

THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT:

A Critique

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Summary of a 40-page article

The stampede to endorse the report of the Warren Commission and the flood of extravagant tributes came before the critics and experts could have had time to read the report in entirety or with the necessary care, and was accompanied by warnings against further heresy by sceptics. Conscientious and prolonged study of the report discloses serious defects--internal contradictions, omissions, and misrepresentation. These cast grave doubt on the central conclusions of the Warren Commission.

The Commission has minimized or maintained silence on gross improprieties by federal and local officials and the press. The findings with respect to the bullet wounds--the latest in a series of metamorphoses which preceded the Warren Report--lean heavily on conjecture and are not conclusive. They are all the more dubious in the light of the fact that the autopsy report, as presented in the report, is undated, reinforcing the other indications that the results of the post-mortem may have been revised to conform to a preconceived theory. There is a serious and unexplained discrepancy between the location of the wound in the back of the President's neck and the corresponding holes in his apparel, as described in the report.

The Commission arbitrarily has discounted evidence that there were more than three shots and that some, at least, came from a location other than the Depository. It has concluded that Oswald had the capability for the rapidity and accuracy of the shots despite forceful evidence to the contrary. The report suggests that the rapidity of the shots was facilitated by the use of an ammunition clip and claims that such a clip was in the rifle when it was found. That claim is belied by the Commission's own account of the discovery and handling of the rifle and by testimony which, if truthful, absolutely rules out the presence of an

ammunition clip and leaves the thesis of Oswald's capability in ruins.

The circumstances which led to the identification of the murder rifle as a 7.65 Mauser on the day of the assassination have been misrepresented in the Warren Report. Discrepancies related to the Carcano and its purchase by mail-order have been ignored.

The characteristics of the photograph alleged to show Oswald holding the murder rifle create doubt about its authenticity. The explanation of the delay in the emergence of the palmprint lifted from the rifle presents the possibility of falsification of evidence. The Warren Commission's finding that the paraffin test is "unreliable" suggests a lack of impartiality in evaluating evidence inconsistent with Oswald's guilt.

The Warren Report gives no indication of Oswald's activities during four crucial hours before the President was shot. The credibility of key witnesses is dubious; other witnesses exist but are not mentioned in the report who possess information inconsistent with the central findings of the Warren Commission. The testimony of some witnesses as described in the report smacks of collusion and falsification, the possibility of which has not been probed energetically.

The report does not acknowledge that it leaves completely blank six crucial hours of interrogation on the day of Oswald's arrest. It ignores serious contradictions in the answers Oswald is alleged to have given to specific questions, as reported by different individuals who were present. One report by an FBI agent contradicts Captain Fritz and other federal agents on a vital element--the "Hidell" card--but his unsupported account is accepted by the Warren Commission despite the preponderance of conflicting reports. Moreover, the Commission claims both (1) that Oswald left his wallet intact in a drawer in Irving on the morning of the assassination, and (2) that the wallet was found on his person when he was arrested and contained incriminating material. It is significant that the police failed to confront Oswald, immediately or later, with evidence allegedly received by them early in the morning of the day after his arrest which linked him to the purchase of the rifle--evidence which might have secured the confession of a guilty man. These and other factors cast a sinister light on the whole business of Oswald's interrogation and on the alleged failure to maintain a transcript throughout the three days of questioning.

The Commission has withheld important facts about the trip to Mexico City and the interest taken in Oswald by an unnamed federal agency. It has accepted a bizarre and implausible account of his relations with the State Department. It has failed to press investigation into avenues suggesting conspiracy and criminal collusion.

The hard evidence against Oswald does not exclude his innocence or victimization. The contemporary American scene is disgraced by instances of the failure, impotence, or miscarriage of justice, with police authorities themselves implicated in crime and conspiracy. The Warren Commission has failed to demonstrate conclusively that Oswald acting alone was the assassin of President Kennedy. It is therefore a national imperative to renew an unrelenting search for the whole truth, however merciless it may be.