

11/17/67
MANCHESTER \$162,500

The neap tide of controversy over the assassination of President John F. Kennedy continues to inundate us. Included in the latest wave are William Smith's privately published, 240-page mimeographed Assassination By Consensus, David Welsh's and David Lifton's The Case For Three Assassins in the January, 1967 issue of Ramparts, and on January 10th the first of four serial installments by Look magazine from William Manchester's long-awaited and much publicized Death Of A President to be published in full in book form in the spring. Undoubtedly, there is other material of which I am not aware at this writing.

Typically most impressive is the installment from Manchester's book which is considered here. The Ramparts article and Smith book are left for later evaluation. Bearing in mind that what is said in the first installment may be modified by what is said in those yet to be published and that all four installments, in turn, can be evaluated justly, finally, only in context of the entire book, it is nevertheless possible to note certain aspects of Manchester's work.

The style of the first installment, as has been remarked in comment in the press, is journalistic, in places colloquial. It is easy to read, has narrative interest, and panders to the common appetite for gossip about the private lives of eminent people in the public eye. While noting parenthetically a small error of fact by the Warren Commission, Manchester makes many more himself. Worse is his dogmatic assertion as fact, unsupported by reference to source or authority, of matter which is uncertain, moot, or contrary to fact. He does not argue the Commission's case; he asserts it dogmatically as established fact without hint of the swirling controversy over virtually every aspect of it: Oswald was the solo assassin of Kennedy.

He misrepresents the political context of the assassination. The deep-going division in the Texas Democratic Party between its dominant conservative wing,

bitterly hostile to Kennedy, and the party liberals who supported his administration, is reduced to a "petty dispute" between Governor Connally and U.S. Senator Yarborough. He paints a familiar picture of hate-filled Dallas, where the Morning News had mounted "an all-out assault on John Kennedy to blacken his name," "incitement to violence had become respectable," and homicide abounded, but he avoids characterizing it politically. It is not true, says Manchester, that Oswald was a "loner." All who said so were wrong.

"...no man lives in a void. His every act is conditioned by his time and his society." Although John Wilkes Booth, who "was not an agent of the Confederacy" and "acted on his own," it is "ridiculous" to suggest "the crime in Ford's Theater could have been committed in a community untroubled by crisis" and "in a city swarming with Southern sympathizers and hardened by seditious talk."

Nevertheless, "Establishing the precise link between deed, era and locale is a hopeless task..." And historian Manchester has no need to demonstrate the process whereby virulent, reactionary, rightist incitements to violence against "LIBERAL" President Kennedy moved Marxist Oswald to kill him. But if the motive was not political, it had to be psychological, and Manchester, who set out as a historian, becomes a psychiatrist and a bedfellow of strange analysts.

Warren's politically divided troop, it will be remembered, professed inability to discover a "definitive" reason on Oswald's part for the murder of Kennedy and left open the question of motivation for the assassination. Two reasons principally account for this lacuna which is the weakest aspect of the Commission's case. Political motivation was precluded by the Johnson policy of denuding the assassination of political meaning by excluding attribution of cause to either right or left, at home or abroad. Psychiatric motivation, the only other possibility on the part of a solo assassin, was ruled out by

lack of evidence and by inability to examine the putative assassin in person, an indispensable condition for psychiatric diagnosis. It is not generally known that Commissioners Dulles and McCloy met on July 9, 1964, with Drs. Dale Cameron of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., Howard Rome of the Mayo Clinic, and David Rothstein of the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners, all of whom had received the relevant material amassed by the Commission and all of whom advised against drawing conclusions from it about Oswald's motive.

It was probably the influence of the psychiatrists which led the Commission to say it did "not believe that the relations between Oswald and his wife caused him to assassinate the President" (Report, p. 423). Defenders of the Commission have not been as inhibited as Warren's panel. Psychiatrist Renatus Hartogs, his memory falsified by greed for notoriety, if not merely for money, recounted in interview and book his recognition in 1913 of the homicidal possibilities in Oswald, then a thirteen-year old truant. Dwight Macdonald, victim of an uncontrollable cacoethes scribendi, who belabored the Commission in Esquire magazine in 1965 for "professional deformation of intelligence," and the Commission's Report because its style was inferior to Homer's, watched Oswald briefly on television, noted a "cocky smirk" on his face and therewith unraveled his personality to prove him an assassin. Ex-Commissioner Ford voted for the Report. He also wrote a misrepresentational Portrait of the Assassin in which he attributed the immediate cause of the assassination to Marina Oswald's rejection of her husband in the evening of November 21, 1963.

Manchester eclipses his predecessors. In a tour de force of imaginative psychiatric fiction he recreates Oswald as a pathologic aberration from birth to death, the antithesis of John F. Kennedy whom he envied. Without reference to clinical records or other documentation and in disregard of established contrary fact, he diagnoses Oswald as a life-long incipient

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paranoiac, and paranoiacs in the Manchester school of depth psychology are "overpowered by a monstrous feeling of personal resentment and a blind craving for revenge." Oswald probably "had no real concept of love." At age 13, it escaped Hartogs' attention, Oswald "already...had become truculent with men and inadequate with women - and quick to rage at both." His "mother's influence...contributed to his weakness." By the time he returned from Mexico where he had gone in 1963 after failing to kill General Walker in an effort to impress his wife, Oswald was "the most rejected man of his time." It is a thought from which Krushchev can now derive a measure of cold comfort. Then the final blow. Marina rejected him once more on the eve of doomsday. He watched a World War II battle film on television. "...shortly before 9 p.m. that evening" he suffered a "total eclipse of his reason." The next day he assassinated the President . Q.E.D.

Poor Manchester! Lost in phantasy, the historian-psychiatrist was unaware it was not Oswald who killed Kennedy. By his own boastful admission it was dictator-President Francois Duvalier of Haiti who had placed a voodoo death curse on Kennedy following the discontinuance by the United States of economic and military aid to Haiti. (Bailing Out Duvalier, Robert Debs Heinl Jr.; New Republic, January 14, 1967).

Duvalier was motivated by the loss of millions. Look paid Manchester more than \$10 a word.

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1/12/67