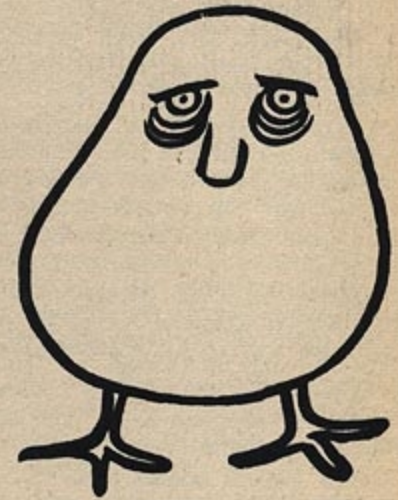


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The Realist



Final Solutions to the Assassination Question

by Craig Karpel

These people seem to have been vaporized.—Jim Garrison, District Attorney, Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

On Thursday, March 9, 1967 I opened the *New York Post* to James Wechsler's column. Under the headline "JFK & Castro: Lost History?", it read:

In his final days on earth John F. Kennedy was actively and inquisitively responding to overtures from Fidel Castro for a detente with the United States.

That is the dramatic story unfolded by William Attwood, a key intermediary in the negotiations, in a new book called "Reds and Blacks" (Harper and Row) describing his experiences as journalist-turned diplomat in the Kennedy era.

Sen. Robert Kennedy, reached in Washington yesterday, confirmed the essence of Attwood's report.

The saga of the secret Castro initiative and the Kennedy Administration's cautious but affirmative, persistent probing belongs in any compilation of the inscrutable "ifs" of history. It has special relevance at this moment in the light of lurid rumors being leaked in Washington of a CIA plot, reportedly known to then Attorney General Kennedy, to assassinate Castro—and the simultaneous tale that Oswald was Castro's agent in a counterplot that led to John Kennedy's death.

The story recorded by Attwood blasts this fantasy and offers a wholly reverse version of the Washington-Havana relationship that seemed to be taking shape when John F. Kennedy was slain.

The unfinished episode began in September, 1963, when Attwood, now editor of the Cowles publications, was serving as special adviser for African affairs at the U. S. mis-

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by Reginald Dunsany

New Orleans D.A. Jim Garrison's courageous probe of the Kennedy assassination has confirmed the existence of a secret international terrorist ring more deadly than the Ochrana, GPU and Gestapo combined—the Homintern.

Intelligence agencies of the East and West have referred in hushed whispers to this sinister camarilla of homosexual militants ever since its founding in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1931, but until Garrison began his investigation, few hard facts confirmed the lethal scope of its activities.

Insiders in New Orleans now claim that all the major figures in the Kennedy murder were covert operatives of the Homintern's Western Hemisphere "Echelon B" network, serving under the direct control of David Ferrie, a former Eastern Airlines pilot cashiered after his arrest on sodomy charges in 1959.

Garrison characterizes Ferrie, who died under suspicious circumstances on February 22, as "the most important person of all time" and the key not only to events in Dallas but also to the systematic liquidation of eyewitnesses following in its wake (at the latest count by Penn Jones, Jr. and other assassination buffs, 23 dead, including Dorothy Kilgallen).

"You can understand Ferrie's motiva-

tion," Garrison said recently. "Kennedy was a virile, handsome successful man—everything Ferrie was not. In addition, there was the thrill of staging the perfect crime. Remember the Loeb and Leopold case in Chicago? It was the same thing with Kennedy."

Writing in the *Saturday Evening Post* (May 6, 1967) reporter James Phelan summarized Garrison's thesis as revealed in a series of exclusive interviews: "He claimed that Oswald and Ruby were both homosexuals and were both involved in the plot. He implied that Ruby—'his homo-

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by Steve Klinger

"Mesa, Arizona—A laughing 18-year-old boy who 'wanted to get known' turned a beauty parlor into a slaughterhouse today when he shot four women and a 3-year-old girl . . . (He said) that he had got the idea from recent mass killings in Chicago and Austin..."

—News item

In recent times, there has flowered in the United States a happy marriage of two great American traditions, individual initiative and violence. Not since the gangland massacres of the 1920s and '30s has the nation been swept by such a bloody wave of multiple killings, and the spontaneous and quasi-public response of American citizens has been truly unprecedented.

Dutiful coverage by the communications media evoked reactions ranging from sympathy for the victims to a half-expressed admiration for the killers, although amongst the citizenry the latter was only obliquely expressed by such expressions as "Wow, what a nut!" and "That guy had some eye, didn't he!"

Still, one could sense the competitive spirit festering about the land as upstarts on every street corner began contemplating shooting their way into fame. Indeed,

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STEVE KLINGER

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as a prominent New York psychiatrist warned, a new national pastime was subtly evolving.

Of course the would-be headline-makers have had a difficult time eclipsing the best work of the past. The giants of yesterday were not so easily surpassed. There was, to begin with, the Babe Ruth of mass murder, Camden, New Jersey's own Howard Unruh, who, on Sept. 6, 1949, killed 13 persons and wounded three in the space of ten incredible minutes. Calculating the percentage of fatalities out of total hits, this gave our marksman a record .813 average and a ratio of 1.3 murders per minute.

Melvin Collins made headlines even earlier when he shot eight persons to death and wounded six others in Chester, Pa. in November of 1948. Collins may have been a bit sloppy but he proved his Hall of Fame mettle by having the resourcefulness to increase his total by killing himself.

Another case several years old which only recently received acclaim is that of Perry Smith and Richard Hickock, who killed all four members of a Kansas family in November, 1959. The two were later executed. The success of Truman Capote's account of the case, *In Cold Blood*, attested to America's esteem for public-pluggers. The book may even have precipitated the recent revival of such slaughters.

In any event a new wave of mass killings began, and soon the old records were being shattered.

On July 14, 1966, Richard Speck allegedly resorted to a variety of techniques in the murder of eight student nurses in Chicago. Living up to the *Born to Raise Hell* tattoo on his arm, he compiled a cool .888 percentage, only narrowly missing a ninth victim.

Ex-marine Charles Whitman responded to this carnage with a vengeance. Climbing to the top of the University of Texas tower in Austin with an arsenal of guns, he displayed the advantages of military training. After two earlier murders at home, he killed 14 and wounded 33 on August 1.

Although his *percentage* of fatalities was too low for a sharpshooter rating, Whitman's score of 49 may stand for some time as a record for most total hits.

The press did a commendable job in reporting the competition. Using its recent experience in war coverage it added all sorts of descriptive color to the killing accounts. One UPI report from Austin during the Whitman killings went so far as to note that the victims were dropping "like soldiers."

Perhaps it was the battlefield aura surrounding Whitman's exploits which

prompted a legislator from one of our larger states to call for a program to "demilitarize" American fighting men before their return to civilian life. After all, why give ex-marines an unfair advantage in the competition?

The press also displayed its power to shape history as well as report it. By running front-page stories across the nation which told the news of one murderer, hypothesized psychiatrists, the dailies hit upon a sure-shot method of attracting new recruits.

Newspapers also responded to the public's idolization of the killers by seeking to establish Whitman as an all-American boy, kind, good-natured and religious. Stories were printed which compared him with Unruh, emphasizing the fond regard each had for the Bible.

Soon American business began to thrive on the public interest in the murderers. From Atlantic City, New Jersey came a report that *Tussaud's Wax Museum* on the boardwalk had ordered wax images of Whitman and Speck almost immediately after their escapades. A spokesman for the museum said, "It is the policy of Tussaud's to obtain these figures as soon as these people make the news." He added that replicas of Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby arrived only three weeks after President Kennedy's assassination.

A leading New York psychoanalyst voiced approval of the museum's policy: "T.V. is so ephemeral," he said. "Obviously this also applies to newspaper accounts. People like to contemplate the great killers leisurely, to see them life-size. Their realization in wax—for better or worse—captures forever the human images of evil, power and fame incarnate."

Reliable sources indicate that the wax museums will soon be rivaled by the vast communications media which are now planning extensive coverage of all mass killings, past, present and future.

From Hollywood comes news that Woody Allen has signed to play Richard Speck in a new Hitchcock film, *Is There A Nurse in the House?*

Also in the offing is a new Parker Brothers game, to be called *Mayhem*. Designed for a maximum of 12 players, the winner would be he who: (1) receives a card designating him an ex-marine; (2) lands on the box marked *Texas*; and (3) kills the most players as he encounters them on the board by rolling the dice.

Mark Lane is preparing to publish a book which attempts to prove that the bullets in the Austin killings could not possibly have been fired from the University tower. The appendix of the book will contain exclusive photos of Whitman's brain tumor.

A recent, though little-publicized, conference of television producers in New York left little doubt that the demands of

the home viewer would soon be met. The executives even agreed to pool their resources and drop network rivalries in the public interest:

"It's about time we had some live coverage of these things," suggested one.

"We could call it *Massacre of the Week*—"

"No, that would be too risky. We'd have to guarantee a slaughter every week. Remember, these killers aren't in Equity. They might fink out on us."

"Yeah," said a third. "We'll just have to stay prepared on 24-hour alert. It could be like a live *You Are There*—"

"Maybe we could get Walter Cronkite to announce, like in the old days."

"Hey, for the first show we could hire six ex-marines and let them loose on Times Square."

"Maybe we could get LBJ to run down Pennsylvania Avenue spraying napalm."

"Yeah, that would be a good sequel to the undercover job he did for us in Dallas."

"I don't remember that one," said a younger producer.

"Oh, sure," a veteran assured him. "Imagine! On top of everything else, having Ruby shoot Oswald on live TV! We'll never top that."

"Say," shouted another, "We could carry these things via Telstar—"

"Good idea, but we might have some trouble. It's already booked up for live coverage of the war in Vietnam."

"Wait a minute," objected the president of the educational network. "I don't know how moral all of this is. Isn't it sort of yellow television?"

"Nonsense! We didn't start this or condone it. We're just reporting the news . . ."

And so they're all ready. Cameras are now being secretly installed in cities ripe for a massacre. Any day now Batman serials and Gemini reports will be interrupted by special play-by-play color accounts of each new attempt at *The Crime of the Century*.

Zoom lenses will zero in on a white puff of smoke as commentators speak to hushed living rooms across the nation.

"He's firing rapidly, folks. How many is that, Howie? . . . Seven hit in the last 10 minutes? Check. If you tuned in late, fans, Howie Unruh here is keeping score for us. He's been given special dispensation by the New Jersey Department of Institutions as a public service—to provide expert opinion. How does it feel to see him gunning for your record, Champ? Would you call him a sharpshooter yet? Hey, there goes number eight! Wait a minute. I think it was that guy from the wax museum. Looked like he was running toward the killer with a tape measure. And now let's pause as he goes after number nine. Hey, friend, do it again. . ."

The Realist

REGINALD DUNSANY

(Continued from Cover)

sexual name was Pinkie'—executed Oswald to prevent him from telling all . . . Boiled down, his version of the Kennedy assassination made it out to be the result of a homosexual conspiracy . . ."

Only a man with the cast-iron guts of the Jolly Green Giant would dare to openly challenge the Homintern. According to a former CIA agent currently employed as security officer with a major Eastern aviation company, the Homintern was founded in Switzerland in 1931 by three men, a German, an Indian and a Persian—to this day their names are not known—who pledged to "employ all means, legal and extra-legal, to advance the fortunes of homophiles around the world."

(Of the initial triumvirate, only the Persian is still alive, now occupying an honorary post without administrative authority.)

There is some evidence that the Homintern initially restricted its activities to legitimate fund-raising and propaganda, receiving large sums from certain European industrialists and Eastern potentates, but by 1933 the organization shifted its emphasis to violent attacks on leading representatives of heterosexual values and a concomitant effort to infiltrate its operatives into positions of power and influence in all the governments of the world.

The group's first major setback occurred when its man in Germany, Ernst Roehm, the notorious invert who headed the Nazi SA, was liquidated in the bloody June 30, 1934 purge only weeks before implementation of the Homintern's master plan to assassinate Hitler and insure Roehm's accession to the Chancellorship.

Homintern successes in the succeeding years have included the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia in Marseilles in 1936 (his successor was Prince Regent Paul, a bi-sexual coprohiliac who threw in his lot with the Homintern in 1935), the abdication of the Duke of Windsor (viewed as a dangerously virile symbol of Empire), the poison death of Franklin Roosevelt (following closely on his discovery of Eleanor's membership in the Androgyne Circle, the Homintern's Women's Auxiliary), the firing of General Douglas MacArthur, the censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy (whose blunderbuss attacks on "security risks" in government came dangerously close to exposing Homintern cadres in the State and Justice Departments) and the infiltration of Homintern agents into key control positions in the theatre, Hollywood and fashion industry.

In the cultural field, the Homintern has worked through the instrumentality of the "Woodstock Group," a closely knit apparatus of artists led by a triumvirate of Truman Capote, Gore Vidal and Edward Albee.

("Scribe," the Woodstock Group's precursor organization was dominated by a prominent playwright known by the code name Janus, and was instrumental in the imprisonment of Ezra Pound in St. Elizabeth's Mental Hospital and directly responsible for the destruction of Ernest Hemingway's sanity through the introduction of progressive doses of belladonna and henbane to his food by a trusted aide now prominent in the Homintern literary hierarchy.)

But as Garrison is now discovering, the Homintern's greatest coup was the Kennedy assassination. Not only did it remove from office a despised symbol of heterosexuality and virility, but it brought to power a man fully amenable to Homintern dictate.

Sources in New Orleans are studiously silent on the extent of Lyndon Johnson's connection with the Homintern—it is generally assumed his torrid affair with Hearst White House correspondent Marianne Means indicates bi-sexuality at the very least—but the association of his most trusted aide with the Homintern is now accepted even by Johnson's political supporters in the FBI and CIA.

Walter Jenkins, Johnson's right-hand man since 1939, has been identified by unimpeachable sources as "Alcibiades"—the near-legendary Washington director of Homintern activities ever since Cordell Hull resigned as Secretary of State in 1946 amidst a shroud of scandal.

Johnson's relationship with Jenkins, who was recruited by the Homintern at the age of 26 in his home town of Jolly, Texas was described by James Reston in the *New York Times* of October 15, 1964: "It was not only that Walter Wilson Jenkins was his personal friend, but that he was also his official confidant, *the last man to leave the White house in the evening . . .*" (Italics added.)

Sources close to DA Garrison are hesitant to reveal the extent and intimacy of the relationship between Jenkins and Clay Shaw, the black-leather cum whips freak who was the bag man for Oswald, Ruby and the "gay Latinos" who fired at Kennedy from the grassy knoll, but there is no doubt the intermediary between "Alcibiades" and Shaw was former New Orleans Mayor De Lesseps Morrison, who died in a mysterious plane crash in Mexico in 1964 shortly after transferring his allegiance from the Homintern to the Mafia.

"If we could grill Jenkins on the stand we'd blow the lid off this entire country," one Garrison investigator who insists on anonymity told me. "But he's still too big — we can't get anywhere near him."

Jenkins' value to the Homintern was destroyed on October 7, 1964 when he was arrested in the public men's room of the Washington YMCA and charged with engaging in indecent acts with Andy Choka, a 60-year-old resident of the Soldiers' Home for Disabled Veterans.

(Choka now serves, apparently through the intermediary of powerful friends, as Deputy Undersecretary for Foreign Trade in the Commerce Department's European Division).

The Homintern had covered up Jenkins' previous arrest in the YMCA lavatory in 1959, and quickly dispatched Abe Fortas (a recent LBJ adornment of the Supreme Court) and attorney Clark Clifford to pressure Washington newspaper editors into suppressing the story, but their efforts failed when Goldwater forces broke the news and Johnson was forced to accept Jenkins' resignation.

(In a poignant expression of grief, Mrs. Johnson issued a statement on October 15th declaring: "My heart is aching today for someone who had reached the end point of exhaustion in dedicated service to his country.")

But "Alcibiades" was not cashiered or liquidated by the Homintern once his public usefulness was ended; perhaps in recognition for his signal services in Dallas, he was awarded a yearly pension of \$100,000 and still serves as a confidential consultant on Washington affairs.

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The full scope of the Homintern's international activities is evidenced by its handling of l'affaire Jenkins, which politically endangered its man in the White House. According to Earl Mazo in the *New York Times* of October 16, 1964: "The Walter W. Jenkins case inspired high hopes in the camp of Senator Barry Goldwater and dismay among supporters of President Johnson."

To counteract the political impact of the Jenkins arrest, Homintern agents speeded up implementation of "Operation Juno," a brilliant plan conceived by the Homintern's top man in Moscow, Dimitri Schelepin, deputy administrator of the Soviet Foreign Office. "Juno," conceived almost two years earlier, aimed at the overthrow of Nikita Khrushchev, whose earthy peasant mannerisms and bull-like virility were anathema to Homintern.

As initially framed, the plan called for Khrushchev's ouster by the party Secretariat after a disastrous border clash with the Chinese in Inner Mongolia, artfully contrived by Homintern agents on both sides of the Bamboo Curtain.

(Unverified intelligence reports reaching Hong Kong indicate that Chou En-Lai, a well-known pederast, heads Homintern operations in Peking.)

It was now deemed necessary to overthrow Khrushchev immediately in order to distract the American public from the Jenkins case and precipitate an artificial air of international crisis that would rally the electorate around Johnson's banner. Within one day of the disclosure of the Jenkins scandal the Soviet Central committee, acting under the adroit tutelage of Homintern agents, toppled Khrushchev and installed Breznev and Kosygin as his successors.

Breznev is free of all Homintern ties, but MI 5 reports that during the two leaders' state visit to England in 1965, Kosygin was spotted conferring with a notorious Homintern agent, Captain Nigel Deverish (ret.) in a public lavatory in Notting Hill Station.

In the wake of the Khrushchev overthrow, the *New York Times* (October 16, 1964) commented: "Reports from Moscow that Premier Khrushchev has been replaced led many political observers to speculate that the possible anti-Johnson impact of the Jenkins disclosure might be nullified by the effect of an international crisis upon the voters."

And a leading Republican spokesman commented: "That Lyndon Johnson is lucky. The arrest of his man Jenkins accented the whole Bobby Baker corruption mess, which is Goldwater's strongest issue. But then comes this Khrushchev thing, taking the headlines and accenting Barry's greatest weakness, international affairs and the trigger-happy charge." (Ibid.)

By a series of swift, brilliant maneuvers the Homintern had saved the day for LBJ.

When all this is said and done, the Jenkins affair remains a serious setback to the Homintern—almost as grave as the current Garrison probe in New Orleans. And if the Homintern is loyal to its allies, it does not forget its foes.

The two officers who arrested Jenkins, both attached to the Metropolitan Morals Division, were Andrew L. Grevers and L. P. De Witt. In May, 1965 Officer Grevers' wife returned to their suburban Chevy Chase, Maryland home and found her husband dead on the living room floor, his neck broken by a single karate chop.

When interviewed by this writer, Mrs. Grevers reported that Maryland state police investigating the case claimed the motive was burglary, although nothing was taken from the house and no suspect has of this date been arraigned. Her late husband's friends on the Washington police force were "suspicious," she revealed, "but they told me not to say anything to anyone about it."

The second arresting officer, L. P. De Witt, resigned from the police force shortly after his colleague's death. A bachelor, De Witt told friends, "Somebody's out to get me—it's a feeling you get when you've been on the force as long as I have. You know when you're being followed everywhere, you develop a sort of sixth sense. This thing is some kind of a vendetta. They got Andy [Officer Grevers] and now they're after me."

In Baltimore on June 2, 1965 De Witt boarded a Panamanian freighter, the *Aregado*, headed for Montevideo, Uruguay, where his married sister lives with her husband, a construction engineer for the Uruguayan Department of Public Works. When the ship landed on June 17, De Witt was not aboard. The verdict of the Montevideo Maritime Commission investigating the case: "Missing at sea, cause of misadventure unknown."

The Homintern had wiped the slates clean.

Washington insiders charge that the Homintern exercised considerable influence over the Warren Commission from its inception. The rumor has it that the Chief Justice himself, while not directly associated with the Homintern, is sympathetic to its aims and receptive to its advice.

One former White House staffer during the Kennedy years, who resigned in a dispute over Vietnam policy and is now associated with a midwestern university, swears to intimate that Warren left the White House with tears streaming down his face after being appointed head of the Presidential Commission not out of reluctance to shoulder such an onerous task but, as he puts it, "Because that old bastard Lyndon ran out of K-Y."

Speaking of homosexuality, we have always been intrigued by those dedicated foes of McCarthyism and resolute champions of civil liberties who triumphantly clinch their arguments against J. Edgar Hoover by "disclosing" he's a queer.

Apart from the fact there exists not one iota of hard evidence to support this supposition—unless you place a sinister interpretation on his prompt dispatch of flowers to Walter Jenkins' hospital room, which may be considered Hoover's finest hour—the thing that really bothers us is the implicit assumption that if Hoover were straight he'd be a paragon of civic virtue.

Isn't it enough that he's a vain, strutting martinet, that he's transformed the FBI into a button-down Gestapo, that he's blackmailed scores of Congressmen and government figures, that he framed the Rosenbergs, that he falsified evidence to be presented to the Warren Commission, that he's anti-Negro and pro-war?

His public record alone condemns Hoover, without the extraneous introduction of smugly sneering references to his sex life.

This is all rather reminiscent of the frenzied attempts in the 1930s by anti-Nazi groups to present Hitler as homosexual and, on a smaller scale, the trend among interviewers of the late George Lincoln Rockwell to impute by sly innuendo that the American Fuhrer spent his nights cavorting in the barracks-room with his teenage stormtroopers.

Hitler, of course, led a resolutely dull and bourgeois sex-

life, thoroughly "normal" if unimaginative, and there isn't a scintilla of evidence that Rockwell was anything but heterosexual.

Again, what troubles us is the belief that Adolf Hitler and his ideological heirs cannot be adequately condemned without throwing their sex lives into question. Imagine—if we may be permitted a fantasy—Supreme Allied Command Headquarters, London, June 3, 1944: Churchill, followed by Lord Thorneycroft, rushes up to Montgomery and Eisenhower, crying: "Call off the invasion, boys! We just discovered he's straight!"

CRAIG KARPEL

(Continued from Cover)

sion to the United Nations. He had initially been enlisted as a New Frontiersman in the role of ambassador to Guinea (and much of his book is a lively, unconventional retrospect of his African assignment). It was the Guinean ambassador who first broached to Attwood the possibility of a Cuban-U.S. rapprochement.

Attwood says he had received hints from other sources that Castro was growing restive under Communist pressures and was prepared to make "substantial concessions" to achieve an accommodation with the U. S. There were indications of a deepening rift between Castro and Che Guevara, the hard-line Commisar who was said to regard Castro as "dangerously unreliable."

The reports seemed plausible to Attwood; a long session with Castro in 1959 "convinced me that he was too emotional to be a disciplined Communist, though naive enough to be swayed by Communist advisers."

Attwood suggested to UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson and Averell Harriman that quiet contact be made with the Cuban delegation at the UN to find out "if in fact Castro did want to talk on our terms."

Harriman favored the idea but advised Attwood to explore it with Robert Kennedy "because of its political implications." Meanwhile Stevenson discussed the matter with President Kennedy, who approved the notion of Attwood conferring with Dr. Carlos Lechuga [Wechsler spells it "Lechunga" throughout the piece], the chief Cuban delegate, "so long as I made it clear we were not soliciting discussions."

At a party a few days later Lechuga told Attwood there was a strong chance that Castro would invite him to Cuba. Robert Kennedy said he thought it would be preferable if such a private session were held outside Cuba, possibly in Mexico.

The late Lisa Howard, the spirited TV correspondent who knew Castro well and tenaciously pursued for many long months a dream of U. S.-Cuban reconciliation, learned of Attwood's talks with Lechuga and was in telephone communication with Maj. Rene Vallejo, Castro's personal aide.

On Oct. 31 Vallejo told Miss Howard that Castro would welcome an unpublicized visit from a U. S. official.

On Nov. 5 Attwood met with McGeorge Bundy at the White House; Bundy, he reports, said "the President more than the State Dept. was interested in exploring this overture but thought we should now find out just what Castro wanted to discuss before going into a meeting."

Vallejo called Miss Howard again to emphasize that the Cubans would accept any secrecy arrangements we proposed. He also said that Castro alone would be present—and specifically stated that Guevara would not be.

Bundy told Attwood that President Kennedy still favored preliminary private talks at the UN to ascertain whether Castro was "seriously interested" in discussing the points Stevenson had raised in a UN speech on Oct. 7. In that address Stevenson said that the U.S.-Cuban cold war could be ended if Castro stopped taking orders from Moscow and

infiltrating other Latin American states, and returned to the democratic promises of his revolution.

Attwood telephoned Vallejo at a private Havana number and confirmed our readiness to listen to Castro. Vallejo said Castro would tell Lechuga to discuss an agenda for the conversation.

On Nov. 19 Bundy told Attwood that the President wanted to see him immediately after he met with Lechuga. The President, Bundy added, would be available except for "a brief trip to Dallas."

Soon after the assassination Attwood encountered Lechuga, who said he had been instructed by Castro on Nov. 23 to begin "formal discussions" with him.

"... I informed Bundy and later was told that the Cuban exercise would be put on ice for a while—which it was and where it has been ever since," Attwood writes.

If . . . ?

I thought this might interest Bill Turner, the ex-FBI Special Agent who is investigating the assassination for *Ramparts* so I clipped the column and sent it off. Turner mentioned Attwood's account in the June *Ramparts*, offering it as evidence of the dramatic changes in American foreign policy that might have taken place had Kennedy lived and, indeed, whose imminence may have helped bring about his death.

I bought *The Reds and The Blacks* so I could see if there had been any errors in Wechsler's version that I ought to bring to Turner's attention.

"The late Lisa Howard," Wechsler had written, "the spirited TV correspondent who knew Castro well and tenaciously pursued for many long months a dream of U. S.-Cuban reconciliation, learned of Attwood's talks with Lechuga and was in telephone communication with Maj. Rene Vallejo, Castro's personal aide."

"Meanwhile," Attwood wrote (p. 143), "Lisa Howard, a television correspondent who knew Castro well and had been briefed on my UN talks with Lechuga, had been in touch by phone with Castro's personal aide, Major Rene Vallejo."

Two things struck me.

First, Wechsler had felt called upon to note that Lisa Howard was no longer alive. Attwood didn't mention the fact of her subsequent death, although she refers quite gratuitously ten pages earlier in the book to the fact that within a year after he ran into Washington painter Mary Meyer in the company of John Kennedy she had been murdered.

Second, only Wechsler thought it interesting that Lisa Howard's interest in our relations with Cuba antedated her involvement in October, 1963.

Neither of these facts could have escaped Attwood. No one in New York's journalistic community could have failed to note Lisa Howard's death in the summer of 1965, or to have known that for some time before October, 1963 she had been exploiting her hard-won contact with Castro in a personal attempt to secure the rationalization of U. S.-Cuban relations.

Both facts were so well known to me that Wechsler's reference to them only barely registered with me on the first reading. It was Attwood's omission of them that renewed my interest.

Lisa Howard was born Dorothy Jean Guggenheim in Cambridge, Ohio in 1926. She entered Miami University in Oxford, Ohio at the age of 16, quit after a year to act. She appeared in a few summer stock productions, in an off-Broadway production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and in a TV soap-opera, *The Edge of Night*.

She joined the Lexington Democratic Club in New York City and energetically began to pursue what she called "the active side of politics." In 1960, with the conventions coming, she decided she wanted to leave acting and the "active side of politics" and "really get in the middle—reporting."

She applied to Mutual Broadcasting in New York and was turned down. She decided she had nothing to lose and flew to Los Angeles to surprise the executives who had turned her down. They were too flabbergasted to keep from hiring her.

That November, Khrushchev was in New York to tighten his heel, and Lisa Howard decided to nail him down. She arrived one morning at the Soviet Embassy carrying a briefcase, wearing an old hat and flat shoes and no makeup. "Goot mornink," she growled to the cops and marched into the embassy.

She hid in the ladies' room for 3 hours.

As Khrushchev and his entourage left the building, she joined the procession. As the Chairman stepped into his limousine she came forward, took his hand and requested an appointment. Khrushchev, astounded, granted her an exclusive interview.

"I don't think my success has anything to do with being a woman," Miss Howard told the *New York Times*. "Call it tenacity or resourcefulness or refusing to take no for an answer." In May, 1961 Lisa Howard was asked to join the American Broadcasting Company as the network's first woman reporter.

During the tense days of the Cuban missile crisis Lisa Howard decided she had to speak to Fidel Castro. As Russian First Deputy Premier Anastas I. Mikoyan was boarding his New York-to-Havana plane in November, 1962, Lisa Howard ran up and handed him an envelope containing a request for an interview and a transcript of her interview with Khrushchev. She asked him to deliver it to Fidel Castro.

There is evidence that Mikoyan complied, but Castro did not reply.

She decided that the only way to get to speak to Castro was somehow to get to Cuba and buttonhole him as she had Khrushchev. She prevailed upon Alex Quaison-Sackey, the Ghanaian Ambassador to the UN, to use his influence to get her a visa. Shortly after Quaison-Sackey returned from a trip to Cuba in February, 1963, her visa application was approved.

By April Fool's Day, she was in Havana with the extravagant notion of getting a TV interview with Castro.

For three weeks she cooled her heels at Havana's Hotel Riviera. Finally, at a quarter past midnight on Sunday, April 21, she received a telephone call from the Swiss ambassador. "Come downstairs," he said.

"I'm in bed," said Lisa.

"Get dressed and come downstairs," said the ambassador.

Lisa leaped into a low-cut brown cocktail dress, went down to the lobby, and was taken out to the hotel steps. Five minutes later, Castro drove up, walked over to her and said, "Lisa Howard, how do you do?"

Then Castro, his interpreter, the ambassador, the Minister of the Interior and Lisa Howard proceeded to the hotel night club. They talked for hours about literature, philosophy—Kant and Camus—and of what Lisa later called "the sacraments of democracy—free elections, free press, the words of Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson."

Castro appeared to enjoy it all. He had pictures taken of himself and Lisa with a Polaroid camera given him by

American attorney James Donovan. He ordered one Scotch-and-soda but hardly touched it. "There was a floor show," Lisa said, "but he never glanced at the stage." At 5:15 a.m., Castro suddenly agreed to be interviewed.

The interview was set for 3 p.m. Wednesday in a 20th floor penthouse suite at the hotel. Castro and his interpreter showed up at Lisa's room an hour early. "We sat and talked for an hour—about life, the revolution," she recalled. Then they went upstairs and Lisa interviewed Castro. When it was over, Lisa said, "Come on, I'll buy you two fellas a drink." They went to the hotel bar and talked for three more hours.

She came back from Havana triumphant, with a 45-minute interview in the can. It was aired on May 10, 1963. Castro said that he believed that the United States had "taken some steps in the way of peace" in its relations with Cuba and that these might be the basis of better relations. He mentioned the exchange of prisoners between the two nations and "the stopping of piratical acts against Cuba" as "steps in the right direction."

"I have looked at such steps with good eyes," he declared.

Senators Kenneth B. Keating of New York and Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota were interviewed immediately after the film. Keating said that Dr. Castro's remarks showed "a hunger for reconciliation." Humphrey, then Kennedy's spokesman in the Senate, said that Castro was "whistling in the dark" about any reconciliation.

ABC rewarded its lady reporter for her initiative with "Purex Presents Lisa Howard and the News, with the Woman's Touch". It went on the air September 9, 1963. The five-minute afternoon show was the first network news show starring a woman in the history of broadcasting.

Meanwhile she had written an article titled "Castro's Overture" that appeared in Richard Hudson's *War/Peace Report*. In it Lisa Howard noted that during the filmed interview Castro had proclaimed his desire to discuss all points of contention that existed between the United States and Cuba:

During our private conversations, which continued over a period of eight hours, Castro was even more emphatic about his desire for negotiations with the United States. He mentioned his desire for better relations with the United States in a speech at Lenin Stadium in Moscow. Upon his return to Cuba, in a televised address to the people, he referred to our interview and again indicated his desire for discussions with the United States.

On June 24th, Cuban President Dorticos spoke on Havana television and said he hoped Cuba could normalize relations with the United States. At a luncheon held at the end of June at the home of the Czech ambassador to Cuba and attended by all the Western ambassadors to Cuba, Castro continually referred to the subject of his desire for more amicable relations with the United States. This luncheon, incidentally, marked the first time Castro had attended a formal gathering of the Western diplomatic corps in over three years.

Surely these are not mere propaganda utterings. Even to the most casual observer of the Cuban scene it must be evident that Fidel Castro has something serious on his mind. An overture repeated so often, and in so many quarters can hardly be ignored.

However, this question may reasonably be raised: If Fidel Castro is genuinely interested in meaningful negotiations, why doesn't he address himself to the Swiss Embassy in Havana, which handles United States affairs there, or the Czechoslovakian Embassy, which represents Cuba in

this country? The answer is a simple one. Castro is an intensely proud man and, therefore, hesitant about making a precise and formal bid for negotiations that might be rejected out of hand—particularly where the United States is concerned.

Castro has spent a good part of his career defying the United States, and now he simply cannot bring himself to beseech us. So he has turned to other, more subtle approaches to impart his message: a U. S. journalist, public speeches, allied ambassadors—hoping that someone on the other side will respond to the suggestion.

Although the "U. S. journalist" had connections on the Cuban side, she was unable to make contact with the Administration. It was instead one of the "allied ambassadors"—the Guinean ambassador to Havana who first broached the topic of a Cuban rapprochement to Attwood—who started the ball rolling.

Attwood does not mention who brought Lisa Howard into the picture at this stage. Most likely it was Bobby Kennedy. On the Attorney General's instruction, Attwood told Lechuga that he "couldn't very well go to Cuba but that if Castro wanted to talk to us we were prepared to meet him or a personal emissary at some convenient place like the UN."

But Attwood notes that "Lechuga's message, which went through the Foreign Office, had apparently not reached Castro."

This is why Lisa Howard was informed of the Administration's interest in arranging talks with Castro: because she was the only person in the United States of America that could run Castro's interference and get through to the man himself.

Humphrey had said that Castro was "whistling in the dark" about any reconciliation. Now John F. Kennedy had picked up the tune, and Lisa Howard danced between them.

Castro called Lisa Howard on New Year's Day 1964, the eve of the 5th anniversary of his seizure of power from Fulgencio Batista. While thousands of red flags and pictures of Castro and Khrushchev decked the streets of Havana for the next day's celebrations, the Cuban Premier spoke in English for a half-hour.

Parts of the conversation were quoted in the next day's *New York Times*. He said that he was hopeful that good relations with the United States might be restored that year, that until President Kennedy's "tragic death" he believed that "an eventual normalization of relations with the Kennedy Administration was possible."

"We have spoken," he said, "and we repeat that our wish is to normalize that relationship. But now it is not for us; it belongs to the United States Government to take the next step to help that normalization because it is difficult to answer what we can do . . . We are ready to speak about indemnification of American property nationalized by the revolutionary Government and so you see that sincerely we are ready to speak, but it does not depend only upon us . . . I want to say to the people of the United States that in spite of the fact that President Kennedy was hard personally toward us, of course we are really sorry about his tragic death."

Lisa went to Cuba again in the Spring of 1964. She spent 10 days inspecting bull farms,, villages, housing co-operatives and agricultural schools. She was with the Cuban leader on five occasions.

"We talked and talked and talked," Lisa said. "He's read Shakespeare, Camus, the Greek philosophers, Thomas Paine.

He is an intellectual who also has a sense of humor."

The admiration was apparently mutual. Castro allowed her to film another interview. "I don't believe this interview is going to do a thing for me," he joked, "but it's going to be great for your career."

It wasn't. The interview was aired on April 19th. Castro said that at the time of Kennedy's death he believed the President was "persuading himself of his mistakes about Cuba. I had some evidence that some change was taking place in the mind of the Government of the United States . . . a new situation . . . and we had evidence I do not want to speak about."

Jack Gould, television critic of the *Times*, the next day criticized the interview as "vague."

"But," he added, "the A. B. C. news department did treat Miss Howard rather oddly in one respect. After her program had finished, the network offered a spot announcement in support of the International Rescue Committee. Viewers were asked to contribute money to aid the thousands of victims of 'Castro tyranny.' The matter of the refugees preferably should have been incorporated in the body of Miss Howard's program. The announcement was so pointed in its content and its placement on the air as to suggest that the network was second guessing."

Lisa Howard kept up her contact with Castro through that year. On July 6th, the Cuban premier telephoned her to inform her that he had sent telegrams to 25 American publications inviting them to send reporters to cover the 26th of July celebrations in Cuba. Any one of the 25 publications was of course free to make the invitation public. Castro called because he was anxious to give his blonde friend the scoop.

In the late summer of 1964 Bobby Kennedy announced that he would run for the New York Senate seat held by Keating. On September 10th, Lisa Howard and Gore Vidal—both known as prominent figures in New York City's Democratic reform movement—met with Keating to pledge their support to his campaign, to forestall what they called the "Bobby Kennedy power grab." The meeting was at Lisa Howard's home.

She told the *Times* three days later that the group was organized because "if you feel strongly about something like this you can't remain silent—you have to show courage and stand up and be counted." One of those attending the meeting said, "Bobby is the very antithesis of his brother, the late President. He is ruthless, reactionary and dangerously authoritarian. We feel he must be stopped now."

The first public meeting of Democrats for Keating was held the evening of September 28th. The following day ABC suspended Lisa Howard and plugged Marlene Sanders into her news slot. ABC News released the following statement:

"Miss Lisa Howard has been relieved from all ABC News assignments for the duration of the political campaign because she has chosen to participate publicly in partisan political activity contrary to long-established ABC News policy."

Lisa replied that she had notified ABC on September 19th that she was working in behalf of Senator Keating as a private citizen and that her television broadcasts would not reflect her political position. She had, she said, participated just as actively in politics during the campaigns of 1961, 1962 and 1963.

Shortly before her suspension ABC had renewed her contract through the following September. She insisted that

there was nothing in this contract that prohibited political activity on her part. The network admitted that this was so, but that she was suspended nonetheless.

Saturday evening, October 17th saw the debut of a series of debates called "The Controversy" at the Strollers Club, once the home of *The Establishment*, the English satirical revue and now the site of Arthur's, a discotheque. It was a panel show with food, drink and audience participation, moderated by Betty Furness.

Lisa Howard and Stephen May, a lawyer and Keating partisan, debated two pro-Bobby attorneys, Robert H. Clampitt and Justin Feldman. Edwin Guthman, a top Kennedy aide, sat silently in the rear of the audience. Lisa dropped the bomb of the evening. "Brothers are not necessarily the same," she told the audience. "There was Cain and Abel."

There was loud applause and a woman's voice that said, "That's disgusting." Betty Furness rapidly closed the refrigerator door on that salient of discussion. As Lisa walked into the foyer and saw Feldman talking to Ed Guthman, she must have realized that her days in broadcasting were numbered.

Election Day came, but Purex was still Presenting Marlene Sanders. The day after Bobby was elected the network informed Lisa that her particular woman's touch was no longer in demand at ABC News. They allowed as how she wasn't in violation of her contract and that they would reciprocate by continuing to mail her the \$500 minimum weekly paycheck to which she was entitled until she resigned—and would she please resign.

"She's being canned," an unnamed ABC executive told the *Times* on November 8th. "She doesn't fit. She's a mystery girl. We just don't want her on our staff."

On December 15th, she filed suit against American Broadcasting-Paramount Theatres, Inc. for \$2,008,000 in damages. She asked for a court order requiring the company to show cause why she should not be reinstated immediately, and asked for a temporary injunction to prevent ABC from using her format on the program during her absence.

"The exercise of a sacred right and citizenship," her affidavit stated, "by participation in a public election campaign cannot possibly constitute a legitimate justification for permanently removing me from ABC television."

At a hearing the following week, Clarence Fried, ABC's lawyer, replied that the company had suspended Miss Howard because she had ignored directives to desist from participating in partisan politics and had "sabotaged" network programs. Moreover, he said, she had been insubordinate to her superiors on several occasions.

State Supreme Court Justice Louis J. Capozzoli thought actual restoration to the air would be "an extraordinary action" and reserved decision. On January 18, 1965, Justice Capozzoli denied her requests for damages, reinstatement and an injunction.

With the possibility of returning to ABC nil, Lisa didn't bother making the rounds of other broadcasters. She was convinced that she was blacklisted. "ABC," she lamented, "has, in effect, created a blacklist on which they've placed my name." Instead she exploited some of her contacts in the reform movement and landed the job of Publicity Director of New York City's anti-poverty program.

She would begin her new job on July 6, 1965.

Slightly more than three weeks before she was supposed to go to work, Lisa Howard suffered what was described as a miscarriage and was admitted to Mount Sinai Hospital. She stayed there for 3 weeks, and was discharged on Fri-

day, July 2nd. Her husband, Walter Lowendahl, a film executive, drove her to their summer home in East Hampton, Long Island.

Shortly after noon on Fourth of July Sunday she was observed "acting strangely" in the parking lot of a pharmacy by "two friends," who helped her into their car and then called the police for assistance.

Patrolman William Brockman, who responded to the call, later told the *Times* that Miss Howard appeared dazed and glassy-eyed and was almost incoherent.

"She kept mumbling something about a miscarriage," the patrolman said. He escorted the friends' car to the East Hampton Medical Center, but "she collapsed before we got her inside."

The doctor at the clinic performed a tracheotomy to clear an airway and gave her oxygen. She never regained consciousness. At 12:15 p.m. Lisa Howard was pronounced dead. Dr. Mary Johnson, assistant Suffolk County medical examiner, tentatively ruled the death a suicide pending an autopsy. The police said that a prescription Miss Howard obtained Saturday for ten sleeping pills had been altered to 100 before she had it filled.

The *Times* reported that "according to a close friend, Miss Howard had been depressed since the loss of her unborn child. Speaking from her home at 63 Spring Close Highway, he said 'Lisa had taken a normal prescription last night to counter the depression. But she woke up and wandered into town seeking more barbiturates. She got them. Then she felt sick and asked two friends for help. They drove her to the East Hampton clinic, with a police escort, where she lost consciousness.'"

Two weeks later, Dr. Sidney Wenberg, Suffolk County medical examiner, ruled the death a suicide. Lisa Howard, he said, had taken enough barbiturates to kill five persons.

I first met Lisa Howard the last week in October 1962, the week the Russians were hauling missiles towards Cuba. I was contact man for the UPI film crew and we set up on a balcony overlooking the ballroom. The cameraman shot an establisher over the balustrade and when he was through he pointed to a knot of people on the floor.

"There's Stevenson, in the middle," he said. "Watch when she comes through—she doesn't care who he is, she'll strong-arm him out of there like he was her little boy."

And indeed within a few minutes Lisa Howard came through a door and made a beeline through the people and tables to where Stevenson was nodding politely, one hand in his coat pocket, his head tilted toward the floor. She stood in the group for perhaps half a minute before she lost her motherly patience and pulled Adlai out of the sandbox.

They came out of the elevator arm in arm. Stevenson looked quite pink as people whom we are used to seeing in the *grisaille* of the media tend to look in the flesh. Lisa Howard had Clairol blond hair pulled back in a bun and a pretty, heavily made-up face. She conducted a business-like interview, after which Stevenson good-evening-gentlemanned us and walked out alone down the hall.

"I've seen him better," she said, shaking her head. "They want this for the 11 o'clock," she said to me.

"There's a rider downstairs waiting," I said.

"They said the same thing two weeks ago and the stuff didn't come through till the next day. They put it on overnight by mistake."

The sound man rolled his eyes and stuck his tongue in his cheek.

"I'll call the lab myself," I offered.

"You'd better do that," she snapped. "This wouldn't be the first time you guys balled things up." She gathered her things and walked out the door.

"That mirror mirror on the wall must have not told her she was the fairest one of all tonight," said the sound man.

Lisa Howard struck me as the sort of person who took out her moods on others, not on herself.

She could indeed have killed herself; her self-possession may have been merely so much veneer over a core of pure mush. But the quality of the evidence that she did kill herself makes her suicide less than plausible. Evidence is often like Swiss cheese—it is the holes in it that make it interesting.

Lisa Howard suffered a "miscarriage" and was hospitalized for three weeks. The period of hospitalization for a miscarriage is ordinarily three days. One can assume that there may have been other factors which required her extraordinarily long stay at Mount Sinai.

She was supposed to have been despondent over the loss of her unborn child. Yet the day after her discharge from the hospital her doctor gave her a prescription for barbiturates. A doctor might as well have given her a loaded gun.

The "friend" who spoke to the *Times* says that she took the barbiturates Saturday to counter her depression. Barbiturates are pharmacologically depressants. Lisa Howard was no dope.

Two anonymous "friends" are said to have found her in the parking lot. Perhaps these "friends" partook of the same sort of anonymity as the "unidentified person" who, on March 27th of that year, had taken Jack Ruby's former attorney Tom Howard to a Dallas hospital to die [see *Ramparts*, November, 1966, p. 42].

If you found a friend of yours wandering around a pharmacy parking lot acting strangely, dazed, glassy-eyed and mumbling incoherently, would you wait for the police to arrive before taking her to the hospital? Put it another way—if you had just poisoned a "friend" and wanted someone to witness the simulated effects of barbiturate poisoning before the "friend" passed out or away, whom would you call?

Patrolman Brockman said that Miss Howard appeared dazed, glassy-eyed and almost incoherent. When he arrived at the scene he was told that she had been wandering around the pharmacy parking lot. If the physician who heard these facts assumed that the patient was suffering from barbiturate poisoning, standard procedure would be to remove the contents of the stomach by inducing vomiting or pumping the stomach and to administer large doses of amphetamines and an adrenalin solution.

None of these procedures was attempted.

Physicians in resort towns are exposed to the symptoms of barbiturate poisoning daily. Why didn't the doctor who treated Lisa Howard take routine action?

(Lee Bowers, the railroad terminal employee who stood in a 14-foot tower directly behind the Grassy Knoll was fatally injured on August 9, 1966 when his brand new company car veered from the road at 50 miles an hour and hit a bridge abutment. The doctor who rode in the ambulance with Bowers noticed something strange about the victim. "He was in a strange state of shock," the old doctor said, "a different kind of shock than an accident victim experiences. I can't explain it. I've never seen anything like it.")

Patrolman Brockman said Lisa Howard kept mumbling

something about a miscarriage. Does this ring true if her death was a suicide? Do people who attempt to commit suicide ramble on about the substantive cause of their attempt? If at this point Lisa Howard was in fact demented, why such extraordinary lucidity? More likely, she would be mumbling about how she was tired, or how the midday sun was hurting her eyes.

Assuming Patrolman Brockman's memory was not affected by what he later was told about the case by those close to Lisa Howard—by others with a more sinister interest in her death—what could Lisa have been trying to say? Could she have been trying to say that there had been no miscarriage? That the "miscarriage" was a ruse she used to find sanctuary in the hospital? Or that she had been poisoned and they were now going to say she had done it because of a miscarriage?

The *Times* reported that the police said she had altered her prescription "from 10 to 100." The *Times* style book dictates that the word "ten" be written out in the text—digits are used starting with 11. By quoting the police this way the reader is assured of the plausibility of such an alteration.

In fact, however, it would be impossible.

There is a law in New York State that prescriptions for barbiturates, amphetamines and narcotics be written out in words—even the time-honored practice of using X for ten and C for a hundred is not permitted in prescriptions for this drug. A pharmacist who filled a prescription for "10" barbiturate tablets would be committing a misdemeanor and putting his license in jeopardy. To dispense "100" he would have to be mad.

So we are presented with the picture of the lady newsman striding forth from the mad druggist to chew down one-hundred barbiturate tablets in an exurban parking lot at high noon without benefit of a glass of water, there being no evidence that she did not commit suicide.

You will excuse me for not going after the *evidence* that she did not commit suicide, but I prefer not to die mumbling "Lisa Howard" and I like water with my pills.

It is too bad that Lisa Howard is no longer with us. I should have liked to ask the only American who was in constant communication with Fidel Castro whether, in the Fall of 1963 or later, he had any intimations that forces in the United States had been plotting his death, or that those forces, finding their plans truncated by presidential order, decided to vent their anti-detente spleen on our young and beautiful President.

Perhaps she could have told us whether, as she found herself moving within earshot of the titans, she had reason to believe that there were among the honorable men of this land those who viewed political questions through the reticule of a gunsight.

Perhaps she could have told us the root of her perception of Robert Kennedy as Cain and John Kennedy as Abel. Mystery girl.

