



TALKING UP

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(Editor's Note: This is sixteenth in a series of reports by Edgar Williams on his recent trip through Norway, Sweden, Denmark and England.)

Still They Ask:
'Who Killed JFK?'

(Part One)

IT HAS BEEN nearly three years since the shots rang out in Dallas and a President died without knowing how much he was loved—or by how many.

Almost two years ago the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, reported to the world that it had "ascertained the truth."

Said the Commission in its report, issued under the imprimatur of Chief Justice Earl Warren and six other distinguished Americans: "The shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally (John B. Connally, Jr., Governor of Texas) were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald."

Since its publication, the Warren Report has been under attack, both in the U.S. and abroad. Curiously, the bitterest assailants in this country are elements which are poles apart ideologically—extremists of the Far Left and the Far Right—but which, in effect, are "allies" in trying to discredit the Report.

It would appear, however, that most Americans—especially those who have taken time to read and give thoughtful consideration to the Warren Report—have accepted the Commission.

But such is not the case among large numbers of Scandinavians. Nor is it the case among numerous Britons. While I cannot make a first-hand report on feelings elsewhere in Western Europe, I have it from reliable sources

in London and in the capital cities of the Scandinavian countries, that the same attitude is prevalent virtually everywhere on the Continent.

TODAY in Scandinavia, with the third anniversary of the slaying of John Fitzgerald Kennedy just around the next calendar corner, one still hears THE question: Who REALLY killed President Kennedy?

Oh, that isn't the constant phraseology. The question is asked in many ways. Sometimes, the "question" is a declarative sentence; e. g., "The real killer of your late President probably never will be known." But it's still a question, in a manner of speaking, because an American to whom it is put is expected to express his opinion in considerable detail.

It is necessary to have visited Scandinavia—as I did twice—when President Kennedy was alive to understand the situation. John F. Kennedy was, to Norwegians, Swedes and Danes, much more than President of the United States. They considered him THE man of his time—the young, courageous leader of the nations of the Free World.

Millions of Scandinavians felt his loss as a personal stab. Norwegians, Swedes and Danes are said to be stoical and impassive (that reputation, for the most part, is not valid). On that awful night of November 22, 1963, when the tragic news was received, the streets of Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen were filled with people, moving about aimlessly, weeping unashamedly.

In the heart, they still weep. And most of them still find it impossible to accept the conclusion that JFK was killed by

a lunatic loner.

I KEPT no tally of the number of persons, from longtime friends to casual acquaintances, with whom I talked this year who asked whether I had "inside information" regarding the assassination. I can tell you, however, that it was a quite unusual conversation in which the subject didn't come up.

The questioners weren't kooks. I have, of course, no knowledge of the political leanings of the "casuals," whom I never had met before. I know, though, that my longtime friends, without exception, are political moderates.

I make the latter point because of baseless charges made in the U.S. frequently that Europeans who continue to question the Warren Report are, per se, Leftists. At least so far as old friends in each of the three nations are concerned, that just isn't so.

On one of those hot after-

noons in Oslo, mentioned here in a week or so ago, I met a young man and young woman at a refreshment stand. They said they were students at the University of Oslo. They spoke excellent English.

They expressed their feelings on Viet Nam. They were disturbed by the threat of a world-wide war, and the young woman said: "I believe a settlement could be reached, if John F. Kennedy were alive today."

The young man broke in: "We don't know who killed your great President. Perhaps you can enlighten us. He was eliminated by a conspiracy, wasn't he?"

"No proof of that ever has been produced," I said. "The Warren Commission spent ten months obtaining testimony from 552 witnesses and checking out hundreds of leads. It reported there was no evidence of a conspiracy and concluded that the assassin acted on his own."

"Do you accept that?" the young woman asked. I replied that, inasmuch as the Report has been out for nearly two years and its critics have not produced a shred of credible evidence which would contradict the basic conclusions, I accept it—and will continue to do so until such time as facts may be presented which would prove

the Report wrong.

"You," the young woman said, shaking her head, "have been misled. One man could not have planned and carried out such a horrible crime."

In Stockholm, a middle-aged woman whom I have known since 1962—and have visited every time I have been in the Swedish capital—expressed doubts about the findings of the Warren Commission. The lady is prominent in Sweden, and she asked that I not use her name in print.

"It is incomprehensible to me that Oswald could have acted on his own. And why was it so easy for that man to kill Oswald in, of all places, a police station?"

MY OLDEST friend in Copenhagen is John Otto Nielsen, of whom I have written before. At twenty-nine, John is an associate editor of "Dag Bladet," Denmark's top-circulation picture magazine, which has a format somewhat similar to those of "Life" and "Look" magazines in the U.S.

Nielsen is a thoughtful man. He is, for example, not old enough to remember much about the Nazi occupation of Denmark during World War II. But he has read voraciously about the rise of the Third Reich and Adolf Hitler's lust for world conquest. Through his reading, John has arrived at a philosophy which today makes him outspokenly pro-American with regard to the War in Viet Nam.

"What the United States is doing today in Viet Nam," he has told me more than once, "is the very thing the free nations should have done to stop Hitler in the Thirties. I am all in favor of America's efforts in Viet Nam."

In the matter of the Kennedy assassination, however, Nielson stubbornly refuses to believe that Lee Harvey Oswald was the slayer.

"Like most Danes," he said. "I don't believe that the real murderer has been found, or ever will be. We feel that America did not do enough to find out what was behind the murder."

"We don't believe statements that there is no doubt about the identity of the murderer. And we don't believe that Americans believe the actual murderer was Oswald."