

inflammatory that police and prosecutors would not dare to try it. I thank Mr. Bishop for his reassurance on this point. —Jerry D. Rose

To the editor: After reading "Oak Ridge Boy" in the September 1994 issue, I was intrigued by the author suggesting "that the museum registration of Oswald may have been part of some unrealized scheme to place Oswald in still another ring of atomic spies." Until further research is done, however, this must remain as pure speculation.

But there may have been an alternative reason to "forge" the Oswald signature. I refer you and your readers to page 630 of Manchester's Death of a President. There, Chief Justice Warren (in what I presume was one of two interviews with Manchester) is quoted as to how President Johnson was able to convince him to chair a federal commission after Warren had initially refused: "...the President told me how serious the situation was. He said there had been wild rumors, and that there was the international situation to think of. He said he had just talked to Dean Rusk, who was concerned, and he also mentioned the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, who had told him how many millions of people would be killed in an atomic war." Warren reluctantly accepted his "duty."

I suggest the document may have been created to give LBJ a leverage tool to persuade Warren and/or others into accepting a position on the commission. After achieving this purpose, it was forgotten, only to be discovered by accident by a tourist some months later.

This may not have the clandestine intrigue of an atomic spy ring, but it does answer why the head of the Atomic Energy Commission would be so involved in an investigation of a Presidential assassination.

And it fits one other pattern: it shows what measures LBJ would use to get what he wanted, i.e., the semblance of impartiality and respectability Warren would have at the time added to a federal inquiry. —Randy Owen, 914 Courtland Ave. E., Unit 406, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2C 1K5

PICTURES OF THE PAIN: A REVIEW

by

Jan R. Stevens

Richard Trask, Pictures of the Pain: Photography and the Assassination of President Kennedy (self-published, Danvers, MA: Yeoman Press, 1994)

Besides the well-known persons such as Zapruder, Moorman, and Nix whose photographs and films have shaped so much of what we understand of the JFK assassination, there are scores of others lesser known but still significant, whose images provide moments of the Dallas tragedy frozen forever in time. Many of these images have been analyzed, enhanced and interpreted endlessly and they represent some of the most important and still extant evidence of the case. Despite over thirty years of conflicting views and controversies, the case for conspiracy is heavily built on them (for better or sometimes worse) as is the weaker lone assassin theory.

This self-published work by historian/archivist Richard Trask meticulously traces the photographic record from Love Field through to Parkland Hospital and back; a virtual A to Z compilation and examination of the amateur and professional photographers and their work. All the various investigations and the major critics' analyses throughout the case's history are extensively examined also. The book presents what was done and not done by official investigators, what all the testing of these materials consisted of, and the historical impact it has had up to now. Make no mistake: this is not a book of assassination photos along with one's respective theories. This massive undertaking is, above all, an invaluable source book of information that stands on its own in its depth of material; a veritable all-in-one-place discourse on all the Dallas photographic evidence before, during and after the shooting. Please note that Trask does not deal with the autopsy photos, Oswald photos and the like—his primary concern is November 22nd. Clearly he is not a newcomer to the JFK case; his personal correspondence and contacts with photographers or their survivors (some dating as far back as 1965), numerous FOIA requests and his genuine familiarity with the complex issues involved attest to it. This is first-class work, and makes for fascinating reading, even for some of us more cynical, jaded researchers.

By tracking down a good number of those who first looked through their viewfinders that day in Dallas, Trask has gleaned

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lively and poignant first-person accounts of what they saw, what they heard, what they felt and what they did with what they had. His narrative is concise, yet informative, and glistens with pertinent circumstantial detail, always following the pictures and their history. For the first time in memory, names like Dave Weigman, Wilma Bond and others have "faces" behind them. We come to know who they were, what they were doing there, what kind of cameras or other equipment they used and how many film frames or stills were taken. Many full "contact prints" and film frames are shown within the text. When warranted, specifics on shutter speeds, film stock and other technicalities are smartly handled, though not to the detriment of the layman reader.

"Pictures of the Pain" (POTP) is fascinating in that it makes the human stories of these witnesses a very real part of the larger picture. At the risk of triteness, I would venture to say that Trask puts us there at Elm and Houston and helps us better experience the nightmare through the eyes of folks like Nix, Willis, Altgens and others, amateur and professional alike.

For most of the book, the author's odyssey through the voluminous assassination material and witness accounts is far-reaching, even-handed and thorough. He is unique in his handling of the many hotly disputed photographic interpretations of critics, since he seems to have no particular axe to grind. In his forward, Trask does indicate his basic belief that three shots were fired from the Depository, and probably by Oswald. But what surprised me, a dedicated believer in conspiracy, is that throughout much of the narrative, he doesn't allow this to become dogmatic a la Posner, though there are at times notable exceptions. Here and there, he relies too much on "lone-nut" proponents like Dr. John Lattimer, but does not, to his credit, "shove it down your throat." He makes a serious and genial attempt to be fair and balanced. He also minces no words when it comes to suspicious conduct and bureaucratic bungling of the FBI and other officials. Often, Trask will make strong points for both sides of a given issue, allowing the reader to make the call. Additionally, he indeed knows the prodigious work of those who came before: Richard E. Sprague, Robert Groden, Jack White, Gary Mack, Josiah Thompson and Harold Weisberg, and their considerable writings and observations are given credence as the author warrants. However, he does seem at times to state an insight made by one of these critics in context without going into why it was made, or what the critic's reasoning may be. This is sometimes disconcerting, and leads here and there to a bit of fence-straddling. At any rate, most key issues are discussed in considerable depth, with minimal gaps and Trask's views are

forthright and straightforward when he chooses to state them. The book's twenty-six chapters, appendix, postscript and indices run 638 pages, including black and whites of various photos and frames, several published here for the first time. As the author explains, "...each chapter serves as an independent portion of the complex tale, forming a patchwork of stories, of truths and of perspectives." [emphasis mine]. It's refreshing to see him make such a differentiation, in a time when critics sometimes have a hard time conceding that "photographic documentation and the sophisticated image processing methods developed over the last several decades cannot give us 'the' truth and reality at Dallas, but rather 'a' truth and reality of the event" (p. xix). Some of us would disagree in part, and rightly so, depending on the specificity of the evidence, its authenticity and its significance, but Trask's point is generally well taken.

There are thousands of singular truths or "truths", as the case may be, which Trask gets into but space permits us here to highlight only a few.

THE Z-FILM: This is the book's longest chapter (97 pages), and Trask acknowledges the film's singular status as the most important case evidence, saying "...the debate over the sequence and timing of the shots would never have taken place" without it. His detail is mostly adequate as to what the frames show clearly, (as opposed to what is often debatable) but I believe Trask hedges a bit here as to his view on when JFK and Connally were actually hit—and by how many shots at what frames. He states the trajectory of the magic bullet theory at face value, (p. 67) not going through any definitive analysis at this point, but the Commission version as stated chronology here should not have been a part of the running description of the film without a nod toward dissenting views,

Oddly enough, Dr. Humes' testimony to Arlen Specter that CE 399 could not have traversed Connally's wrist is mentioned here and although Dr. Shaw (who operated on Connally) and Dr. Pierre Finck concurred, their testimony is not noted. This tends to discredit the account of the shots as run down by POTP's Z-film narrative. The conflicting accounts of Parkland's Darrel Tomlinson and O.P Wright as to what bullet was actually found further demolish the theory.

The author then takes us through quite a comprehensive history of the film, juxtaposing the various accounts to outline how many copies were made and who received them, the differences between the FBI and Secret Service copies and which one the Warren Commission had (it was not the S.S. copy, which has no frames missing). He then exquisitely details the acquisition by Richard Stolley for LIFE magazine—

—which, paraphrasing a classic book, author Walt Brown referred to as “LIFE Be Not Proud”—and the ensuing controversy. The book comes down hard on LIFE’s possession of Zapruder’s film, saying “In a real sense, public history was abused, hoarded and became the object of profiteering, in the name of the sanctity of private corporate ownership.” (p. 97) This section is rife with sturdy documentation obtained by Trask; when coupled with Dan Rather’s disinformatonal reporting on the film—most of which is reproduced verbatim here—it makes for an exceptional chronology. As to the possible abduction of the film by the CIA and the tests at its National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), Trask believes it was done “after November 29 and probably before mid-December” (p. 107), which I, for one, take issue with. He cites “internal evidence” from the CIA document “Item #450,” first discovered by researcher Paul Hoch in 1976. (Actually, my copy labels it as “1641–450.”) According to the landmark piece by Phil Melanson in the November 1984 THIRD DECADE, the agency claimed in a 1982 document release that they never possessed their own copy of the film from LIFE until February 1965 and did not mention the “three copies mysteriously printed by NPIC.” Melanson makes a strong case that, since the Secret Service had two copies made at the time of the LIFE deal, according to the official explanation, perhaps it was not a copy at all, but the original which was dispatched by the CIA for analysis. Perhaps Trask might have looked a bit deeper into this, considering the agency’s track record on related matters. He then traces the work done by ITEK for the 1967 and 1975 CBS “investigations” (I use the term loosely) and is rather uncritical with their analysis. Among their often-challenged conclusions, you may recall, was that Jackie somehow may have assisted in “pushing” JFK backward around Z312–313. This absurd impossibility is not addressed by Trask. Josiah Thompson’s pioneering work with the film is gone over, as are the groundbreaking contributions of Robert Groden, although Trask seems to spend far less time on Robert’s important interpretive and enhancement work than on others’. A digression on some of the start-up problems of the House Select Committee (p. 130) leads into a basic discourse on the acoustics evidence, as well as more from Lattimer and Dr. Alvarez’ work and some of the continuing debates and observations on the Z-film. The section is comprehensive but can be considered as in many ways subjective.

RICHARD BOTHUN’S photos are next up, notable for one reason in this review. Bothun #4 is one of those showing the “umbrella man” and his fellow bystander who, by many accounts, appears to be a Latino of some sort. However, Trask

calls him an “unknown black witness” (p. 156), the first time this writer has seen such a reference. [After this review was completed, Gary Mack wrote me that he published an uncropped copy of the Clint Grant photo, showing the two men at the extreme right edge in his May 1984 “Coverups!.” He believes the blowups “clearly reveal the guy is black, not a Cuban.”] The two men are seated on the north curb of Elm near the Stemmons sign. Trask also has no problem accepting Louis Steven Witt’s self-identification as “umbrella man” and the weak explanation to the House Committee of his supposed involvement in the event. The problems with this issue are not addressed in POTP, nor is the work of those like Robert Cutler and others brought up in any depth.

PHIL WILLIS’ series of color slides are among the best known, especially for the apparition known as “the Black Dog Man,” the image which can be seen behind the retaining wall on the knoll. The figure also shows up, of course, in Hugh Betzner’s photo #3 and certainly the House Select Committee, PBS’s “NOVA” studies and other analyses reveal a person there. Not much credence is given “black dog man” here, which has been exhaustively written about by Groden, Jim Marrs, Gary Shaw et al. However, if you’ve ever stood on that concrete pedestal in Dealey Plaza from where Zapruder filmed, it should become evident that this man behind the retaining wall would easily be within Zapruder’s and others’ view, and is not at all likely an assassin. His exit was perhaps hasty, as some have pointed out, but in reality, it is illogical that anyone would be right there without any cover, shooting at the President.

A popular assassination myth has been effectively trounced in this chapter, and with photographic proof to boot. Starting with Mark Lane, many have stated that Jack Ruby was standing in front of the Depository, as apparently evidenced by his “appearance” at the far right edge of Willis #14. Since the photo as it was printed in the Commission volumes was cropped on this side, further suspicion followed. Even Willis himself was convinced of it, as Trask notes. Lo and behold, a Jim Murray photograph, taken at about the same time, shows the figure, now facing the camera, and it is unquestionably not Jack Ruby; unless of course one wishes to propose a “second Ruby theory!” Three cheers for the author for finally laying this nagging discrepancy to rest by publishing this photo for, I believe, the first time anywhere. The JFK case needs to have erroneous assumptions (which then run the risk of being translated as fact) weeded out, and this is being done more often than ever before. The case for conspiracy will be stronger for it and less susceptible to the slings and arrows of

outrageous misfortune (and future Gerald Posners), the more we all "clean house."

THE NIX FILM: Pictures of the Pain is probably the first book to fully explain the story of Orville Nix and his 6 1/2 seconds of assassination footage from start to finish. Since the dark and blurry film has the grassy knoll as a backdrop, it rivals only the Moorman photo in conjectured gunmen in various places. Nix's own account of the shooting, (primarily taken from Mark Lane's "Rush to Judgment" film) lends support for a knoll shooter as well. The late air-conditioning engineer was never called to testify before the Commission.

Trask explains that Nix used Type A Tungsten film, thus the images are darker and much grainier than if he had used a compensating outdoor filter on the lens, or better quality outdoor film. After discussing how Nix sold the footage to UPI for \$5,000, a free dinner and a new hat, Trask tends to darken Nix's comments to Mark Lane of shots from the knoll by stating that from where he stood, "the Depository was obscured to him, blotted out by the cement column of the north peristyle to the northeast." (p. 187) If this is to hinder Nix's hearing ability, it's a rather flaccid attempt.

Early critic Jones Harris was the first to ascribe a knoll shooter (on a station wagon's bumper) from the Nix images and, along with his friend Bernie Hoffman, the two tried to interest UPI to work on the film, but after a short time and some preliminary darkroom work, they passed on it. Trask follows the trail through to the ITEK tests, done as a free "public service" (once again, to cover the Commission's ass, it would seem). Stereoscopic views were studied, and comparative studies on color as well as black-and-white still frames determined lights and shadows instead of gunmen. ITEK further indicated that the supposed gunman image remained after JFK's car had departed. The ITEK conclusions were essentially confirmed by Cal-Tech. It is important to note that the image of a quick flurry of movement at the end of the retaining wall, so often emphasized by Robert Groden and considered by the HSCA, is still not definitively explained. The Committee did not analyze the Nix frame corresponding to Z312 (see Vol. 6, p. 296 for Groden's memo) and it appears the issue was dealt with mostly from the ITEK conclusions. Their photographic panel did observe, however, the absence of any flesh-tones in the pertinent enhanced frames.

Trask points out Marilyn Sitzman's interview in 1966 with Tink Thompson (which Trask obtained a transcript of) in which she refers to a young black couple who were sitting on a bench a few feet behind the wall nearly against the pergola and, (quoting Sitzman) "...threw down their Coke bottles...and

just started running toward the back," after the last shot was fired. The bench in question is not seen in the familiar photos of the area, apparently out of photographers' view, but Trask unearthed a photo (p. 75) of two investigators examining a paper bag and food wrappers on this bench, which was perpendicular to the concrete wall. There were a few witnesses who recalled seeing a red liquid in the area, and this has been taken to have been a soft drink. The movement at the end of the retaining wall, could be, according to POTP, the throwing motion of the bottle. According to Gary Mack's observations from Jimmy Darnell's WBAP footage (some of which was in "Frontline" last year), the bench was "far from the 'movement' in Nix." At least, Trask keeps an open mind, the issue being one that is still unresolved, considering the poorer quality copies available and the intrinsic problems with the original footage which was lost by UPI after the HSCA returned it.

THE MOORMAN PHOTO has long been a cornerstone of evidence for conspiracy; most recently due to the formidable enhancement work leading to the discovery of the "badgeman" image by Gary Mack, assisted by Jack White.

Once again, Trask effectively begins with a novel approach: presenting a kind of history of the Polaroid/Land camera and the consumer-oriented product it was, all which has a bearing on the photograph itself, (which as many know, was another Warren "omission"). The chapter covers the activities of Mary Moorman and fellow eyewitness Jean Hill both pre- and post-assassination, while examining the many and often conflicting statements made by Mrs. Hill and their various embellishments over the years.

Although this is not one of the author's more riveting sections, there is certainly no lack of the known accounts of the facts, such as how the original Moorman photo (Photo #5) was bandied about with the FBI, UPI and the TV networks. He does present a unique illustration of the various "versions" of a knoll shooter: Thompson's in 1967, Ray Marcus' of the same year, Groden/Model's in 1976, and Mack/White's Badge Man position, dated 1982 (p. 257) Even David Lifton's mid-60s observations are noted. The problem is that, even though Trask respectfully acknowledges this work, he doesn't seem to take it all too seriously. For the badgeman hypothesis, (arguably, the strongest of them all) he relies too much on the portion of "The Men Who Killed Kennedy" documentary in which knoll eyewitness Gordon Arnold dramatically told of a crying policeman (without a hat) who took his film away: a story that, if true, strongly supports the badgeman hypothesis. Trask's presentation lacks here somewhat, in that he postu-

lates that Senator Ralph Yarborough's well-known account of seeing a serviceman "hit the deck" as shots rang out, could have been, perhaps, Bill Newman (p. 258). First of all, Newman and family were nowhere near the Arnold position and secondly, one may recall that, when Gordon Arnold's story first appeared in the Dallas Morning News in 1978, Yarborough called the paper noting that the man he saw was, in fact, on the hill, contrary to Trask's supposition. His stronger argument must be taken at face value: Arnold appears in no other known photograph of the area. The dedication and diligence shown by researcher Gary Mack and his attempts over the years to have the image further enhanced by contemporary scientific analysis to resolve the Badgeman questions once and for all are congenially noted in the chapter. As has often been said by Groden and others, the HSCA did their work on the faded original, rather than the far superior high quality negatives as first used by UPI in 1963. As Mack wrote in recent FOURTH DECADE articles, there may still be more we can learn from the Moorman photo, but the images fade with time and the work is expensive. My recent conversations with Gary revealed that new digital enhancement work is being done by another firm and is, so far, encouraging.

Trask's chapter on the Polaroids is a bit too brief, but satisfactory, except for his reluctance to concede the important clues, especially the "badgeman" image, that seem to reveal the fence shooter. However, it is his right to do so, and he does it with much aplomb, as well as an informed grasp of the available material.

THE BRONSON FILM did not come to light until 1978, when declassified documents led Dallas reporter Earl Golz and Gary Mack to Oklahoma, and eyewitness Charles Bronson. The reader may recall that, after the HSCA disbanded, one of the things Chairman Louis Stokes recommended to the Justice Department was that digital image processing work be done on the film. Trask is at his very best here, absolutely appalled at the games, delays and obfuscation that ensued, along with the legal entanglements often mentioned and too often blamed unfairly on Bronson's attorneys.

The first part of the film shows, of course, the infamous 6th floor window seconds before the shooting and possibly movement by two men as was noticed by Groden and others, which made headline news in Dallas in 1978. Trask himself got involved by contacting the Attorney General in the mid-eighties and got screwed around by practitioners of red tape and disinformation. It is an intriguing tale and I wouldn't want to give it away; suffice to say that Trask did a lot of legwork along with reviewing analyses, and this section shines bril-

liantly.

The book has separate chapters for those press photographers who were in Camera cars 1 and 2. These would include Dave Wiegman (whose film was really the first footage shown on TV; the NBC cameraman began shooting film about three seconds before the head shot), White House photographers Cecil Stoughton and Tom Craven, Tom Atkins, Frank Cancellare, AP man Henry Burroughs, Clint Grant of the Dallas Morning News, Art Rickerby of LIFE, and Tom Dillard. Trask carefully examines their activities, equipment and the photographs themselves with no stone left unturned. There are several bits and pieces here that still boggle the mind: Craven's recalling to Trask that he took film at the hospital that is now lost forever, including footage of officials "cleaning the blood out of the car" (p. 383); newsman Joe Laird's Parkland recollections, including his having edgy Secret Service men "put guns to my head" as LBJ was being led out. Having had much personal and written contact with a number of these men, Trask's account is packed with a sense of authenticity and adds new material to the assassination saga from these media veterans.

Camera car 3 had Jim Underwood, WBAP-TV's Jimmy Darnell, WFAA's Mal Couch, and local newspaper photographers Tom Dillard and Bob Jackson (whose greatest fame was for his photo of Ruby killing Oswald). Couch has the distinction of being perhaps the first person to say he saw a rifle being pulled back in from the 5th or 6th floor of the Depository, and his report was broadcast around 1:55 CST nationally over NBC television.

The work of Dillard and Jackson is given a chapter unto itself in POTP, once again with some heretofore unseen material. Dillard has nasty things to say about LIFE magazine's renowned photojournalism and "power over the American psyche," in Trask's phrase (p. 456). The "dean of the Dallas news photographers" (noted for his TSBD photos) collaborated with Underwood on those shots taken of the Elm Street curbstone and its bullet mark. The whole story is run down in a rather matter-of-fact way here and in my view, the author might have given more space to author Harold Weisberg's extensive work (and litigation), rather than just passing reference. For example, POTP relates how the FBI's speculation on the curb mark mentioned that it had been, perhaps washed off by "street cleaning machines." Weisberg once commented, in "The Men Who Killed Kennedy" documentary that, had this been the case, "there'd be no streets left in America." Enough said, as the bulk of these chapters are terrific.

WFAA-TV cameraman Tom Alyea was the only one of his

profession to get into the Depository building after the assassination and took some historic footage of the police activity at the scene. It has found its way into many documentaries and assassination specials, and is seen in its most complete (and, by no means total) form in the WFAA compilation series, "The Kennedy Tapes," reviewed by this writer in the January–March 1992 *Third Decade*. Some Alyea outtakes were used in the aforementioned Nigel Turner documentary, and Gary Mack recently told me there is a bit more footage, as yet unseen by most.

Trask, in his most "lone assassin" posture in this chapter, derives some material from an unpublished manuscript by Alyea called "The JFK Conspiracy HOAX" (undated in the bibliography) and his 1993 interviews with him. Other possible suspects, like Jim Brading and Larry Florer, are covered—as are the various book carton positions in the 6th floor "sniper's nest." The rifle clip, another area of dispute, gets added clarity in this section: Trask notes that it is seen "protruding from the bottom of the rifle" in the Allen photo. He relates that he owns a box of 6.5mm ammunition "in which each of the three clips contains the identical markings" as those on the Carcano's clip (p. 500). The "SMI" and "952" markings Trask refers to are those testified to by the FBI's Robert Frazier to the Commission.

Researcher and rifle expert Walter Graf has done much work regarding the clip, and has written to me several times asserting that it must fall out after the last round is bolted into the chamber. The book states, however, that the clip "had a propensity to catch and not fall out" (p. 549). I would guess that we haven't heard the last of this yet.

William Allen took other important photographs, including his three exposures of the infamous "tramps." Readers familiar with the differing versions of the tramps' alleged identities will not be disappointed, for Trask covers all the bases on this one. Allen also took shots of several officials at the curbside site of the aforementioned bullet mark. One of them seems to be pocketing a bullet or fragment. This has been often written about and, most recently investigated by researcher Mark Oakes (in his excellent privately-sold videotape). Mark has made a tentative identification of the agent in question and is still working on the issue.

As he did for the Nix film, Trask presents the most lucid account yet of the various amateur film clips collectively known as the Dallas Cinema Associates (or DCA) film. Nowhere else, to my knowledge, has anyone put together the story of the individuals involved, and how this collection came together. Many of us have had access to it for years, in

rather shabby form, however. No firm has yet taken it on commercially to present a cleaner, clearer and legitimate rendering, although POTP reports that Wolper Productions bought the rights and it was marketed locally for a time without much success. [Actually, it was simply one-time rights, not outright purchase, as pointed out to me by photo researcher Mack.] Critics have long pointed to the problematic footage therein of Ernest Montesana, which depicts several bystanders observing a rifle being examined by a policeman.

The rifle seen is said to be most dissimilar to the "assassin" rifle, as it is labeled in the frames' caption and is certainly not the Mannlicher–Carcano, as was first shown by photo expert Richard E. Sprague in 1967, and duly noted by Trask. The question then asked was: is this a second rifle found by police, thus a conspiracy? The book's solution is that "[C]omparing these frames with an assortment of still photos made by photographers William Allen and Jim Murray, the pictures show the pump shotguns carried by officers to be carried in the same manner [by the officer in question] as the one seen in the Montesana clip..." (p. 578). Perhaps, but maybe Robert Groden, Jack White or someone with the proper photographic equipment and a better copy of the blurry film than we've seen so far, can give a more definitive answer or interpretation; Trask's version leaves me unconvinced.

"Pictures of the Pain" concludes with a painstakingly researched section on the claims of Canadian Norman Similas, who Trask exposes as a fraud; and a scathing chapter on alleged "Babushka Lady," Beverly Oliver Massagee, whom he calls a "master of disguise" (p. 612). He brings up all the known discrepancies, and I, for one, am inclined to agree with his position. Her story, holes and all, is well-known to this journal's readers, and POTP relays it competently and without hyperbole or fanfare. In the July 1993 *Third Decade*, Mrs. Massagee attempted to answer several of the accusations thrown at her, and her book (written with Coke Buchanan), has recently been released.

It is difficult to imagine anything consequential regarding to photographic record of John Kennedy's assassination being left out, for Trask seems to have covered not only the obvious but also many associated side-issues associated therein. He has effectively closed a few gaps in some of the many stories of this case, discrediting some flawed hypotheses along the way, and has added a few new stories as well. He has spent a lot of his own money, so that he could put out the book that he wanted to put out, rather than be constrained and stymied by publishers' whims and demands. The result is a sturdily-bound and handsomely presented volume. He has recounted

the complexities of the known photographs and films, and given us a good sense of several of those still out there or otherwise lost or destroyed. As in any other major work on this case, we will all have our own particular areas of interest where we would have wished Trask would be a bit more open-minded, but this writer found himself mostly impressed with the author's sense of logic, though never overlooking that some of the book is often both selective and subjective.

POTP is likely to get some of the research community's photographic experts ticked-off in places. This is probably unavoidable, considering their well-contoured views and personal interpretations about this evidence, which they've worked on for so many years, often with great results, sometimes not. Their closeness to and defensiveness about their work is just human nature. But an objective reading should reveal that this dedicated historian/archivist is very much up to the task, and that his many years of serious effort have produced an indispensable, clearly written study of the assassination films and photographs, and thus, much of the case itself. It should not be taken as any kind of "final word" on the subject, however: Trask is sometimes inclined to dismiss a number of good arguments for conspiracy too readily, and often without their intrinsic strengths intact, as I see it.

But in an age where sensationalistic journalism, sloppy methodology and outright fakery seem often to replace incisive assassination research, this book is a tough act to follow. There's a richness in the clearly told and heavily footnoted detail here, tainted only by Trask's sporadically nonchalant approach to conspiracy research. But don't let that constrain you—Trask does it gently and respectfully for the most part and with much food for thought. Without doubt, Richard Trask is a serious "player" and this reviewer is confident that "Pictures of the Pain: Photography and the Assassination of President Kennedy" will be considered a pivotal and even seminal work for a very long time to come.

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THE BLEDSOE BUST:

A Case Study in the Possibilities and Perils Encountered Investigating New Leads, Documents and Sources

by

James R. Folliard

Background

On April 2, 1964, Mary Esther Bledsoe joined a long list of Kennedy assassination witnesses deposited in Dallas by Warren Commission Counsel Joseph Ball. Mrs. Bledsoe, 67 years old and divorced, lived at 621 N. Marsalis Avenue, in Dallas' Oak Cliff section, in the boarding house she owned.

Ball had two reasons to want to get Bledsoe's testimony. On Monday, October 7, 1963, she had rented one of her rooms to a nondescript young man who (she said) signed the register "Lee Oswald" and paid her \$7 for his first week's stay. But by Saturday the 12th, she had grown uncomfortable with her new tenant, and abruptly evicted him—without refunding the \$2. Oswald requested for the remainder of his week.

The second reason involved her report of a more dramatic encounter with her ex-tenant six weeks later, just after the shooting in Dealey Plaza. After watching the presidential motorcade in downtown Dallas, Mrs. Bledsoe boarded a bus to return home. Her bus continued west on Elm Street and picked up another passenger several blocks short of Dealey Plaza—Lee Harvey Oswald. She described him as looking "like a maniac...He looked so bad in his face, and his face was so distorted." Almost immediately, news reached the passengers that President Kennedy had been shot, and "Oswald" got off two blocks later. [1]

Mrs. Bledsoe was the only witness to positively place Oswald on this bus, so her testimony was critical to the Warren Commission's reconstruction of his movements immediately after the shooting. But even more crucial was the information she supplied about Oswald's appearance, particularly his shirt, which had "a hole in it, a hole, and he was dirty, and I didn't look at him. I didn't want to know I even seen him." [2]

She was referring to a "distinctive hole in the shirt's right elbow," marking it as the same brown shirt Oswald had on when arrested little over an hour later at the Texas Theater. The crucial point: cotton fibers identical in color—composition

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