

A BOOK FOR TODAY

2 More on Kennedy Assassination

By SHIRLEY ELDER

SIX SECONDS IN DALLAS.
By Josiah Thompson. Bernard Geis Associates. 321 pages. \$3.95.

ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT: The Warren Commission, the Authorities and the Report. By Sylvia Meagher. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. 477 pages. \$3.50.

Evidently it will never end, this speculation over just what happened in Dallas that sunny November day more than four years ago. Did Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, assassinate the President of the United States? The Dallas police said so. A special commission, named by the new President and headed by the Chief Justice said so. CBS said so. An erratic nightclub owner named Jack Ruby apparently thought so—and wiped out the No. 1 witness, Lee Harvey Oswald himself.

But many others have disagreed and have spelled out their disagreement under such accusatory titles as "rush to judgment," "whitewash" and "inquest."

These latest two studies of the Kennedy assassination do not, as their publishers claim, prove anything. But they do raise serious questions about the Warren Commission that should be answered, perhaps, as Miss Meagher suggests, with a new and thorough investigation by the Federal government.

Hard on the Report

The most important distinction between the Thompson-Meagher books and some earlier efforts by others to debunk the Warren Commission's finding is that these are, indeed, studies. Miss Meagher, unlike some 200 million other Americans, actually has read the 26-volume Warren Report and corrected its first major omission: she prepared an index that has served as an invaluable guide for other scholars. She is hard on the Warren Report. The observation is typical:

"It must be said," Miss Meagher writes of the report, "... that it resembles a tale told for fools, full of sophistry and deceit, signifying capitulation to compromise and the degradation of justice by its most eminent guardians." In very readable style, she goes on to support that charge in detail. There was no defense allowed Oswald, though dead; only witnesses supporting the preconceived conclusion that a single assassin fired the shots were heard with credibility; leads were not checked out; stories were not verified; preliminary investigations were not followed up—in short, it was a botched-up job.

Miss Meagher examines the correlation, or lack of it, between the Warren Report and the volumes of hearings and exhibits and concludes there is a "powerful presumption of (Oswald's) complete innocence of all the crimes which he was accused."

Thompson's Line

Thompson, a young philosophy professor from Haverford College, took a different tack and arrived at very nearly the same conclusion. It is quite possible, Thompson said, that during the shooting Oswald was where he said he was, on the first floor of the Texas School Book Depository building.

Thompson studied all available photographs of the assassination scene, not just the famed Zapruder film, but everything. Interestingly, he found that the Warren Commission's copy of the Zapruder film was blurry and shockingly inferior to Life magazine's original.

But he found more. He found that there may have been two persons, neither of them Oswald, in the book building's sixth floor window—where the shots came from. He found that there may have been four shots fired, not three, and that they could have come from three persons, not one.

Thompson presents intriguing bits of evidence never pursued by the Warren Commission, or brushed aside as irrelevant. Take, for instance, the Commission's "single bullet theory." The Warren Commission concluded that one bullet pierced the President's neck and then ricocheted through Gov. John Connally's body, smashing his forearm and wrist as it left. Tests show that much less resistance than a bone would crumple such a bullet. But this one emerged—if the Warren Commission is correct—nearly perfect. Thompson, in a rare bow to sarcasm, calls it the Superbullet.

- Moff
- Platt
- Casper
- Callahan
- Conrad
- Felt
- Gale
- Rosen
- Sullivan
- Tavel
- Trotter
- Tele. Room
- Holmes
- Gandy

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Book of President Kennedy

- The Washington Post _____
- Times Herald _____
- The Washington Daily News _____
- The Evening Star (Washington) *BS*
- The Sunday Star (Washington) _____
- Daily News (New York) _____
- Sunday News (New York) _____
- New York Post _____
- The New York Times _____
- The Sun (Baltimore) _____
- The Worker _____
- The New Leader _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- People's World _____
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Some Questions

But there's more:

Who, for instance, was the man in the light coat seen leaving the book building shortly after the shooting? Not Oswald. Oswald was then getting into a cab some blocks away. The mystery man ran down an incline and got into a car driven by someone with a dark complexion. A similar car, maybe the same one, was seen by other witnesses and described as slightly suspicious.

Also, there was the man pacing back and forth behind a fence who—Thompson speculates—could have been a third gunman who fired the fourth shot, the shot that ripped through the President's head. Then, there was the umbrella man. First his umbrella was open, then closed. A signal? A hidden gun?

Admittedly, one could speculate that all Thompson's speculations are nonsense. But he raises too many questions to be dismissed so lightly.