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INTRODUCTION

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The thousand or more books on the John F. Kennedy assassination generally fall into two camps. There are the conspiracy hobbyists from either the Right or the Left who assert that JFK was a victim of a conspiracy that had its roots in the “deep politics” of the Cold War. For many years the conspiracy treatment of Dallas was commercially successful and whetted the public appetite for more sensational revelations about the dark forces behind the assassination. ^{Warren.} Taking the field against the conspiracy buffs are authors who basically upheld the conclusions of the Warren Commission Report. The works of these Commission apologists offer a combination of soft reassurance and childish boosterism. While they admit that the Commission got many things wrong, was misinformed, and did not lay to rest all the questions and mysteries of Dallas, it still got it right. Essentially they ask their readers to join them in a leap of faith---the Commission was right about the assassination because the government says it was right.

Despite this dichotomy in the literature there is a gaping fault line that runs through both approaches to the Kennedy assassination in those books that have appeared since the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act and its amending in the 1970s. While the encomia on the dust jackets assure the reader that if they only read one book on the JFK assassination that they must add this one to their library. However, a quick spot-check of the bibliography is a ready antidote to these lavish claims. Almost without exception, the current run of books on the assassination either ignore the primary sources or exhibit only a superficial acquaintance with the rich repository of government

documents that are in the public domain. The treatment of the assassination from both camps has generated a literature that is written without fear and not much serious research. As a consequence, the seemingly endless and exhausting debate about Dallas has produced little in the way of informed and useful critique but has given rise to a bumper crop of understandable skepticism among publishers and the general public. Today a kind of Gresham's law has taken hold that inhibits serious and scholarly historical treatment of the subject. Two generations of pseudohistories have made it difficult for legitimate works on the Kennedy assassination to get a fair hearing.

This book's working maxim is take nothing on its looks, but take everything on the evidence. This history of the Warren Commission and the investigation into the JFK assassination draws almost exclusively from official government documents and other primary sources. It is the first book to explore an enormous amount of published and unpublished documentation and fit it into a comprehensive examination of how the government failed to provide a good faith investigation into the murder of the nation's 35th president. The book is not intended to be an exoneration of the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. It makes no claims of omniscience or special insider knowledge, that is, the study does not speculate on what group or interests carried out the "Murder of the Century." The "Who" and the "Why" of Dallas are questions that are clearly beyond the capacities and capabilities of any private researcher.

However, the government's own evidence makes an unmistakable case for a conspiracy on two levels. First, the crime was too complicated for one gunman to have carried it off. The FBI knew early on in its investigation and examination of the evidence that Dallas involved more than one assassin. The Commission was not innocent either. It

was familiar with the key evidence in the case that left no doubt that JFK was a victim of a conspiracy. But politics, not truth, quickly became the Commission's only client. It joined the FBI and other government agencies in an unholy alliance to tranquilize a traumatized nation with what became the official mythology of Dallas: that a lone nut who was determined to nail his name in the history books killed President Kennedy. For the next nine months, for reasons that still remain unexplained, the Commissioners and its staff of lawyers lashed their hands to the steering wheel and under General Counsel, J. Lee Rankin's, careful stewardship, pointed their investigation toward its preordained destination. It is this conspiracy, the conscious and willful effort of the Warren Commission to play Judas to a trusting nation by palming off a counterfeit history of Dallas that is the subject of this book.

Some apologists resort to the argument that the Commission could not reveal everything because that would involve disclosing "sources and methods" that might compromise national security and other horrors. Exactly how they know what these eminent men discussed when they went off record is never disclosed. More telltale about what preoccupied the Commissioners when they met behind closed doors were, for instance, ways to enlist support from the dead President's brother, Attorney General Bobby Kennedy, Kennedy brother-in-law Sargent Shriver, and the State Department for their Report's no-conspiracy conclusion. Then there was Rankin's nagging concern about bringing the Report in under budget. The general counsel even considered only printing the Report and filing the transcripts of witnesses' testimony with the National Archives just in case historians might in the future want to peruse them. Commissioner Allen Dulles was quick to sign on to this suggestion, noting that he "did not think any body

would pay attention to them to begin with.” “Sources and methods” is a red herring argument. The Commission was not in the business of rationing the truth in deference to national security dictates. According to the official records, its chief concern was in suppressing the truth about what really took place in Dallas.

The Warren Commission Report is a veritable arsenal of smoking guns. It was inevitable that this would be the case considering that it set out to impose upon the public a pseudohistory of Dallas that the evidence it had before it would not support.

The Commission’s most audacious suppression was JFK’s death certificate. The two-page death describing the wounds of the nation’s murdered leader whose assassination generated the 900-page Report, dressed out with almost 7000 footnotes and a body guard of 26 stout volumes containing more than 10,000,000 words, was suppressed from the permanent record. This omission was not a Commission oversight. The President’s death certificate was treated like a poisonous snake because if it was made public it could have toppled this impressive edifice of officially sanctioned truths and conclusions.

Since the death certificate strikes at the vitals of the Warren Report it was essential that the Commission ignore JFK’s personal White House physician who signed this historic document. Admiral George G. Burkley was with the moribund President in Emergency Room Number One at Dallas’ Parkland Memorial Hospital while a team of doctors worked on the dying victim. It was Dr. Burkley who pronounced Kennedy dead. The admiral stayed with the corpse and attended to the needs of the President’s widow all through that dreadful day and into Saturday morning when he felt himself relieved from the White House “death watch.” Burkley’s name should have been near the top of the

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Commission's witness list. He was neither called as a Commission witness nor interviewed by the staff. The FBI and the Secret Service never interviewed him before they submitted their reports on the assassination to the Warren Commission. Dr. Burkley's fate was not unlike those old Bolsheviks who were air-brushed out of Soviet history books and the national narrative after they fell victim to one of Stalin's party purges.

*Subject's office
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Unquestionably, JFK's autopsy was the one area of the investigation in which the Commission should have established an unimpeachable record. An examination of the documentary records reveals a different story. The Commission ^{+ the staff} consciously engaged in actions that corrupted this record. It sanctioned perjury, connived in the destruction of the best evidence, boycotted key witnesses, and deliberately suppressed material medical records and legal documents. The massive corruption of the autopsy records was undertaken with one purpose in mind: to assure that the medical evidence in the Kennedy assassination was consistent with the official government version of a lone assassin.

The most dramatic measure of this corruption of the autopsy record is the mind-numbing fact that almost 75% of the medicolegal "facts" making up the official JFK autopsy protocol appearing in the Warren Report cannot be found in the ~~published~~ autopsy notes published in that same historic document. These missing autopsy notes have either been memory-holed or they suffered the same fate as the original autopsy draft. The first autopsy draft, if we can believe the chief Bethesda Naval Hospital prosector, Dr. James J. Humes, who testified that he consigned it to archival oblivion by incineration in the fireplace of his recreation room shortly after it was reported that Jack Ruby murdered Oswald. A second autopsy protocol was drafted after it was certain there

*Part of
SA's report*
*Published
in 1964*

would be no trial and no opportunity for Oswald's lawyers to cross-examine the medicolegal evidence.

If there is a Rosetta stone for the JFK assassination that exposes to the open-minded the colossal deception of the government's investigation it is the so-called "single-bullet" theory. It was absolutely essential to the Commission's no-conspiracy case that it was able to forensically prove that a bullet struck JFK in the posterior neck and exited his throat before it slammed into Texas Governor John B. Connally leaving a large hole in his chest. This missile, which critics of the Warren Report dubbed the "magic" bullet, then exited Connally's body, and according to the Report, lodged itself under the mattress of the governor's stretcher. The bullet (Commission Exhibit 399 or CE 399), according to the Report, was jostled free when a Parkland Hospital employee kicked the stretcher out of the way to clear a path to the elevator.

It does not require laser vision to see through the Commission's flimsy reasoning, ex parte treatment of the evidence, and outright deception in its general misconstruction of the evidence to make its case for its single bullet fabrication. A review of some just some of the indisputable facts serve as a countercheck to the "single-bullet" theory while they underscore the argument that the Commission knew that Dallas was more than the acting out of a lone sociopath.

Reliable Parkland Hospital employees who were directly connected in one way or another with the Connally stretcher gave convincing testimony that CE 399 could not have come from off of the governor's stretcher. The Secret Service agent who received the bullet and carried it back to Washington later wrote a report describing the carriage where CE 399 was found. The report's description of the carriage that gave up the bullet

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it had it with the FBI Laboratory's (BuLab) report on the collar and tie. BuLab reported that spectrographic analysis of the tears in the collar and tie showed no copper traces. It short, a copper-jacketed bullet like CE 399 could not have caused the slits and nick that the Warren Report touted as confirmatory evidence of a bullet exiting Kennedy's throat.

What is germane here is that the FBI's spectrographic analysis report is not in the Warren Report or the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits. A close student of the Commission's facsimile investigation will also look in vain for the FBI expert's hair and fiber report on the Kennedy collar and tie to see if the fibers in the collar were turned outward, indicating that a missile could had exited through the material. There was such a report but the Commission suppressed it just as it omitted BuLab's scientific tests on the collar and tie from the permanent record. The FBI's hair and fiber expert, Paul M. Stombaugh, spent many hours testifying before the Commission but he was never once asked about his tests on Kennedy's shirt collar and tie.

This pattern of suppression of material evidence in the assassination included the FBI's spectrographic and neutron activation test results on the five bullet fragments found in the presidential limousine, the two recovered from JFK's head, and one fragment from Governor Connally's wrist. The Commission knew that the FBI had these two reports but never entered them in its Report or in the 26 volumes. Was it because these scientific tests revealed that the fragments did not come from the same batch of ammunition or could not be matched with CE 399 which allegedly was fired from Oswald's rifle? There is an obvious answer to this obviously rhetorical question. Without hard and certain proof that all the recovered fragments had a scientifically determined common origin the Warren Report is irreparably compromised. The FBI agent who ran these tests, John F.

Gallagher, was never called to testify before the Commission. He was deposed in September 1964 when the galley proofs of the Report were ready for the printer. When Commission counsel Norman Redlich sat down with Gallagher the matter of the bullet fragments and whether they had a common origin never came up.

Gallagher was brought in at the last minute to do some damage control. Commission staff lawyer Redlich was in a tizzy. His area of the final report was to substantiate the fact that Oswald had fired a weapon the day of the assassination. The FBI ballistics people had reported to the Commission that “No conclusion could be reached as to whether or not these three bullets [removed from patrolman Tippit’s body] were fired from Oswald’s revolver.” Trumping this revelation was the Dallas Police report that a paraffin test on Oswald’s right cheek came up negative. Understandably, Redlich was in a quandary because the “evidence file” could not definitely establish that Oswald had shot any body. A distraught Redlich noted Commissioner Allen Dulles “At best the analysis shows that Oswald may have fired a pistol, although this is by no means certain. There is no basis,” Redlich went on to lament, “for concluding that he also fired a rifle . . .” Gallagher, the Commission’s last witness, was called in to spin-doctor the situation by entering into the record reasons why the Oswald paraffin test was unreliable and therefore indecisive as to whether Oswald had fired a rifle.