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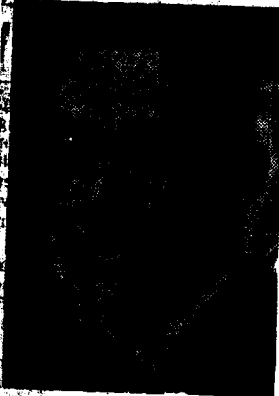
LANSDALE, PENNA., TUESDAY,

REPORT

LOCAL AND WORLD AFFAIRS

AUGUST 9, 1966

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TALKING UP

EDGAR
WILLIAMS

(Editor's Note: This is six weeks in a series of reports by Edgar Williams on his recent trip through Norway, Sweden, Denmark and England.)

Still They Ask: Who Killed JFK?

(Part One)

HAS BEEN nearly three years since the shots rang out in Dallas and a President died without knowing how much he was loved—or by how many.

Almost two years ago the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, reported to the world that it had "ascertained the truth."

Said the Commission in its report, issued under the imprimatur of Chief Justice Earl Warren and six other distinguished Americans: "The person who killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally (John B. Connally Sr., Governor of Texas) were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald."

Since its publication, the

Warren Report has been under attack, both in the U.S. and abroad. Curiously, the bitterest assailants in this country are elements which are poles apart ideologically—extremists of the Far Left and the Far Right—but which, in effect, are "allies" in trying to discredit the Report.

It would appear, however, that most Americans—especially those who have taken time to read and give thoughtful consideration to the Warren Report—have accepted the Commission.

But such is not the case among large numbers of Scandinavians. Nor is it the case among numerous Britons. While I cannot make a first-hand report on feelings elsewhere in Western Europe, I have it from reliable sources in London and in the capital cities of the Scandinavian countries, that the same attitude is prevalent virtually everywhere on the Continent.

TODAY in Scandinavia, with the third anniversary of the slaying of John Fitzgerald Kennedy just around the next calendar corner, one still hears THE question: "Who REALLY killed President Kennedy?"

Oh, that isn't the constant phraseology. The question is asked in many ways. Sometimes, the "question" is a declarative sentence; e. g., "The real killer of your late President probably never will be known." But it's still a question, in a manner of speaking, because an American to whom it is put is expected to express his opinion in considerable detail.

hoons in Oslo, mentioned here in a week or so ago, met a young man and young woman at a refreshment stand. They said they were students at the University of Oslo. They spoke excellent English.

They expressed their feelings on Viet Nam. They were disturbed by the threat of a world-wide war, and the young woman said: "I believe a settlement could be reached, if John F. Kennedy were alive today."

The young man broke in: "We don't know who killed your great President. Perhaps you can enlighten us. He was eliminated by a conspiracy, wasn't he?"

No proof of that ever has been produced, I said.

Warren Commission spent ten months obtaining testimony from 552 witnesses and checking out hundreds of leads. It reported there was no evidence of a conspiracy and concluded that the assassin acted on his own.

"Do you accept that?" the young woman asked. I replied that, inasmuch as the Report has been out for nearly two years and its critics have not produced a shred of credible evidence which would contradict the basic conclusions, I accept it — and will continue to do so until such time as facts may be presented which would prove the Report wrong.

"You," the young woman said, shaking her head, "have been misled. One man could not have planned and carried out such a horrible crime."

In Stockholm, a middle-aged woman whom I have known since 1962—and have visited every time I have been in the Swedish capital — expressed doubts about the findings of the Warren Commission. The lady is prominent in Sweden, and she asked that I not use her name in print.

"It is incomprehensible to me that Oswald could have acted on his own. And why was it so easy for that man to kill Oswald in, of all places, a police station?"

MY OLDEST friend in Copenhagen is John Otto Nielsen, of whom I have written before. At twenty-nine, John is an associate editor of "Dagbladet," Denmark's top-circulation picture magazine, which has a format somewhat similar to those of "Life" and "Look" magazines in the U.S.

Nielsen is a thoughtful man. He is, for example, not old enough to remember much about the Nazi occupation of Denmark during World War II. But he has read voraciously about the rise of the Third Reich and Adolf Hitler's lust for world conquest. Through his reading, John has arrived at a philosophy which makes him outspokenly pro-American with regard to the war in Viet Nam.

"What the United States is doing today in Viet Nam," he has told me more than once, "is the very thing the free nations should have done to stop Hitler in the Thirties. I am all in favor of America's efforts in Viet Nam."

In the matter of the Kennedy assassination, however, Nielsen stubbornly refuses to believe that Lee Harvey Oswald was the slayer.

"Like most Danes," he said,

"I don't believe that the real murderer has been found, or ever will be. We feel that America did not do enough to find out what was behind the murder."

"We don't believe statements that there is no doubt about the identity of the murderer. And we don't believe that Americans believe the actual murderer was Oswald."

(Next: Much of the skepticism of Scandinavians concerning the assassination is traceable, in large measure, to public utterances by several Americans. Two in particular are responsible; one is an American expatriate living in Paris, who admits to having been a member of the Communist Party, the other is an attorney, long associated with far-out causes, who now lives in Denmark. Williams examines these and other influences, also returns briefly to London where, during the "Battle of Tower Hill" (remember?), a British Communist told our Innocent Abroad that the Intermars had planned and carried out the murder of the President of the United States.)

FREQUENTLY, when an American visitor talks with a Scandinavian friend and the assassination of John F. Kennedy comes up, the American is faced with two handicaps — two men, both U. S. citizens.

Take my conversation with John Otto Nielsen, my oldest friend in Denmark, an associate editor on the staff of a Danish magazine. John, as I have said, is a thoughtful man. He knows more U. S. history than many Americans do. He outspokenly backs our policy in Viet Nam.

But on the assassination subject, Nielsen, like most of my friends in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, asks: "Who REALLY killed President Kennedy?"

Yesterday's essay wound up with a statement by Nielsen to the effect that most Danes do not believe the findings of the Warren Commission — and furthermore are convinced that most Americans don't accept them, either.

Among the virtues of a strong friendship is that it can survive wrangles. It wasn't necessary to do a soft-shoe dance in replying to this friend.

"John," I said, "you're a fine journalist. But that remark is just plain balderdash."

"It has no basis in fact."

Nielsen gave me an indulgent smile. "Edgar," he said, "you are a fine journalist yourself. But you are very naive. You must not be acquainted with the writings and speeches of two of your countrymen which are at odds with the official report on the assassination. They..."

interrupted. "Don't tell me," I said. "You are referring to Thomas Buchanan and Mark Lane."

"Right," John said. "Are you going to dispute their arguments?"

"No," I answered. "I see no point to disputing controversy, which is all those two ever have presented concerning the assassination."

NOT ONLY in Scandinavia but elsewhere on the Continent and in Britain, Buchanan and Lane have convinced uncounted Europeans that, contrary to the Warren Report, Lee Harvey Oswald was at most a minor figure in the tragedy of Dallas.

Who are Buchanan and Lane? Their backgrounds provide some insight into what motivates them.

The Baltimore-born Buchanan is an expatriate living in Paris. In 1948, he was fired by the Washington Staff, where he was a reporter, after he admitted membership in the Communist Party.

Lane is an attorney from New York, now living — temporarily, at least — in Denmark. He has long been mixed up in far-out causes. To my knowledge, Lane never has been an actual Communist, but he is highly regarded by the Communist-front International Association of Democratic Jurists in Eastern Europe, and has gone behind the Iron Curtain to address that organization.

Buchanan has profited handsomely from his book, "Who Killed Kennedy?" which was published in eight European countries in 1964 and still sells briskly. It is important to note that the exact date of publication was May 2, 1964. You need not be a genius to see that less than six months after the assassination — twenty-three weeks and one day, to be precise — the tome was in bookstores.

Having experienced the labor pains of book writing, I can assure you that the

not, narrow, narrow, tight, written, published, and distributed so quickly. The usual timetable, even for books dealing with subjects far from earth-shaking, is a full year.

Buchanan, handling an extremely serious subject, banged out "Who Killed Kennedy?" in a few weeks. He didn't go to Dallas. He never left Paris. In the book, he offers as "proof" chiefly newspaper reports written just after the tragedy.

Buchanan suggests (1) that the author of this crime is a millionaire of Texas, called "Mr. X"; (2) that Oswald was an accomplice; but that (3) the actual shooting was done by two triggermen, one stationed in the Texas Book Depository building, the other on the grass ahead. Also, Buchanan insinuates that "Mr. X" had the active cooperation of the Dallas police chief in carrying out the murder.

Lane, who has picked up not inconsiderable fees throughout Europe for his lecture, "The Innocence of Lee Harvey Oswald", does not quite accuse any Texas millionaire or the Dallas police chief of conspiring to kill President Kennedy. But, as he likely will do in his own book, to be published next Monday, he has endeavored to blacken the integrity of the FBI, the American press and certain officials in the U.S. government.

It seems to be Lane's contention—which may well be subject to change—that Oswald not only wasn't the assassin but had no connection with the crime. Lane has described the killer or killers as persons "motivated by disease, bad minds," adding that they are still running loose.

Buchanan has the knack of making the weakest sort of case seem plausible to the average reader. Lane is a persuasive speaker. In view of the attention the two have attracted in Europe, I would be reluctant to chide my Scandinavian friends for having bought a bill of goods.

"I can do is be patient and try to explain the situation as I see it. Eventually, I may even succeed in convincing John Nielsen."

★ ★ ★
DURING the already-chronicled "Battle of Tower Hill" in London there was a colloquy which did not report. It was not pertinent to my "debate" with twenty Britons, all anti-American, over Viet Nam. It shows, however, that irrationality of attitudes toward the findings

of the Warren Commission is widespread.

On Tower Hill that afternoon, one adversary digressed. Possibly trying to throw me off stride, he brought up the assassination. What follows is transcribed from my tape recording:

MAN: You know why your President Kennedy was killed, don't you?

ME: That sounds like a loaded question. So you tell me.

MAN: It was because he had refused to serve his masters.

ME: You can name his masters, of course?

MAN: Why bother? Everybody knows who they are.

ME: Well, I don't know who they are. Name them.

MAN: It was the big interests, the millionaires, who had him killed.

ME: You mean, all millionaires in America planned the crime?

MAN: I didn't say "all." It was some.

ME: Give me the name of

ME: I don't know the name of one.

MAN: Everybody knows who all of them are. You're trying to cover up for them.

That was the exchange. Its only value is to indicate the irrationality breeds irrationality.

END