

'Startling Conclusion' on a President's Death

W' 45
1-14-79

To the Editor:

Because The Times focused narrowly on the newly derived acoustical evidence, to the exclusion of an existing body of evidence, it reached the rather startling conclusion that "two maniacs instead of one" may have been involved in the Kennedy assassination in Dallas (editorial Jan. 7).

The conclusion is startling because it goes to the core question of Mr. Oswald's motive, a question the Warren Commission was never able to resolve. The commission did indeed dredge up testimony indicating that Mr. Oswald had his share of emotional disturbances, but it never alleged that he was a "maniac," and his behavior while in custody was the opposite of maniacal.

In its continuing eagerness to deny any possibility of a high-level conspiracy — domestic or foreign — The Times resorts to this kind of circular logic: We know Mr. Oswald did the deed; therefore he must have been a maniac. Because he was maniac, he did the deed. Case closed, and not for the first time!

The apparent presence of a second "maniac" at Dealey Plaza should give the most serious kind of pause to The Times and other long-time defenders of the Warren Commission. It would not be amiss to throw a small bone of

grudging praise to those persistent critics — Mark Lane, for example — who have so tenaciously argued their case over the years.

Finally, the Department of Justice should be urged to set up a special task force to evaluate, yet again, the entire body of accumulated evidence surrounding the crime. For the task force, I for one would nominate the professionals who cracked the grisly murder in Washington of the exiled Chilean leader Orlando Letelier.

PETER B. YOUNG
Marlboro, Mass., Jan. 8, 1979