

Assassination investigator hassled

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The caller said, "If you think your husband dropping out of the Echo Park Commission is going to protect you, you're crazy. Let this be fair warning!" and hung up. That phone call, received by my wife Monday afternoon, July 27, was the latest development in an incredible series of adventures and misadventures we have experienced in the past half year. A half year which has given me some valuable insights into the care, feeding and abortion of an important but unpopular (albeit nonviolent) cause in this country.

The Monday phone call followed the Saturday rally ("RFK Probe") at which I announced my resignation from public appearances for the Echo Park Commission on Law and Order, an organization which I helped found six months ago and to which the caller had referred. The commission was founded on the premise that it is unlawful and also disorderly in the extreme to kill the President of the United States—and especially to get away with it. It was our aim to apply the issue of law and order to everyone, even killers of presidents and senators, and to those who are always yelling loudest about law and order—many of whom were responsible for violating it in allowing the killers to go free (or wherever they were allowed to go). A worthy aim, I thought, and even against impossible odds right might still prevail. Wrong. The funny thing about it is that it was wrong for reasons I never would have imagined.

It is true that my wife was attacked and beaten six weeks ago by two men in relation to the RFK

probe. It is true that we have received many threatening and mysterious phone calls. It is true that we (especially my wife) have been followed on numerous occasions by an individual who attended our first public meeting several months ago. It is true that our phone is tapped by God knows who (in addition to the police who had one applied, at our request after the last call). It is true that my involvement has cost us many hours of time and many hundreds of dollars which we could not and cannot now afford. And it is true that I sleep with a loaded gun beside the bed (or try to sleep), wondering when some thug is going to come back to get his head blown off. (It is ironic that I gave up the gun after the RFK murder, and, now because of it, I have had to take it up again.)

Those are not easy things to live with. But war is war, and that's what this amounts to. But there is no way to win a war when your allies do more fighting with you and among themselves than with the enemy, and when the people you are fighting for don't really care who wins as long as it doesn't cause them any real inconvenience and they can still make a buck and joke disparagingly about Spiro Agnew and maybe stick peace signs in the windows of their new cars.

At the Saturday rally (or, more aptly, for me, catastrophe) one particularly vocal and bellicose researcher—who has done a considerable amount of valuable photographic work—openly challenged my rather cursory JFK assassination discussion (with slides and films) on two points of which he made quite an issue. One was ill-founded because I think he was mistaken about a location I gave, and the other was a Mexican stand-off on a point that to my satisfaction has never been settled. He told me afterward that he wanted to see the "truth" told. I agreed with that aim, but the net effect of what he did was to cast doubt in the uncommitted mind about critical issues on which he and I were in fundamental agreement. "One of these guys doesn't know what he's talking about ... or both!" Zap! "What conspiracy?"

I raise this as a single-example of the bickering, back-biting and

infighting going on continually between the researchers, Warren Commission critics, and friends of the conspiracy theory. There was a conspiracy, both in the execution and the subsequent whitewash of the assassination of John Kennedy. I believe that can easily be shown to any reasonable person. But far be it from the Warren Commission critics to get together long enough to prove anything to anybody even in that fundamental area on which they have always agreed anyway. They think it is more important to press for acceptance of their own special theories of the detailed whys and wherefores and for the recognition and remuneration to be gained therefrom: self-aggrandizement looms a larger threat to this effort than any government or other suppression on any level. I is my belief that anyone with anything more than a general idea of exactly what happened and why and by whom it was done is either involved in it or dead or both. Why should they (the guilty) become lenient now, when they still have as much to lose—and to gain? (If you are wondering what that might include, refer to last Monday's LA Times headline story titled, "Kennedy Plan Told for '65 Viet Pullout," or to the Life magazine article from which it was excerpted.)

At the rally there were some technical and other kinds of problems that could have been averted if there had been more open communication and more time given to preparation for the event by some of the people involved (or who should have been involved). Jealousies, indifference and misunderstandings about others and about themselves have led to the same kinds of effectivity breakdown for people associated with the RFK investigation, and I admit some laxity here on my part. For example, while I did not learn that Mary Sirhan would not appear at the rally in time to cancel our fairly extensive publicity (after being led to believe that she definitely would), I should have contacted her or her attorneys directly to confirm. (Steps have been taken since then to try to reconcile some of the differences that prevented her appearance, and I hope that memory will feature this potential success — which could have great significance — rather than the disappointment suffered by so many, including myself, at the rally.)

But while the critics neutralize their energies in suing, discredit (please turn to page 19)

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ing, threatening and just not communicating with each other, much less the public, that same public sits on its collective ass and waits for somebody to save it. That same public which, as the polls have revealed, does not swallow the Warren Report, sits benignly by wondering if in fact there were good reasons for covering up the fact of conspiracy. Reasons like "national security?" Lyndon Johnson this year gave that as the reason for censoring his admission that he didn't accept the findings of his own commission. Hubert Humphrey wrote that was the reason we may never know "the full truth." Whose security, exactly, is the "national security?" Yours and mine ... or that of the murderers themselves and those in whose behalf they acted?

As the people comfort themselves with the negative answer to "what could I do anyway" (especially all those liberals who act like they ought to know better), the machinery of war and central power accountable only to itself trundles on to 1984. The liberals and "radicals," not the Right (many of whom are keenly interested, but for the wrong reasons), are the first to say the assassination issues are as dead as the men involved. "If there was a conspiracy, so what else is new." Nothing, until they themselves become the targets of it.

The rest of the people—the silent majority—know too, but they don't want anyone to remind them how bad it is. What they don't realize is that it will get worse as long as they let it. The Jews must have thought Hitler would eventually go away and leave them alone if they kept quiet. He didn't, and he won't.

Personally, I hope that the Echo Park Commission will be able to continue its work and that its March on Washington will be a success. The commission has, I think, already accomplished a great deal

in getting important evidence to people locally and to congressmen, senators and other officials nationally. Most of these persons had not been exposed to such evidence before, and their response, while not totally favorable, has been largely gratifying and a little surprising. Some of them, liberals like Edmund Muskie as well as conservatives like George Murphy, have taken the trouble to review the evidence and, thinking it deserving of some action, have forwarded it to the Justice Department. They have all received the same form letter in reply—the same form letter being sent as early as 1967 and to Vice President Humphrey in 1968 (I have copies). If they don't know they're getting the same putoff as everyone else, they soon will.

This issue cuts across political lines, and there is a great deal of interest in Congress. That is where I think the greatest hope lies, where I will continue the thrust of my efforts, and where I urge everyone who asks what to do to exert pressure. Members of the Congress show definite signs of waking up to the fact that the traditional system of checks and balances provided for by the Constitution has been overturned in favor of the Executive Branch. Based on my correspondence, and that of others, I have every reason to believe that sufficient public pressure between now and the next session of Congress will result in new, congressional investigations of the assassinations of the '60's. Senator Burch Bayh, of Indiana, who has shown quite an interest, wrote me last week that a bill (S.842), making it "a Federal offense to assassinate, kidnap or assault a member of Congress" and which might prove of importance here, is now pending before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Another area that needs pursuit is bringing the weight of public opinion to bear on Time-Life, Inc. which owns the Zapruder film of the JFK assassination and which has prevented its public showing ever since it was purchased (at a cost of millions in potential revenue, incidentally, which one might assume is being compensated by another source). A single showing of a clear print of that film on network television would confirm millions of individual doubts as to the findings of the Warren Commission.

To aid readers who want to get involved as individuals, I will make available a list of senators and

congressmen who have shown a positive interest through their letters (along with some notable exceptions). Please write me in care of the Free Press. The address of the Time-Life New York office where the film is locked up is Time-Life Inc., Film Dept., Admin. Office, Time-Life Bldg., Rockefeller Center, New York, N.Y., 10020. The Echo Park Commission prepared a post card for mailings to elected representatives and others. On the face of the card is a photo comparison by local researcher Fred Newcomb. That comparison is reproduced here. The legend on the back of the post card explains it as follows:

LEE HARVEY OSWALD —
World's First Chin Trans-
Plant — Operation was unsuccessful, chin rejected patient who soon died. Left photo (before) by Dallas Police, taken on Oswald's arrest. Right photo (after) by "Marina Oswald," et al., made on
This photo was enlarged from Warren Commission Exhibit 183A, showing full figure "Oswald" with "murder weapons" and leftist papers.

The full picture (also shown here), which appeared on the cover of Life magazine in Feb., 1964, was found by the FBI and Dallas police the day following the assassination. In addition to the chin change, there are many other factors which make any claim as to that picture's authenticity patently absurd. Yet that phony picture was used by the Warren Commission to help nail down the frame on Oswald ... just in case you thought all this was about a dead or insubstantial issue.

But I have the feeling that I could stand up on top of the Lincoln Memorial with a bullhorn and absolute, incontrovertible proof of who killed Kennedys, King and maybe others, and everybody there would run away for fear they might find out and be faced with actually having to do something about it.