



Chief Justice Warren presents the President with the Warren Commission Report

Since the tragic death of President John F. Kennedy, a great controversy, both here and in Europe, has raged over the true facts of the assassination. To end this debate once and for all, President Johnson set up the Commission, headed by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Earl Warren. Now, with the publication of the Warren Commission Report, the public for the first time can find the answers to such troubling questions as:

- Was Lee Harvey Oswald really the killer?
- Was he alone, or a member of a conspiracy?
- Just what were his relations with the far Left, the radical Right, the CIA, and Jack Ruby?
- What was the true sequence of events of the terrible crime and its extraordinary aftermath?

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# THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT ON THE ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

The conclusive findings of the Official

Investigation into the most shocking crime of our century

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ROBERT J. DONOVAN

Author of THE ASSASSINS and PT-109



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**WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
ROBERT J. DONOVAN**

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## **The Moment Of Nightmare . . .**

A triumphal procession through the streets of Dallas. Rifle shots ringing out. The President slumping down, while beside him his wife's eyes fill with horror . . .

Then, inevitably, shock, confusion, and a storm of controversy which has continued to rage . . .

Here is the concise portrayal-in-depth of the most brutally astonishing crime of our century, with every fact concerning the tragic event at last brought to light. As Robert J. Donovan writes: "The Warren Commission Report on the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy seems destined to be one of the most famous documents of our time. Not only is it likely to become an American household item . . . but its influence will spread around the world . . ."

From the... of... apparently shaken...  
assassination... THE NEW YORK TIMES...  
See 4-10-68  
19-111

A PROLOGUE  
DEATH IN DALLAS  
BY TOM WICKER

DALLAS, Nov. 22—President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was shot and killed by an assassin today.

He died of a wound in the brain caused by a rifle bullet that was fired at him as he was riding through downtown Dallas in a motorcade.

Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was riding in the third car behind Mr. Kennedy's, was sworn in as the 36th President of the United States 99 minutes after Mr. Kennedy's death.

Mr. Johnson is 55 years old; Mr. Kennedy was 46.

Shortly after the assassination, Lee H. Oswald, described as a one-time defector to the Soviet Union, active in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, was arrested by the Dallas police. Tonight he was accused of the killing.

SUSPECT CAPTURED AFTER SCUFFLE

Oswald, 24 years old, was also accused of slaying a policeman who had approached him in the street. Oswald was subdued after a scuffle with a second policeman in a nearby theater.

The shooting took place at 12:30 P.M., Central standard time (1:30 P.M., New York time). Mr. Kennedy was pronounced dead at 1 P.M. and Mr. Johnson was sworn in at 2:39 P.M.

Mr. Johnson, who was uninjured in the shooting, took his oath in the Presidential jet plane as it stood on the runway at Love Field. The body of the President was aboard. Immediately after the oath-taking, the plane took off for Washington.

Standing beside the new President as Mr. Johnson took the oath of office was Mrs. John F. Kennedy. Her stocking was saturated with her husband's blood.

Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas, who was riding in the same car with Mr. Kennedy, was severely wounded in the chest, ribs and arm. His condition was serious, but not critical.

The killer fired the rifle from a building just off the motorcade route. Mr. Kennedy, Governor Connally and Mr. Johnson had just received an enthusiastic welcome from a large crowd in downtown Dallas.

Mr. Kennedy apparently was hit by the first of what was...

...Dallas's Parkland Hospital; they, in an emergency operat-  
...room, with only physicians and nurses in attendance, he  
...ed without regaining consciousness.

Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Connally and a Secret Service agent  
... in the car with President Kennedy and Governor Con-  
... ally. Two Secret Service agents flanked the car. Other than  
... Mr. Connally, none of this group was injured in the shooting.  
... Mrs. Kennedy cried, "Oh no!" immediately after her husband  
... as struck.

Mrs. Kennedy was in the hospital near her husband when  
... died, but not in the operating room. When the body was  
... ken from the hospital in a bronze coffin about 2 P.M., Mrs.  
... Kennedy walked beside it.

Her face was sorrowful. She looked steadily at the floor.  
... he still wore the raspberry-colored suit in which she had  
... eeted welcoming crowds in Fort Worth and Dallas. But she  
... had taken off the matching pillbox hat she wore earlier in the  
... day, and her dark hair was windblown and tangled. Her hand  
... rested lightly on her husband's coffin as it was taken to a wait-  
... ing hearse.

Mrs. Kennedy climbed in beside the coffin. Then the ambu-  
... lance drove to Love Field, and Mr. Kennedy's body was  
... placed aboard the Presidential jet. Mrs. Kennedy then at-  
... tended the swearing-in ceremony for Mr. Johnson.

As Mr. Kennedy's body left Parkland Hospital, a few  
... stunned persons stood outside. Nurses and doctors, whisper-  
... ing, among themselves, looked from the window. A larger  
... crowd that had gathered earlier, before it was known that the  
... resident was dead, had been dispersed by Secret Service men  
... and policemen.

#### PRIESTS ADMINISTER LAST RITES

Two priests administered last rites to Mr. Kennedy, a  
... Roman Catholic. They were the Very Rev. Oscar Huber, the  
... pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Dallas, and the Rev. James  
... Thompson.

Mr. Johnson was sworn in as President by Federal Judge  
... Sarah T. Hughes of the Northern District of Texas. She was  
... appointed to the judgeship by Mr. Kennedy in October, 1961.

The ceremony, delayed about five minutes for Mrs. Ken-  
... nedy's arrival, took place in the private Presidential cabin in  
... the rear of the plane.

About 25 to 30 persons—members of the late President's  
... staff, members of Congress who had been accompanying the  
... President on a two-day tour of Texas cities and a few re-  
... porters—crowded into the little room.

No accurate listing of those present could be obtained.  
... Mrs. Kennedy stood at the left of Mr. Johnson.

face showing the signs of weeping that had apparently shaken  
... her since she left the hospital not long before.  
... Mrs. Johnson, wearing a beige dress, stood at her husband's  
... right.

As Judge Hughes read the brief oath of office, her eyes,  
... too, were red from weeping. Mr. Johnson's hands rested on a  
... black, leather-bound Bible as Judge Hughes read and he re-  
... peated:

"I do solemnly swear that I will perform the duties of the  
... President of the United States to the best of my ability and  
... defend, protect and preserve the Constitution of the United  
... States."

Those 34 words made Lyndon Baines Johnson, one-time  
... farmboy and schoolteacher of Johnson City, the President.

#### JOHNSON EMBRACES MRS. KENNEDY

Mr. Johnson made no statement. He embraced Mrs. Ken-  
... nedy and she held his hand for a long moment. He also  
... embraced Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, Mr. Ken-  
... nedy's private secretary.

"O.K.," Mr. Johnson said. "Let's get this plane back to  
... Washington."  
... At 2:46 P.M., seven minutes after he had become Presi-  
... dent, 106 minutes after Mr. Kennedy had become the fourth  
... American President to succumb to an assassin's wounds, the  
... white and red jet took off for Washington.

In the cabin when Mr. Johnson took the oath was Cecil  
... Stoughton, an armed forces photographer assigned to the  
... White House.

Mr. Kennedy's staff members appeared stunned and be-  
... wildered. Lawrence F. O'Brien, the Congressional liaison  
... officer, and P. Kenneth O'Donnell, the appointment secretary,  
... both long associates of Mr. Kennedy, showed evidences of  
... weeping. None had anything to say.

Other staff members believed to be in the cabin for the  
... swearing-in included David F. Powers, the White House re-  
... ceptionist; Miss Pamela Turnure, Mrs. Kennedy's press secre-  
... tary, and Malcolm Kilduff, the assistant White House press  
... secretary.

Mr. Kilduff announced the President's death, with choked  
... voice and red-rimmed eyes, at about 1:36 P.M.

"President John F. Kennedy died at approximately 1  
... o'clock Central standard time today here in Dallas," Mr.  
... Kilduff said at the hospital. "He died of a gunshot wound in  
... the brain. I have no other details regarding the assassination  
... of the President."

Mr. Kilduff also announced that Governor Connally had  
... been hit by a bullet or bullets and that Mr. Johnson, who had  
... not yet been sworn in, was safe in the protective custody of

the Secret Service at an unannounced place, presumably the airplane at Love Field.

Mr. Kilduff indicated that the President had been shot once. Later medical reports raised the possibility that there had been two wounds. But the death was caused, as far as could be learned, by a massive wound in the brain.

Later in the afternoon, Dr. Malcolm Perry, an attending surgeon, and Dr. Kemp Clark, chief of neurosurgery at Parkland Hospital, gave more details.

Mr. Kennedy was hit by a bullet in the throat, just below the Adam's apple, they said. This wound had the appearance of a bullet's entry.

Mr. Kennedy also had a massive, gaping wound in the back and one on the right side of the head. However, the doctors said it was impossible to determine immediately whether the wounds had been caused by one bullet or two.

#### RESUSCITATION ATTEMPTED

Dr. Perry, the first physician to treat the President, said a number of resuscitative measures had been attempted, including oxygen, anesthesia, an indotracheal tube, a tracheotomy, blood and fluids. An electrocardiogram monitor was attached to measure Mr. Kennedy's heart beats.

Dr. Clark was summoned and arrived in a minute or two. By then, Dr. Perry said, Mr. Kennedy was "critically ill and moribund," or near death.

Dr. Clark said that on his first sight of the President, he had concluded immediately that Mr. Kennedy could not live.

"It was apparent that the President had sustained a lethal wound," he said. "A missile had gone in and out of the back of his head causing external lacerations and loss of brain tissue."

Shortly after he arrived, Dr. Clark said, "the President lost his heart action by the electrocardiogram." A closed-chest cardiograph massage was attempted, as were other emergency resuscitation measures.

Dr. Clark said these had produced "palpable pulses" for a short time, but all were "to no avail."

#### IN OPERATING ROOM 40 MINUTES

The President was on the emergency table at the hospital for about 40 minutes, the doctors said. At the end, perhaps eight physicians were in Operating Room No. 1, where Mr. Kennedy remained until his death. Dr. Clark said it was difficult to determine the exact moment of death, but the doctors said officially that it occurred at 1 P.M.

Later, there were unofficial reports that Mr. Kennedy had

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been killed instantly. The source of these reports, Dr. Tom Shires, chief surgeon at the hospital and professor of surgery at the University of Texas Southwest Medical School, issued this statement tonight:

"Medically, it was apparent the President was not alive when he was brought in. There was no spontaneous respiration. He had dilated, fixed pupils. It was obvious he had a lethal head wound.

"Technically, however, by using vigorous resuscitation, intravenous tubes and all the usual supportive measures, we were able to raise a semblance of a heartbeat."

Dr. Shires said he was "positive it was impossible" that President Kennedy could have spoken after being shot. "I am absolutely sure he never knew what hit him," Dr. Shires said.

Dr. Shires was not present when Mr. Kennedy was being treated at Parkland Hospital. He issued his statement, however, after lengthy conferences with the doctors who had attended the President.

Mr. Johnson remained in the hospital about 30 minutes after Mr. Kennedy died.

The details of what happened when shots first rang out, as the President's car moved along at about 25 miles an hour, were sketchy. Secret Service agents, who might have given more details, were unavailable to the press at first, and then returned to Washington with President Johnson.

#### KENNEDY'S HALLED AT BREAKFAST

Mr. Kennedy had opened his day in Fort Worth, first with a speech in a parking lot and then at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast. The breakfast appearance was a particular triumph for Mrs. Kennedy, who entered late and was given an ovation.

Then the Presidential party, including Governor and Mrs. Connally, flew on to Dallas, an eight-minute flight. Mr. Johnson, as is customary, flew in a separate plane. The President and the Vice President do not travel together, out of fear of a double tragedy.

At Love Field, Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy lingered for 10 minutes, shaking hands with an enthusiastic group lining the fence. The group called itself "Grassroots Democrats."

Mr. Kennedy then entered his open Lincoln convertible at the head of the motorcade. He sat in the rear seat on the right-hand side. Mrs. Kennedy, who appeared to be enjoying one of the first political outings she had ever made with her husband, sat at his left.

In the "jump" seat, directly ahead of Mr. Kennedy, sat Governor Connally, with Mrs. Connally at his left in another "jump" seat. A Secret Service agent was driving and the two others ran alongside.

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rang out. He also saw a man snatch up his little girl and run along the road. Policemen, he said, immediately chased this man under the impression he had been involved in the shooting, but Mr. Crouch said he had been a fleeing spectator.

Mr. Kennedy's limousine—license No. GG300 under District of Columbia registry—pulled up at the emergency entrance of Parkland Hospital. Senator Yarborough said the President had been carried inside on a stretcher.

By the time reporters arrived at the hospital, the police were guarding the Presidential car closely. They would allow no one to approach it. A bucket of water stood by the car, suggesting that the back seat had been scrubbed out.

Robert Clark of the American Broadcasting Company, who had been riding near the front of the motorcade, said Mr. Kennedy was motionless when he was carried inside. There was a great amount of blood on Mr. Kennedy's suit and shirt-front and the front of his body, Mr. Clark said.

Mrs. Kennedy was leaning over her husband when the car stopped. Mr. Clark said, and walked beside the wheeled stretcher into the hospital. Mr. Connally sat with his hands holding his stomach, his head bent over. He, too, was moved into the hospital in a stretcher, with Mrs. Connally at his side.

Robert McNeill of the National Broadcasting Company, who also was in the reporters' pool car, jumped out at the scene of the shooting. He said the police had taken two eyewitnesses into custody—an 8-year-old Negro boy and a white man—for informational purposes. Many of these reports could not be verified immediately.

#### EYEWITNESS DESCRIBES SHOOTING

An unidentified Dallas man, interviewed on television here, said he had been waving at the President when the shots were fired. His belief was that Mr. Kennedy had been struck twice—once, as Mrs. Norman recalled, when he slumped in his seat; again when he slid down in it.

"It seemed to just knock him down," the man said. Governor Connally's condition was reported as "satisfactory" tonight after four hours in surgery at Parkland Hospital.

Dr. Robert R. Shaw, a thoracic surgeon, operated on the Governor to repair damage to his left chest.

Later, Dr. Shaw said Governor Connally had been hit in the back just below the shoulder blade, and that the bullet had gone completely through the Governor's chest, taking out part of the fifth rib.

After leaving the body, he said, the bullet struck the Governor's right wrist, causing a compound fracture. It then lodged in the left thigh.

The thigh wound, Dr. Shaw said, was trivial. He said the compound fracture would heal. Dr. Shaw said it would be unwise for Governor Connally to be moved in the next 10 to 14 days. Mrs. Connally was remaining at his side tonight.

#### TOUR BY MRS. KENNEDY UNUSUAL

Mrs. Kennedy's presence near her husband's bedside at his death resulted from somewhat unusual circumstances. She had rarely accompanied him on his trips about the country and had almost never made political trips with him.

The tour on which Mr. Kennedy was engaged yesterday and today was only quasi-political; the only open political activity was to have been a speech tonight to a fund-raising dinner at the state capitol in Austin.

In visiting Texas, Mr. Kennedy was seeking to improve his political fortunes in a pivotal state that he barely won in 1960. He was also hoping to patch a bitter internal dispute among Texas's Democrats.

At 8:45 a.m., when Mr. Kennedy left the Texas Hotel in Fort Worth, where he spent his last night, to address the parking lot crowd across the street, Mrs. Kennedy was not with him. There appeared to be some disappointment.

"Mrs. Kennedy is organizing herself," the President said good-naturedly. "It takes longer, but, of course, she looks better than we do when she does it."

Later, Mrs. Kennedy appeared late at the Chamber of Commerce breakfast in Fort Worth.

Again, Mr. Kennedy took note of her presence. "Two years ago," he said, "I introduced myself in Paris by saying that I was the man who had accompanied Mrs. Kennedy to Paris. I am getting somewhat that same sensation as I travel around Texas. Nobody wonders what Lyndon and I wear."

The speech Mr. Kennedy never delivered at the Merchandise Mart contained a passage commenting on a recent pre-occupation of his, a subject of interest in this city, where right-wing conservatism is the rule rather than the exception.

Voices are being heard in the land, he said, "voices preaching doctrines wholly unrelated to reality, wholly unsuited to the sixties, doctrines which apparently assume that words will suffice without weapons, that vituperation is as good as victory and that peace is a sign of weakness."

The speech went on: "At a time when the national debt is steadily being reduced in terms of its burden on our economy, they see that debt as the greatest threat to our security. At a time when we are steadily reducing the number of Federal employees serving every thousand citizens, they fear those supposed hordes of civil servants far more than the actual hordes of opposing armies."

"We cannot expect that everyone, to use the phrase of a decade ago, will 'talk sense to the American people.' But we can hope that fewer people will listen to nonsense. And the notion that this nation is headed for defeat through deficit, or that strength is but a matter of slogans, is nothing but just plain nonsense."



ON THE RELEASE OF  
THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT

BY ANTHONY LEWIS

Washington, Sept. 27—The assassination of President Kennedy was the work of one man, Lee Harvey Oswald. There was no conspiracy, foreign or domestic.

That was the central finding in the Warren Commission Report. Chief Justice Earl Warren and the six other members of the President's Commission on the assassination were unanimous on this and all questions.

The Commission found that Jack Ruby was on his own in killing Oswald. It rejected all theories that the two men were in some way connected. It said that neither rightists nor Communists bore responsibility for the murder of the President in Dallas last November 22.

Why did Oswald do it? To this most important and most mysterious question the Commission had no certain answer. It suggested that Oswald had no rational purpose, no motive adequate if "judged by the standards of reasonable men."

Rather, the Commission saw Oswald's terrible act as the product of his entire life—a life "characterized by isolation, frustration, and failure."

"Oswald was profoundly alienated from the world in which he lived," the Report said. "He had very few, if any, close relationships with other people and he appeared to have great difficulty in finding a meaningful place in the world."

"He was never satisfied with anything."

"When he was in the United States, he resented the capitalist system. When he was in the Soviet Union, he apparently resented the Communist Party members, who were accorded special privileges and who he thought were betraying Communism, and he spoke well of the United States."

The Commission found that Oswald had shot at former Major General Edwin A. Walker in Dallas on April 10, 1963, narrowly missing. It cited this as evidence of his capacity for violence.

It listed as factors that might have led Oswald to the assassination "his deep-rooted resentment of all authority which was expressed in a hostility toward every society in which he lived," his "urge to try to find a place in history" and his "avowed commitment to Marxism and Communism, as he understood the terms."

The Report's findings on what happened in Dallas contained few surprises. The essential points had leaked out one way or another while he was still in Dallas.

END

...has since President Johnson appointed the Commission last November 29. But the Commission analyzed every issue in exhaustive, almost archeological detail. Experts traced the path of the bullets. Every critical event was re-enacted. Witnesses here and abroad testified to the most obscure points.

The question now is whether the Report will satisfy those, especially abroad, who have insisted that there must have been a conspiracy in the assassination. The Commission attempted to answer, specifically, every such theory and rumor.

The Report did have surprises in its appraisal of the protection provided for the President by federal agencies, and in its recommendations for improved methods of protection.

It was critical of the Secret Service for inadequate preventive measures, and of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for not giving the Secret Service the adverse information it had on Oswald. It called for higher-level government attention to the problem of protecting the President, and possibly for reorganization.

The Commission made public all the information it had bearing on the events in Dallas, whether agreeing with its findings or not. It withheld only a few names of sources, notably sources evidently within Communist embassies in Mexico, and each of these omissions was indicated.

All the testimony taken by the Commission and its staff—some 552 witnesses—will be published separately. It will fill 15 supplementary volumes, and there will be 8 or 9 large volumes of exhibits. They are to be made public soon.

The Report itself ran 888 pages, with 8 chapters and appendices. The Commission's thoroughness is indicated by the fact that it interviewed every known person who met Oswald during a brief trip he made to Mexico. Interviewing continued into this month.

Drafting of the Report was done by the legal staff under J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel. But all 7 members of the Commission themselves went over, edited and substantially rewrote the entire work.

A staff lawyer remarked that this Report was probably unlike any other in the history of Commissions—"it really is a group product, the work of the Commissioners."

The members in addition to the Chief Justice were Senators Richard B. Russell of Georgia and John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, Representatives Hale Boggs of Louisiana and Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, Allen W. Dulles and John J. McCloy. All are Republicans save Messrs. Russell and Boggs.

In a foreword the Commission says that it operated not as a judge or jury—because Oswald could never have a trial—but as a dispassionate fact-finder. This is borne out by the report which is essential in tone and makes every effort to be fair in its

Despite the group authorship and the legal approach, the Report often achieves a genuine literary style. The very detail of the narrative is fascinating, and there are many moving passages.

Few who loved John Kennedy, or this country, will be able to read it without emotion.

As the President's motorcade drove through Dallas on November 22, large crowds cheered. Governor John Connally's wife, who was in the car, said to Mr. Kennedy, "Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you." He answered, "That is very obvious."

A moment later the shots were fired.

Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, according to the Report, "saw the President's skull torn open" by the second bullet that hit him. She testified that she cried out, "Oh, my God, they have shot my husband. I love you, Jack."

A reader of the Report is struck again and again by the series of events that had to fall into place to make the assassination possible. Over a period of years, so many men could have done so many things that would have changed history.

On October 31, 1959, Oswald appeared at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and stated that he wanted to renounce his citizenship. While he had a right to do so at once, consular officials did not want to let a young man take so final a step precipitously. They told him to come back next week.

He never came back. If Oswald had been allowed to expatriate himself at once, he would have found it difficult or impossible to return to the United States when he fired of the U.S.S.R.

Similarly, American officials helped Oswald and his Russian wife, Marina, when they wanted to come to the United States in 1962, because they thought it better for this country to bring a defector back. The Report says "it is only from the vantage of the present that the tragic irony of their conclusion emerges."

When Oswald shot at General Walker, he told Marina. She warned him not to do a thing like that again—but she did not tell the police or anyone else. If she had . . .

When he returned from Mexico, he applied for a job with a printing company in Dallas. He was not hired because a previous employer told the company he was a "troublemaker." On October 15, 1963, he got a job with the Texas School Book Depository. A month later a presidential route was chosen that went by that building.

The F.B.I. learned in early November 1963, that Oswald—whom it knew as a defector and proclaimed friend of Castro—was in Dallas and worked at the Depository. The agent neither interviewed Oswald nor reported the facts to the Secret Service when the President's motorcade route was published. At the time of the assassination, Oswald had a room in Dallas while his wife stayed with friends in nearby Irving.

The evening of November 21, he asked her to move to Dallas with him. She was angry with him, and she refused.

In the Depository the next day, Bonnie Ray Williams ate a lunch of chicken on the sixth floor so he could watch the motorcade. When none of his friends joined him, he went down to the fifth floor. That left Oswald alone on the sixth.

It rained in Dallas that morning, but the rain stopped and so officials took the plastic bubbletop off the President's car. That top was not bullet-proof, but Oswald might not have known that and might in any event have had greater difficulty sighting through it.

Finally, there was the arrangement of the presidential car. Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy sat in the rear, Governor and Mrs. Connally in the jump seats. A Secret Service Agent drove, and another sat next to him, but they were separated from the passenger compartment by the front seat and a metal bar 15 inches above it. And the President had asked that no agents ride on small running boards provided at the rear.

The second bullet that hit the President was the fatal one. The Commission found that if a Secret Service man had been in a position to reach him quickly, "it is possible" that he could have protected the President from the second shot.

The Report clarified what had been considerable confusion about the bullets. Much of this stemmed from the necessarily hasty examination made by doctors at Parkland Hospital in Dallas in their desperate effort to save the President's life.

The Commission found that in all probability three bullets were fired. Three empty cartridges were found inside the sixth floor window of the Depository. Also recovered were one nearly whole bullet and fragments of one or two others.

One of the bullets missed, the Report said. It was not certain whether this came before, between or after the two that hit.

The first of the two shots that did not miss hit the President in the lower back of the neck and emerged at the lower front. Mr. Kennedy grabbed at his throat and said "My God, I am hit."

"President Kennedy could have survived the neck injury," the Commission found. But between 4.8 and 5.6 seconds later—the time was calculated from an amateur's movie film—the fatal bullet hit the back of the President's head.

The time was 12:30. When he arrived at the hospital five minutes later, the Report said, Mr. Kennedy was alive "from a medical viewpoint;" there was a heart beat. But "his condition was hopeless." He was pronounced dead at 1:00 p.m.

Some uncertainty remains about when Governor Connally was hit. But the Commission said the probability was that the first bullet that struck the President went on through the Governor's chest, and then his wrist and finally lodged in his thigh. All of these points were demonstrated by the Commission

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with elaborate re-enactments, expert testimony and experiments on simulated skulls and bodies. The Report contains many macabre pages of such detail.

"The cumulative evidence of eyewitnesses, firearms and ballistic experts and medical authorities," the Report said, demonstrated that the shots were fired from the sixth floor of the Depository Building.

Experts said flatly that the nearly whole bullet and two large fragments recovered could only have been fired by the 6.5 millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano rifle inside the Depository window.

One apparent conflict dismissed by the Report was the talk that a mark on the Presidential car's windshield had been made by a bullet coming from in front of it. Experts testified that the glass had been hit by a fragment from behind. The Commission found that no shots came from in front.

In painstaking detail the Report connected Oswald with that rifle and that position at the window.

It traced his purchase of the gun. It showed that he had brought the gun to work in a home-made paper bag that morning. His fingerprints were on the bag, and on some cartons on which the rifle apparently rested. A witness saw a man who looked like Oswald at the window with the gun.

And the Commission found that he had the ability to hit the target easily at that distance, 177 to 266 feet, with a telescopic sight and the target moving off in a straight line from him.

It found that he killed Dallas Patrolman J. D. Tippit 45 minutes later. Numerous eyewitnesses saw him during or after this shooting. And the bullets came from the revolver he carried when he was arrested shortly afterward.

In discussing Oswald's possible motives, the Report portrayed a man of strange contradictions. He said he was "A Marxist but not a Leninist-Marxist." One of his favorite books was George Orwell's powerfully anti-totalitarian "1984."

He wrote letters to American Communist Party officers volunteering his services. But some of these leaders testified that Oswald was never a member, and the Commission so found.

The Commission also rejected, after complete access to the files of the F.B.I. and the Central Intelligence Agency, the claims that Oswald may have been some kind of American undercover agent.

After his arrest, he told the police that "my wife and I like the President's family. They are interesting people." He said: "I am not a malcontent; nothing irritated me about the President."

All the frustrations in Lee Harvey Oswald seemed to come to a head in the last weeks of his life. The Report paints a sad, almost sympathetic picture.

His dream of glory in the Soviet Union had failed. He had not been able to go to Cuba. He had a menial job, packing

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## THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT— THE SERVANT OF HISTORY

BY JAMES RESTON

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 27—The Warren Commission has not only fulfilled its primary assignment, which was to be the servant of history. It has provided enough material to intrigue the novelists and dramatists for generations to come, and thus it has added materially to the Kennedy legend.

This report may not satisfy the historians that the Commission has found the whole truth about the murder of President Kennedy, but legend is often more powerful than history, and the unanswered questions that still trouble the historians will only inspire the dramatists and novelists.

Now the central mystery of who killed the President has been answered by the Commission only in the process of raising a new catalog of mysteries. Now the main characters in the play have been surrounded by a host of new characters, each of whom appears briefly at a critical moment with some vital testimony, only to disappear without our really knowing much about who they are.

### MOTIVE STILL OBSCURE

The whole story is full of the mystery of life. Lee Harvey Oswald's motive for murdering the President remains obscure. The distinguished members of the Commission and their staff obviously gave up on it.

The "might-have-beens" are maddening. If only he had been given that visa to go to Cuba and thence to the Soviet Union just before the assassination. If he had not been allowed to come back from there in the first place. Who was "the neighbor" who got him the job in the Texas Book Depository, from where he shot the President? And what were the details of Oswald's attempted suicide in Moscow?

The wild accidents are equally intriguing. There is, for example, the case of Mrs. Bledsoe who rented Oswald a room in Dallas and then, on a 10,000-to-1 chance, just happened to be on the bus he boarded when he was running away from the crime.

Then there are the consoling yearnings and kindnesses in the midst of tragedy: Ruth Paine, who was also "alienated" and "isolated," and frustrated, like Oswald, but who never-

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theless "befriended" Marina Oswald in her trouble. And there was Marina Oswald herself who seems to have been "very angry" with her husband when he was using assumed names and doing other things wrong.

### LEFT MONEY BEHIND

Finally, there was even Oswald himself leaving his wedding ring and his last \$170.00 on the dresser at home before he went to work on the morning of the murder.

Who sent Oswald from Moscow to Minsk? How did he meet his Russian wife, and how did they live there? Why was he allowed to return to the United States with a State Department loan? All we have are glimpses of these intriguing things.

The whole story is not only beyond the journalists, but beyond most historians as well. The backdrop is the conflict of the 20th century; the atmosphere of intrigue; the struggle of personalities, of men and women, of ideologies and regions within the United States.

### TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

And all this, of course, centering on the family of the President—*itself* a saga of triumph and tragedy.

There are no pictures of Booth murdering Lincoln, or of any of the other high tragedies of American political life, but the story of this one is now on record and on film: of Jacqueline Kennedy in that unspeakable moment of horror, scrambling onto the back of the car in Dallas; of Ruby murdering Oswald; and finally, of Jacqueline Kennedy claiming her husband at last in death.

All this reveals more than either President Johnson or the Warren Commission intended. President Johnson's instruction to Chief Justice Warren and his Commission was to "satisfy itself that the truth is known so far as it can be discovered."

President Johnson was not thinking of the long future. He was disturbed by the conspiratorial speculations in Europe about the assassination. He was merely trying to get at the facts. He was not thinking of perpetuating the Kennedy legend—indeed, ironically, it was difficult for him to govern effectively so long as the nation was preoccupied with the Kennedy story—but in calling for "the facts" he has summed up a drama that will intrigue the nation long after the historians have agreed on President Kennedy's place in history.

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## Introduction

The Warren Commission report on the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy seems destined to be one of the famous documents of our time. Not only is it likely to become an American household item, as millions of copies eventually find their way into homes, schools and libraries, but its influence will spread around the world, giving people everywhere a clearer understanding of the tragedy in Dallas.

For the murder of President Kennedy was so horrifying, so senseless and heart-rending that the act was difficult to comprehend in terms of the average person's experience. To anyone who happened to know the history of the assassinations and attempted assassinations of American Presidents, Lee Harvey Oswald conformed remarkably to the pattern of obscure misfits, loners, fanatics, cranks and mentally deranged and deluded men who committed these historic crimes. Indeed he even bore a vague physical resemblance to them.

To millions everywhere, however, the crime in Dallas was too momentous in all its implications to be accepted as the pitifully simple thing it was, the solitary act of a deranged and deteriorating wanderer, taking his revenge on the world by destroying one of its finest living figures. Surely, it seemed to many—especially to many abroad—there *must* be a further explanation, a more complex cause, a plot, a conspiracy.

There was, to be sure, ample material upon which the imagination could draw to visualize a plot against President Kennedy. For example, Dallas was a hotbed of Right-Wing sentiment hostile to the President and much that he stood for. Also, at the opposite end of the political spectrum, the conspiratorial nature of international Communism instantly arouses suspicion when anything so momentous occurs as the assassination of the head of the foremost anti-Communist power in the world. In the curious case of Oswald this suspicion was reinforced by the fact that he had lived for a time in the Soviet Union, had sought Soviet citizenship and married a Russian woman.

Further more, various circumstances surrounding the tragedy in Dallas were so bewildering and unusual that they lent themselves to the theory that the President had been murdered in a plot involving others beside Oswald. Foremost among these circumstances, of course, was the murder of Oswald by Jack Ruby while Oswald was in the hands of the police two days after the President's assassination. If Oswald had acted as part of a conspiracy, what was more to have been expected than that co-conspirators should have contrived to murder him before the police could extract from him the names of other plotters? Ruby's mad shot was utterly mischievous, therefore, not only for its debasement of legal process in the United States but for the doubts it raised about the single-handedness of Oswald's act.

While Ruby's crime made an unholy mess of things, there were also other disturbing circumstances that were to provoke endless skepticism that the story of the President's assassination was indeed what we were told it was. For example, there were contradictory police reports on the number of shots fired and the direction from which the bullets came. More significant was the fact that Oswald, though his presence was known to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was not under surveillance as the President's open car approached the Texas School Book Depository.

Because of his past defection to the Soviet Union, the F.B.I. kept a check on Oswald and knew he was employed at the book depository at the time of the President's visit to Dallas. Ken, because the F.B.I. did not regard him as a man likely to commit a violent crime (his previous attempt to shoot Gen. Edwin A. Walker was not yet known to any authorities), this information was not passed on to the Secret Service, the agency responsible for the protection of the President. This is an understandable judgment perhaps, but a sad one. In the best of all worlds, surely, the Secret Service would have been warned about Oswald and would have assigned an agent to watch him as the Presidential motorcade passed.

It was on November 29, 1963, one week after the assassination, when doubts were arising in many places, that President Lyndon B. Johnson created the special Presidential commission soon to be known as the Warren Commission because its chairman was Chief Justice Earl Warren. In the words of a White House announcement, the commission was directed by the President "to satisfy itself that the truth is known as far as it

can be discovered and to report its findings and conclusions to him, to the American people and to the world."

Supposedly against his better judgment, the Chief Justice accepted the assignment in an emotional scene in the President's office. Warren, who in ten years on the bench had become one of the most influential yet controversial Chief Justices in American history, was fully aware of the personal and official hazards of an appointment of this sort. A long and worthy tradition imposes upon members of the high court a detachment from public affairs that is not altogether compatible with involvement in controversial undertakings such as the investigation of President Kennedy's death. Warren knew that he would be criticized and perhaps professionally damaged by mixing his role in the investigation with his judicial duties. If we may believe the reports of his meeting with the President, it was only Mr. Johnson's impassioned appeal to his patriotism that led him to accept the chairmanship of the commission.

For this part the President was right in thinking that an investigation was sorely needed and that a commission would command the greatest possible respect if it was headed by the Chief Justice. Its report carries all the more weight because of the high reputations that are at stake in its findings.

In addition to the Chief Justice, the members included Allen Dulles, former Director of Central Intelligence and brother of the late Secretary of State; John J. McCloy, a distinguished lawyer and adviser to Presidents and himself a former president of the World Bank; two Democratic members of Congress, Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia and Representative Hale Boggs of Louisiana; and two Republican members, Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky and Representative Gerald R. Ford of Michigan. The commission assembled a first-rate staff, headed by a general counsel, J. Lee Rankin, former Solicitor General of the United States. Congress voted the commission subpoena powers and authority to grant immunity from prosecution as a means of compelling testimony from reluctant witnesses.

It is reasonable to assume that this report is as exhaustive, as impartial, as logical, as wise and as true as the brains and character of seven dedicated, patriotic and accomplished men could devise.

They undertook their work with such thoroughness that the country was treated to the extraordinary spectacle of the Chief Justice visiting Jack Ruby in a prison cell in Dallas. Experts

of all kinds were called in during the research, even experts on fibers and human hair. Every shred of evidence was sifted. The crime was re-enacted with precision on the streets of Dallas by the F.B.I. Everyone who might be able to cast some light on the assassination was questioned, including Oswald's wife, Marina, his mother, Marguerite, Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, and Governor John Connally of Texas, who was shot while riding in the same car with the President.

With vast resources, the commission probed Oswald's career, his associations, his ideas and psychology. It made a meticulous study of Ruby and his crime. It examined the measures taken to protect the President on his fateful journey. It even interrogated the young doctors at Parkland Hospital in Dallas who made the hopeless attempt to restore the life of the President, the first President any of them had ever seen in person.

We could wish now that such competent and prompt investigation had been made into the assassinations of other Presidents. How much clearer the history of 100 years ago might have been if only we knew all the circumstances culminating in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth. It is quite certain that many men who possessed pieces of revealing information that never came to light at the time took these secrets to their graves. We think we know the true story in its main outline. Yet enough of the details remain forever shrouded in mystery to make it possible, for example, for writers, even in recent years, to have produced books purporting to show that Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton must have masterminded the assassination of the President.

Even the most modern reference books blame the assassination of President James A. Garfield on a disappointed office-seeker and the Assassination of President William McKinley on an anarchist. Yet the fact that Charles J. Guiteau was a disappointed office-seeker and Leon F. Czolgosz had a vague idea he was an anarchist does not answer the question of the motives of these assassinations. Garfield and McKinley were murdered by men who were demented. They committed murder under the delusion that they were acting for God and country.

It is, therefore, most important that the account of President Kennedy's assassination be put straight before myths and misconceptions become woven forever into this tragic chapter of American history. Ascertaining the facts and judging them wisely have been the sole mission of the Warren Commission.

The facts and the judgments are what make his report a document of lasting value.

The conclusion that Oswald acted alone is important not only for the present but the future. For in spite of the anguish of Dallas, the American people may always take some consolation in the fact that the crime was a result of a warped mind. With all its faults and weaknesses the Republic has endured generations of political storm and controversy with sufficient stability, restraint and morality to eschew assassination as a political device. Although four of our Presidents have been murdered and four others shot at, there is solace in the realization that in almost all instances the crimes were the acts of lone mental cases and not the product of palace intrigue, secret societies and political power struggles. (The exceptions to the rule are exceptions in a technical sense only. Booth had a few insignificant accomplices and two fanatic Puerto Rican Nationalists tried to assassinate President Truman at Blair House.)

Nearly 130 years ago, Francis Scott Key made a point of the difference to the country's pride between an assassination for calculated political ends and an assassination caused by insanity. Key was a lawyer as well as the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner." In defending Richard Lawrence, a demented house painter, who had tried unsuccessfully to assassinate President Andrew Jackson at the Capitol in 1835, Key reminded the court that the same act which would bring shame on a nation if committed by a sane man would reflect no disgrace if it was the result of an unsound mind.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Warren Commission report will erase doubts about the nature of the crime of November 22, 1963. Let us also hope that it will focus attention on the tragedy and danger of mental disease and the need for treating it early. Years before the crime in Dallas, psychiatrists found that Oswald had symptoms of serious mental disorder, but, alas, nothing was done about it because his mother took him to another city.

In a sense the report of the Warren Commission closes the incident at Dallas. The pain will never end, but at least we now know perhaps all that we are likely to know about what happened.

Washington, D. C.  
September, 1964

ROBERT J. DONOVAN