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The fifth anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's assassination finds one out of every three New Bernians interviewed still doubting the Warren Commission's report.

Local skeptics, except for a very small minority, are willing to accept the circumstantial evidence pointing to Lee Harvey Oswald's part in the slaying, but better than thirty percent believe he either had help in the actual shooting, or served as the trigger man for others in a cleverly planned conspiracy.

It is interesting to note that the ratio of disbelief varies little among those who might be regarded as above average and below average in intelligence. In almost every instance, those who suggest a conspiracy say they don't care to hazard a guess as to how and why it originated.

Ironically, both the doubters and the believers point to the alleged assassin's apparently warped mentality as the basis for their argument. "I am convinced he was insane," one of those interviewed says, "and an insane man would hardly have conspired with someone else."

Using the state of Oswald's mind in arriving at a completely opposite conclusion, another highly intelligent citizen reasons that Oswald wasn't smart enough or rational enough to plan and carry out the crime with deadly exactness, and had help.

The doubt that will not go away for thousands here is present beyond question elsewhere in North Carolina, from the mountains to the sea. Call it an unreasonable doubt, if you care to, in view of the exhaustive study made of the crime by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other authorities.

The fact remains, John Fitzgerald Kennedy's assassination, like Honest Abe Lincoln's is a whodunit that Tar Heels will ponder for years on end.

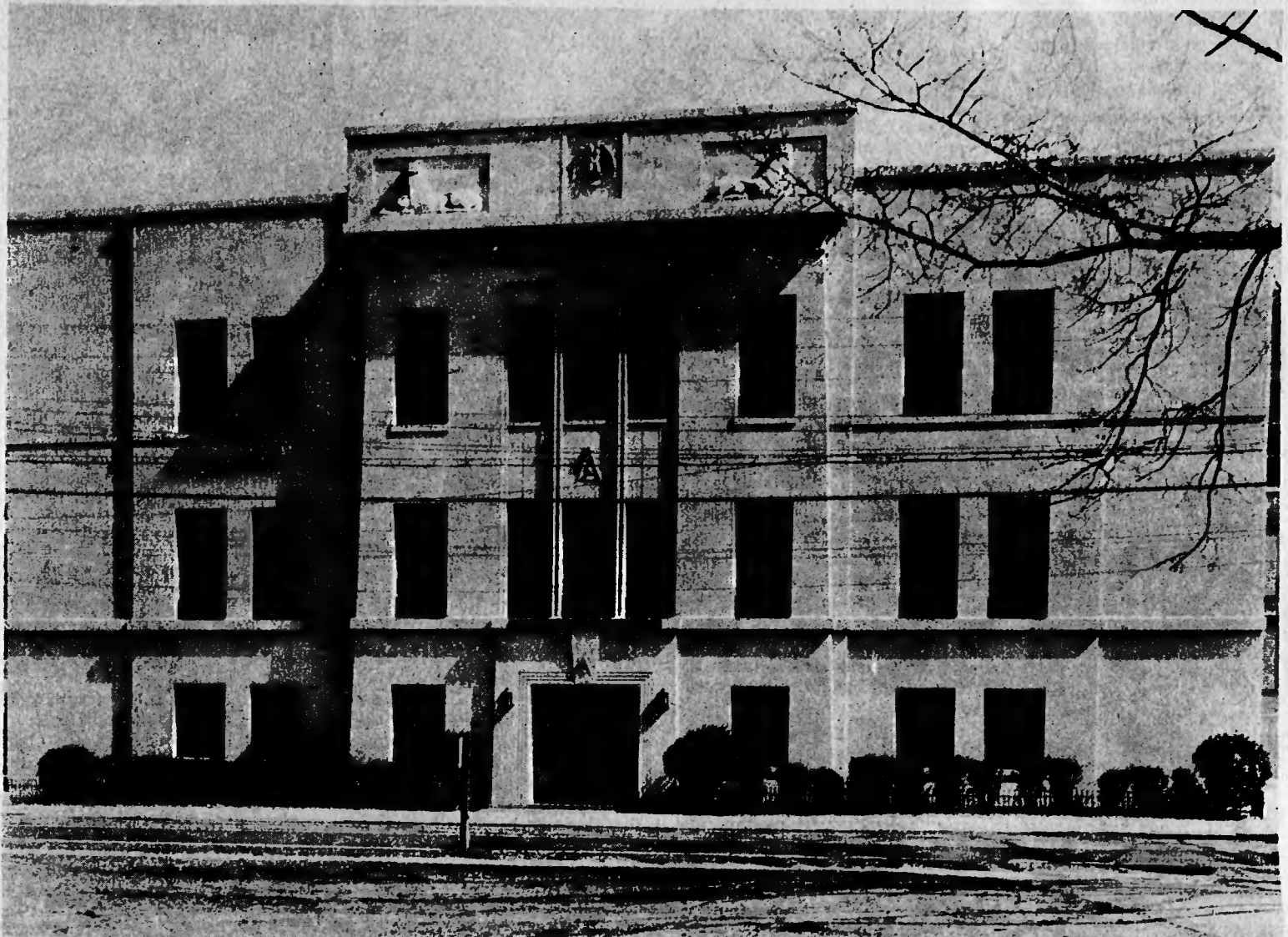
Murder is hard to predict, and so called murderer types exist only in fiction. The most brutal homicides this writer has had occasion to cover during a third of a century of trial reporting were perpetrated by meek appearing individuals who displayed no violent exterior.

As recently as last week, two AWOL Camp Lejeune marines, one of them 20 and the other 18, were given life sentences in Craven Superior Court for the savage knife slaying of a 41 year old Jones County ABC store operator.

Neither looked like a killer, although both pleaded guilty to armed robbery and first degree murder. As might be expected, each though counsel blamed the other for stabbing and slashing the victim 22 times.

When death occurs during the act of committing a felony, in this case armed robbery, the law states that all participants are guilty of the homicide, no matter who did the actual slaying. Even now, doubt exists as to which marine yielded the knife.

Both of the confessed murderers dropped out of school in the eighth grade, one in Montgomery, Ala., the other in Nor-



**READY AND WAITING**—New Bern's Scottish Rite Temple (see editorial) showed no signs of life when the camera caught this view of its impressive exterior, but its solitude was fleeting. Tuesday morning, degree teams, stage crews, kitchen personnel, dignitar-

ies and considerably more than a hundred candidates darkened its doors for the annual Fall Reunion. For three days and nights, from early dawn until late evening, Masons from 28 counties sought and gained advancement in the craft.



**THEY WERE THERE** — Miss North Carolina, New Bern's own Anita Johnson, found herself in distinguished company when she sang for those attending the Fall Reunion of the New Bern Scottish Rite Consistory. Pictured with her is Past Grand Master

Robert L. Pugh, Sovereign Grand Inspector General James G. Johnston of Charlotte, and his lovely wife, Sarah. The two Masonic dignitaries, as you can readily see, added only contrast to an otherwise beautiful group.—Photo by Chick Natella.