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Probes Oswald's Life

'Legend' Adds to Assassination Puzzle

LEGEND: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald. By Edward Jay Epstein. McGraw-Hill. \$12.95.

ASIDE FROM gardening and cookbooks, the non-fiction field has produced a number of books in two areas which have become extremely interesting to the American public during the past five or six years — the Watergate affair and the Kennedy assassination.

The problem has been that with each new book on Wa- have been informed about the two-gun theory, the Oswald tergate, very little has been revealed that hasn't been told before by another author-co-conspirator and sales have gotten progressively slower. On the other hand, each new publication on the Kennedy assassination seems to add another piece to that everlasting puzzle of what really happened on Nov. 22, 1963.

SUCH IS the case with "LEGEND: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald," newest expose to uncover more of what is publicized as "astounding" information. So far, we have been informed about the two-gun theory, the Oswald double, the Soviet and Cuban connections and the conspiracy, not to mention the Warren Commissions findings of a lone gunman.

However, each issue tends to negate much of the basis for the others, and the Epstein version is no different. What makes this account stand out is the mystery surrounding the author as he delved into a hidden world of information, following Oswald's every move from boyhood to death.

The first portion of the book introduces a man called Nosenko, who purportedly served in a number of positions in the KGB and claimed to know specifics about Oswald and his stay in the Soviet Union as a defector. And yet, with this full knowledge available to both the CIA and FBI, not one iota was presented to the Warren Commission, the author

notes, and asks "Why?" With this Epstein begins to uncover in a meticulous manner the legend of Lee Harvey Oswald and his connection and non-connections with various intelligence agencies both domestic and foreign.

ESPSTEIN WEAVES a tale equal to any mystery thriller in style, a book intrinsically spiced with information gathered from 10,000 pages of previously classified documents to give it just the right flavor. Author of "Inquest" and "Agency of Fear," he spent more than two years in unflagging research for the Readers Digest in gathering material and interviewing more than 400 persons.

One of the most disputable interviewees was George DeMohrenschildt, who may have had a decided effect on Oswald. But the world will never know. After the second day of a scheduled four-day interview with Epstein, DeMohrenschildt committed suicide. And the man who may have held so many answers to the puzzle was swept away by what must have been deep depression and guilt. Or was it? Such is the impression left by the author and might well be asked by the reader, too.

The reading is tight, fact-filled and detailed from the first to the last page. But the surprise is in appendices which follow, particularly the questions asked of our intelligence agencies and their answers. Although the answers are those expected, it makes one wonder, when questions are passed off as speculation or useless topics, when the charade will end?

"Legend" is by far the most shocking and controversial book yet to come out on the Kennedy killing and definitely worth reading if you are interested in just how covertly some forces in our government operate — no matter how innocent they may claim to be.

—JIM COLLINS