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People

✓ A senator prods a 'house of cards'

Unlike other skeptics, U.S. Sen. Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania has the power to dig out answers to some of his questions about the assassination. Recently appointed (with Colorado Democrat Gary Hart) to serve on a subcommittee investigating the role of the FBI and CIA in preparing the original Warren Report, Schweiker can subpoena both witnesses and classified documents. Already he has reached some conclusions.

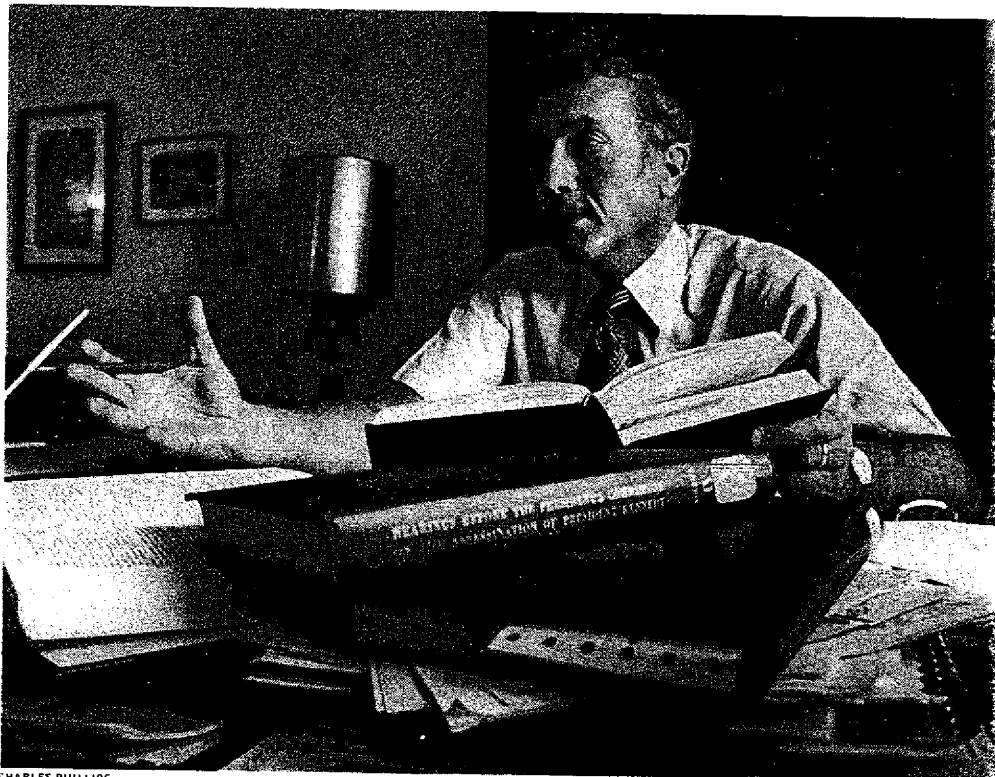
Characterizing the Warren Report as a "house of cards," the 49-year-old Republican maintains that "recent disclosures have devastated its credibility. We now have evidence that the FBI destroyed and suppressed evidence. And we have evidence that the FBI may have influenced witnesses to mislead the commission."

A liberal and onetime dove on Vietnam, Schweiker served four terms in the House of Representatives before his election to the Senate in 1968. With his wife, a former "Miss Claire" of television's *Romper Room*, and his three daughters and two sons, Schweiker barnstormed his state in an old school bus last year. He survived Watergate and won reelection. Now when he goes back home he wants to discuss the economy, "but all my con-

stituents want to talk about is this investigation."

Schweiker, a member of Sen. Frank Church's Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, had his interest kindled in the Kennedy assassination only six months ago. "When I sat there and heard the CIA admit they had made a deal with the Mafia to shoot Castro, it put everything into a new frame of reference," Schweiker says. He does not espouse any of the current assassination theories. "I don't want to fall into that trap," he explains. "There may be elements of truth in all of them." But he is intrigued by Lee Oswald's ill-defined link with the government. "I don't know if it's conspiracy or not," he says, "but there was something going on between Oswald and the U.S. intelligence community. When he was thrown in jail in New Orleans [while picketing], he was allowed one phone call. Did he call his wife? No. He called the FBI."

Why was Kennedy killed? "It might have been a Communist plot originating in Cuba or the USSR," says Schweiker. "Maybe it was a right-wing conspiracy here in the U.S. Or perhaps it was anti-Castro Cubans. I don't know the answers." Schweiker shrugs. "It just gets stranger and stranger." □



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