

PZ2935 \* \$1.00 \* A BANTAM EXTRA



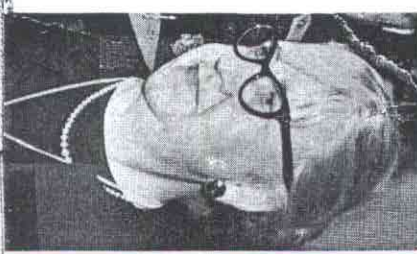
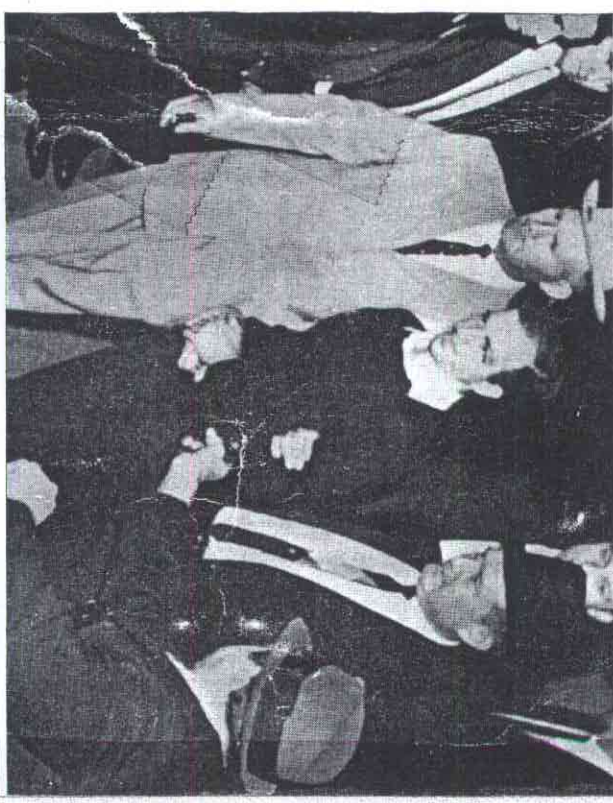
THE COMPLETE TEXT WITH ALL ILLUSTRATIONS

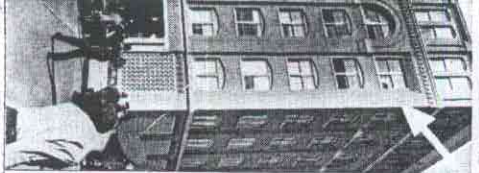
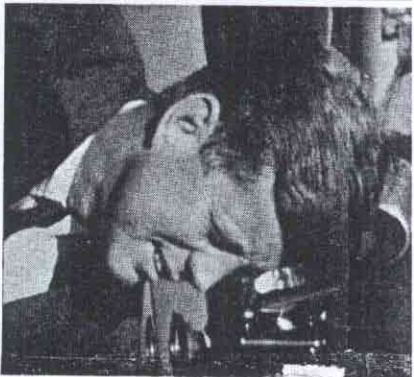
# REPORT OF THE WARREN COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

## THE DRAMATIC OFFICIAL ANSWER TO WHO KILLED KENNEDY

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY HARRISON E. SALISBURY AND OTHER MATERIAL PREPARED BY *The New York Times*. EXCLUSIVELY FOR THIS EDITION

PZ2935 5 NON-FICTION \$1.00 REPORT OF THE WARREN COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY BANTAM BOOKS





PZ2935

5

NON-FICTION

\$1.00

REPORT OF THE WARREN COMMISSION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY



# THE TRUTH BEHIND THE MOST SHOCKING CRIME OF THE CENTURY!

On November 22, 1963 the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, was shot down on the streets of Dallas. A young ex-marine named Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested by the police as his assassin. Two days later Oswald himself was murdered. A grief-stricken world was stunned with horror.

With the suspected killer dead, how would the real truth ever be known?

Was Oswald shot to keep him quiet?

Was he the agent of some political conspiracy?

Was a foreign power involved?

Was there any truth to the persistent rumor that Oswald was actually innocent?

On November 29, 1963 President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a special committee of distinguished Americans under Chief Justice Earl Warren to search for the truth. Now, after six months of the most painstaking, exhaustive investigation, here are their dramatic answers, the final truth behind the most shocking crime of the century!

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT

BY HARRISON E. SALISBURY  
Assistant Managing Editor  
The New York Times.

See  
p. 17

The quest for truth in the Kennedy assassination has been long and arduous. The Warren Commission spent the better part of a year in exhaustive examination of every particle of evidence it could discover. It questioned hundreds of witnesses, sought expert testimony on each phase of the case where expert testimony was applicable and attempted to evaluate every theory advanced about the killing—no matter how absurd, extreme or flimsy it might seem.

The Warren examination has not been the only one. The case has attracted dozens of independent investigators of varying degrees of competence. In the first hours, days and weeks after the President was shot, newsmen and correspondents from all the major news-gathering organizations in the world conducted separate inquiries.

Some of the early investigations were notable in scope. With the uses of history in mind, *The New York Times* set for itself the task of looking into every possible clue and factor which might concern the case. It was this newspaper's investigation, for example, which first ascertained many vital facts concerning the background of Lee Harvey Oswald—information about his childhood, the nature of his life in New Orleans in the summer of 1963, his activities on a trip to Mexico City just before the President's death.

The early inquiries, like that of *The New York Times*, had as their objective the uncovering of the basic information in a confused and bewildering situation. They were not intended to prove or disprove any particular thesis. They were designed to establish if possible what had happened and who was involved. They were aimed at giving the public the necessary information on which to base a judgment.

Later on, a host of other inquiries and investigators appeared on the scene. In many instances they were not so much interested in establishing facts as in proving or disproving theories as to how President Kennedy had been killed and who was responsible for the crime.

Frequently these theories were self-serving—designed to advance some special political goal or cause. Some have had

the objective of undermining the standing of the government and its governmental structure. Some have been aimed at sowing distrust and confusion at home? Officers seek to convey to foreign countries the image of a violent America, helpless in the face of dangerous forces.

The Warren Commission inquiry has been conducted with all of these factors in mind. It sought to present a body of data, evidence and conclusions which should lay—for all time—the aura of vicious and irresponsible rumor which has grown up around the Kennedy assassination.

But it seems naive to suppose that the Warren report—imprehensive, careful, compendious and competent as it is—will provide the final word on Mr. Kennedy's death. The acts of Abraham Lincoln's murder are well known. Yet today, one hundred years after his death, the legends of its occurrence are still flowering.

The legend of President Kennedy's death began with the check of the sniper's rifle that took his life. It was born at about 12:30 p.m. on November 22, 1963, when the lethal bullet whined toward his body.

It has steadily grown since that moment. As an editor of *The New York Times* remarked when he read the bulletin announcing the President's death at 1:35 p.m. that day: "The year 2000 will see men still arguing and writing about the President's death."

Nothing that has happened since seems likely to invalidate that assessment. Not even the Warren Commission can be expected to stifle the Kennedy legend.

All this report can do is to provide a hard-rock basis of fact against which to test the validity of the hypotheses which have proliferated and which will continue to proliferate.

There are those who have been puzzled at the persistence, diversity and vitality of the Kennedy legend. Their puzzlement overlooks the fact that for various reasons—some essential, some emotional, some psychological and some political—the Kennedy assassination has emerged as the major enigma of our time.

Around the death of Mr. Kennedy has sprung up a mystique. In part it is a mystique of the martyr. In part it derives special appeal from the dead President's youth and vitality. In part it reflects the deep guilt feelings which afflict so wide a strata of our contemporary society. And in part it is the deliberate product of widely-differing political forces and tendencies—including tendencies of dangerous implications to

Out of this situation a hundred theories have burgeoned as to how and why the President was killed. It is safe to predict that another hundred will spring up. These theories are for the most part not founded upon actual evidence about the killing of the President but upon contradictions, confusions and omissions which can be cited between one witness and another. Many of them, for example, bear down heavily on the fact that the Dallas police and other officials in the first hours after the killing reported first one thing, then another. The circumstance that the whole city was in a state of confusion and near-hysteria is discounted in order to construct new and deviant accounts of what *actually* occurred.

Based on such an approach, books and pamphlets have poured from the presses—particularly in Europe. Not a few political movements are engaged in a deliberate attempt to shape Kennedy legends which will fit their particular purposes.

There is nothing strange about this. Something of the kind happened after Lincoln's death. The violent death of an American president midway in the twentieth century is, by its very circumstance, an event of cataclysmic consequence. It cannot fail to trigger reservoirs of feeling, of passion, of ambition.

What many Americans have failed to recognize is the extent to which the legend—rather than the fact—about President Kennedy's death has taken possession of the minds of reasonable men who live beyond our borders. Not to mention the minds of a surprising number of Americans themselves, especially young people and teenagers.

Perhaps, because the tragedy occurred in our midst; perhaps, because so much of it took place before our very eyes on television, we have not fully realized its high drama. We have not grasped the fact that a blow which strikes down King, Emperor, Dictator or President has no equal on the human stage. When that blow takes the life of the mightiest figure of the world none should be surprised if a shudder passes through society. Did not John Webster exclaim (in *The Duchess of Malfi*): "Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out!"

Such a murder as that of President Kennedy saddens the nation. It is felt by each citizen to be an individual tragedy and a personal loss. But there are always men and forces—skilled, able, hampered neither by scruple nor principle—ready to convert the national mood to selfish and particular ends.

At moments of profound tragedy the tides swirl dangerously. It is easy to lose footing in the fog of rumor and

report. The very arch stones of the state seem to shift. All that has seemed secure suddenly—if only for an instant—becomes uncertain, unstable, treacherous. If the President can in the full panoply of power be turned to dust—what man feels safe?

When we add to such a situation of high drama even a whiff of suspicion, a hint of the unknown, a touch of rumor, the tensions may rise to an excruciating level. Sensation begins to feed upon sensation, rumor upon rumor. The fundamental assumptions on which the community lives may fall subject to challenge.

These ingredients lay at hand in the Kennedy assassination. If the crisis was held back before it had opportunity to take shape; if public confidence within the United States was largely maintained, this was due, in no small measure, to the fact that one week after the President's murder when the nation still horrified, still mystified, still angered by the Dallas events, sought vainly to comprehend the significance of what had happened, President Johnson set up what quickly came to be known as the Warren Commission.

Comprised of seven distinguished public men, headed by Chief Justice Warren, the Commission was charged with the task of satisfying itself:

"That the truth is known so far as it can be discovered and to report its findings and conclusions to him (the President), to the American people and to the world."

This elemental quest for truth—so simply stated—has proved infinitely complex.

So charged with emotion and skepticism has been the atmosphere that hardly a move the Commission has made has escaped criticism. Indeed, its very appointment and composition have been cited by some theory-mongers as evidence of one kind of conspiracy or another.

This was inevitable. The Commission was sworn in only seven days after the assassin's gun had cut short Mr. Kennedy's life at the age of forty-six. Yet, even at that early moment, the event had been overlain by report, suspicion, rumor, hearsay, controversy and contradiction. Around the world had begun to be spun those strands of legend which in the following months were woven into endlessly elaborating hypotheses.

It is well, thus, to remind ourselves that at the heart of the mystery of the assassination (and of the task of the Commission) lay a handful of central questions:

"Whence came the shots? How many were fired? Was there

one assassin? Or two? Or more? Was it a conspiracy? Who was behind the deed? Was it a madman? What was the motive?"

These were—and are—the germinal issues of the tragedy. Strip away all the extraneous matter and these are the questions which remain. It is not without significance that these questions arose in the very moment of the act. Other questions appeared within an hour or two—questions about Oswald and his background, about Policeman Tippit and why he was shot, about the validity of assertions by District Attorney Wade. Many more emerged before the fateful week-end of November 22 was over—questions about the interrogation of Oswald, about Jack Ruby's role, about a connection between Oswald and Ruby, Oswald and Tippit, Tippit and Ruby, about security conditions in Dallas—and a score of other matters.

These later questions were superimposed upon the basic ones like a photographic double-exposure. With the passage of time the later questions have almost obscured our view of what happened in those brief moments when the President's life was taken.

But the first questions were—and are—the keys to the mystery. Answer them and all the rest fall into appropriate relationship, as minor attendant mysteries, interesting as puzzles, fascinating to solve, but of no material consequence to the seminal secret.

This distinction between the essential and the secondary is one which the Warren Commission was compelled to make from the start (and with great firmness) because of the rapidity with which the Kennedy death was caught up and woven into designs which embodied the bizarre, the melodramatic, the mass-emotional, the political, the mystic, the hysterical and the self-serving.

The first task of the Warren Commission was simply stated by President Johnson: to establish the actual facts of what happened in the seconds after the arrival of Mr. Kennedy's entourage in the vicinity of the Texas Book Depository at the intersection of Elm and Houston streets in Dallas.

The task may seem simple. Yet, the Warren Commission found it remarkably complex. Take the first question—the source of the initial shot. Did it come from the front—toward the bridge over the triple underpass that lay ahead of the Kennedy cavalcade (as some motor-escort officers thought)? Was the source back toward the railroad tracks (as other police officials surmised at the moment of the attack)?

Giuseppe Zangara, the naturalized Italian who carried out an unsuccessful attempt on the life of President-elect Roosevelt in Miami, Florida, February 15, 1933 (in which Mayor Anton Cermak of Chicago was killed), immediately announced that he had sought "to get even with the capitalists" by killing the President because "I have trouble with my stomach." He repeated his explanation again and again. It may have made little sense to others but he wanted the world to know his reasons.

John Schrank, the obscure man who made a futile attempt on the life of Theodore Roosevelt in Milwaukee in 1912, readily proclaimed his motive. Indeed, he had written at great length why he felt Roosevelt must be eliminated (he considered him responsible for President McKinley's death). Leon F. Czolgosz, the assassin of McKinley, proudly proclaimed "I done my duty" after shooting down the President whom he described as "an enemy of the working class."

Charles J. Guiteau, assassin of Garfield, loaded his pockets with declarations and proclamations.

Oscar Collazo, survivor of the unsuccessful attempt on the life of President Truman, blamed the shooting on his slain colleague, Griselio Torresola, but said he and Torresola were demonstrating in behalf of Puerto Rican nationalism.

This pattern is not limited to assassination in the United States. In Czarist Russia, where attempt after attempt was made on the lives of the Czar and other high officials, the perpetrators made every effort to publicize their acts. If the assassins were shot down, as sometimes happened, their surviving colleagues quickly came to the fore embracing, not shunning, responsibility. The young Japanese who turned pre-World War II Tokyo political life into a nightmare invariably shouted their slogans as they wielded the murderous knife.

Thus, no matter how massive the circumstantial evidence, there remains a puzzle: If Lee Harvey Oswald killed the President why did he not proclaim that fact and shout out his motive?

There is another tradition of assassination. This is conspiracy. The assassinations of Europe and of Asia have almost always been the product of plots. The killing of the Archduke Ferdinand in 1914, the murder of Foreign Minister Barthou of France and King Alexander of Yugoslavia in Marseilles in 1934, the slaying of Socialist Jean Jaures on the eve of World War I in Paris, the assassination of King Humbert I of Italy in 1900, the slaying of Czar Alexander II in Russia—each of these was an act carried out by an organized conspiracy. Each

xxii

plot had a political motivation (nationalism or radicalism).

Thus, to a Frenchman, a German or a Russian it is almost unthinkable that a President of the United States would be slain by a lone man without conspiratorial ties or political motivation. And the slaying, in turn, of the alleged assassin by a gangland figure while in police hands would cause most Europeans (and particularly Russians familiar with the famous Kirov case in Leningrad in 1934) to be convinced that they were confronted with a plot in which the police themselves were deeply implicated.

To an American, the idea of an attack on a President by a single individual may not seem so implausible. The pattern of an attempt launched by a solitary killer, a man with an inward, paranoid tendency, a man with a self-professed cause, a man who feels himself chosen by a higher fate or by God to kill the President, is more familiar to us. Booth had conspirators of a sort. But Zangara, Schrank, Czolgosz and Guiteau acted alone. So did Richard Lawrence, the little-known house painter, who tried unsuccessfully to take the life of President Jackson.

As for Jack Ruby, Americans accustomed to the sight of easygoing relations between police and nightclub operators did not see in his involvement evidence, per se, of a plot in which the police played some nefarious role.

All of the theories about Mr. Kennedy's assassination fall roughly into three categories: right-wing conspiracy, left-wing conspiracy, lone individual attack.

The suspicion of right-wing conspiracy was born almost at the moment of the attack. It arose, although this may be painful to the residents of Dallas, from the geographic locale of the affair.

Dallas was known already to the nation and to the world as a center of intense right-wing activity. Many Dallas citizens had made no secret of their violent antagonism to individuals whose opinions they regarded as left-wing or liberal. Vice President Johnson and Mrs. Johnson experienced vituperation and abuse in a Dallas hotel lobby during the 1960 election campaign. A month before Mr. Kennedy came to Dallas, Adlai Stevenson was booed and spat at during a Dallas appearance. Moreover, there had been for months in the South a succession of violent incidents aroused by the civil rights controversy. These included bombings, arson, beatings and assassination by sniper's bullet.

The setting of the killing and the method struck a chord in many minds. Because the President was shot in Dallas many

xxiii

Curiously, both right- and left-wing theorists are apt to cite many of the same pieces of evidence. They contend that Oswald was an agent of the CIA and was simply carrying out CIA orders in killing the President. The inference is that the CIA is part of the "Communist conspiracy." None of them spend much time in studying what actually happened at the Texas Book Depository. None present any alternative to Oswald as the assassin. All make the most of discrepancies in the (naturally) varying stories of witnesses.

They make much of a famous photograph showing a man in a checkered sports shirt standing in the door of the Texas Book Depository at the moment the fatal shot was fired. But they ignore the fact that when the original picture is matched against those showing Oswald in his checkered sports shirt it is obvious that the two patterns are not the same. Nor does the man in the doorway bear much real resemblance to Oswald. (And of course the man was identified four days after the killing as another worker in the Depository).

District Attorney Wade made a number of conflicting statements in the forty-eight hours after the President's death. Each of these is seized upon as a matter of capital evidence. Wade is cited against Wade. But the discrepancies were noted at the time; correct versions long ago were ascertained by accurate reporters. *The New York Times*, for example, combed all of these and other statements in the few days just after the assassination. It checked each with comparatively little difficulty (until the FBI began to impose silence on some key witnesses). The Warren Commission has had little trouble in doing the same: in establishing, for example, beyond question that all the shots came from Oswald's gun; that it was Oswald's gun; that Oswald himself purchased it; and, of course, that Oswald himself fired the shots.

Will painstaking establishment of the facts end the elaboration of new hypotheses? Undoubtedly not. The mythmakers can be counted upon to scrutinize the Commission findings with care; to seize upon every conflict with earlier evidence and quickly to weave these bits and pieces into a new legend.

The wounds suffered by President Kennedy have long been a subject of controversy and a major ingredient in many theories. It has been contended that the official evidence was changed and re-arranged in order to fit later versions of the killing.

This matter has been explored by the Warren Commission, as it had been earlier by various newspapers. It is clear that because of the location of the wounds and the haste of the initial medical examination (the President was in extremis,

or even past that point when his car arrived at Parklands hospital) the first reports were neither accurate nor complete. Only later was a full and detailed autopsy made which enabled investigators to reconstruct with care the manner in which the wounds were inflicted, the trajectory of the bullets, etc. The angle of fire from the sixth-floor window was, in reality, not sharp. But the positioning of the cavalcade and the sweep of the highway make it seem more oblique in photos than it is in reality. In fact, it is difficult to interpret the scene by the photographic evidence alone. Taking into account the fact that the early reports of the wounds were incomplete and inaccurate; that some reports mentioned one bullet, others two, others three or even four, it is small wonder that doubts and confusion have persisted as to how the lethal shots actually were fired.

How could Oswald, who had no special qualifications as a marksman, have fired three shots at a moving target at such a distance and angle with such accuracy? Demonstrations by a moderately skilled person showed that no genuine difficulty was imposed in duplicating the feat. But the legend-builders overlook this.

There is no exhausting the list of questions and doubts. Individual lists of up to one hundred questions have been compiled. The Warren Commission itself set out hundreds—thousands—of individual items to which it insisted upon getting an answer.

With all the answers in, many persons still share doubt that a single man without conspirators, a man who demonstrably had been incapable of the ability to organize, who found ordinary school too difficult, who proved a misfit in the Marine Corps and in Russia and who could not hold one unskilled job after another, should display the initiative, the skill, the energy and the resoluteness to carry out the Kennedy murder.

To such doubts the careful reconstruction of Oswald's personality and life provides a convincing answer. Five of the assassination attempts against American Presidents were carried out by men who strongly remind us of Oswald. They were men who had not been capable of solving their personal problems; men who found it difficult to hold employment; men who drifted aimlessly, as did Oswald, from one part of the country to another; men who demonstrated neither will to action nor ability to organize—until they struck at the President of the United States.

Each was a man who at one point or another because of some curious mental process became possessed of the convic-

persons leaped to the conclusion that he must have been the victim of a right-wing conspiracy. They proceeded to interpret events and evidence in the light of this emotional frame of mind. One of the first and persistently asked questions was: Why did Mr. Kennedy go to Dallas and, if he was determined to go, why were not special security precautions taken?

The presentation of this viewpoint found expression in the person of Mark Lane, New York attorney who has made a career of insinuating that Mr. Kennedy was the victim of a right-wing plot. Abroad, this thesis has had countless supporters. Among the more eloquent elaborators of such theories have been Thomas G. Buchanan (an expatriate American) in England who suggested that "Mr. X," a Texas oil millionaire, concocted the plot in an effort to protect the oil depletion allowance; Leo Sauvage, a writer for *Le Figaro* of Paris, who views the killing as the product of a conspiracy linking police, gangsters and right-wingers; and Joachim Joesten, an American citizen of German origin, who has published (both in Germany and the United States) a theory that the FBI, the CIA, the Army and oil millionaires conspired to take Mr. Kennedy's life.

There are differences in detail among these theories, but they share many basic premises: that there has been a consistent effort to "cover up" facts about the assassination; that elements inside and outside the U.S. government have collaborated to suppress evidence of a "conspiracy"; that clues indicating right-wing involvement in the killing have been concealed; that an attempt has been made to hide links between Oswald and others; that Oswald was killed to silence him; that Oswald was either an FBI or a CIA agent or both; that the cover-up attempt involved not only the Dallas police and local Texas authorities but the national government, including the FBI, the Secret Service, the CIA, President Johnson and the Warren Commission itself; that evidence has been changed, falsified, distorted and otherwise abused in order to support official versions that Oswald and Oswald alone was involved in the killing; that rudimentary security precautions, such as guarding the President's route (particularly the Book Depository building), keeping an eye on known subversives (such as Oswald), were not taken, indicating complicity of security agents in the crime.

Some Americans have had some or all of these doubts. But more important is the fact that many (some observers think a majority of) Europeans share these hesitations.

In England, for example, such notable individuals as Lord

XXIV

Boyd Orr, former director-general of the United Nations Food Organization, Sir Compton Mackenzie, J. B. Priestley, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, Kingsley Martin, former editor of *The New Statesman*, and Michael Foot have joined with Bertrand Russell in a "Who Killed Kennedy Committee."

This group, in the words of Lord Russell, believes that "there has never been a more subversive, conspiratorial, unpatriotic or endangering course for the security of the United States and the world than the attempt by the United States Government to hide the murderer of its recent President."

Not infrequently such groups compare the Kennedy killing to the Dreyfus affair—the inference being that the whole weight and authority of the American Establishment—Government, Big Business, the Power Structure of Society—has been placed behind a campaign to rest the blame on a single (presumably innocent) man.

For example, Lord Russell demands answers to such questions as: "Why were all the members of the Warren Commission closely connected with the U.S. Government? If, as we are told, Oswald was the lone assassin, where is the issue of national security? If the Government is so certain of its case why has it conducted all its inquiries in the strictest secrecy?"

The plain intent, of course, is to cast into doubt in advance the findings of the Warren investigation.

The proponents of the left-wing conspiracy advance such contentions as these: Why did the President name a "known Communist" like Earl Warren to investigate the assassination? Why is an effort being made to absolve Moscow from responsibility? Why are the investigators trying to minimize the fact that Oswald was a Russian (or Castro) agent? Why did not the Government announce that the President was killed by a Communist? Why is an effort being made to cover up the fact that it was all a Communist plot? Why did Washington prevent Texas authorities from charging Oswald with being the agent of a Communist conspiracy?

These advocates not infrequently also call for the impeachment of Warren; they categorize former President Eisenhower and Allen Dulles (former director of the CIA and member of the Warren Commission) as Communists. Some even advance the notion that President Kennedy himself was a Communist who was done away with by other Communists because he was not carrying out Moscow's orders with sufficient efficiency (presumably advocates of this theory believe that President Johnson was a more able and active "Communist" than President Kennedy).

XXV



X  
Curiously, both right- and left-wing theorists are apt to cite many of the same pieces of evidence. They contend that Oswald was an agent of the CIA and was simply carrying out CIA orders in killing the President. The inference is that the CIA is part of the "Communist conspiracy." None of them spend much time in studying what actually happened at the Texas Book Depository. None present any alternative to Oswald as the assassin. All make the most of discrepancies in the (naturally) varying stories of witnesses.

They make much of a famous photograph showing a man in a checkered sports shirt standing in the door of the Texas Book Depository at the moment the fatal shot was fired. But they ignore the fact that when the original picture is matched against those showing Oswald in his checkered sports shirt it is obvious that the two patterns are not the same. Nor does the man-in-the-doorway bear much real resemblance to Oswald. (And of course the man was identified four days after the killing as another worker in the Depository).

District Attorney Wade made a number of conficting statements in the forty-eight hours after the President's death. Each of these is seized upon as a matter of capital evidence. Wade is cited against Wade. But the discrepancies were noted at the time; correct versions long ago were ascertained by accurate reporters. The New York Times, for example, combed all of these and other statements in the few days just after the assassination. It checked each with comparatively little difficulty (until the FBI began to impose silence on some key witnesses).

The Warren Commission has had little trouble in doing the same: in establishing, for example, beyond question that all the shots came from Oswald's gun; that it was Oswald's gun; that Oswald himself purchased it; and, of course, that Oswald himself fired the shots.

Will painstaking establishment of the facts end the elaboration of new hypotheses? Undoubtedly not. The mythmakers can be counted upon to scrutinize the Commission findings with care; to seize upon every conflict with earlier evidence and quickly to weave these bits and pieces into a new legend.

The wounds suffered by President Kennedy have long been a subject of controversy and a major ingredient in many theories. It has been contended that the official evidence in many theories, and re-arranged in order to fit later versions of the killing.

This matter has been explored by the Warren Commission, as it had been earlier by various newspapers. It is clear that because of the location of the wounds and the haste of the initial medical examination (the President was in extremis,

xxvi

or even past that point when his car arrived at Parklands hospital) the first reports were neither accurate nor complete. Only later was a full and detailed autopsy made which enabled investigators to reconstruct with care the manner in which the wounds were inflicted, the trajectory of the bullets, etc. The angle of fire from the sixth-floor window was, in reality, not sharp. But the positioning of the cavalcade and the sweep of the highway make it seem more oblique in photos than it is in reality. In fact, it is difficult to interpret the scene by the photographic evidence alone. Taking into account the fact that the early reports of the wounds were incomplete and inaccurate; that some reports mentioned one bullet, others two, others three or even four, it is small wonder that doubts and confusion have persisted as to how the lethal shots actually were fired.

How could Oswald, who had no special qualifications as a marksman, have fired three shots at a moving target at such a distance and angle with such accuracy? Demonstrations by a moderately skilled person showed that no genuine difficulty was imposed in duplicating the feat. But the legend-builders overlook this.

There is no exhausting the list of questions and doubts. Individual lists of up to one hundred questions have been compiled. The Warren Commission itself set out hundreds—thousands—of individual items to which it insisted upon getting an answer.

With all the answers in, many persons still share doubt that a single man without conspirators, a man who demonstrably had been incapable of the ability to organize, who found ordinary school too difficult, who proved a misfit in the Marine Corps and in Russia and who could not hold one unskilled job after another, should display the initiative, the skill, the energy and the resoluteness to carry out the Kennedy murder.

To such doubts the careful reconstruction of Oswald's personality and life provides a convincing answer. Five of the assassination attempts against American Presidents were carried out by men who strongly remind us of Oswald. They were men who had not been capable of solving their personal problems; men who found it difficult to hold employment; men who drifted aimlessly, as did Oswald, from one part of the country to another; men who demonstrated neither will to action nor ability to organize—until they struck at the President of the United States.

Each was a man who at one point or another because of some curious mental process became possessed of the convic-

xxvii

tion that he must kill the President; that the President in some manner was responsible for his own failure or had become a danger, so he thought, to the country. They were men who when this point was reached took on a sense of mission. They had little to do with their fellow men. They were lonely persons without close or enduring friendships. They began to live in a dream world, a paranoid world, the psychiatrists would call it, in which they interpreted events according to the structure of their own distorted vision.

In several instances these men, having purchased a weapon and having determined to kill the President, did not act when the opportunity arose—only to strike quite unexpectedly when a later chance for attack presented itself. It was not unusual for them to contemplate striking at some other prominent person—another President, another high official. In the end the President was attacked as much because he provided a target of opportunity as anything else.

Several times the assassin was a man who considered himself a representative of a clique, faction or organization (but was not so considered by the organization). The case of the professed Anarchist Czolgosz, who killed McKinley, is very much in point. He had at one time belonged to a Socialist Club and read a good deal of their literature. Later, he gave up the Socialists and began to attend Anarchist lectures. He sought to join several Anarchist societies but his inquiries as to whether they were considering certain acts of violence caused them to be suspicious of him. They thought he was an agent provocateur.

Just five days before Czolgosz shot McKinley an Anarchist paper in Cleveland published a warning against him. Czolgosz had been wandering aimlessly about the country. He had no job and as little money as Oswald. Finally he went to a town called West Seneca, New York, near Buffalo. A few days before President McKinley came to Buffalo, Czolgosz left suddenly for Cleveland, but stayed only briefly and returned to Buffalo where he bought a revolver, apparently having decided to kill the President. He wandered about some more and finally, as much by chance as anything else, got into a receiving line at the Buffalo Exposition, waited patiently until he came up to shake hands with the President and then shot him down at point blank.

It is impossible to read the history of Czolgosz without being reminded of Oswald. There are differences between the two, but differences of minor detail.

Many persons thought it odd that Oswald should make an

xxviii

attempt on the life of Major General Edwin Walker and talk of killing Vice President Nixon. Why would a man pick three such diverse persons as possible victims? If Oswald tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Walker what manner of mind would take the same gun and successfully shoot Mr. Kennedy?

The explanation is simply that this was not a rational mind. Nor were the minds of other assassins rational. Zangara, who killed Mayor Cermak while shooting at F.D.R., had picked several earlier victims but had been unable to carry out any attempts on them. They were King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy, President Calvin Coolidge and President Hoover. He finally shot at Roosevelt just because he happened to be in Miami when the President-elect came there.

Schrank, the man who shot Theodore Roosevelt, had a fixation against third-term presidents. He said that if Grant had run for a third term he would have tried to kill him, and he begged to be released from the asylum in order to "deal with" F.D.R. when he ran for a third term.

These are not reasonable statements. But assassins, whether motivated by political cause or mental aberration, are not reasonable men.

No material question now remains unresolved so far as the death of President Kennedy is concerned. True, there is no confession. But the evidence of Oswald's single-handed guilt is overwhelming. Yet, few Americans will feel that this is the final word. Not, I submit, because the evidence is not toweringly clear. But rather because there is in each of our hearts some feeling, however small, of responsibility; some feeling that each of us had some share in the crime because we had a role in a society which made it possible; which gave birth to a young man who by a long, dreary, painful path became distorted into an assassin. Thus, there remains in each of us some communal share of guilt in the senseless loss of a man so young and brilliant as John F. Kennedy; some feeling of a step not taken; an act not completed; a word not spoken; a thought not carried into life which would have spared us so great a tragedy.

And it is this secret gnawing at our conscience that not all the efforts, not all the millions of words in the many volumes of the Warren findings will ever still. It is this, in the end, that will keep the spark of the Kennedy legend aglow.

xxix

SIMILAS  
RYPER  
LOCEMAN-KIRK

R. MARCUS  
1249 Hi Point Street  
Los Angeles 35, California

A DOCUMENT  
OF GREAT HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

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

ANTHONY LEWIS, *The New York Times*

This completely authoritative edition of the Warren  
Commission Report, which you are holding in your  
hands includes ~~unlike any other mass distributed~~  
paperback edition ~~all the~~ text and every single one  
of the vitally important Commission Exhibits neces-  
sary to an understanding of the Report.

With the expert help and advice of the national staff  
of *The New York Times*, Bantam Books has been able  
to prepare one of the clearest and most thorough pre-  
sentations of the facts concerning the assassination of  
President John F. Kennedy.

The book begins with a section especially arranged  
for this edition. It contains a eulogy by Tom Wicker;  
an Introduction by Harrison E. Salisbury, Assistant  
Managing Editor of *The New York Times*; and other  
interpretive articles by Anthony Lewis and James  
Reston.

In addition, every care has been taken to assist the  
reader. There is a complete picture section, and some  
of the Commission Exhibits in the appendices have  
even been reset for greater clarity.

The first printing for 700,000 copies of this 800-page  
low-priced edition of the Warren Commission Report  
has been made available to the public just eighty hours

*continued*



REPORT OF THE  
WARREN COMMISSION  
ON THE  
ASSASSINATION  
OF  
PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Introduction by  
HARRISON E. SALISBURY  
with additional material prepared by  
THE NEW YORK TIMES  
exclusively for this edition



2A JIM 12

after President Lyndon B. Johnson released it. This establishes a new milestone in book publishing. A force of over 150 skilled men and women at W. F. Hall Printing Company in Chicago, Illinois, one of the largest printing plants in the world, accomplished this gigantic task by working in eight-hour shifts around the clock.

Since President Johnson felt it was of vital importance that the whole truth about President Kennedy's death be given to the world as quickly as possible, special arrangements were made to air the books all over the world. Thus, the Warren Commission Report in this edition will be read in London, Paris, Tokyo, Melbourne and other cities throughout the world almost as soon as it appeared in Los Angeles.

With the permission of Bantam Books and *The New York Times*, the Book-of-the-Month Club made arrangements to distribute a hard cover edition as a Special Book Dividend. Similarly, McGraw-Hill Book Co. made arrangements for a hard cover edition which they will distribute to bookstores and libraries.

Thanks are due the dedicated men and women associated with W. F. Hall, *The New York Times*, and the organizations (some of them world-encircling) which distribute mass publications. Without them this assignment would not have been possible.

A portion of the proceeds of this Bantam edition of the Warren Commission Report is being donated to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library.

The Editors of Bantam Books

has been taken  
eye picture  
this in the  
of claim  
of 0000  
Warren  
the book

COVER PHOTO CREDITS—Front cover: from United Press International; inside front cover: all from United Press International; inside back cover: 7, 8, 10, 12 from United Press International; 9 from Wide World Photos, Inc.; 11 from Joe Scott, KRLD Black Star.

REPORT OF THE WARREN COMMISSION  
ON THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

A BANTAM BOOK  
Published October 1964

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 64-24803

All rights reserved.  
© Copyright, 1963, 1964, by The New York Times Company.  
Published simultaneously in the United States and Canada.

Bantam Books are published by Bantam Books, Inc. Its trade-mark, consisting of the words "Bantam Books" and the portrayal of a bantam, is registered in the United States Patent Office and in other countries. Marca Registrada. Printed in the United States of America. Bantam Books, Inc., 271 Madison Ave., New York 16, N. Y.