

CAPSULE COMMENTS FROM CELEBRITIES

by Norman Wilner

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REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT (CAVALCADE, FEB. 1965)

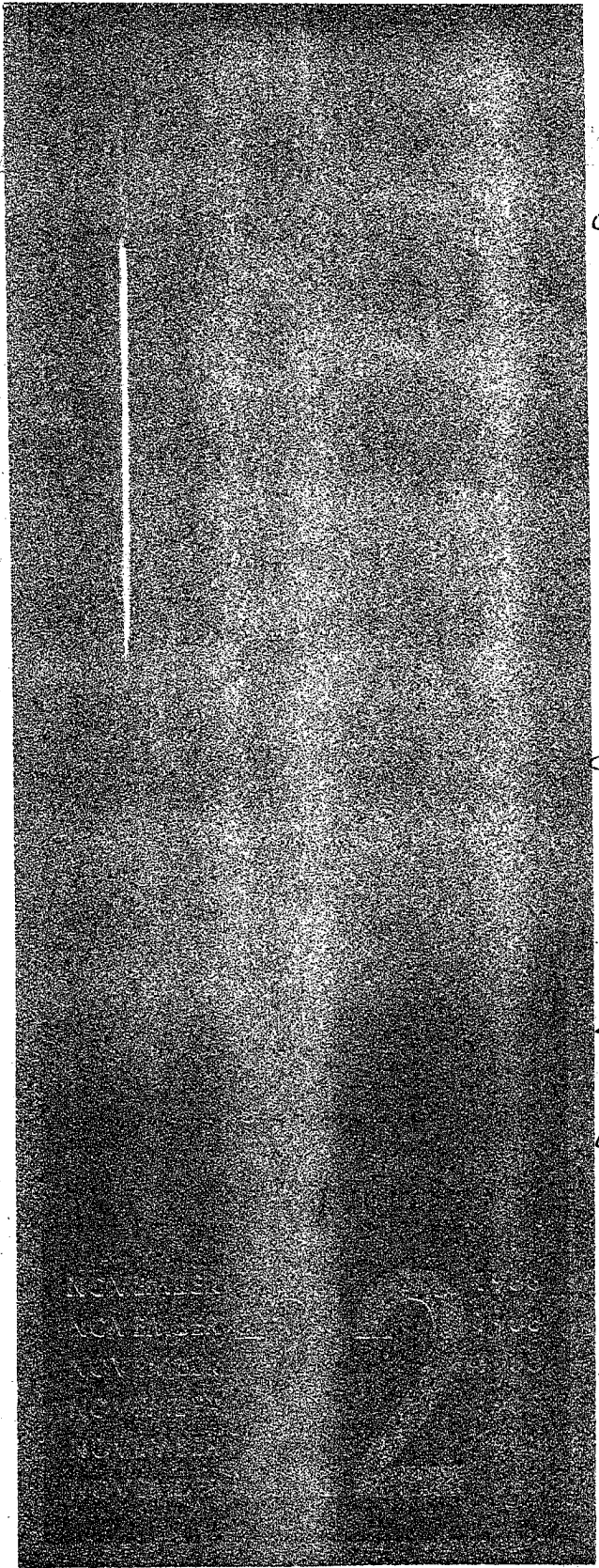
WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.: "...it is theoretically possible that the Commission suppressed evidence that would have inconvenienced its thesis: that the two killings were the work of two independent psychotics. But such evidence has not been uncovered. The Commission simply reports what apparently happened--not *why* it happened--and does so with an authoritative thoroughness. The Commission absolved the Soviet Union from any complicity in this assassination, but did not do so by adducing any later purity in the Soviet soul. Finally, there remains the idiot fringe who will not be satisfied until a commission comes along that proves Kennedy was struck down by General Walker while H.L. Hunt was passing him the ammunition."

PROFESSOR REVILO OLIVER: "Kennedy was murdered by Oswald acting under orders of either the Soviet Union or the CIA. I am not sure which, but after all the difference is only a bookkeeping one." **ZSA ZSA GABOR:** "Dahlin, most of my European friends are suspicious of the Warren Report. They say Americans are so naive, it must have been a plot. They cannot conceive of so many coincidences happening all at vunce. Jack Ruby shooting Oswald before he even had a chance to testify, things like dat. I went to a U.N. cocktail party and I was talking to a Spanish diplomat. He said it was a Communist plot. Five minutes later I am talking to a Russian official and he is absolutely convinced it was a Rightist plot. Who is to say? I, personally, having lived in the United States for so many years, I know how open and aboveboard Americans are, so I say the Warren Report was the whole truth and nozzing but the truth."

JACK E. LEONARD: "I've known Jack Ruby for years so I don't wanna get mixed up in any of that jazz. I'm a comedian. What am I supposed to do, make jokes about a serious thing like this? Nope, no comment." **BETTY FURNESS:** "I haven't read the Warren Report, so I'm not qualified to offer an opinion. Matter of fact, I'm doing a sort of conversation piece act with the audience at the Strollers Club and I find people are loathe to talk about the Warren Report."

STEVE ALLEN: "People in show business are not supposed to concern themselves with politics on the ground that it will endanger their careers, but I think this is morally and indefensibly wrong. I read the report carefully and thoroughly and although I am far from a detective, it seemed to me that what the Report stated was absolutely true; it was all a tragic coincidence. There was no deep, dark plot as far as I am concerned." **ORSON BEAN:** "It was certainly a thorough report. There's no question in

How true!



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my mind that Warren is probably the most honorable man in America. Certainly, there are lingering doubts in my mind, but I have to go on the basis of what I read in the report. I live with doubts as part and parcel of my own suspicious nature; they're probably the result of some lack within myself. It's like a guy who finds out his wife doesn't love him any more. He's absolutely convinced she must be in love with another man and then he discovers she's just sick of him, that's all. It's as simple

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and senseless as that. People are suspicious of simplicity. Suspicion is something that hovers over all of us. I just came back from two weeks in Washington and I felt President Kennedy's presence everywhere. I still can't believe it." **MILT KAMEN:** "I heard Mark Lane on the radio and I don't trust him. Of course there were a lot of discrepancies but, if there is anything in the Warren Report that has not come out, I don't think it would be anything that would shake us. The Report brought back to me that we lost somebody important. I got the feeling of being personally useless and here was somebody useful to society. I mean, what am I after all? A clown, a buffoon. This wasn't just another Joe. He brought another kind of atmosphere, a new feeling, a feeling of potential hope to the American people. For a while after he was elected, there was no more of that feeling of dark brooding, people felt more human to each other because of President Kennedy. Even though, I want you to understand, I was no worshipper of Kennedy. I haven't read the Laski book which made him out to be almost some kind of political monster, but friends told me about the book. Somebody in the limelight means literally the light is upon him. Certainly, JFK had imperfections (as we all do), only you see every pore exposed to this pitiless light. It's so easy to cut up a man, particularly a man in high position. I understand the book portrayed JFK as an opportunist and hungry for power. Well, I'm glad he was ambitious and an opportunist because it was for me and millions of other Americans that this great drive was working for. Laski showed more about himself than about JFK in writing the kind of book he did. I'll tell you something. I wouldn't want to see Laski as President up there. They do that sort of thing with people in show business, too. This pervert business in the White House, we're all responsible. Maybe we'll drive the poor guy to suicide. We're all responsible for the assassination. We're all responsible for the ills of society. There's a sickness in all of us because we overlook, we don't bother with other people. We are not our brother's keeper. President Kennedy's assassination was a ridiculous waste of an important human life. We have to get on with the spirit of JFK, not dissect every morbid aspect of his tragic death." **XAVIER CUGAT:** "Thees country has been vairy good to me. Eet has enable me to become a millionaire several times over so I am vairy grateful to the United States. But there are too many loopholes in the evidence as far as I am concern. I have no facts to guide me, only my instinct, but I think eet was a plot. I cannot prove it. I have only my nose to guide me, but I have a vairy sensitive nose, senior." **MARK LANE:** "I have been retained by Lee Oswald's mother to represent her before the Warren Commission. They maintained, however, that Oswald was not entitled to representation because he was not on trial, he had already been convicted. Now, it seems to me that the Warren Commission is hardly a cross section of America and, in fact, it is not very well known abroad. The right to cross examine the evidence was totally obliterated and this caused great dissatisfaction and suspicion abroad. Oswald was assumed guilty in the absence of a trial. The American people failed to get the facts. The Warren Report is the prosecution's case and a very good case it is, but where is the defense case? The accused has a right to be heard. For example, how was it possible for the rifle to have fired accurately with three perfect hits? Even in the hands of experts, this is im-

possible. Page 193 of the Report told about a test conducted by three of the best marksmen in the country. They fired at three still, not moving, targets. They fired at a silhouette of the entire body, not just the head and they missed 5 out of 18 shots. Three witnesses testified it was impossible for Oswald to have carried a rifle into the building without them seeing it. Many important witnesses were not called. Need I say more?" **ALEXANDER KING:** "The whole thing is too idiotic, anyways. I loathe politics categorically. It is the last refuge of the bumbling inept. I must admit, however, President Kennedy was one of the few Presidents with wit and verve and elan. Most important of all, as far as I am selfishly concerned, he was a patron of the arts. Not just a patron, I have reason to believe he was genuinely interested in the arts. The poor, dear man was assassinated--of that I am convinced. But it's over and done with. Let's not keep belaboring the issue over and over again." **JOHN WAYNE:** "My reaction? Hell, anybody in his right mind knows it was a Communist plot." **GEORGE JESSEL:** "When Jack Ruby shot Oswald in front of millions of TV viewers, I thought, 'Oh oh, now everybody'll say it was some kind of Jewish plot.' I say thank God for the Warren Report, which at least cleared the air and laid the guilt of this monstrous crime on Oswald's shoulders." **DUKE ELLINGTON:** "This is a delicate area to explore, one which I would rather not get into. I will say this, however. I have had the pleasure of meeting Chief Justice Warren on occasion. He is a fine gentleman and a credit to the Supreme Court. I refuse to believe he would permit any whitewash of President Kennedy's assassination." **JACK PAAR:** "The Warren Report was the truth as far as I'm concerned, but I'm sure you'll end up misquoting me. Why should you be any different?" **SAMMY DAVIS, JR.:** "Chief Justice Warren and all of the other gentlemen on the Commission are solid, reputable citizens with no axe to grind, so I see no reason to doubt the truth of the Warren Report. All I can think of very sadly, very mournfully, is that the American Negro lost one of his best friends, one of his champions when President Kennedy was assassinated." **OSCAR LEVANT:** "Why do you bother me with this nonsense? I think the whole country needs psychiatric treatment with all this morbid interest in JFK's assassination. The continual rehashing, it's like those Clairol advertisements--Did He Or Didn't He? I assure you there won't be this much fuss when someone assassinates me. And it'll probably be my wife. I don't want you to get the impression that I'm trying to joke about it, because it knocked me, like every other American, for a loop. In other words, I believe the Warren Report. Now let's try to forget it." **JACK BENNY:** "If you don't mind, I would really rather not get mixed up in this. I'm a pretty sentimental guy and I cried like a baby the day the President was shot. It was a terrible, terrible thing. Then when I read the Warren Report, it brought back that horrible day all over again and I started to cry again." **DICK GREGORY:** "As I read the Warren Report, I couldn't help thinking suppose it had been a Negro who had committed this monstrous crime? The whole white world would have been down on us. What do you expect from those dumb, ignorant niggers? They're all murderers and criminals, that would have been the general reaction. But do we Negroes say that because Oswald killed the President, that's typical of white men? We got more sense than that."

Whose
side is
he on?

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