

# ROBERT ROYCE

The Bars Stay

Open at Night for

Columbo:

Peter Falk

by Tom Burke

Seymour

Hersh

Part II

by Tom

Asvathian



THE JPK

ASSASSINATIONS

by Douglas Wright

Reorganize

Investigation

by Robert

by Robert

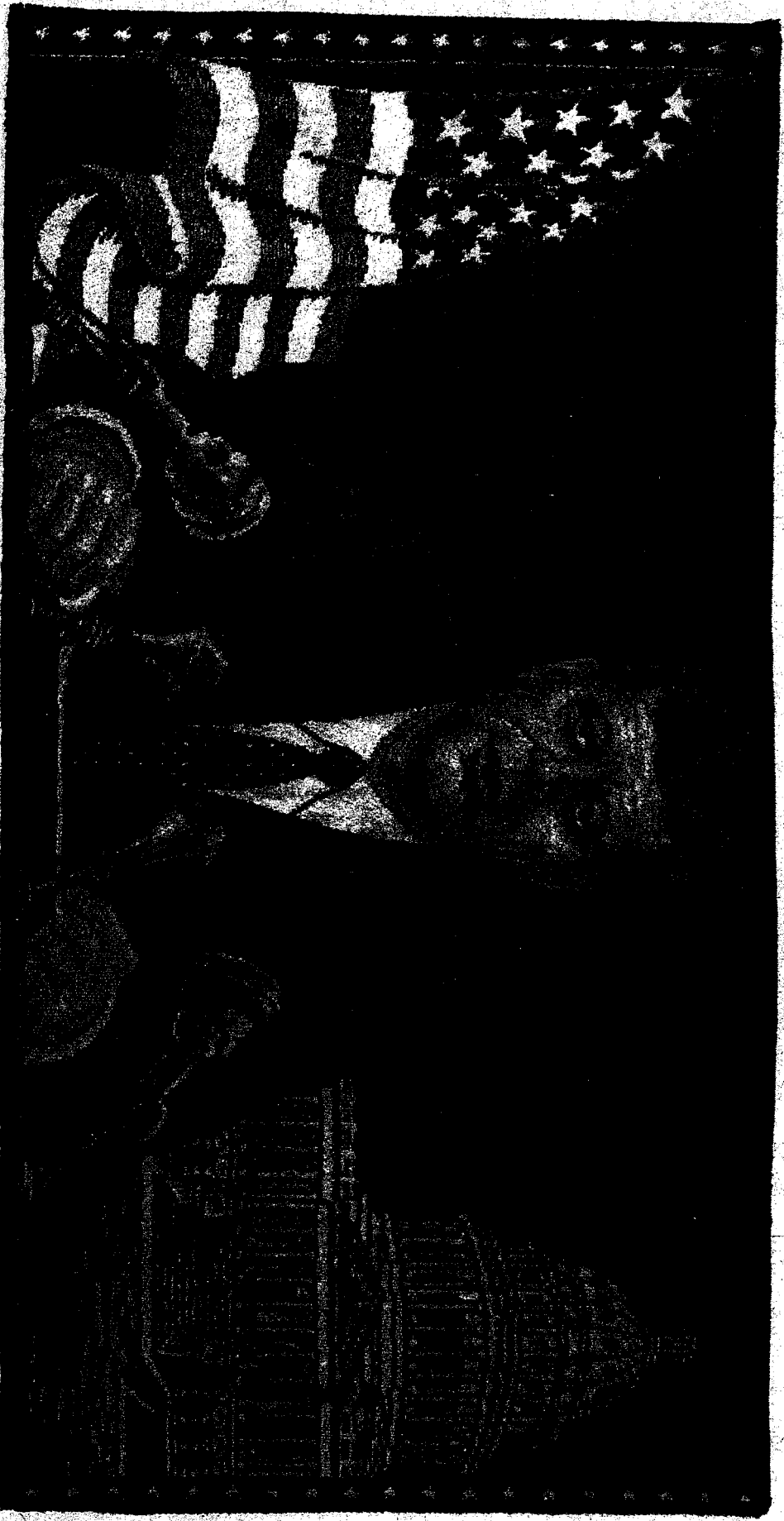
by Robert

by Robert

by Robert

by Robert

POLITICS



Kennedy: Peter Ray/Concannon; Joseph G. Clardy

# The JFK Assassination: Why Congress Should Reopen the Investigation

By ROBERT BLAIR KAISER  
I. A WARREN COMMISSION MEMBER  
CALLS TO REOPEN THE CASE

At long last, one of the members of the Warren Commission is willing to stand up and say he thinks the time has come to reopen an official inquiry into the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The man is Burt W. Griffin, now a judge on the state trial bench in Cleveland, Ohio. "The case ought to be reopened," he says. "It's still an important public issue. It's not at all clear to me how to approach it. But the public is concerned and it's all tied in with everything that's been happening in our government for the past ten years."

What's been happening is a trend toward "Big Brother government and the implicit threat this represents to the freedom of the people," says Senator Frank Church, who heads a congressional committee about to plunge into an investigation of the entire U.S. intelligence community.

Judge Griffin's forthright stand—the first time any member of the Warren Commission has dared suggest the commission didn't get all the answers—should come as no surprise to the majority of Americans who, as early as 1966, according to a Gallup poll, did not accept the conclusions the Warren Report: that Lee Harvey Oswald,

Robert Blair Kaiser wrote "R.F.K. Must Die," after seven months of interviews with Sirhan Sirhan in the D.A. County Jail. Kaiser, formerly a foreign correspondent for Time magazine, is now a freelance living in California.

acting alone, assassinated President Kennedy and that nightclub owner Jack Ruby, acting alone, killed Oswald two days later in the Dallas police station.

And Judge Griffin's reasons for reopening the case should come as no surprise to longtime critics of the Warren Report. Says Judge Griffin: "I don't think some agencies were candid with us. I never thought the Dallas police were telling us the entire truth. Neither was the FBI. I wrote a memo in late August of 1964 to the director of the commission [J. Lee Rankin], in which I laid out a whole series of evidentiary questions. We only got answers on two or three of them."

Judge Griffin didn't keep copies of his own memos and the original of that memo isn't where it ought to be in the National Archives in Washington. But one of the evidentiary questions Griffin recalls had to do with fingerprints other than Oswald's on the packing cases in a sixth-floor room of the Texas School Book Depository. After some delays, the FBI finally confessed to the commission that the other prints belonged to an FBI agent. "We accepted the answers we got," says Judge Griffin, "even though they were inadequate and didn't carry the battle any further. To do so, we'd have had to challenge the integrity of the FBI and the CIA. Back in 1964, that was something we didn't do."

Another staff lawyer on the Warren Commission confirmed Judge Griffin's view, if somewhat less courageously. Asked whether he got everything he wanted from the FBI, he paused for about 15 seconds and said, "Off the record?" Why would he want the obviously negative reply off the record?

"Because of possible reprisals from the FBI," he said. "Though I'm worried about that less now than I was when Hoover was the director."

The informal testimony of Judge Griffin and his colleague confirms the findings of the independent critics of the Warren Commission.

These critics have dramatic new documentation which proves that the Warren Commission investigation was never the free and independent inquiry we'd been told; that the FBI concluded, too soon, there was no conspiracy and then in an effort to justify its early conclusions did a grudging reinvestigation whose only purpose was to prove its own premature conclusions.

The critics' most important piece of documentation: a longtime top secret transcript of an executive session of the Warren Commission on January 27th, 1964, which was declassified only last year (after a long and expensive Freedom of Information suit filed by Harold Weisberg). That transcript suggests the FBI and other intelligence agencies may possess significant information they withheld from the commission. The information may still be available in some agency's files or in the "GC" (official and confidential) files moved to J. Edgar Hoover's home at the time of his death in 1972.

Critics have been calling for a reopening of the JFK assassination case for years. Some of the calls have come from crackpots, others from solid analysts. Most of the calls, however, lacked focus and some of the questions had no reasonable hope of a solution.

But Judge Griffin's comments and the documentation of the critics help narrow the scope of any inquiry and

make it possible for a congressional committee to ask questions that have answers. They can subpoena Dallas policemen as well as key figures like Marina Oswald; they can subpoena the files of U.S. intelligence agencies which were aware of Oswald long before November 22nd, 1963.

Peter Dale Scott, a Warren Commission critic who teaches English at the University of California at Berkeley, insists that abundant clues point to a conspiracy "demonstrable from the very procedures which it used to cover its traces" à la Watergate.

The time is right for reopening the case in another sense. The assassination seems to dominate the national subconscious. A majority, as polls show, have always had their doubts. Watergate, White House horrors and high-level coverup have only deepened doubts about America's ugliest murder mystery. Recent news stories only serve to intensify them.

A 1960 memo from J. Edgar Hoover to the State Department surfaced in 1975. It is a warning from the director that someone posing as Lee Harvey Oswald in Russia might try to get Oswald's U.S. passport. In itself, the memo may not be significant: Oswald's mother had complained to the FBI that she'd sent a birth certificate to Oswald in Switzerland and he'd never received it. But, linked to other reports that "a second Oswald" left traces in New Orleans, Miami, Dallas and Mexico City in 1963 and that some (even members of the Warren Commission) speculated that Oswald may have worked with the FBI as an undercover agent, the memo is a startling clue that Hoover and the FBI knew something about Oswald they

never told the commission. Why would J. Edgar Hoover himself be concerned about an obscure American defector working in a factory in Minsk? David Slawson, formerly a staff lawyer on the Warren Commission and now a professor of law at the University of Southern California, has one innocent explanation: "The signature of J. Edgar Hoover went on all the official communications coming out of the FBI. Hoover probably never saw the memo."

Nevertheless, the memo raises questions: Robert Kennedy's aides confirm the continuing rumor that the CIA contracted with the American Mafia to assassinate Cuba's premier, Fidel Castro. It is an unsettling development, shocking to the American people, doubly shocking to those in foreign countries who still have to deal with an American government which may use assassination as a political tool. But as Tom Wicker pointed out in the *New York Times*: "The mentality that can order or condone murder for political purposes abroad need not be greatly warped to order or condone murder for political purposes at home, particularly when the instrument to carry it out is ready at hand."

The doubts about the assassination of President Kennedy become part of an atmosphere that nurtures the dreams of dramatists. In *The Last Man at Arlington*, a best-selling novel by Joseph DiMona, the CIA plots President Kennedy's murder. In *The Tears of Autumn*, novelist Charles McCarry spins another theory: The Diem family planned President Kennedy's death in retaliation for the American assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

A very bad movie, *Executive Action*, attempts in documentary fashion to reveal how the real assassins killed President Kennedy; thousands flock to see it. In a better movie, *The Parallax View*, Warren Beatty plays a reporter who uncovers the plot by a major U.S. corporation to kill U.S. leaders. At the movie's end, the plotters kill him, too. The doubts and the drama poison America with fear and a feeling of frustrated helplessness.

Confronted by this, many Warren Commission members defend their work like so many Pontius Pilates: *Quod scripsi, scripsi*, what I have written, I have written. Commissioner John J. McCloy, now a New York lawyer, says, "I never saw a case more completely proven." Staff lawyer Leon D. Hubert Jr., now professor of law at Tulane University, says, "We tried, man, we tried. Each of us said, 'If I can break this thing wide open, I'm made.' But none of us found it was anybody but Oswald." Staff lawyer Wesley J. Liebeler,

now director of policy planning for the Federal Trade Commission, says, "There's no question in my mind that the conclusions of the Warren Commission aren't correct." Staff lawyer Melvin Aron Eisenberg, now a law professor at Boalt Hall in Berkeley, doesn't return an inquiring phone call and tells his secretary to call back with the message, "I have no doubts."

But others reacted in quite different ways. Representative Henry Gonzalez of Texas recently introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives asking for a congressional inquiry into the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King and the attempted assassination of George Wallace. A week later, six congresspersons appeared at a town meeting on New York's Upper East Side and endorsed

the Gonzalez resolution. The representatives were: Bella Abzug, Herman Badillo, Mario Biaggi, Elizabeth Holtzman, Edward Koch and Benjamin Rosenthal. Another Manhattan congressman, Charles Rangel, added his endorsement a few days later.

The time is right. Congress—whether through the new committee proposed by Representative Gonzalez or through the Church committee in the Senate—must investigate the JFK assassination.

It seems clear now that the FBI and other agencies including the CIA and the Secret Service were playing games with the Warren Commission. The agencies were behaving as if they had something to hide. Just what they were hiding is open to official inquiry.

## II. THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED TRANSCRIPT OF AN EXECUTIVE SESSION

Some Warren Commission critics believe they were hiding Lee Harvey Oswald's intelligence connections. As we have learned in the past few months, after then attorney general Saxbe's revelations about the FBI's Cointelpro and CIA director Colby's report to President Ford on the CIA, both agencies were embarked in the early Sixties on a massive domestic spy effort. It was a big, expensive program that added to the size and power of the FBI and CIA empires.

The last thing the FBI or the CIA needed was public exposure of (and a public reaction against) their programs—by having a Lee Harvey Oswald tied to them. Whatever Oswald's real role was, no one in the U.S. government engaged in spy-counterspy games wanted to assume any responsibility for him.

The transcript of the commission's executive session of January 27th, 1964, demonstrates the commission's concern about this possibility—a possibility pointed out to the commission by some of the top law enforcement officials in Texas. These officials had

heard a rumor that Oswald might have been an informant for the FBI, that he was paid \$200 a month and that he even had an FBI number, S. 179. Commission member Gerald Ford, recalling the moment when general counsel J. Lee Rankin gave this news to the commission, said the members "looked at one another in amazement" and spent a good deal of time wondering what to do about the news.

The commissioners took it seriously. In fact, they asked the Texas officials to fly to Washington immediately for a meeting with them. On Friday, January 24th, Warren and Rankin met with five of the top lawyers in Texas: Waggoner Carr, attorney general; Robert Storey, dean emeritus of the law school at Southern Methodist University; Dallas DA Henry Wade; Dallas assistant DA Bill Alexander and Leon Jaworski, spe-

cial counsel for the Texas Court of Inquiry (whose projected investigation was preempted by the work of the Warren Commission).

On the commission's next working day, Monday, January 27th, all of the commission members except Representative Gerald Ford showed up for an executive session. Soon after the meeting began, Rankin showed where he stood: "We do have a dirty rumor that is very bad for the commission, very damaging to the agencies that are involved in it and it must be wiped out insofar as it is possible to do so by this commission." The possibility that it might be true doesn't occur to Rankin. Or, if it does, then the whole question is one that is beyond him. Rankin simply wants to get an official denial from the FBI.

Warren wants to go to the sources of the story "to see if there is any substance to the claim."

Senator Richard Russell agrees with Warren. "If you went down there in the first instance to the FBI and got a statement and when you start pursuing it you would look like you are impeaching." ("Impeaching" here means "attacking the credibility of" the FBI.)

"This is my point," says Warren.

"Exactly," says Representative Hale Boggs.

Senator Russell says, "The best way to handle it would be to try to exhaust it at the other end before you go to

the FBI."

Allen Dulles says the FBI has *already* issued a categorical denial of the Oswald-agent story in the *New York Times*. (It is interesting that Dulles, a former CIA director, is so ready to consider the question closed.)

But John McCloy doesn't give the FBI's categorical denial much weight, and Senator Russell points out that the commission may be dealing with spooks, a notoriously lying breed. Says Russell: "If Oswald never had assassinated the president or at least been charged with assassinating the president and had been in the employ of the FBI and somebody had gone to the FBI they would have denied he was an agent."

"Oh, yes," says Dulles.

Russell says, "They would be the first to deny it. Your agents would have done exactly the same thing."

"Exactly," says Dulles.

Well, then, where can the commission go to establish the facts? Boggs says they seem to have gotten themselves into a box. Someone suggests the commission go to the attorney general. Rankin says he doesn't see how Attorney General Robert Kennedy can come right out and ask Hoover what was happening.

McCloy wants the reasons for that spelled out. His outrage at the reversal of power inside the Justice Department warms the cold transcript: "Just why would it be embarrassing for the attorney general of the United States to inquire of one of his agencies whether or not this man who was alleged to have killed the president of the United States was an agent? Does the embarrassment supersede the importance of getting the best evidence in such a situation as this?"

Senator John Sherman Cooper says that for Bobby Kennedy to do so would imply that Bobby thought there was something wrong in the bureau. Even so, McCloy says, "It still wouldn't divert me from asking. It is an awkward affair. But as you said the other day, truth is our only client."

Boggs agrees and McCloy says, "I don't think we could recognize that any door is closed to us unless the president closes it to us." McCloy says he wants to get to the bottom of all this.

Dulles says McCloy may be asking the impossible. "How," asks Dulles, "do you disprove a fellow was not your agent?"

Boggs wonders whether Dulles, as head of the CIA, had had agents with no records.

"The record might not be on paper," says Dulles. "But on paper [we] would



*"If Oswald had been in the employ of the FBI, they would have denied he was an agent" — Warren Commission member Rankin. "Oh yes," Dulles replied.*

have hieroglyphics that only two people knew what they meant, and nobody outside of the agency would know and you could say this meant [one] agent and somebody else could say it meant another agent."

Boggs mentions the U-2 pilot, Francis Gary Powers. Dulles says Powers had a signed contract with the CIA. Boggs says, "Let's say Powers did not have a signed contract but he was recruited by someone in CIA. The man who recruited him would know, wouldn't he?"

"Yes," says Dulles, "but he wouldn't tell."

Justice Warren seems surprised.

"Wouldn't tell it under oath?" asks Warren.

Dulles says, "I wouldn't think he would tell it under oath, no."

"Why?" asks Warren.

Dulles has to give the commission a little lesson. "He ought not tell it under oath. Maybe not tell it to his own government but wouldn't tell it any other way."

McCloy says, "Wouldn't tell it to his own chief?"

Dulles says, "He might or he might not. If he was a bad one, he wouldn't."

Boggs may have thrown up his hands here. "What you do is you . . . make our problem utterly impossible because you



say this rumor can't be dissipated under any circumstances."

Dulles says, "I don't think it can, unless you believe Mr. Hoover, and so forth and so on, which probably most of the people will."

Furthermore, Hoover may have had a reason to hire Oswald. "It is Mr.

Hoover's job to watch the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and try to penetrate it in any way he could," says Dulles. But he doesn't believe the FBI did hire Oswald: "He was not the kind of fellow that Hoover would hire. . . . He was so stupid."

McCloy says, "I wouldn't put much confidence in the intelligence of all the agents I have run into. I have run into some awfully stupid agents."

Dulles says, "Not *this* irresponsible." (Irresponsible is a strange description of an assassin of a president. If Oswald was a lone nut, then "irresponsible" is

find out if this is fact or fiction."

Rankin is afraid of Hoover and says so. "What I was fearful of was the mere process will cause him to think . . . that we are really investigating him."

"If we are investigating him," says Warren, "we are investigating the rumor against him; we are investigating him, that is true."

The implication—that the commission may have to investigate Hoover—seems to bother Boggs. "Mr. Dulles," says Boggs, "when you headed up the CIA, the notion that you would know the countless informers and people em-

**Senator Russell: The FBI "have tried the case and reached a verdict on every aspect." McCloy: "We don't want to be in the position of attacking the FBI."**

simply the wrong word. To whom would Oswald be responsible?)

McCloy counters, "Well, I can't say that I have run into a fellow comparable to Oswald but I have run into some very limited mentalities both in the CIA and the FBI."

The commission's meeting room rumbles with what the stenotypist describes as "laughter."

Warren tries to sum up: "Agencies do employ undercover men who are of terrible character."

The man who immediately agrees with Warren is the one man on the commission who should know. Says Dulles, "Terribly bad characters."

Rankin is impatient with all this. "Would it be acceptable to go to Mr. Hoover," says Rankin, "and tell him about the situation and that we would like to go ahead and find out what we could about these—"

"Well, Lee," interrupts Warren, "I wouldn't be in favor of going to any agency and saying, 'We would like to do this. I think we ought to know what we are going to do and do it, and take our chances one way or the other. The most fair thing to do would be to try to

ployed by the agencies was fantastic. You couldn't know about all of that."

"No," replies Dulles. "But by this time I would have known whether we did hire him or not."

McCloy says, "You would know in this case who, if there was anybody, who would have hired Oswald, who it would be."

Dulles admits that he'd know what area to look in. "Someone," he concedes, "might have done it without authority. The CIA has no charter to hire anybody for this kind of work in the United States. It has abroad, that is the distinction. But the CIA has no charter. I don't say it couldn't possibly have done it but it has no charter of authority to run this kind of agent in the United States."

Was the CIA involved with Oswald? There is reason to believe that the CIA performed its own unpublicized investigation on Oswald after the assassination. Yet there's little on the record of what the CIA told the Warren Commission.

This is serious business and McCloy lodges the first open complaint about the situation: "I would think the time is

almost overdue for us being as dependent as we are on FBI investigations, the time is almost overdue for us to have a better perspective of the FBI investigation than we now have."

Rankin takes part of the blame for that. He says that he and his staff need more time to study the FBI's supplemental report, given to them two weeks before. He says the supplemental report answered many of the commission's questions—but not all of them: "There are vast areas that are unanswered at the present time," says Rankin. And then he explains the trouble he is having with the FBI. "Part of our difficulty," he says, "is that they have no problem. They have decided that it is Oswald who committed the assassination, they have decided that no one else was involved, they have decided—"

Senator Russell interrupts. "They have tried the case and reached a verdict on every aspect."

"Yes," says McCloy. "We know who killed cock robin. That is the point. It isn't only who killed cock robin. Under the terms of reference, we have to go beyond that."

Did the commission go beyond that? Hardly. The commission didn't even give its staff a mandate to go beyond the FBI on this question. For a moment, it seemed as if it might. Senator Russell sums up the commission's dilemma. "It seems to me we have two alternatives," says Russell. "One is we can just accept the FBI's report and go on and write the report based on their findings and supported by the raw materials they have given us, or else we can go and try to run down some of these collateral rumors that have just not been dealt with directly in this raw material that we have."

The members seem inclined to want to go beyond the FBI. But then McCloy points out that some "sheet" he has in front of him (judging from a prior reference, it is probably a copy of Harold Feldman's probing article in the *Nation*, "Oswald and the FBI," January 27th, 1964) "is designed to be an attack on the FBI." Says McCloy, "We don't want to be in the position of attacking the FBI."

With this, the commission does a quick about-face. Forgetting their only client, truth, the commissioners agree that none of them wants to attack the FBI. They decide on a "marriage" of Senator Russell's two alternatives: They end up resolving to ask Hoover about the relationship between Oswald and the FBI and to perform their own inde-

pendent investigation.

But the commission did very little independent investigation. Equating that with an attack on the FBI, the commission let the FBI investigate itself.

Rankin thought this was pretty controversial material. He confiscated the stenographers' notes of the January 22nd meeting—and they remain sealed to this day. Rankin specifically requested no stenotypist at all for the January 24th meeting with the Texas officials and filed an affidavit with Judge Gerhard Gesell's court in Washington in 1974 (when Harold Weisberg was suing to see the transcript) saying he had instruction from the Warren Commission to keep the January 27th meeting under a top-secret classification. Weisberg says there's nothing in any commission record to support Rankin.

[The transcript of the Jan. 27th meeting is reprinted in Weisberg and Lesar's Whitewash IV, \$6.25 from H. Weisberg, Rte. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701.]

### III. THE SERIOUS CRITICS AND THEIR NEW EVIDENCE

Though Rankin tried to hide the material, some critics managed to dig it out. They learned to find their way around the National Archives, they studied the commission's working papers, compared drafts of the report's chapters and examined internal memos among the commission staffers and letters between the commission and the FBI.

Paul Hoch is one of these critics, a young man who got his Ph.D. in high-energy physics in 1974 from the University of California, now laying aside his physics research to work on a book which codifies evidence he has gathered through most of his student years. In the book (*The Oswald Papers: The FBI versus the Warren Commission*, still unfinished) Hoch shows how Hoover volunteered information to the commission only when necessary, tried to define the informant relationship out of existence, declined to answer substantive questions about the basis of the FBI's relationship to both Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby and presented flatly contradictory explanations to the Warren Commission without flinching. Hoch's highly documented and readable story shows how the commission knew Hoover was hiding something—and how the commission let him get away with it, "at considerable cost," concludes Hoch, "to the integrity of the investigation."

The best of the Warren Commission critics are as serious as Hoch and their

names may well go down some day on an honor roll of those who cared enough to get involved: Vincent Salandria, Harold Weisberg, Sylvia Meagher, Josiah Thompson, Edward Jay Epstein, David Lifton, Lillian Castellano, Fred Newcomb, Perry Adams, Ray Marcus, Marjorie Field, Shirley Martin, Mary Ferrell, Richard Popkin, Bill Turner, Richard Sprague and the early Mark Lane.

Among the most important critics still hard at work and making new contributions are:

- Bernard Fensterwald, a successful Washington D.C. lawyer, who out of his own well-haberdashed pocket, finances the activities of something he calls the Committee to Investigate Assassinations, a loose confederation of citizens whose worry about the assassination of two Kennedys and a King was once signalized by the flag they printed on their metered mailings: **WHO IS KILLING OUR LEADERS?** Fensterwald helped set up a special assassination archive at Georgetown University and was the chief honcho for a conference at Georgetown on the tenth anniversary of JFK's assassination. With attorney James Lesar, he is handling legal appeals for James Earl Ray, having been brought into the Ray case by Harold Weisberg. Though Fensterwald has avoided entangling his assassination conspiracy theories with the Ray case, Weisberg says that was the strategy behind the move to get a new trial for Ray. "If we walk Ray, then the government will have to find Dr. King's real killers." This seems to be the committee's basic thrust: to push the government to find the real killers—of JFK, MLK, RFK.

- Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, coroner of Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) and director of the Institute of Forensic Sciences at Duquesne University, is the first pathologist outside the federal government to examine the assassination evidence at the National Archives. Trouble is, he reported in August 1972, the president's brain is missing from the medico-legal exhibits at the Archives. So are certain important skin sections taken from the point where bullets were supposed to have entered the scalp and upper back of JFK. So are photos of the sections. Nevertheless, even without the missing materials, Dr. Wecht concludes that the physical evidence which he has examined doesn't support the Warren Commission's findings. "More than one person," he says, "was involved in the shooting of President Kennedy."

Wecht says he bases his conclusion on an analysis of the famous single bullet (Commission Exhibit 399)

which the Warren Commission said was supposed to have entered the right side of the president's back, coursed through the uppermost portions of the thorax and mediastinum and emerged just over the knot of the president's tie—then entered the right side of Governor Connally's back (breaking his right fifth rib), emerged from his chest, shattered a bone in his wrist and entered his left thigh. After all this the bullet had only lost two grains from its original weight and, said Wecht, the upper two centimeters of the bullet "show no grossly visible deformities, areas of mutilation, loss of substance or any kind of significant scathing." There is one small piece that was removed from the bullet's jacket by an FBI agent "for spectrographic analysis" (which analysis might show that JFK and Connally were not hit by the same bullet).

Furthermore, says Wecht, there was something strange about the trajectory of that bullet from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. It was supposed to have been traveling downward and passing through JFK from right to left. It should, therefore, have missed Governor Connally completely. Under the Warren Commission's hypothesis the bullet may have made an acute angular turn in midair. Wecht believes a second assassin may have been firing at JFK from the rear, possibly even from the front, but he says he cannot know for sure until he examines the materials that are missing.

- Robert Groden, a young expert in optics from New York City, has magnified the central part of each frame of the Zapruder film and produced what he calls a reframed copy. The result is like a new film of the assassination, made through a zoom lens, with much of the jiggle removed. Now, even more starkly than before, to the lay observer at least, it appears that the shot which took off the top of the president's head and splattered two trailing police motorcycles came from the front. The president's head clearly snaps back and to the left. Mrs. Kennedy's description of the president at that moment was deleted from her testimony as published by the Warren Commission, but her actual words, released by the Archives in 1972, may be significant here: "I was trying to hold his hair on. But from the front there was nothing. I suppose there must have been. But from the back you could see, you know, you were trying to hold his hair on and his skull on."

Groden, who reconstituted the Zapruder film from a pirated copy belonging to Time Inc., has had his film shown recently on scattered TV stations all over the U.S. and Canada. According

to Groden, his blowup shows not only that President Kennedy was killed by a shot from the front (and therefore from a shot on or near the grassy knoll); it also shows the rifleman standing there on the grassy knoll holding the rifle up in the air as the presidential car disappears through the railroad underpass.

Interestingly enough, when Groden showed this film at Bernard Fensterwald's home in November 1973, neither he nor anyone else made any mention of a rifleman on the knoll. Groden says it wasn't until January 1974 that

he started scanning the last 18 frames of his Zapruder film and then began to see that what he thought was the wheel well of the presidential Lincoln wasn't the wheel well at all, but the rifleman—"because the car was moving forward and the 'wheel well' was moving backward."

- David Lifton is an engineering-physics graduate of Cornell and a dropout from graduate school at UCLA who ought to have three doctorates by now in the disciplines he has picked up during ten years of work on the assassination: history, political science and his-

toriography (a study of the way history is written). In 1967 Lifton did a 30,000-word analysis (with David Welsh) in *Ramparts* which argued that there were three assassins firing in Dealey Plaza on November 22nd, 1963.

In 1968, shortly after most of the transcripts of the Warren Commission executive sessions were declassified, Lifton published them privately as *Document Addendum to the Warren Report*. Lifton has served as a consultant to Dr. Cyril Wecht and it was he who provided the producers of *Executive Action* with the documentary record which

supported that movie's attempt to prove how several assassination teams might have worked in Dallas. Lifton is a 35-year-old bachelor whose Brentwood apartment has 22 filing drawers on the assassination.

Lifton has a work in progress which challenges the authenticity of the evidence on which the Warren Commission based its major findings.

- George O'Toole, a former computer analyst for the CIA, has turned to a new technological tool as an important adjunct in his assassination research. The tool is [Cont. on 37]

[Cont. from 33] something called a Psychological Stress Evaluator (PSE), a machine which a skilled operator can apply to anyone's recorded words and tell, by evaluating the stress patterns in the speech (seen on the machine's scanners as a series of mountains and valleys), whether that person is telling the truth or lying.

The PSE presents advantages over the old polygraph exam (which is why old-time polygraph examiners don't like it): A skilled PSE examiner can play the PSE game with remote subjects who don't even know they're participants. All O'Toole needed in order to find out whether some of the actors in the JFK assassination scenario were telling the truth was access to old taped interviews they'd given out years ago. O'Toole found some of these—radio and television interviews with officials like Dr. J.J. Humes, who performed an autopsy on President Kennedy, and members of the Warren Commission and, most notably, Lee Harvey Oswald's hallway interviews in the Dallas police station. Where previously taped interviews didn't exist (especially in the case of certain witnesses in Dallas and members of the Dallas police), O'Toole played the role of a journalist doing a tenth-anniversary story on the assassination, went down to Texas with a tape recorder and got his own interviews.

In O'Toole's just released book, *The Assassination Tapes*, he contends that many of the principals in this case (even Justice Warren) were not telling the truth when they said they'd found no evidence of a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy.

And, most startling of all, that Lee Harvey Oswald was telling the truth when he said, to a nameless reporter in the Dallas police station who asked him whether he had shot the president, "I didn't shoot anybody, no sir."

#### IV. LOBBYING FOR THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS

If Oswald didn't do it, who did? There are a lot of conspiracy theories. A congressional task force is needed to evaluate them all. If the agencies themselves, the Secret Service, the FBI, the CIA, Army and Navy Intelligence, are themselves an object of the investigation, then, quite obviously, we can't expect them (or anyone in the ranks of traditional law enforcement) to investigate themselves, or investigate anyone with old-boy ties to any part of the in-

telligence community.

And don't expect much from the Justice Department either. A group of Warren Commission critics, including Mary Ferrell of Dallas and Bernard Fensterwald, recently presented the U.S. Attorney's office in Dallas with evidence they'd gathered which they hoped would help reopen the case before federal courts in Dallas. Their project failed. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth Mighell said he saw nothing new in the evidence they gave him.

The only likely forum is a congressional committee, which is being pushed by Representative Gonzalez—and you can expect no endorsing action by enough members of Congress unless and until public opinion keeps building.

Who will build it? There are various citizen lobbies at work. There's one active group in Washington D.C. under the leadership of Mark Lane and Marcus Raskin (who is director of the Institute for Policy Studies), an intelli-

gent, liberal but unexciting group which has decided to talk quietly with individual congresspersons.

Then there's something else in Cambridge, Massachusetts, called the Assassination Information Bureau. The "bureau" consisted of five young men when I visited them last November. Their headquarters were in the home of Carl Oglesby on Arnold Circle in Cambridge. Oglesby, gaunt, articulate, a sometime instructor at MIT, is a former president of Students for a Democratic Society. He's 38 now, but his four associates in the AIB, Bob Katz, Mi-

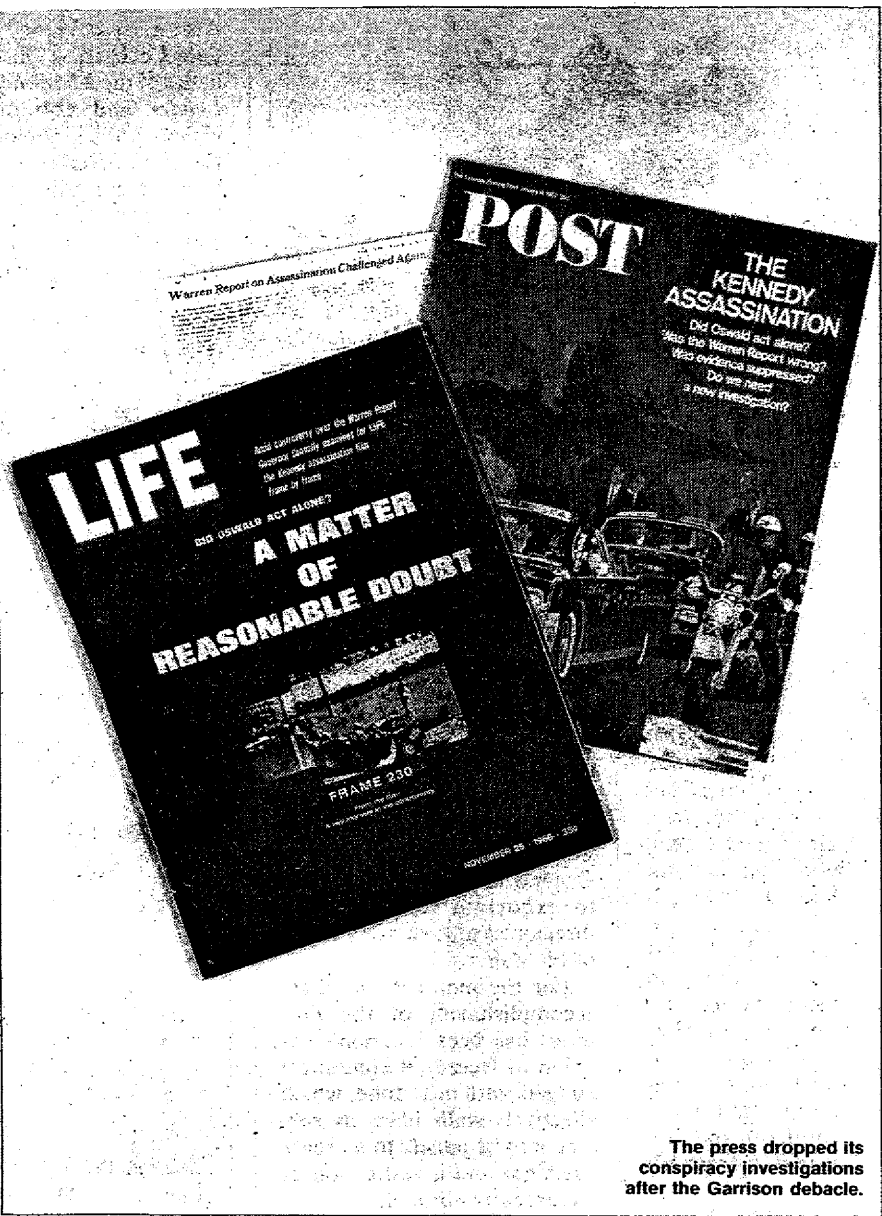
chael Gee, Dave Williams and Harvey Yazjian, are all in their 20s.

The group began with no particular political goal in mind. Bob Katz was a reporter in Boston who had done some reading on the JFK assassination and one day he worked up a little slide lecture and presented it to some students in Boston. After that, he got more invitations, mostly from college groups.

Katz and his friends started learning all they could about the assassination of JFK and the Warren Commission's investigation and they were puzzled and excited by what they heard. In the fall of 1973, after the Senate Watergate hearings, Katz, with the help of his buddies, went national with a slide lecture called "Who Killed JFK?"

"At first," says Dave Williams with disarming frankness, "it was just a gig. Just something to do. Maybe make a little money. Then we started getting more dates than one man could handle. We realized that the young people were hungry and thirsty for the truth. They had a feeling they'd been conned about the assassination. We put three teams





hind this drive to reopen the JFK case? "I don't know," says Oglesby. "So far, I'm the only one I know of from the Antiwar Movement who's into this. I've gotten some criticism, in fact, from some of my friends from the SDS. They wonder why I want to get involved. I tell them I want to get involved because I believe there was a coup d'état in 1963 which has influenced our politics ever since. Since then, we've had a history of clandestine politics in the U.S.—and we're fighting that, too."

V. THE PRESS'S OBLIGATION

Who will force the issue? It must begin with the press. Without pressure from the press, government officials do little. Attorney General Richard Kleindienst promised that the Justice Department would attack Watergate with "the most extensive, thorough and complete investigation since the assassination of President Kennedy." The Justice Department did that—and went no further up the line than Gordon Liddy. But the press didn't accept that official truth as the whole truth. The *Washington Post* went after the story and so (later) did the rest of the national press. Finally and almost reluctantly Congress acted.

Now, 11 years after the assassination of President Kennedy, the press must get back on the story it was once covering. Back in August 1966, an aide to the Kennedys who had served as a speechwriter for both President Kennedy and President Johnson, Richard N. Goodwin, called for a reopening of the case—and added that other friends of the Kennedys agreed with him.

By early 1967, both *Life* and the *Saturday Evening Post* did stories blasting many of the Warren Report's conclusions. *Life* used frames from the Zapruder film to make a case for a new official investigation. And the *New York Times* organized a task force of reporters under Harrison Salisbury "to go back over all the areas of doubt and . . . eliminate them."

But Salisbury and his team didn't eliminate the areas of doubt. In a recent interview, Salisbury said his task force got about halfway through the investigation when a standing request he had made for a visa to Hanoi came through at last. He put the JFK project on the shelf ("I was the only one who held all the strings," he says, "and I didn't want to give the thing to anyone else") and flew off to Paris and Hanoi. Salisbury's dispatches from Hanoi caused a furor in Washington, and after he returned, he had to testify before congressional committees.

By April of 1967, Salisbury says, he

on the road." In 1973 and 1974, the AIB hit more than 150 college campuses, from Maine to Hawaii. And the crowds kept getting bigger.

In the fall, after Nixon's demise and the succession of Gerald Ford, the kids crowded into the AIB lectures as never before. "You guys only charging \$750?" said the campus honchos in charge of booking lecturers. "You're getting bigger crowds than anybody. You oughta charge more." The AIB didn't charge more.

Said Oglesby: "We think it's up to us to politicize this question. We want to

take the information to a wide audience. We want the people at large to get so interested in answers that every presidential candidate in the '76 campaign will be forced to take a position on reopening the case. We want to make it a central issue of the campaign."

The AIB took a step toward that goal

early in February by organizing a conference on the assassination. They assembled some of the nation's better-known critics for three days of open meetings and discussions. The list of invitees was hardly a safe one; the AIB invited some whose work has already been discredited as a passel of lies and/or paranoid fabrications. "It's all right," said Oglesby. "Competition for the truth is good, because it forces everyone to make the best possible case."

Oglesby looks to the Sixties for his model. "Our movement is likely to express itself like the Antiwar Movement did—with teach-ins all over the country."

Does Oglesby feel that veterans of the Antiwar Movement might get be-

The press dropped its conspiracy investigations after the Garrison debacle.

and his team had simply "lost interest" in their JFK project. "Nobody told us to stop," he says. "We just felt that nobody cared."

But it was precisely at this time that New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison indicted Clay Shaw (Garrison said he was CIA) for complicity in a plot to kill President Kennedy. Representatives of the press streamed into New Orleans from all over the world to see what Garrison really had. It turned out that he didn't have much. Salisbury doesn't remember that Garrison's activities were a factor in his decision to drop the investigation. As he tells it, there wasn't even an overt decision to drop it. He just had other things to do.

Gene Roberts, now executive editor

of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, was a member of Salisbury's team. He says now, "We took all the critics' complaints and we did our own investigation and we couldn't find anything that really held up." Martin Waldron, still a reporter for the *Times* in Texas, was another member of the team. He says that he and others came up with "a lot of unanswered questions." He doesn't know why the *Times* didn't bother to pursue them. He says he's not even sure that the *Times* ever made much of a decision to start looking in the first place. "I'd be off on a good lead and then somebody'd call me off and send me out to California on another story or something. We never really detached anyone for this. We weren't really serious."

After reporters from the national press saw Garrison at work (and the menagerie of assassination freaks that

seemed to hover around Garrison), the media in general began to have less and less time and space for assassination stories. Editors began to classify every conspiracy theorist as a nut. Says the *Washington Post's* executive editor, Benjamin Bradlee, explaining why he has yet to put an investigative team on the JFK assassination story, "Ron Kessler did a recent story knocking down the second gun theory in the Robert Kennedy assassination and nuts from both coasts were all over me. Letters, telegrams, phone calls, personal visits. I've been up to my ass in lunatics." Bradlee's failure to commit the reportorial and financial resources of the *Post* (which also owns *Newsweek*) to any methodical investigation during the last dozen years is especially puzzling in view of the *Post's* courageous handling of Watergate and the intimate friend-

ship Bradlee had with President Kennedy.

Editors, of course, sometimes categorize movements by pinning pejorative labels on the most extreme elements in each movement. Warren Commission critics became "paranoid conspiracy freaks" and, by the time Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy died at the hands of other assassins, the press was already committed to ignoring conspiracy talk. Quick denials of a conspiracy, in fact, became part of government protocol. The government only wanted to deal with murders by lone psychotics. And the press, relying too much on "official truth," went along. Says Ben Bradlee: "Back in 1965, Russ Wiggins, the man I replaced here at the *Washington Post*, told me there'd never be an end to this story [on the JFK assassination]. He

said, 'Unless you can find someone who wants to devote his life to it, forget it.'"

But perhaps that is exactly the kind of journalistic commitment which is needed. American newsrooms are full of men and women who have devoted their lives to the police beat. Watergate was a police story which took years to unfold; the assassination of John F. Kennedy is the biggest police story of them all. If it takes decades to tell it, then decades must be devoted to its telling.

In the assassination of President Kennedy, the major question today is: Did the FBI and the CIA (or any other governmental agency) withhold important information from the Warren Commission? It is a question the press must ask—over and over again—until the people have a credible answer.