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Killer Mentality

Unlike some of the foreign press, as well as perhaps many persons here at home, we do not perhaps believe there was any Communist plot involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.
Nor do we feel Ruby shot Oswald, with a national television audience watching in horror, in an effort to keep him from talking.
To be sure, in an event so momentous, so literally earth-shaking, one looks automatically for a strong malevolent purpose, for a dark master plot of some kind in explanation.
But we are satisfied, until evidence to the contrary is available, and after watching television reports for hours and reading every scrap of copy we could get our hands on, that no such evil design was present here.

THIS was, we conclude, with strong mixed feelings, just the work — in both instances — of twisted psychotics, each acting not in response to a command from some higher scheming power, but, pitifully, from the insane dictates of demented minds.
It is true that Oswald called himself a Marxist and was affiliated with some idiot group called "Fair Play for Cuba Committee." But it seems clear that he had no real ideological basis or intellectual comprehension of the very things he said he believed in.
It is manifest, however, that the sullen-faced youth was a total misfit in society, wherever he went or whatever he tried to do. His failures in school, his constant fights with other boys, his unsuccessful record in the Marine Corps, his vocational instability, all attest to it.
Picture the frustration at being unable to feel — from his point of view — anything but rejection in this country, and then, worse yet, not to be able to find ease or acceptance in this country's antithesis, Communist Russia.

THWARTED by bureaucratic red tape in his recent attempt to visit Cuba and Russia, it is perhaps understandable that he should centralize all that frustration and irrational hatred against President Kennedy, the titular and symbolic head of our nation's government, and Gov. John Connally, against whom he seemed to feel a personal score in connection with the conditions of his discharge from the Marine Corps.
Oswald's state of mind as he planned the assassination, indeed as he squeezed the trigger, is somewhat analogous to the ordinary man who, having been rebuked by his boss, goes home and vents his anger by kicking his dog or by picking a fight with his wife.
The vast majority of us find routine safety-valves to release our pent up frustrations. But there are some, and we submit Oswald was one of them, who because they are psychotics are impelled to react in ways that are dangerous to society: by driving at maniac speeds, by planting bombs in Sunday schools, by making obscene telephone calls or writing filthy letters, or by fixing on a particular group, race or religion, as objects of intense hatred.

WITH Jack Ruby there is less opportunity for the amateur psychologist to muck around. And at least in his case the motives which lead him to gun down Oswald will be explored in detail at his trial at some time in the near future.
But isn't there something of the gangland "code of honor" in his act? Isn't the gangster's mentality and eye-for-an-eye morality evident? Doesn't it seem reasonable that he imagined himself the nation's avenger, that by shooting Oswald, he could in some way even up the score?
It even seems plausible that he felt a kind of brutish gallantry in sparing Mrs. Kennedy a possible appearance at Oswald's trial.
The epithet he shouted at Oswald before he shot him would be consistent with such a hypothetical construction.

FOR a long time to come, at least until the final blue ribbon committee report is released, there will be conflicting stories and rumors.
Many are already floating around:
—that Oswald had an accomplice and that two silhouettes were seen by someone at that sixth floor window.
—that there is a "link" between Oswald and Ruby, and that the former was rubbed out because it was feared he was starting to crack under the interrogation.
—that the Dallas police and/or the district attorney are suppressing various mysterious pieces of evidence that could clear the whole matter up in an instant.
—that Oswald signalled Ruby with a "look" to leap forward and shoot him, or that the Dallas detectives escorting Oswald deliberately made no effort to protect him.

IT is unutterably sad that the President should have been cut down in the very prime of his life by a madman who even lacked the dignity of a cause.
It somehow makes a senseless act even more desperately senseless, and this is part of the impotent rage we all feel.
Such a great life should have been lost — if it had to be lost — in fighting for a worthy cause of some kind that would benefit all humanity, not from a bullet fired without purpose or meaning by a lurking sniper.
Let us now resolve, with the memory of our late President's fearless courage still fresh in our minds, to resist the impulse to see a shadow lurking behind every tree, and to imagine a wide-ranging master plot, where none probably existed — G.H.B.

'It's Terrible How Intolerant People Are Getting'



...Communications...

Letters to the Editor must bear the name and address of the writer, although under certain circumstances the use of a pen name or initial for publication is permissible. The Mail Tribune reserves the right to edit all letters with a view to clarification and condensation. Letters submitted for publication must not exceed 400 words. The letters printed in this column do not necessarily represent the views of the paper; in fact the contrary is often the case.

Boeing Deal Shaky
To the Editor: Much has been written about the Boardman Project. Some of it is truthful, some of it is untruthful and some of it is half truthful.
A recent editorial in the morning Oregonian discussed Rep. Mosser's idea of taking a million dollars from the Veteran's Fund Profits for investment in the Boardman - Boeing Project. The editorial indicated that the holders of the Veteran's Fund Bonds might be concerned over the "shaky" nature of the Boardman - Boeing Project under the Boeing lease and look unfavorably upon this type of investment. Of course, since the editorial, the money being talked about is now two million, not one million. This could add to the "shakiness" of the deal.

We have many men in our country that have risen to the heights of their chosen field from poverty and with all odds against them. Some people (most people) don't have that drive and a few go off the deep end. But we can't permit all of America to be indicted when one American does a murder. True, this murder was the President of the United States. But he was just a man. Nobody lives forever and if it had not been Mr. Kennedy's time to go, then he would have escaped as Gov. Connally did.

I would like to recommend a book for the readers of your paper — "1984" by George Orwell. For this past week has made me think of this book many times — for the radio, TV and people's reaction have been straight from the pages of "1984".

I know it was most tragic, the shooting of our President. We tend to think of that sort of thing happening in South America or other countries overseas, but not in our civilized United States.

But that four day orgy put on by all our radio and television stations was exactly as in "1984". And now most all radio and TV is busy beating the drums trying to pin this on the right wing, or as "1984" would have it, this is "hate the right wing" week, even though it's known to all that Oswald was a Marxist, an admirer of Castro, an admirer of Russia. What gives with people? It's like the fable of the king's falling down the street with no clothes. But one wanted to be the one to upset the applecart by daring to speak the truth.

What has happened to America, that a spade is not a spade any more?
Mrs. Robert E. Ellis
P. O. Box 204
Rogue River Ore.

Had Fun
To the Editor: I am one of the members of the Security Benefit Club who attended the Rebekah and Odd Fellows benefit dance at Central Point Saturday, Nov. 23. I also went to the club meeting Wednesday where approximately 150 of us had a lovely Thanksgiving dinner, and an afternoon of dancing. At each of these places a period of silent prayer for our departed President was observed. I do not feel that any disrespect was shown.

On television I followed his journey from the White House to the Capitol and from the Capitol to Arlington National Cemetery. I grieved with his courageous widow, knowing from experience the terrible ache she carried in her heart.
As for the dance, I certainly did not see anyone "whooping it up." And we did have fun.
Mrs. Leatha Jones
Box 367
Gold Hill, Ore.

Wishes for Railroads
To the Editor: Subject: Letter to Santa Claus.
Dear Uncle Santa Sam: My Christmas wish is for a safe train trip home for all holiday travelers. Too often, weather, climate and over-crowded highways turn holiday reunion into tragedy.

For our busy airlines we wish a generous portion of railroad style self-reliance. They have much too long worn the subsidized infant industry diapers of tax-free public airports, free traffic control and air mail support. Their service is important enough to pay its way without half the fare coming out of the taxpayer's pocket.
We wish a long vacation to

Foreign News: New Crisis in Berlin Possible in January; Changes Seen

Notes from the foreign news cables:
Berlin Crisis:
If the Soviets are to test the new U. S. administration's determination over Berlin, the guessing in West Berlin is that it will not come before January. The German winter usually restricts large scale troop movements. However, some time in January a battalion of about 1-100 men stationed in Berlin is expected to exchange duties with another battalion now in West Germany. This will mean a week-long series of convoys in both directions over the Autobahn, with possibilities of a Russian challenge on control procedures.
Changes:
London gossip columnists are claiming that U. S. Ambassador to London Dave Bruce may retire and be replaced by McGeorge Bundy.
There is no official confirmation in either American or British quarters of this suggestion.

The reports claim Bruce, who has been ambassador to Britain since 1961, feels he wants to return to private life. Bundy is well known in London and, while officialdom keeps diplomatic silence, little doubt is left that he would be welcome.

Strictly Personal



By Sidney J. Harris
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SEE OURSELVES

The senseless murder of the President was a mirror we were forced to hold up to ourselves — and we did not like, or believe, the image that we saw.

"How could it happen here? In this day and age? In our country? I thought such things happened only in history. In Europe. Somewhere else and long ago."

These were the reactions of Americans. They bespoke a tremendous ignorance and delusiveness about ourselves. For, as I have written many times in the past (and have been assailed for so writing), we are a violent people who do not know the rang and force of our primitive feelings.

Why should it happen here? The last three Presidents out of four have had assassination attempts on their lives. Nowhere in Europe is this true: in most such countries, the chiefs of state walk about virtually unguarded.

In this day and age? This is the age of the most ferocious war the world has ever known, the most bloody dictatorships, the gas ovens, the concentration camps, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by a "peace-loving" nation.

In our country? Why not, with our staggering homicide rate, our casual and callous auto fatalities, our shocking prevalence of firearms, our frontier relish for combat and conflict, our contempt for courts, our cynicism about the effectiveness of orderly processes.

Lydia Burnham
814 Warno St.
Prescott, Ariz.

If anyone still doubts this, consider the cry of applause that went up from the crowd gathered outside the Dallas jail when it learned that the presumed assassin of the President had himself been shot down. . . .

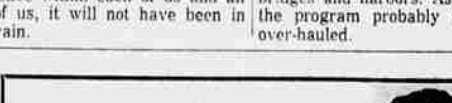
This reaction is, to me, more appalling and more revealing than anything else in the whole nightmare of the weekend. Here was a man not known for sure to be the killer. He had not confessed, not been brought to trial, not defended, not sentenced. And he was killed while in the very hands of the police.

And the crowd outside shouted its approval of this bestial, stupid and irrational act. This is frightening, this is disgusting, this discloses the profound failure of our society to instill in its citizens any real sense of civilization, any idea of the meaning of law and justice. This is what turns our country into little better than a jungle.

If this dreadful murder of a President makes us see ourselves more clearly, makes us re-examine our feelings, makes us determine to purge the violence within each of us and all of us, it will not have been in vain.

Japanese Premier Hayato Ikeda's 1960 program to double the Japanese people's real income in 10 years already has seen a 38 per cent jump in such income in less than three years. But it has shown weak spots in small farming, coal mining and in "infrastructure" such as roads, railroads, bridges and harbors. As a result, the program probably will be over-hauled.

The Righteous Shall Destroy the Earth
By Arthur Hoppe



WASHINGTON — The day after the funeral was grey and cold. I was walking down Pennsylvania Avenue, aimlessly. In search, I suppose, of comfort. How very much we need comfort right now. For I think we are confused, uneasy, vaguely fearful of an infection among us. (How odd that rings.)

President Johnson had quickly ordered "a prompt and thorough investigation" of the assassination. Texas was naming a court of inquiry. Congressmen were demanding "a blue ribbon investigation" of their own.

In the coming weeks, I knew, we would probe and examine and test and analyze. What was this infection? Was it spreading? What was this growth? Was it malignant? We must be reassured.

There would be headlines and magazine stories and official reports and gradually, I supposed, an official story would emerge and we would all be comforted and turn to something else. And I felt more uneasy than before.

In that first terrible hour after the shooting, I remembered how quick the liberals were to assume the assassination a plot by the radical right. "We really can't tolerate them any more," said one rational man I know, his eyes full of grief and anger and hatred. "They really must be wiped out."

The assassin now appears to have been a member of the left wing. And I feared how, after this period of mourning is over, the right wing would cry with equal hatred and anger for the blood of the radical left.

The picture came to my mind, as it often has these past few days, of the killer himself with the rifle butt to his cheek, the target in his sights. How righteous he must have felt when he squeezed the trigger. How noble. How martyr-like.

And I thought of Jack Ruby. How righteous he felt when he squeezed the trigger. How superior. How like an avenging angel.

And I never felt more strongly that the malignancy on our fringes is not so much hatred as righteousness. For no man is evil to himself. All men must justify what they do. And how easy this is for the righteous.

The radical right, in its righteousness, would save us all from the Communist conspiracy. And the radical left, in its righteousness, would save us from the Capitalist exploitation. Each knows he is right. Each is positive of his cause. And the deeds of each are therefore self-justifying.

So if we are destroyed, it will be by those who would protect us. If the world is destroyed, it will be by those who would save it. All in a righteous cause.

But as I climbed Capitol Hill in the funeral greyness, I found the comfort I sought. It lay in the solid massive granite and marble of the buildings — in the stolid columns of the Capitol, in the pristine morality of the Supreme Court.

I felt, as I always do, how enduring our system is, how deep its roots. But I understood for the first time that its prime function is to protect us from the righteous. For the heart of our American idea is that the majority will save itself. And I think it will. I think it will. For we, the people, are our only hope.

In the Day's News

By FRANK JENKINS

Hijacker seized a twin-engine Venezuelan Conair on a domestic flight, hurled pro-Communist leaflets over the city of Ciudad Bolivar and then forced the crew to land the liner in Trinidad. This terrorist incident came as police combatted Caracas for Lieutenant Colonel James K. Chennault, a U. S. Army officer kidnaped by pro-Castro foes of Venezuelan President Romulo Betancourt.

Bomb blasts shook Bogota and other Colombian cities as Communists reacted against U. S.-Latin American maneuvers off the Colombian coast.

IT MIGHT not be a bad idea if more of our people—as a matter of information and education — would do some reading about the other great religions of the world — such as Buddhism and Mohammedanism.

As literature, they're far better than a lot of the stuff that gets read these days.

THE THANKSGIVING holiday's strangest traffic accident: As a California highway patrolman started up onto the Dumbarton bridge south of San Francisco Thursday, he saw a car lying upside down in the shallow water. He had a hunch that somebody might be inside it. So he stripped off his clothes, waded out through the bone-chilling water, found a handle and pulled a door open, reached inside, felt a human arm and started to pull out what he thought was a corpse.

To his amazement, the "corpse" struggled out of his grasp, popped up out of the water and began gasping for air.

WHAT HAD happened? The car had skidded off the bridge approach and turned over in the water. When it turned over, it TRAPPED A POCKET OF AIR. By bending his head back, the driver was able to breathe this air. It kept him alive until the cop came into the picture — about 40 minutes after the accident.

Truth sometimes IS stranger than fiction. If a fiction writer had invented that situation, his readers would have scoffed and said it was TOO imaginative.

MAYBE we'd better get this Supreme Court decision straight in our minds. It is based on the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an ESTABLISHMENT of religion, or prohibiting the FREE EXERCISE thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peacefully to assemble and to petition the Government for redress of grievances."

IT DOESN'T PROHIBIT the reading of the Bible. It merely prohibits a law REQUIRING the reading of the Bible.

The Bible is Great Literature. No one can be anything but BETTER OFF for reading it. All the Supreme Court decision does is forbid COMPELLING the people to read the Bible.

One fears that these pickets are crackpots — of whom we have too many already.



There's be a temporary cessation of activities during this period of mourning!