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35 years after Dallas

## Scholar offers new look at inner workings of Warren Commission

Thirty-five years after John F. Kennedy's assassination on Nov. 22, Max Holland seeks to shed new light on the Warren Commission's findings by examining the personalities of the men that made up that seven-member panel.

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. – An independent scholar at Brown University is finishing his book on the inner workings of the Warren Commission, a story that promises to provide new understanding of the commission's often criticized finding that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In 1963, a seven-member commission led by Chief Justice Earl Warren was charged with investigating the assassination. Ten months later, the commission determined the shooting was the act of a lone gunman - Oswald - and that he was not part of a larger conspiracy. Three and a half decades later, the commission's finding remains controversial, fueled in recent years by the Oliver Stone movie "J.F.K."

Knowing the personalities of the men who made up that commission answers any doubt about its findings, said Max Holland, a fellow at the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization at Brown University. "I think it is the missing piece in the puzzle," he said. "If people knew what happened on the commission they might be more at peace with the outcome. I just want to tell the story as it occurred at the time."

Since July, Holland has been at Brown doing research for his book. Started three years ago for Houghton Mifflin publishers, it is tentatively titled *A Need to Know: Inside the Warren Commission*, and is scheduled for publication by the end of 1999.

Holland examined the political and philosophical tensions between Warren and a senior Democrat on the panel. It is common practice to dub a presidential commission after its chairman, and so the commission recognized Earl Warren's leading role. Yet for a long time, Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.) insisted on calling it the President's Commission, Holland said.

"If Richard Russell could possibly have disagreed with Earl Warren he would have," said Holland. "Yet they did agree - it's a unanimous report."

Holland's research has included interviews with former President Gerald Ford, the only surviving commission member, and staff members of the other commissioners. He has traveled to Dallas to interview former members of the Police Department, local FBI, local Secret Service and U.S. Attorney's Office. He has also gone through the personal papers kept by the commissioners and records at the Gerald Ford Library in Ann Arbor, Mich.; the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin, Texas; and, in recent months, the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Mass.

Holland is a contributing editor of *The Nation* and the *Wilson Quarterly*, the magazine of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He is author of *When the Machine Stopped: A Cautionary Tale from Industrial America*, published in 1989 and named one of the year's 10 best books by *Business Week*. Born in Providence and raised in Los Angeles, Holland graduated from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio in 1972. He resides in Washington, D.C.

*Editors: Interviews with Holland can be arranged through the Brown News Bureau at (401) 863-2476 or by email to [News\\_Bureau@brown.edu](mailto:News_Bureau@brown.edu).*

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