

TRANSCRIPT

Jim Bishop, interviewed by Mitchell Krause on NET Channel 13  
10 p.m. Friday November 22, 1968

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Bishop ... The Dallas Police Department did its best to solve the crime as quickly as possible, solely to try to erase the stain from the conscience. But then, you must bear in mind that all of us felt this sense of guilt, because as long as Mrs. Kennedy kept that dress on, and those stockings, with the blood of her husband and the brain of her husband, all day and all evening, she was inflicting that guilt on us, because all of us winced, we felt badly...

Krause ... Of course, since that day five years ago, we have seen the assassination of his brother and of Martin Luther King and many others less well-known. Did you feel at the time that this happening in Dallas was an indication, as so many have said, that we live in a sick society?

Bishop ... No, I do not believe that...I believe this is a very average, normal society...It has buried hostilities...I mean individuals, everyone has a hostility...these hostilities are akin to death and I think we will always have an assassin somewhere who will do what no other man dares to do, and that is, pull the trigger. We like to think that that happens in the banana republics, that down in Central America they shoot the chief of State and put another man in, have a coup d'etat. We think we're above that. My point is, we're not sick, but we're not above those banana republics...

Krause Are you saying that the act of an assassin is nothing but an extreme extension of feelings that all of us have? of hostility, of animosity?

Bishop Absolutely; absolutely. I have never heard of a normal human being who will not admit that at one phase or other of his life he felt like killing somebody. He didn't do it--but he felt like killing somebody. The difference between that man and Lee Harvey Oswald is that Lee Harvey Oswald felt it was the only way he could pull himself up from the gutter, the only way he could get out of being a human cipher, he was going to become a big digit all in one day. Bang!

Krause With those who have been assassinated--politically speaking, all of them were to the left of center, were liberals, in the nomenclature of the day, and some have speculated that this is more than a coincidence. Why...why is it?

Bishop Because the Right extremists are more prone to violence than the Left. If you follow the whole trend of Leftist politics, you will find that they seek ...peace, joy, work. These are their credo--not "kill." But the Rightists believe that anyone who is slightly to the Left of them is an arrant Communist or a Marxist and is out to create a revolution. And how do we eliminate that? We shoot 'em.

Krause You're saying that this is, in your view, a Rightist kind of action?

Bishop Absolutely.

Krause Do you accept any kind of conspiratorial connotation?

Bishop Oh, no; none whatever. I don't know of anybody in all of my research, and I read sixteen million five hundred thousand words before I started to interview people for this book---there wasn't one word to show that anyone trusted Lee Harvey Oswald. In the Soviet Union, in the United States, his wife, his own brother Edward (sic), no one, no one trusted him---not because of violence, because they regarded him as some sort of naive fool. He couldn't make good in any job he held, he was a failure. He was not a great lover to his wife, or a great father to his children. He could not provide. The best salary he ever made was a dollar twenty-five an hour.

Krause You then accept the Warren Commission finding that he was the guilty one, that there was no conspiracy...?

Bishop In toto, I accept their findings, the philosophy of their findings---not the individual parts. For instance, I don't believe that they can actually say what happened to that first bullet, what happened to the second one, what happened to the third one. Some parts of the story will always be argumentative (sic). But I do believe that the Warren Commission did a thorough job, as good a job as could be done within those time limits. It's very redundant...It took me two years to read those twenty-six volumes and annotate them, and, it's sloppily put together, but it is complete, and it is irrefutable.

Krause In your reconstruction of November 22, 1963, you found nothing new in terms of provocative unfinished business?

Bishop Oh, I found a lot that was new. Now, I would have to cull my memory at the moment to think of what I regard as new in this book, but let's start off here---that Lee Harvey Oswald didn't want to escape. No one else has mentioned this before; but a man who has as his entire earthly possessions one hundred and eighty-three dollars and eighty cents does not take what he calls curtain rods (and we know to be a rifle) in one hand, and take a hundred and seventy of those one hundred and eighty-three dollars and leave them in a jar for his wife. Because if you're going to even try to shoot somebody---suppose you miss? Whether you miss or not, you're going to need get-away money...Remember when he tried to shoot Major-General Edwin Walker he left a note for her, saying, here's where the insurance is, and if the press besieges you, here's what to say...He expected to be captured, in the General Walker thing. Now when he tried to assassinate Vice President Johnson in the Adolphus Hotel his wife locked him in the bathroom all day. Now here was the third time around.

Krause Do you think he expected to be shot, then...?

Bishop No, I don't think he expected to be shot. Bear in mind, he didn't even try to get away from the scene of the crime, he didn't try to get out of Dallas...

Krause Why do you think this was? that he didn't want to get away?

Bishop Because I think he wanted to be known as the assassin---not today, maybe not tomorrow, but in time, under his terms, his way of doing it, his drama. He would play it out to the hilt and then he would concede the point that he had done it...

Krause (question about James Earl Ray)

Bishop In the first place, I do not know that this man is guilty of anything and I don't want anyone to get the impression that I am prejudging it. But if he did do anything, I would regard him as a hired person.

Krause And Sirhan Sirhan?

Bishop I would regard that man as a spontaneous killer.