

100 Kennedy Slaying Still Debated

Good conspiracy theories die hard. This is particularly true when they involve a momentous and shocking event such as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Many critics, particularly Europeans who seem to delight in speculating about conspiracies, refuse to believe that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin, despite the Warren Commission's report. Unfortunately, Oswald

himself was assassinated, so history shall be deprived of his side of the story.

The latest theory on conspiracies, and perhaps one of the most interesting, comes in the latest issue of the *New York Review of Books*.

In what is ostensibly a review of two books criticizing (on technical grounds) the Warren Commission's findings, a California professor of philosophy, Richard Popkin, suggests that Oswald was part of a group of assassins who killed Kennedy.

Popkin makes the intriguing suggestion that there were two Oswalds—the "real Oswald" who did not do the shooting and a "duplicate Oswald," a look-alike who did the actual shooting. Popkin suggests that the "real Oswald" was merely a front man for a band of conspirators, used to create the illusion that a lonely, "alienated nut" committed the crime.

Popkin says his theory is based on two readings of the voluminous Warren Report, material he says was overlooked by the commission and what he describes as new evidence gathered by independent investigators.

But even Popkin admits that, "My reconstruction is, of course, no more than a possibility." Doubtless, other critics will come along to dispute Popkin's theory, and then add their own theories.

His explanation and others which have blossomed on the literary scene draw some credibility from the fact that the Warren Report did leave some questions unanswered. There seem to be as many theories about the assassination as there are items to consider in explaining it: the rifle, the number of shots fired, the location of the bullet wounds, etc.

The conspiracy theorists will probably continue to offer versions of the Kennedy assassination for generations to come. It remains to be seen if they will shake the findings of the Warren Commission.

But then, even today, some still dispute the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.