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Truth Won't Out

REALISM instructs us to expect little from the special commission created by President Johnson to investigate the death of his predecessor.

No member of the commission has any competence as an investigator, nor does any have access to a disinterested investigative staff. The commission will be almost wholly dependent upon the facts made available to it by the Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Dallas Police Department.

In a sense, of course, the special commission is investigating the role played by each of these agencies, and it is manifestly naive to expect these cops to bear witness against themselves or, indeed, each other.

Any reporter who has wasted a portion of his young life in a hick police station thinks he knows exactly how Rubenstein, the squalid impresario of skin shows, gained access to the Dallas Municipal Building where he apparently shot and killed the man who apparently shot and killed President Kennedy. (If you contend there are too many apparentlys in that sentence, my reply is that there are too many apparentlys in the murders that took place in Dallas.)

Ruby probably had a press pass issued by the Dallas cops. Every reporter has known police buffs of the stripe of Rubenstein, and the sleazy breed invariably prizes possession of a press card.

But is anyone foolish enough to expect the Dallas Police Department to step before Chief Justice Warren and say, yes, your worship, we did give Rubenstein a press pass to which he was not entitled and he did use it to gain access to the basement where he performed the gallant act of gut-shooting a manacled prisoner?

If you believe the Dallas police will ever give up the truth about how Rubenstein got a clear shot at Oswald you will believe anything, possibly including the solemn assertion that Rubenstein was not paying off any officials for the privilege of skirting the law in operating his peltorama.

In their extravagant outpouring of grief over the death of their young President, the American people have largely overlooked the disgraceful failure of the Secret Service. We are assured that these hard-nosed federal cops could not possibly check every window along the parade route, and no one is moved to ask why they couldn't. The building from which the assassination of Mr. Kennedy is said to have taken

place was a prime stake-out for a sniper, since the President's automobile had to slow for a turn beneath its windows.

Will the Secret Service candidly explain to the special commission why Oswald was permitted to rest patiently on his hunkers gnawing a chicken bone, a rifle beside him, in one of perhaps a dozen choice locations for a bushwacker?

Again, little has been made of the fact that the President was shot not once but twice. The autopsy findings on Mr. Kennedy have not been made public, and may never be, but suppose the first wound was not mortal? Then the lax protection that permitted a second bullet to strike home becomes a great historical scandal. Will Mr. Justice Warren and his colleagues ever know the truth of this, and if they do learn it, will they publish it?

Will the presence on the panel of Allan Dulles, erstwhile headmaster of the Central Intelligence Agency, assure us that the truth of Oswald's sojourn in the Soviet Union will ever be known? The Russians suggest they suspected him of being a spy. Can any realistic person believe any tentacle of the nation's elephantine espionage apparatus will own up to ever having Oswald on its payroll?

Can we expect the FBI to explain why Oswald was not under close surveillance? How many would-be defectors to Russia did they have to watch that day in Dallas when the President's widely-heralded visit was scheduled?

It is not in the nature of bureaucracies to destroy their carefully-nurtured fables of omniscience. It would be well to bear this in mind, and to remember that the findings of the Warren commission will depend almost wholly on what it is told by these agencies.