

New Assassination Report Published

Reviewed by
Bill Yaryan

ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT: The Warren Commission, The Authorities, and The Report, by Sylvia Meagher, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 477 pages, \$8.50.

Sylvia Meagher is very much the cool, detached scholar when she explains that "this book examines the correlation, or lack of correlation, between the (Warren) Report on the one hand and the Hearings and Exhibits (all 26 volumes) on the other."

In other words, Mrs. Meagher is attempting to determine if the Warren Commission's conclusion—Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin to kill President John F. Kennedy in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963—is based on its own evidence.

Her conclusion about the conclusion: "It must be said, without apology to the authors and advocates of the Warren Report, that it resembles a tale told for fools, full of sophistry and deceit, signifying capitulation to compromise and the degradation of justice by its most eminent guardians."

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Coming from any other critic, such a lapse into passionate subjectivity would be cause for taking any further conclusions with the proverbial grain of salt.

Mrs. Meagher, however, has earned her credentials. I've often doubted that anyone could actually read every word of the 26 volumes of tes-

timony and evidence. Few people have even read the Report. But not only has she read it all, she even indexed it all. Her "Subject Index to the Report and Hearings and Exhibits" was referred to in "The American Schoar" as "the standard work for all investigations into the Commission documents."

"Accessories After the Fact," consequently, is a veritable reference book for future, past and present critics of the Warren Commission. Certainly no researcher will ever attempt to duplicate Mrs. Meagher's work. Her feat could only be topped by a computer, and if that happened she would have to be the programmer.

In the style of the diligent atheists of the Renaissance who combed the Bible for inconsistencies, Mrs. Meagher has itemized every instance where the Commission reasoned poorly from ample evidence, based conclusions on shaky evidence, failed to question witnesses whose knowledge was pertinent, or refused to follow obviously important leads... and more.

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Like the Warren Report, she lumps her material under the umbrella headings: The Assassination, The Accused, Other Crimes (Tippit, near miss of General Walker), The Investigation and Murder on Television.

"The central purpose of my books," the author says, "is, by citing the actual evidence from the Hearings and Exhibits, to prove (1) that Oswald, far from being a lone assassin, may well be innocent of any implication in the crimes of which he has been accused; (2) that there were two or more assassins; and (3) that the Warren Report is a travesty of fact and mockery of jus-

tice, consciously contrived to render a false version of the assassination."

The implications of her charges, and those of Mark Lane, Jim Garrison, and others, are so earth-shattering that more than a few people have closed their minds on the subject rather than think that the sky is falling.

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Could an honorable man like Earl Warren or the late President's brother be in on it? they ask before changing the subject. "It is not the critic's responsibility to explain why the Chief Justice signed such a Report or why Robert Kennedy accepts it or to answer similar questions posed by the orthodox defenders," Mrs. Meagher says.

I believe the question must be answered by any critic who spices his research with speculation about the motives of the people involved. Most have; Mrs. Meagher, rarely.

The public in turn, the people who require all or nothing from the critics, must examine the new conclusions reached by the critics instead of pretending it couldn't be so.

The most reasonable request made by the critics is that the investigation into President Kennedy's assassination be reopened. It seems obvious that the vast majority of Americans would agree. Still, the White House seems deaf to the plea. Surely a promise to discover the truth would make one of the most potent campaign issues this year for a perceptive candidate.



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