

Harris Finds Growing Doubt On Assassination

By LOUIS HARRIS

The American people have deep and abiding doubts about the official explanation of the assassination of John F. Kennedy put forth in the Warren commission report.

A just completed survey of a cross section of the public reveals:

¶ Fewer people today than at the time of the shooting are sure that Lee Harvey Oswald killed the President.

¶ A majority of the public holds the view that the full story of the assassination was not contained in the Warren report (which was issued in September, 1964.)

¶ By a 3 to 2 margin the American people reject the main thrust of the Warren report that assassination was the work of one man and tend to believe the killing was part of a larger plot. But the public is at a loss to say who was behind the plot.



EARL WARREN

The largest lack of acceptance of the explanation by the Warren commission persists among lower-income, lesser educated Americans. The more articulate, better informed groups tend to give credence to the official report.

The national cross-section was asked:

"From what you have read, do you feel the full story of the Kennedy assassination was reported in the Warren commission report, or do you think there are still a lot of unanswered questions about who killed President Kennedy and how it was done?"

WARREN COMMISSION REPORT

	TOTAL PUBLIC
Full story in report	32%
Still may be unanswered questions	54%
Not sure	14%

Only one in three Americans is convinced that the Warren report contained the full story. The major reservation centers on the question of whether the assassination was the work of one man or was part of a broader plot.

Just after the killing, in December, 1963, and again last month, the Harris Survey asked the public:

"Do you feel that Lee Harvey Oswald was the man who shot President Kennedy?"

WAS OSWALD THE ASSASSIN?

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
NATIONWIDE, DEC., 1963	74%	3%	23%
NATIONWIDE, SEPT., 1966	69%	3%	28%
By Education:			
8th grade or less	58%	6%	36%
High school	70%	3%	27%
College	75%	2%	23%

A major reason why almost a third of the public cannot say for sure that Oswald killed the late President is the belief on the part of nearly one in every two Americans that the Kennedy assassination was part of a broader plot.

People were asked:

"Do you feel that the Kennedy assassination was the work of one man or part of a broader plot?"

ONE MAN OR A BROADER PLOT?

	ONE MAN	BROADER PLOT	NOT SURE
NATIONWIDE	34%	46%	20%
By Education:			
8th grade or less	13%	56%	31%
High school	35%	49%	16%
College	45%	36%	19%

In order to probe deeper into this apparent doubt on the part of the public, the cross-section was then asked who or what people they felt were behind the Kennedy assassination.

WHO OR WHAT BEHIND ASSASSINATION?

	TOTAL PUBLIC
Just Oswald	33%
Won't say	14%
Communists	11%
Ruby and Oswald	5%
Radicals	3%
Oswald and the Russians	2%
Lyndon Johnson	2%
Castro	1%
Not sure	29%

The nature of the answers reveals how confused American public opinion is. Where the pursuit of facts ends and gossip and speculation begins is difficult to say.

It is possible, of course, that all the facts of the assassination are not contained in the Warren report. Unofficial publications appear to be sowing additional doubts. It seems likely that among many of those who lived through the tragic and shocking events of Nov. 22, 1963, speculation will continue for the rest of their lives.