

Confidential until

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Chas. Sylva

Tusk

The Kennedy assassination: Something rotten...

Almost a year ago, we published an article by Richard J. Whalen that raised some major questions about the assassination of President Kennedy and demonstrated fairly conclusively that the Warren Commission was wrong. At that time, we urged an official reopening of the investigation---not a spectacular public "trial" but a ~~quietly~~ quietly meticulous re-examination of the disputed evidence. ~~But~~ ~~we~~ We were not alone in this proposal. Life magazine, for one, expressed a similar view, and, indeed, any number of independent observers who have studied the case ~~with care~~ have come to the same conclusion.

The results have been virtually nil. It is astonishing, really, that charges of such gravity should ~~produce~~ produce so little effect. It is charged, to begin with, that a national commission headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, did a sloppy job, overlooked ~~important~~ or distorted important evidence, and came to the wrong conclusion. It is charged that Lee Harvey Oswald could not ^{possibly} have fired the single bullet 399 through both the President and Governor Connally. It is charged that ~~there~~ ^{there} may have been other assassins, and the implication is that ~~there was~~ ^{there was} a conspiracy to kill the president, ~~and~~ a conspiracy that succeeded not only in ~~the~~ committing the murder but in disguising itself so that most of the conspirators went free ---and are free to this day. The official answer to ~~all~~ all this is that there is no answer. The case is closed.

It is also astonishing that the only official to take any action should be a local district attorney in New Orleans, James Garrison, who claims that he has solved the case and expects to get several convictions based on his solution. Garrison's solution is that ~~a half dozen conspirators, some of~~

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there were ~~xxx~~ half-dozen conspirators, some of them ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{Cuban exiles} embittered by Kennedy's failure to overthrow Fidel Castro, some of them ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{simply} pathological malcontents, ~~xxx~~ Several skilled reporters, including James Phelan of the Post, have looked into Garrison's charges and found them unconvincing, and indeed ~~xxx~~ Garrison's "conspirators" include so many odd and confused characters that it seems hard to believe they could ever carry off a Q plot of such skill and audacity. On the other hand, Garrison's defenders, among whom ~~xxxxxx~~ the most vociferous is Garrison himself, argue that he is proceeding with a perfectly straightforward prosecution, that the indictments he asked have been ^{Voted} supported by a grand jury, and that he expects to prove his case in court. Perhaps. ~~xxxxxx~~ It is a reasonable defense, but we are unable to judge Garrison's case from a distance.

What is clear, however, is that Garrison has received little or no help from officials outside his own jurisdiction, and that any ~~xxxxxx~~ suspected conspirator who can avoid the grasp of the New Orleans authorities remains as free as before. In this issue of the Post, we bring the whole question up again. By publishing a major excerpt from Josiah Thompson's ~~xxx~~ new book, Six Seconds in Dallas, we declare once again that ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ we believe the Kennedy mystery has not been solved, and that the case ~~is~~ not closed.

It is painful, and even disgusting, to read the clinical details of the President's wounds. It is difficult, and sometimes tedious, to study such technicalities as the Zapruder film and the firing speed of a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. ~~xxx~~ Many readers--and perhaps many officials, too-- react to the whole subject by ~~xxxxxx~~ turning away and trying to avoid it.

(more to come)

It is easier to fall back on the ~~the~~ knowledge that the Warren Commission consisted of honorable men, and that they would not have done less than the best that could be done. Similarly, if J. Edgar Hoover and the Justice Department treat the case as closed, if the Kennedy family treats the case as closed, what ~~is the point of amateurs and outsiders,~~

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poking around in the ashes?

One returns, inevitably, to those clinical details, those bits of evidence ~~seen to have been~~ that ~~was~~ systematically misread or misinterpreted. For as Thompson analyzes and arrays them, they ~~cry out~~ cry out for the truth to be told and for the murderers to be punished. It has been said ~~too~~ too often that Americans cannot face the truth about themselves, about ~~their~~ their secret ~~fears~~ fears and hatreds, about the violence that sickens their whole society. ~~The reactions to the Kennedy assassination~~ ~~have always illustrated~~ have always illustrated the reactions to the Kennedy assassination ~~that self-evasion.~~ that self-evasion. From the ~~first~~ first moment, when we couldn't believe it had happened, to that bizarre moment ~~when Lee Oswald~~ ^{death} ~~was murdered~~ in front of the television cameras, when we were ~~relieved~~ in a sense relieved to be rid of him, to the present moment, when every suspicion is shushed up as a violation of the President's memory, we have struggled to avoid the ~~unavoidable~~ unavoidable question of what really happened and why. Is the question really too ugly to be raised, or are we too childish to face reality?