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For Release On or After Sept. 20th

BANTAM PUBLICATION OF "INQUEST"
MAKES IT MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED
BOOK ON WARREN COMMISSION.

Paperback includes Special
Appendix of newly released
FBI and Secret Service
documents.

NEW YORK, N. Y. -- INQUEST: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of the Truth by Edward Jay Epstein is now the most widely circulated of the books and articles delving into the Commission's study of the Kennedy assassination.

Less than 13 weeks after its June 29th hardcover publication by Viking Press, the book has been published (September 20th) by Bantam Books in a 95¢ paperback edition -- with a Special Appendix of newly released FBI and Secret Service Reports -- for mass market distribution throughout the world. Bantam's first printing is 300,000 copies.

This unusual "Bantam Extra" publication for a newly released hardcover book was explained by Thomas H. Guinzberg, President of Viking Press, as follows:

"INQUEST" is one of the most widely reviewed books we have ever published. It was immediately sold to several publishers abroad. This suggests not only nationwide but worldwide interest in the fundamental questions Mr. Epstein has raised. In view of that interest, it seems important to expose Mr. Epstein's book to the widest possible audience at the earliest possible time."

Literary Guild, Book-of-the-Month Club, British, French, German and Italian hardcover editions of INQUEST have been, or soon will be published, as will serializations in Germany's Der Spiegel and Spain's Triunfo.

INQUEST has also received major news and book review coverage, including such comments as:

"I have just read a book which, I must admit, shakes for the first time the belief I have had in the report of the Warren Commission. The book is INQUEST..."

- Max Lerner, The New York Post.

"Mr. Epstein makes his case in so logical and detached a manner that it demands equally serious exploration and refutation to satisfy us that we have established the lone guilt of Oswald...The investigation must be re-opened if we wish to approach the truth more closely."

-Richard N. Goodwin, formerly Assistant Special Counsel to President Kennedy and Special Assistant to President Johnson, in Book Week.

"When I first read Mr. Epstein's book it was with the hope that I would find it greatly flawed and could advise that it was not a work to be taken seriously...But I found it from start to finish responsible, sober, and to use the word the Commission could not bring itself to use, compelling."

-Richard H. Rovere, Washington correspondent for The New Yorker, in his introduction to INQUEST.

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Special Appendix in Bantam Edition

In addition to carrying the complete text and illustrations of the Viking INQUEST, the Bantam edition includes a Special Appendix containing FBI and Secret Service documents, just released from The National Archives, and therefore unavailable for publication in any book published at an earlier time. These documents do not appear in the Report of the Warren Commission nor in the 26 volumes of Hearings and Exhibits published by the Commission.

They are the FBI Reports of November 26, 27, and 29, 1963 regarding the autopsy performed on President Kennedy, a letter of transmittal, a receipt for the autopsy report and notes of the examining doctor, and a Secret Service Report on the interview with Alonso H. Hudkins III, formerly a reporter with the Houston Post.

They are further documentation for Epstein's thesis that the official version of the Kennedy assassination fails to contend with serious contradictions presented by the evidence.

"Oswald could not have acted alone"

For example, one of the several major conclusions that Epstein reaches is that "there is a strong case that Oswald could not have acted alone."

As Richard H. Rovere writes, "The case for Oswald's single-handed guilt rests, as of now, wholly on the Warren Commission's finding that only three bullets were fired at the Presidential party and that one of these described an eccentric course through the bodies of President Kennedy and Governor John Connally of Texas. According to Mr. Epstein, 'There was, however, no substantial evidence which supported this contention, and there was evidence that all but precluded the possibility that both men had been hit by the same bullet.'"

Among this evidence were two FBI Summary Reports, disclosed publicly for the first time in the Viking INQUEST, which offer descriptions of the late President's wounds that are in direct contradiction with the official version of the autopsy results in the Warren Report.

In an intended rebuttal to this, in The New York Times (June 5th) Norman Redlich, who was the Commission's deputy general counsel, is reported as saying, "The Commission study used the actual reports of FBI investigative agents, not just the summary."

Now published in the Bantam INQUEST are these "actual reports"--those of November 26, 27, and 29, 1963--and far from rebutting Epstein's thesis, they considerably strengthen it. According to Epstein, these reports, plus the two Summary Reports, now constitute the third case of the FBI's alleged "error" in reporting autopsy evidence that directly contradicts the Commission's Report, and bring Epstein to the conclusion that the autopsy results were changed at some point after the autopsy was made.

Secret Service Report, about Oswald as FBI agent

The Secret Service Report of January 3, 1964, also reproduced in the Bantam INQUEST, reveals that Alonso Hudkins called the Houston office of the Secret Service on December 17, and "advised that he had just returned from a weekend in Dallas, during which time he talked to Allen Sweatt, Chief Criminal Division, Sheriff's Office, Dallas; Chief Sweatt mentioned that it was his opinion that Lee Harvey Oswald was being paid \$200 a month by the FBI as an informant in connection with their subversive investigations."

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Yet in an article in the July 12 issue of Look, Fletcher Knebel reports Hudkins as saying "he was never interviewed on this matter by the Secret Service, that he never heard the rumor from Sweatt," and adds that "Sweatt says he never made any such statement to Hudkins or to anyone else, and that he had no knowledge of Oswald's connection with any government agency." As Epstein reasons, either Hudkins, and possibly also Sweatt, are lying, or the Secret Service Report is inaccurate to a point that would strain credibility.

But Mr. Knebel continues in his article to say: "Epstein says that 'nowhere' in the Warren Report is there a mention of the allegation. If he means the specific rumor credited to Hudkins, he is correct, but his implication is wrong."

Epstein's only implication, he explains, is that the Commission did not investigate as completely as it might the possibility of a connection between Oswald and the FBI, and now the January 3rd Secret Service Report is evidence that his implication was not wrong.

About the Author

Edward Jay Epstein, born in New York City in 1935, holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from Cornell University and is now in a doctoral program in American government at Harvard University.

He began his book INQUEST as a thesis at Cornell University. His intention was to provide a case study of the nature and activity of an extraordinary government Commission.

He set out, as he puts it, to answer the question: "How did the Commission go about searching for such an elusive and many-faced quarry as the truth?" Further, how was the investigation organized? To what degree did political considerations affect the truth-finding process? What was the scope of the investigation, and what were its limits? Finally, exactly how was the Report written?

The most important sources for answers to these questions were interviews conducted by the author with five of the seven members of the Commission and with ten members of its working staff. These interviews, together with documentary evidence and Epstein's interpretation of it, provide a picture of the Commission and its work sharply at variance with the generally accepted view.

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