullet 399, for which he unearths some pertinent new difficulties. Bullet 399, it will be recalled, is alleged by the Warren Report to have entered the back of Kennedy's neck, exited at his throat on a downward path, then entered Connally's back and exited just below the nipple, going through his wrist, reaching his femur, and finally plopping out onto his stretcher, clean and undamaged (Commission Exhibits 67-80 and 689).

This bullet, found by a Mr. Tomlinson when he was adjusting two stretchers in Parkland Hospital blocking entrance to a men's room, is the most tangible piece of evidence against Oswald, since it alone links Oswald's gun and the wounded men in Parkland Hospital (although it still leaves moot the veracity of the bullet altogether, its whereabouts previous to being discovered, and the identity of the user of Oswald's rifle). What Leboeuf adds to our understanding of bullet 399 is the result of some investigations into the identity of Mr. Tomlinson. By studying municipal records of the Dallas-Irving area, Leboeuf discovered that the man named Tomlinson, employed as a janitor in Parkland Hospital, had moved into town only six months prior to November, 1963. Before that his trail disintegrates, for the Johnson City address he gave turns out to be completely false, the street non-existent, his name on no public records.

For a lesser sleuth than Ulov G. K. Leboeuf, this might have been a dead-end, however provocative. But a chance discovery led to further detections. A careful study of Jack Ruby's family tree (as listed on a 1959 wedding invitation posted in Ruby's kitchen cabinet) turned up a cousin-in-law by the name of Artemis Heverford, who had indeed resided in Johnson City up until exactly June, 1963. Leboeuf made inquiry, and found that Heverford had worked as a janitor in a Johnson City

vocational school, but that upon moving out of that city had apparently disappeared. Like Tomlinson, though, he had a club-footed wife named Mary from whom he was divorced.

Having established his point, Leboeuf goes on to reveal that Mary Heverford, divorced wife of Artemis and second cousin to Jack Ruby, is easily traced to her residence in Las Vegas where, though continuing to use her first husband's name, she has become the common law wife of one Officer Toasty, an FBI agent who figured prominently in Lee Harvey Oswald's letter to the Soviet Embassy of November 9. Officer Toasty turns out to be the Bureau's munitions expert for the Nevada area, in whose Las Vegas workshop are contained a sample file of all bullets and gunpowders being used in America and Western Europe.

Leboeuf does not actually state that Tomlinson (Heverford) was in such close cahoots with Toasty that the bullet was supplied by the one man and planted by the other, nor even that his camouflaged move from Johnson City to Dallas was specifically planned for the incident, but the reader cannot help but come away with suspicions along this line. Almost without seeming to appreciate fully the significance of the data himself, Leboeuf mentions casually that among Toasty's wallet papers (which Leboeuf arranged to be pick-pocketed from the agent at a New Year's Eve party) were a compromising photograph of Robert Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe, a sizable I.O.U. from Ronald Reagan, a United Airlines credit card in the name of Senator Ralph Yarborough, and a scrap of paper bearing the inscription A. H.: JO 8-9657—JO being a Johnson City telephone exchange. He presents a photostat of the scrap, decorated with doodles of lips, breasts, and swords, as Exhibit 17 (I: 404).

In this manner, Leboeuf time and again presents new information in areas scrupulously avoided by the official investigatory parties.

But it is in Volumes III and IV that Leboeuf really pulls out the stops. It is only here, among the murky Exhibits of the gigantic Volume III (Exhibit 226, III: 581: a James Beard cookbook from the pantry of Peggy Goldwater with a recipe for cinnamon rolls circled

in red; Exhibit 252, III: 654: a comic book retrieved from a Mexican house of ill-repute with the name "Oswell" scrawled upon it), that the scrupulously academic reader might have occasional doubts over the unorthodox, even manic, spirit with which Leboeuf has conducted his investigations. One might have wished that the man had been able to write with a bit more of the restraint that appeals (albeit for superficial reasons) to the urban literate community which must, after all, approve his work.

ALEBOEUF ELABORATES on one recently purported theory of "a second Oswald," declaring that it is right as far as it goes, but hardly begins going there. He wholeheartedly assents to the view, and adds a third, fourth, and fifth Oswald, the four going by the names, respectively, of L. H. Oswell, H. L. Oswill, Lee R. V. Isabell, and Oswald Harby. All answer to the description of 5'9", 165 pounds. All five men must have lived in the domicile of Marina Oswald in Irving, Texas, for two years and six months preceding the assassination for, during that period of time, it would be physically impossible for fewer than four men to have accomplished all the tasks and appearances reported in oral testimony. All five variations on the name appear in the records of Dallas-Irving retailers and in the guest ledgers of Mexican hotels. Although Leboeuf admits to some uncertainties in this area, he has gathered evidence indicating that Lee Harvey Oswald was the only one of the five who was *not* a crack shot; that it was L. H. Oswell, and not Oswald, who took the often-discussed trip to Mexico in September, he having the greatest resemblance to Lee Harvey among the four and being already known to a certain few Mexican girls; that it must have been Isabell, an expert typist, who sent off the letter to the Soviet embassy; that it was H. L. Oswill who was the weekly buyer of milk and cinnamon rolls at Hutchison's grocery (a propensity of hiccoughing distinguished him definitively); and that Lee Harvey Oswald himself was seen around the city most rarely, since, of all five, he had the greatest tendency to spend his time sleeping, a tendency that amounted virtually to a compulsion.

Leboeuf suggests that these four men were the core of the conspiracy, or its fighting arm at least, and that they had been sent to Dallas-Irving to live with Lee Harvey Oswald precisely to learn to be replicas of him.

When given a lie detector test, Selma Fingle, a near neighbor of the Oswalds in Irving, reported that she thought Lee Harvey had a lot of brothers, for men that looked quite a bit like him seemed to be entering and leaving the house all the time. Also, Mrs. Fingle declared, after dark all the shades were always drawn in the Oswald home so that all that could be seen were a number of silhouettes. "I figured maybe they was having lotsa political meetings. You know," Mrs. Fingle said. According to Leboeuf, who was sitting in on the FBI interview, the agents interrupted at this point to say that Mrs. Fingle's testimony must be mistaken, for Oswald had neither brothers nor male cousins, nor did his political group have any membership. They went immediately on to the next witness.

By this point in the volume, Leboeuf's meaning is clear. The FBI had to ignore Mrs. Fingle's report. The four Oswalds, one infers, may well have been previously working with American Intelligence on a classified project in Burbank, California. Such a theory dovetails neatly with the intimations of Leopold Zaftig, in his otherwise strident little pamphlet *Oswald: Patsy Without Portfolio*. Zaftig reprints a portrait of Oswald with his rifle that appeared on a December, 1963 cover of *Life* magazine, pointing out that while the shadow from Oswald's nose is cast directly down onto his upper lip (indicating a twelve-noon sun), the shadow of his body and gun extend sideways at a considerable angle (indicating a late afternoon sun). Enlargements of key segments of the photograph reveal that Oswald's head has been grafted onto another's body (Oswell's, according to Zaftig's perhaps too-charitable assumption), and that a telescopic sight has been sketched in.

At various times during the years in which the maneuvers were incubating, the help of different political groups was enlisted: sometimes the Castroites, sometimes the anti-Castroites, sometimes the Communist-anarchists, and sometimes the radical right. Leboeuf

presents convincing new evidence linking a number of prominent millionaire conservatives, as well as a few beer, oil and birth control trusts, with the plot. The case for an inside job is persuasive, if not incontrovertible.

Leboeuf shows, for instance, that the angle of the bullet hole in Kennedy's back, heretofore a subject of vigorous dispute, is of less significance than the fact, revealed by the Tupperman silicone test on the plastic seatcovers of the Presidential automobile, that the bullet was fired less than .0002 of a millisecond before making contact with the target within the car. This means that however fast the bullet might have been traveling, either from the Knoll or the Book Depository, it still would not have been able to reach the car so rapidly. The conclusion is startling: the Kennedy bullet must have been fired either from within the car itself or from extreme proximity to it.

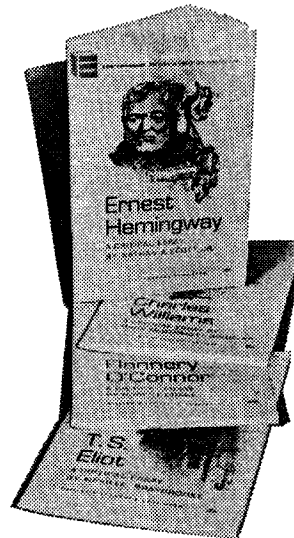
One eye-witness to the shooting, Merriweather Really, described the initial reaction as appearing to be an awkward, insufficiently rehearsed play. Two shots rang out in quick succession, he stated, sounding like they were coming from Kennedy's car itself, or from one of the cars right behind. "The Vice-President slapped Andy Youngblood on the back and whooped, and the entire brigade of police and secret service men made a dash for the Knoll, almost as if," testified Really, "they had known in advance they were going to head that way." Needless to say, the Warren Report did not include Really's assertion.

Whether or not Leboeuf's entire chain of interlocking evidence has its own tenuous links, it is dishearteningly apparent that the Commission Report has stretched plausibility to the breaking point to accommodate its single-assassin hypothesis. This country's babes have been lulled into a delusional sense of security by the purveyors of official pap. The time has come for us to start from our torpor and wait for the truth. Leboeuf and his colleagues have shown us the way. Let us continue.

Jacob Brackman is a staff editor of the New Yorker magazine.

Faye Levine, a graduate of Radcliffe, has published in the Harvard Crimson.

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