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ACCESSORIES AFTER THE
FACT:

The Warren Commission,
The Authorities and
The Report.

By Sylvia Meagher:
The Bobbs-Merrill Company.
\$8.50

Three out of five Americans doubt or disbelieve the findings of the Warren Report; the proportion may be greater if this astonishing book gets the wide reading it merits. Mrs. Meagher is a meticulous, far-reaching critic of the Report who believes its findings were erroneous. A scholar of awesome depth, she has as well the skills of a great defense attorney and her book gives Lee Harvey Oswald posthumously the day in court an assassin's bullet denied him.

In his Introduction to her book, Leo Sauvage calls Mrs. Meagher the only person in the world who knows every item in the 26 volumes of the Hearings and Exhibits on which the Warren Commission based the conclusions in its Report (as well as much more about the Assassination that is missing from the volumes). In nearly 500 closely packed pages, this tireless author examines point after point of evidence to try and find a correlation between the evidence of the Hearings and Exhibits, and the conclusions of the Report. She finds very little.

Her method is simple but devastating. She lays before the reader a mass of alleged facts, describes the conclusions that the Report draws from them, and then proceeds to her own "appraisal of the known facts" which is almost always at complete variance with the Report. Her logic is powerful and dazzling, her prose bitterly ironic and almost scornful. She charges the Commission with "distortions, discrepancies and misrepresentations" of innumerable points of evidence, stating bluntly that it issued a "false indictment" of Oswald, who had "no motive, no means and no opportunity to assassinate President Kennedy.

While it is not her purpose to prove a conspiracy and turn up the true killers, Mrs. Meagher does construct a plausible theory that ties up some loose ends left by the Warren Report and points in the same direction as that of District Attorney Jim Garrison of New Orleans. But she has had increasing misgivings about the use of the latter as it continues to unfold.

Mrs. Meagher concludes with a plea that many readers will wish to second: Open the 75-year time vault holding all the evidence in the case to a new investigation by an impartial body, which her book ringingly avers the Warren Commission was not. And do it within our lifetime.

THOMAS G. BRUNI