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'Oswald innocent' book hits at Warren

By Evelyn Irons
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NOVEMBER 22, the fourth anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy, is being marked by a fresh onslaught on the Warren report of 1964 that named Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone killer.

"Accessories After the Fact," by Sylvia Meagher, to be published by Bobbs-Merrill, is regarded as the best documented and most damning of any attacks on the Warren report yet. A massive book of 250,000 words, it takes up the Commission's points one by one and patiently refutes each of them by carefully culled evidence from its own records.

Mrs Meagher, an executive of the World Health Organisation in New York, compiled and published last year the only index that exists of the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits that appeared two months after the Commission's report itself.

"Oswald was 95 per cent. innocent," Mrs Meagher told me today. "The report found him guilty. But the Hearings and Exhibits, instead of corroborating that verdict, create gravest doubts of his complicity in any of the crimes of which he was accused."

She denounced the members of the Warren Commission and Chief Justice Warren himself for "manipulating the evidence" contained in their own documents to back up their presumption that there was no conspiracy and that Oswald acted alone. The report suppressed findings favourable to Oswald, overlooked testimony from crucial interviews, glossed over inconvenient facts.

In her book, Mrs Meagher says: "The Commission's blatant bias for and against witnesses and its double standard of judging credibility are beyond belief. Marina Oswald's testimony is treated as impeccable, despite her poor showing under the sole cross examination to which she was subjected. Her unsupported statement that Oswald took a potshot at the Rightist General Edwin Walker was accepted without question."

There is no indication in the vast collection of documentation, she maintains, that the Commission at any time seriously considered the possibility that Oswald was not guilty, or that he had not acted alone.

I asked Mr Edward Jay Epstein, whose book "Inquest" last year exploded international controversy over the Warren reports, what he thought was the most significant exposure made in Mrs Meagher's book (he is reviewing it in the Washington Post later this month). He answered:

"Mrs Meagher found 27 errors by the Commission in the area of the autopsy alone which occupies only six or seven pages of the report. This is a terrible indictment. It exposes the Commission as using intuition to reach conclusions instead of scientific or judicial methods."

Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, now Professor of Humanities at New York University, thought that the book proved beyond doubt that there must be a fresh and unbiased investigation into the death of President Kennedy, "and President Kennedy's two Senator brothers should take the lead in setting it up."

It wasn't only for the sake of pure truth that the mystery should be solved; it was a matter of top political importance. If there was a conspiracy, then people existed who could assassinate any future president with impunity.