

Panel's Thorniest Problem: To Disprove Conspiracy

WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON—Efforts to refute suspicions of a conspiracy surrounding the Nov. 22 assassination of the late President Kennedy proved the major concern—and most difficult task—of the Warren commission, which concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone.

The commission devoted almost a fourth of its 296,000-word report on the assassination to disproving the conspiracy theory and detailed no fewer than 127 specific "speculations" that proved unfounded.

"In order to meet its obligations fully, the commission has investigated each rumor and allegation linking Oswald to a conspiracy which has come to its attention, regardless of source," the commission said.

In the process, it used the resources of all federal agencies concerned with internal security plus the intelligence apparatus of the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency.

"The commission has found no evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate President Kennedy," the report said.

Rejected as unfounded were rumors and allegations that Oswald was an agent of either the Soviet Union or Cuba, an agent of the FBI or the CIA, that he had any help in planning and executing the assassination, that there was any connection between Oswald and Ruby, or that either had any relationship with Dallas Patrolman J. D. Tippit, who was also slain by Oswald.

Most of the rumors, it was found, were the products of (1) incomplete or erroneous information circulated in the first hectic hours following the assassination by "exaggerated" or "imaginative" accounts of witnesses who later admitted under oath they had no basis for their statements; (2) incidents of mistaken identity; or (3) mere speculation based on the backgrounds of Oswald and Ruby.

One widely publicized theory that Kennedy was shot from a vantage point on an overpass ahead of his motorcade was offset by a massive mountain of evidence—including one previously undisclosed eyewitness account—that pointed solely to Oswald.

This theory was prompted first by the earliest description of Kennedy's wounds by physicians at Parkland Hospital, who were so preoccupied with saving the President's life that they never turned the body over and discovered the wounds on his back side.

A later autopsy proved that the shells which struck both Kennedy and Gov. John Connally were fired from behind and above.

Bullet damage to the presidential limousine's windshield was found to be on the inside, caused by deflection of a bullet fragment.

More difficult to trace, the commission found, were reports that Oswald acted as a foreign agent or that he acted in concert with Ruby.

To arrive at its findings, the commission reconstructed the lives of both men in painstaking detail and sought to account for their activities on almost an hour-

by-hour basis prior to the assassination.

All associations of both men were carefully checked, the commission said, both here and abroad.

Much of the investigation centered around Oswald's self-professed adherence to Marxism, his defection to the Soviet Union, his attempts to become a Soviet citizen, his activity in pro-communist groups in the United States and his attempts to gain entry into Cuba.

Much of the data on Oswald's life in Russia, the commission conceded, was of a "highly confidential nature." Apparently gleaned by the U.S. spy network in the Soviet Union, the information was included in the report but in many cases the sources were withheld.

Totally missing, the commission found, was any evidence that Oswald was a communist agent for either the Soviet Union or Cuba. Oswald's life in Russia was carefully detailed as were his activities after he returned to the United States.

Specifically, the commission said its 10-month investigation disproved that Oswald was given preferential treatment either in entering Russia or while remaining there and in fact turned up evidence that he was distrusted by Soviet officials.

A rumored "school for assassins" Oswald allegedly attended while working in Minsk turned out to be a hunting club, the commission found.

"Had Oswald been recruited as a Russian agent, it is improbable

that he would have been encouraged to defect," the report said, noting that defectors invariably come under FBI surveillance when they return to the United States.

Also reconstructed from confidential sources was Oswald's trip to Mexico in an effort to gain entry into Cuba.

It was obvious from the report that much of the commission's investigation was devoted to tracking down reports that Oswald and Ruby were involved together—reports that gained impetus because both once lived in Oak Cliff, both had post office boxes in close proximity to each other, and both were repeatedly reported to have been seen together.

What did not prove to be apparent coincidence, the commission found, turned out to be cases of mistaken identity.

Most of these reports linking Oswald and Ruby originated with Mark Lane, a New Yorker who lectures nightly there on the subject of "Who Really Killed John Kennedy."

Each allegation, the commission said, was thoroughly investigated and found to be untrue. In its report, the commission listed each individual allegation, then set out its own findings in rebuttal.

Ruby Told Of Report By Sister

Jack Ruby had two visitors Sunday in his Dallas County jail cell—his sister and Sheriff Bill Decker.

Mrs. Eva Grant, his sister, told him that the Warren Commission report was released Sunday to the public.

"I tried to get it through to him about the report, but he just didn't comprehend it," said Mrs. Grant. Ruby's sister said that her brother is "inhibited with hallucinations about the Jews being persecuted."

"The things I say to him don't register," she said.

Sheriff Bill Decker said he dropped in on his most famous prisoner Sunday to deliver him a batch of mail.

"He didn't say a word about the report," said the sheriff.

After visiting her brother, Mrs. Grant returned home to watch television reports on the Warren Commission report.

"They were confusing," she said. "I'm not sure that they were so accurate."

Mrs. Grant would not discuss the alleged inaccuracies:

"I'm going to go to Washington to read the full testimony. When I get back I'll give all the information I can," she said.

Mrs. Grant said she objected mostly to the "things that weren't said" about her brother on the television presentations.

"He wasn't a traitor, he wasn't connected with the underworld and he didn't know Oswald," she said, contending that these points had been left out on the news programs.