

Meagher, Sylvia  
Accessories after the Fact: The Warren  
Commission, the Authorities, and the  
Report  
New York: Random House  
477 pp., \$5.95, LC 75-30981  
Publication Date : March 26, 1976

Lee Harvey Oswald acting alone and for essentially undetermined motives assassinated President Kennedy and was himself murdered by Jack Ruby also acting alone and for basically unknown reasons. This book is a critique of these and other major findings of the Warren Commission.

Sylvia Meagher is a public health analyst who became intrigued by the Kennedy assassination. She initially read and prepared an index to the entire 26 volumes of the Commission's evidence.

Meagher's work stands out in comparison with other critiques of the Warren Report. It is comprehensive and detailed in reviewing the evidence and the chain of reasoning that purports to prove each major conclusion of the Report. Arguing that Oswald stands convicted without a fair trial, Meagher adopts the perspective of Oswald's defense attorney. The method is to demonstrate primarily through an examination of the published evidence that the case against Oswald and other conclusions of the Report are dubious. Meagher's work derives credibility from its reliance on the Commission's own evidence. Finally, the restrained tone of the work distinguishes it from others of its genre. There is passion and speculation, but the former is controlled and the latter is clearly labeled. Also, the author does not try to prove who *really*

killed Kennedy or that the Commission was engaged in a cover-up or conspiracy. 159  
Rather, Meagher seeks only to show that the Report's conclusions are open to reasonable doubt. "The truth about Dallas remains unknown," she says. (p. xxi) She succeeds with devastating effect in demonstrating that a new and fairer inquiry is warranted.

This is not easy reading. It is laced with long quotations from transcripts; technical discussions of ballistics, photography, and forensic medicine; and meticulous examinations of precise bits of evidence. Yet, it is a compelling book in much the same way as Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. Case upon case builds to the cumulative and overwhelming conclusion that the Warren Report is not credible. "The discrepancies, distortions, and misrepresentations of crucial points are sufficient . . . to condemn the Warren Report," she concludes. (p. 455)

Her call for a new inquiry is made particularly timely by the recent report of the Senate Intelligence Committee charging that the CIA and FBI covered up important information in investigating the Kennedy assassination.

This work was first published in 1967 in hardback and is being reissued as a paperback. The reappearance of this fascinating and disturbing book is to be welcomed.

September 1976

*Perspective*