

POLICE BULLETS PEPPERING WHITMAN'S LAIR
 "I intend to kill. I am prepared to die."

CRIME

The Madman in the Tower

(See Cover)

In the forenoon of a blazing August day, a blond, husky young man strolled into a hardware store in Austin, Texas, and asked for several boxes of rifle ammunition. As he calmly wrote a check in payment, the clerk inquired with friendly curiosity what all the ammunition was for. "To shoot some pigs," he replied. At the time, the answer seemed innocent enough, for wild pigs still abound not far from the capital. The horror of its intent only became obvious a few hours later, when the customer, Charles Joseph Whitman, 25, a student of architectural engineering at the University of Texas, seized his grisly fame as the perpetrator of the worst mass murder in recent U.S. history.

That morning, Charles Whitman entered two more stores to buy guns before ascending, with a veritable arsenal, to the observation deck of the limestone tower that soars 307 feet above the University of Texas campus. There, from Austin's tallest edifice, the visitor commands an extraordinary view of the 232-acre campus, with its green mall and red tile roofs, of the capital, ringed by lush farm lands, and, off to the west, of the mist-mantled hills whose purple hue prompted Storyteller O. Henry to christen Austin the "City of a Violet Crown." Whitman had visited the tower ten days before in the company of a brother, and had taken it all in. Today, though, he had no time for the view; he was too intent upon his deadly work.

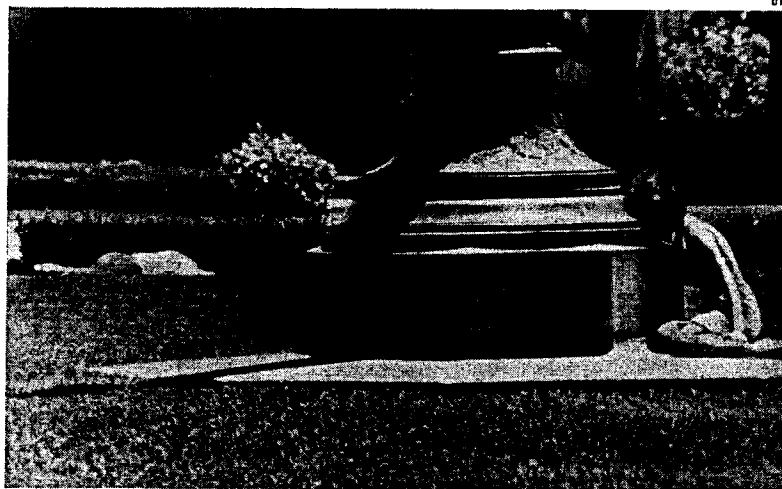
Methodically, he began shooting everyone in sight. Ranging around the tower's walk at will, he sent his bullets burning and rasping through the flesh and bone of those on the campus be-

low, then of those who walked or stood or rode as far as three blocks away. Somewhat like the travelers in Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, who were drawn by an inexorable fate to their crucial place in time and space, his victims fell as they went about their various tasks and pleasures. By lingering perhaps a moment too long in a classroom or leaving a moment too soon for lunch, they had unwittingly placed themselves within Whitman's lethal reach. Before he was himself perforated by police bullets, Charles Whitman killed 13 people and wounded 31—a staggering total of 44 casualties. As a prelude to his senseless rampage, it was later discovered, he had also slain his wife and mother, bringing the total dead to 15.

In a nation that opened its fron-

tiers by violence and the gun, Whitman's sanguinary spree had an unsettling number of precedents, both in fiction and in fact. The imaginary parallels are grisly—and suggestive—enough: from *The Sniper*, a 1952 movie about a youth who shoots blondes, to *The Open Square*, a 1962 novel by Ford Clarke, whose protagonist climbs a tower on a Midwestern campus and begins picking people off. (So far as police know, Whitman had neither seen the movie nor read the book.) Even the fiction, however, pales before the fact. There was Scripture-reading Howard Unruh's 20-minute orgy that brought death to 13 people in Camden, N.J., in 1949, and bandy-legged Charles Starkweather's slaying of ten during a three-day odyssey through Nebraska and Wyoming in 1958. There were the two murderers of the Clutter family, Richard Hickock and Perry Smith, now enshrined in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, the year's most talked-about bestseller. Only last month, when eight student nurses were slain in a Chicago town house, and Richard Speck was charged with the crime, an official there called the murders "the crime of the century." Sadly, Austin Police Chief Robert A. Miles observed last week: "It isn't any more."

Unusual Undercurrents. Like many mass murderers, Charles Whitman had been an exemplary boy, the kind that neighborhood mothers hold up as a model to their own recalcitrant youngsters. He was a Roman Catholic altar boy and a newspaper delivery boy, a pitcher on his parochial school's baseball team and manager of its football team. At twelve years and three months, he became an Eagle Scout, one of the youngest on record. To all outward appearances, the family in which he grew up in Lake Worth, Fla.—including two younger brothers besides his mother and father, a moderately successful plumbing contractor—was a typical American family. Charlie joined the Marines in



CHARLOTTE DAREHSHORI AT FLAGPOLE AS WOUNDED MAN LIES IN BACKGROUND
 Drawn by inexorable fate to their crucial place in time and space.

1959 when he was 18, later signed up at the University of Texas, where he was a B student.

Yet beneath the easy, tranquil surface of both family and boy there flowed some unusual undercurrents. Charlie was trained to use guns as soon as he was old enough to hold them—and so were his brothers. "I'm a fanatic about guns," says his father, Charles A., 47. "I raised my boys to know how to handle guns." Charlie could plug a squirrel in the eye by the time he was 16, and in the Marine Corps he scored 215 points out of a possible 250, winning a rating as a sharpshooter, second only to expert. In the Marines, though, he also got busted from corporal to private and sentenced to 30 days' hard labor for illegal possession of a pistol, was reprimanded for telling a fellow Marine that he was going "to knock your teeth out." He rated his favorite sports as hunting, scuba diving and karate.

A tense situation also prevailed behind the family façade. His father was—and is—an authoritarian, a perfectionist and an unyielding disciplinarian who demanded much of his sons and admitted last week that he was accustomed to beating his wife. In March, Margaret Whitman walked out on him, summoning Charlie from Austin to help her make the break. While his mother was packing her belongings, a Lake Worth police car sat outside the house, called by Charlie presumably because he feared that his father would resort to violence. To be near Charlie, Mrs. Whitman moved to Austin. The youngest son, John, 17, left home last spring. When he was arrested for pitching a rock through a storefront glass, the judge gave him a choice of a \$25 fine or moving back in with his father; he paid the fine. Patrick, 21, who works for his father, is the only son who lives with him.

His parents' separation troubled Charlie deeply, and last March 29, he finally went to Dr. Maurice Heatly, the University of Texas' staff psychiatrist. In a two-hour interview, he told Heatly that, like his father, he had beaten his wife a few times. He was making "intense efforts" to control his temper, he said, but he was worried that he might explode. In notes jotted down at the time, Heatly described Whitman as a "massive, muscular youth" who "seemed to be oozing with hostility." Heatly took down only one direct quote of Whitman's—that he was "thinking about going up on the tower with a deer rifle and start shooting people." That did not particularly upset Heatly; it was, he said, "a common experience for students who came to the clinic to think of the tower as the site for some desperate action."* Nonetheless, Heatly urged Whitman to return the next week to talk some more. Charlie Whitman never

* Three persons have jumped from the tower to their deaths since its completion in 1937. Two others have died in accidental falls.

A GUN-TOTING NATION

CHARLES WHITMAN may have been unusual in having a dozen guns at his disposal, but he was by no means unique. Americans have always been a gun-toting people. Guns enabled the first settlers to protect and feed themselves in a hostile land, made later colonists a nation of riflemen capable of winning their freedom in the American Revolution. The West was tamed with guns, and frontier justice became synonymous with them. From the nation's earliest days, the gun has been the delight of collectors and sportsmen. Today, the U.S. has the world's largest civilian cache: some 100 million handguns, rifles and shotguns in private hands. Every year, more than 1,000,000 "dangerous weapons" are sold by mail order in the U.S., and another million or so imported.

Behind those numbers is a remarkable dearth of effective legal controls over the purchase and possession of guns. Federal law curbs a few things, such as traffic in machine guns, sawed-off shotguns and silencers, but the regulation of firearms has been left largely to cities and states, which have built a crazy quilt of laws, few of them stringent. Until New Jersey enacted a new gun statute last week, no state (and only Philadelphia among U.S. cities) required police permits for buying, keeping, or even roaming Main Street with a shotgun or rifle. Only seven states and a handful of municipalities require permits for handguns.

Such leniency shows up in crime statistics. The FBI reports that 57% of the 9,850 homicides in the U.S. last year were committed with firearms, and that all but one of the 53 police officers killed on duty were gunshot victims. In Dallas, where firearm regulations are practically nonexistent (as throughout all of Texas), 72% of all homicides were committed with guns v. 25% in New York City, where the state's tough 55-year-old Sullivan Law requires police permits for the mere possession of handguns. Says J. Edgar Hoover: "Those who claim that the availability of firearms is not a factor in murders in this country are not facing reality."

Most foreign countries have much stricter controls than the U.S., and some virtually outlaw guns. Given the American passion for guns, however, it would be unthinkable to ban firearm sales outright in the U.S., an action that would eliminate such legitimate uses as hunting, target shooting and, in some cases anyway, self-defense. But the Justice Department, bar associations and most U.S.

police officials feel that much tighter gun controls are called for.

The Austin slaughter breathed new life into a bill now before Congress, sponsored by Connecticut's Senator Thomas Dodd, which would 1) severely limit interstate mail-order handgun shipments; 2) limit the inflow of military-surplus firearms from abroad; 3) ban over-the-counter handgun sales to out-of-state buyers and anybody under 21; and 4) prohibit longarm sales to persons under 18. Invoking the "shocking tragedy" in Austin, President Johnson urged speedy passage "to help prevent the wrong persons from obtaining firearms." Of course, recognizing the "wrong person" is not always possible; Whitman would probably have qualified for his guns even under strict controls.

Nonetheless, a good deal of firearm violence could no doubt be prevented. By limiting interstate gun sales, the Dodd bill would strengthen the power of states to enforce their own gun laws. In most states, stiffer controls are needed—minimizing, for example, spur-of-the-moment shootings by providing "cooling-off" periods of several days before anyone can obtain a new weapon, as well as prohibiting all gun sales to criminals and known psychotics. Yet, despite the renewed clamoring for action, it is far from certain that the Dodd bill will be enacted, largely because of the influence wielded by the National Rifle Association, whose 750,000 members lobby vigorously and effectively against most gun-control legislation.

Though some right-wingers condemn gun controls as a Communist plot to disarm Americans, a more common objection is that individual Americans have "a constitutional right to bear arms." Actually, no such absolute right exists. The Supreme Court has held consistently that the right is a collective one. State militias are quite clearly what the Founding Fathers had in mind in drafting the Second Amendment: "A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Stricter arms licensing could certainly not prevent the sort of crime perpetrated by Whitman, but it would keep guns away from at least some who might misuse them. Since Americans usually need licenses to marry, drive a motor scooter, run a shop or even own a dog, it is difficult to see why a license to keep a lethal weapon would be any abridgment of their freedom.

went back. Instead, some time in the next few months, he decided to act.

"I Love My Mother." The evening before his trip to the tower, Whitman sat at a battered portable in his modest brick cottage. Kathy, his wife of four years (they had no children), was at work. "I don't quite understand what is compelling me to type this note," he began. "I've been having fears and violent impulses. I've had some tremendous headaches. I am prepared to die. After my death, I wish an autopsy on me to be performed to see if there's any mental disorders." He also wrote: "I intend to kill my wife after I pick her up from work. I don't want her to have to face the embarrassment that my actions will surely cause her."

At one point he had to break off when a fellow architecture student, Larry Fuess, and his wife dropped by to chat. Fuess found him looking "particularly relieved about something—you know, as if he had solved a problem." After the couple left, Whitman drove off in his black '66 Chevrolet to pick up Kathy at her summer job as a telephone information operator. He apparently decided not to kill her immediately, instead dropped her off at their house and sped across the Colorado River to his mother's fifth-floor flat in Austin's Penthouse Apartments. There he stabbed Margaret Whitman in the chest and shot her in the back of the head, somehow also breaking several bones in her left hand with such force that the band of her diamond engagement ring was driven into her finger and the stone broken loose. "I have just killed my mother," Charlie wrote in a hand-printed note addressed "To whom it may concern." "If there's a heaven, she is going there. If there is not a heaven, she is out of her pain and misery. I love my mother with all my heart."

Tragic Timetable. Back home—it was now after midnight—Whitman stabbed his wife three times in the chest, apparently as she lay sleeping, and drew the bed sheet over her nude body. Then he returned to the note—partially typewritten, partially handwritten, partially printed—that was to be his valedictory. Included was a tragic timetable: "12:30 a.m.—Mother already dead. 3 o'clock—both dead." He hated his father "with a mortal passion," he wrote, and regretted that his mother had given "the best 25 years of her life to that man." Clearly, the erratic orbit of his mind had already carried him off to some remote apheion of despair. "Life is not worth living," he wrote. He had apparently concluded that if it were not worth living for him, it need not be for the others, either. With the special lucidity of the mad, Whitman meticulously prepared to take as many people with him to the grave as he possibly could.

Into a green duffel bag and a green foot locker that bore the stenciled words, "Lance Cpl. C. J. Whitman," he stuffed provisions to sustain him during a long siege and to cover every contingency: Spam, Planters peanuts, fruit cocktail, sandwiches and boxes of raisins, jerricans containing water and gasoline, rope, binoculars, canteens, transistor radio, toilet paper, and, in a bizarre allegiance to the cult of cleanliness, a plastic bottle of Mennen spray deodorant. He also stowed away a private armory that seemed sufficient to hold off an army: machete, Bowie knife, hatchet, a 6-mm. Remington bolt-action rifle with a 4-power Leupold telescopic sight (with which, experts say, a halfway decent shot can consistently hit a 6½-in. circle from 300 yds.), a 35-mm. Remington rifle, a 9-mm. Luger pistol, a Galesi-Brescia pis-

tol and a .357 Smith & Wesson Magnum revolver. At home, he left three more rifles, two derringers.

Whether Whitman slept at all during the following few hours is not known. He was next seen at 7:15 a.m. when he rented a mover's dolly from an Austin firm. Then, deciding that he needed even more firepower, he went to Sears, Roebuck and bought a 12-gauge shotgun on credit, sawed off both barrel and stock. He visited Davis Hardware to buy a .30-cal. carbine. And at Chuck's Gun Shop, he bought some 30-shot magazines for the new carbine. All told, he had perhaps 700 rounds.

Left to Die. Around 11 a.m., Whitman boldly breezed into a parking spot reserved for university officials, near the main administration and library building at the base of the tower. Dressed in tennis sneakers, blue jeans and a pale polo shirt, he wheeled the loaded dolly toward an elevator, gave passersby the impression that he was a maintenance man. The elevator stops at the 27th floor; Whitman lugged his bizarre cargo up three flights of steps to the 30th floor. There, at a desk next to the glass-paneled door that opens onto the observation deck, he encountered Receptionist Edna Townsley, 47, a spirited divorcee and mother of two young sons. Whitman bashed her head in, probably with a rifle butt, with such force that part of her skull was torn away, also shot her in the head. Then he left her behind a sofa to die.

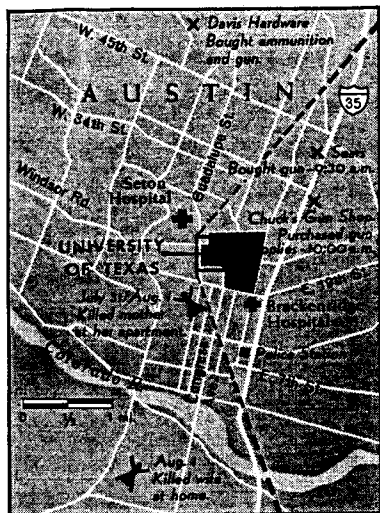
As Whitman began assembling his equipment on the deck, six sightseers arrived, led by Mark and Mike Gabour, the 16- and 19-year-old sons of M. J. Gabour, a service-station owner in Texarkana, Texas. "Mark opened the door to the observation deck and a gun went off," said Gabour. "Mike screamed." Then his sons, his wife and his sister, Mrs. Marguerite Lamport, "came rolling down the stairs. Whoever did the shooting slammed the door." Gabour turned his younger son over, saw he had been shot in the head. He was dead. So was Gabour's sister. Critically injured, his wife and his older son were bleeding profusely. Gabour and his brother-in-law dragged their dead and wounded to the 27th floor, sought help but could find none.

Splashed with Blood. Outside, on the six-foot-wide walkway that runs around all four sides of the tower, Whitman positioned himself under the "VI" of the gold-edged clock's south face. Looking toward the mall, a large paved rectangle, he could see scores of students below him. Had Mrs. Townsley and the Gabours not held him up, he might have had another thousand students as targets when classes changed at 11:30 a.m. Now, at 11:48 a.m., Charles Whitman opened fire. The 17-chime carillon above him was to ring the quarter-hour six times before his guns were silenced.

For a moment, nobody could make out what the odd explosions from atop the tower meant. Then men and women began crumpling to the ground, and



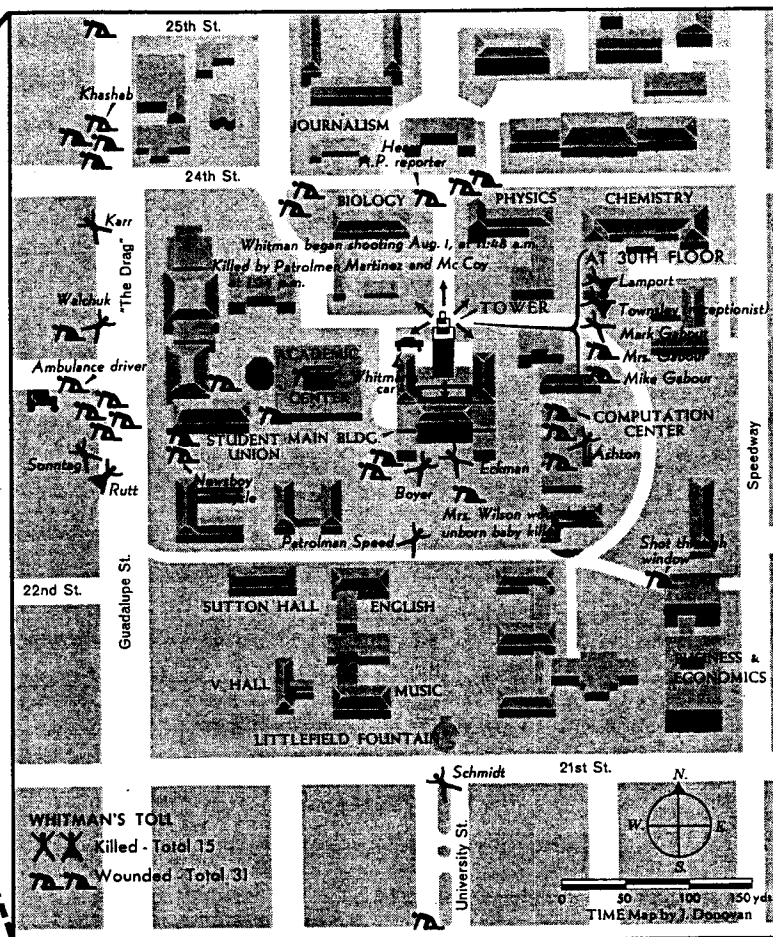
LARRY FUESS WITH KATHY & CHARLIE IN MAY (PHOTO SHOT BY MRS. FUESS)
As if he had solved a problem.



others ran for cover. On the fourth floor of the tower building, Ph.D. Candidate Norma Barger, 23, heard the noises, looked out and saw six bodies sprawled grotesquely on the mall. At first she thought it was just a tasteless joke. "I expected the six to get up and walk away laughing." Then she saw the pavement splashed with blood, and more people falling. In the first 20 minutes, relying chiefly on the 6-mm. rifle with the scope but switching occasionally to the carbine and the .357 revolver, Whitman picked off most of his victims.

On the sun-dappled mall, Mrs. Claire Wilson, 18, eight months pregnant, was walking from an anthropology class when a bullet crashed into her abdomen; she survived, but later gave birth to a stillborn child whose skull had been crushed by the shot. A horrified classmate, Freshman Thomas Eckman, 19, knelt beside her to help, was shot dead himself. Mathematician Robert Boyer, 33, en route to a teaching job in Liverpool, England, where his pregnant wife and two children were awaiting him, stepped out onto the mall to head for lunch, was shot fatally in the back. More fortunate was Secretary Charlotte Darehshori, who rushed out to help when the first victims dropped, suddenly realized she was under fire and spent the next hour-and-a-half crouched behind the concrete base of a flagpole—one of the few persons to venture onto the mall and survive the siege uninjured.

At the south end of the mall, Austin Patrolman Billy Speed, 23, one of the first policemen on the scene, took cover behind the heavy, columnar stone railing, but a bullet zinged between the columns and killed him. Still farther south, 500 yds. from the tower, Electrical Repairman Roy Dell Schmidt, 29, walked toward his truck after making a call, was killed by a bullet in the stomach. To the east, Iran-bound Peace Corps Trainee Thomas Ashton, 22, was strolling on the roof of the Computation Center when Whitman shot him dead. Directing his fire west, Whitman



found shop-lined Guadalupe Street, the main thoroughfare off campus—known locally as "The Drag"—astir with shoppers and strollers. Paul Sonntag, 18, lifeguard at an Austin pool and grandson of Paul Bolton, longtime friend of Lyndon Johnson and news editor of the Johnsons' Austin television station, was accompanying Claudia Rutt, 18, for a polio shot she needed before entering Texas Christian University. Claudia suddenly sank to the ground. Paul bent over her, then pitched to the sidewalk himself. Both were dead. A block north, Political Scientist Harry Walchuk, 39, a father of six and a teacher at Michigan's Alpena Community College, browsed in the doorway of a newsstand after working all morning in the college library. He was shot dead on the spot. A few steps farther up the street, Senior Thomas Karr, 24, was walking sleepily toward his apartment after staying up almost all night for a 10 a.m. exam when he dropped to the pavement, dying.

Impossible to Hit. Four minutes after Whitman opened fire, Austin police received a report about "some shooting at the University Tower." In seconds, a "10-50" trouble signal went out, directing all units in the vicinity to head for the university. In a din of wailing sirens, more than 100 city cops,

reinforced by some 30 highway patrolmen, Texas Rangers and U.S. Secret Service men from Lyndon Johnson's Austin office, converged on the campus.

The lawmen sent hundreds of rounds of small-arms fire crackling toward the tower deck. A few smashed into the faces on the clocks above Whitman, and most pinked ineffectually into the four-foot-high wall in front of him, kicking up puffs of dust. Ducking below the wall, Whitman began using narrow drainage slits in the wall as gunports. He proved almost impossible to hit, but he kept finding targets—to the north, where he wounded two students on their way to the Biology Building; to the east, where he nicked a girl sitting at a window in the Business Economics Building; but particularly to the south, where the mall looked like a no man's land strewn with bodies that could not safely be recovered, and to the west, where The Drag was littered with four dead, eleven wounded.

Riding along The Drag, Newsboy Aleck Hernandez was practically catapulted off his bicycle when a bullet slammed into its seat—and his, inflicting a painful wound. Three blocks up The Drag, Basketball Coach Billy Snowden of the Texas School for the Deaf stepped into the doorway of the barbershop where he was having his

hair cut and was wounded in the shoulder. Outside the Rae Ann dress shop on The Drag, Iraqi Chemistry Student Abdul Khashab, 26, his fiancée Janet Paulos, 20, whom he was to have married next week, and Student-Store Clerk Lana Phillips, 21, fell wounded within seconds of each other. At Sheftall's jewelers, Manager Homer Kelley saw three youths fall wounded outside, was helping to haul them inside when Whitman zeroed in on the shop. Fragments from two bullets tore into Kelley's leg. Windows shattered. Bullets tore huge gashes in the carpeting inside. North of the tower, Associated Press Reporter Robert Heard, 36, was hit in the shoulder while he was running full tilt. "What a shot!" he marveled through his pain.

Green Flag. Unable to get at Whitman from the ground, the police chartered a light plane, sent sharpshooting Lieut. Marion Lee aloft in it. The sniper's fire drove it away. Finally four men, who had made their way separately to the tower building through subterranean passages or by zigzagging from building to building, decided to storm the observation deck. Three were Austin patrolmen who had never been in a gunfight: Houston McCoy, Jerry Day and Ramiro Martinez, who was off duty



MARGARET WHITMAN
Dearlly beloved?

when he heard of the sniper, got into uniform and rushed to the campus. The fourth was Civilian Allen Crum, 40, a retired Air Force tailgunner, who had "never fired a shot" in combat.

The four rode to the 27th floor, headed single file up the last three flights, carefully removed a barricade of furniture that Whitman had set at the top of the stairs. While cops on the ground intensified their fire to divert Whitman's attention, Martinez slowly

pushed away the dolly propped against the door leading to the walkway around the tower, crawled out onto its south side and began moving stealthily to the east. Crum followed through the door and turned toward the west. Hearing footsteps, Crum fired into the southwest corner to keep Whitman from bursting around the corner and shooting him. Martinez, meanwhile, rounded one corner, then, more slowly, turned onto the north side of the walkway.

Fifty feet away from him, in the northwest corner, crouched Whitman, his eyes riveted on the corner that Crum was about to turn. Martinez poured six pistol shots into Whitman's left side, arms and legs. McCoy moved up, blasted Whitman with a shotgun. Martinez, noting that the sniper's gun "was still flopping," grabbed the shotgun and blasted Whitman again. As an autopsy showed, the shotgun pellets did it: one pierced Whitman's heart, another his brain. Crum grabbed a green towel from Whitman's foot locker, waved it above the railing to signal cease-fire. At 1:24 p.m., 96 murderous minutes after his first fusillade from the tower, Charlie Whitman was dead.

Tumors & Goofballs. Whitman's bloody stand profoundly shocked a na-

ALL murder is horrifying, but the work of such as Charles Whitman or the Chicago nurse-killer produces an almost hysterical quality of shock and dread. Numbers of dead alone cannot entirely account for it. Nor can the unsettling plaint of Austin's police chief that "this kind of thing could have happened anywhere." What is ultimately so disturbing about the 23 lives so taken is that nearly all were snuffed out for no reason and at random. In almost every case, they were unnamed and unknown to their killers, the incidental and impersonal casualties of uncharted battlefields that exist only in demented minds. They were sacrifices to the irrational, wherein lies, as it always has for reasoning man, the ultimate terror. They were victims of the blind fury of the psychotic murderer.

Many psychiatrists believe that there is something intrinsic in modern American society that causes on occasion the sort of senseless mayhem practiced last week in Austin. Some of the violence of the frontier still lingers in the American character, they believe, aggravated to extremes in a few individuals by the pressure to succeed and the social and economic mobility of American society. Perhaps, as many psychiatrists insist, the American mother's increasingly powerful position in the family has weakened the ego of American men, who are with rare exceptions responsible for mass murder in the U.S. All, or none, of this may be true—or, most likely, part of it. But the fact is that mass murder is by no means an exclusive American institution; it has been perpetrated in scores of countries down the ages, from Caligula's Rome to the Congo.

Helpless & Haunted

Of the nearly 2,500,000 Americans who were treated for mental illness in hospitals and clinics last year, almost a third were classified as psychotic: a person who, by minimum definition, has lost touch with reality. Many types of psychotics are harmless and helpless. The most dangerous type, the paranoid schizophrenic, on the other hand, is a powder keg of lethal emotions. He frequently has deep sexual problems, often involving his mother. He not only lives in an unreal world that may be dominated by either macabre or fairyland fantasy, but is haunted by fears and delusions of

The Symptoms

persecution. In his befuddled mind, an accidental bump on a crowded sidewalk or a passing criticism from his employer or family can be transformed into an illusion that the world is plotting against him. When he chooses to retaliate, he may become an irrational killer.

The psychotic does not murder often; neither, for that matter, does the professional thief. "Contrary to popular myth," says Wayne State University Psychiatry Professor Emanuel Tanay, "murder is not the crime of criminals, but that of law-abiding citizens." The great majority of the nation's 9,850 murders last year were family affairs, committed by outwardly ordinary people who, asserts Tanay, "practically never repeat this or any other crime again." When the psychotic whose trouble is deep enough does strike, the result is often wholesale slaughter.

Compulsive Need

The menace of the psychotic killer is the more frightening because he may seem a model citizen until he goes berserk. Many of them "have a feeling that there is a demon within themselves," says Los Angeles Clinical Psychiatrist Martin Grotjahn, "and they try to kill the demon by model behavior." Sensing aggressive impulses that frighten them, adds a Manhattan analyst, "they live the opposite of what they feel. They become gentle, very mild, extremely nice people, and often show a compulsive need to be perfectionistic," which is one reason why people can always be found to describe a murderer as a "nice" or a "gentle" or a "good" boy, as some described Charles Whitman last week.

Some psychiatrists estimate that the percentage of potential mass killers in the U.S. ranges as high as 1 per 1,000 of the population, or about 200,000 Americans. Most, of course, will never carry out their aggressive urges, but enough will so that unsuspecting people will continue to fall victim to their irrationality. Says Houston Psychiatrist C. A. Dwyer: "Potential killers are everywhere these days. They are driving cars, going to church with you, working with you. And you never know it until they snap."

tion not yet recovered from the Chicago nurses' murders. One effect was to prompt a re-examination of U.S. arms laws and methods of handling suspected psychotics (see boxes). There was a spate of ideas, some hasty and ill conceived. Texas Governor John Connally, who broke off a Latin American tour and hurried home after the shootings, demanded legislation requiring that any individual freed on the ground of insanity in murder and kidnapping cases be institutionalized for life. New York's Senator Robert Kennedy proposed that persons acquitted of all federal crimes on the ground of insanity be committed for psychiatric treatment. Had Whitman lived to face trial, said Kennedy, he would "undoubtedly" have been acquitted because "he was so clearly insane."

An autopsy showed that Whitman had a pecan-size brain tumor, or astrocytoma, in the hypothalamus region, but Pathologist Coleman de Chenar said that it was "certainly not the cause of the headaches" and "could not have had any influence on his psychic behavior." A number of Dexedrine tablets—stimulants known as "goofballs"—were found in Whitman's possession, but physicians were not able to detect



CHARLES A. WHITMAN
Mortally hated?

signs that he had taken any before he died.

Half-Staff. Precisely what triggered Whitman's outburst is a mystery. And it is likely to remain so, though psychiatrists will undoubtedly debate the causes for years. The role of Whitman's father in shaping—or misshaping—his son's personality has already come under intense scrutiny, but other psychiatrists feel that the cause of his illness must be sought in his relationship with his

mother. Whatever its cause, Charlie Whitman's psychosis was poured out in detail in his farewell notes, which, a grand jury said, will be released only to "authorized investigating agencies, since they contain unverified statements of an insane killer concerning an innocent individual."

In the end, Charlie Whitman and his mother returned together to Florida, he in a grey metal casket, she in a green-and-white one. With hundreds of curiosity seekers gawking and jostling in a rolling, palm-fringed cemetery in West Palm Beach, mother and son were buried with Catholic rites. Charlie had obviously been deranged, said the Whitmans' priest, and was not responsible for the sin of murder and therefore eligible for burial in hallowed ground.

In Austin, where two of those wounded by Whitman remain in critical condition and three in serious condition, most flags flew at half-staff through the week. This week the flags go back to full staff as the university and the capital attempt to return to normal. That may take a while. The 17 chimes in the tower from which Charlie Whitman shot peal each quarter-hour, resounding over the tree-shaded campus and the mist-mantled hills beyond.

of Mass Murder

Is there any way to identify the psychotic killer before he snaps and acts? The doctors will only say: sometimes. Any violent personality change should signal an alert to family and friends—a habitually shy and quiet person who suddenly becomes aggressive and talkative, or the reverse. Other danger signs: depression and seclusion, hypersensitivity to little slights and insults, a change in normal patterns of eating or sleeping, uncontrolled outbursts of temper, disorganized thinking and morbid interest in such potential tools of destruction as guns or knives. Psychiatrists are quick to add that the appearance of even all those symptoms does not necessarily mean that a man is about to turn killer. But the symptoms do mean that he is in need of help.

Even if a dangerous psychotic reaches the examining room, it is by no means certain that he can be headed off. Most doctors agree that the University of Texas psychiatrist was without fault in taking no action even after Whitman confessed his urge to climb to the tower and kill people several months before the event took place. "Thousands of people—and I mean literally thousands," says University of Chicago Psychiatrist Robert S. Daniels, "talk to doctors about having such feelings. Nearly all of them are just talking." Deciding which patients mean it is still more art than science. Doctors tend to take a patient seriously, of course, if he relates his threat to a particular happening or circumstance ("The next time they read my mind, I will . . .") or has the immediate means and resources to carry out his threat (a chemist who threatens to poison people).

Enormous Pressure

Medical reluctance to call in the police is rooted both in therapeutic practice and the practicality of the law. Successful treatment of mental illness depends on the confidence of the patient in the therapist. If doctors were expected by the public and their patients to report every threatening remark, they would soon have few patients. Moreover, as New York's Deputy Police Commissioner Sylvan Fox noted last week, "we can't arrest people because they are ill." Adds

New Jersey Psychiatrist Henry A. Davidson: "We are in a situation now where there is enormous pressure for civil rights. The idea of locking someone up on the basis of a psychiatrist's opinion that he might in the future be violent could be repugnant." It would also be a very poor way to help the vast majority of disturbed people who make threats that they will never carry out.

Some states empower a doctor to order commitment to a mental hospital when he thinks a patient dangerous—at least long enough to subject him to a thorough examination by psychiatrists. Other states insist that the individual commit himself voluntarily, that his family commit him or that the courts remand him into hospital care. In such situations, the doctor can only try to persuade, though the psychotic is not notably amenable to having himself locked up. Nor, often, is his family, who may still regard mental illness as a shameful smirch and resist formal commitment to an institution until it is too late.

Study v. Punishment

For this reason, most medical men believe that the best way to catch psychotics before they begin shooting is a long-term program of education in mental hygiene, more psychological testing in schools and colleges, and the spread of community clinics that can make instant help available to all. Necessary, too, is more money and manpower for research. Far too little is known about the mass murderer because he erupts infrequently—and even less frequently survives to be examined. Psychiatrists firmly believe that Richard Speck, accused of the nurse killings, ought to be studied intensively rather than punished by society, if found guilty. Pilot studies in Massachusetts and Illinois of juvenile offenders indicate that many potential psychotics may be identifiable and curable while in their teens, and an important segment of the medical profession has not given up hope of finding the cure to psychosis in the chemistry of the brain. While science may never develop a foolproof psychiatric Geiger counter or a cerebral "Pap smear" for spotting every psychotic in advance, there is no doubt that far more can be done within the resources of the Great Society to pare the danger of sudden, irrational murder.