

THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

"A Minority Report"

VTR DATE: Tuesday
August 30, 1966

STUDIO I

TIME: 9 P.M.

HOST - NARRATOR

Jim Bishop

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Lane, attorney and author of "Rush To Judgement."

Harold Weisberg, author of "Whitewash" - The Report On The Warren Report.

Edward Jay Epstein, author of "Inquest" - The Warren Commission And The Establishment Of Turth.

Leo Sauvage, U.S. correspondent for "Le Figaro," and author of "The Oswald Affair," - An Examination Of The Contradictions And Omissions Of The Warren Report.

Penn Jones, editor of the "Midlothian Mirror," in Midlothian, Texas and author of "Forgive My Grief."

Jacob Cohen, writer and historian, author of "The Missing Documents" which appeared in the Nation Magazine.

JIM BISHOP -- BIOGRAPHY

Jim Bishop is the "King Features" syndicate columnist and author of "The Day Lincoln Was Shot," "The Day Christ Died," and "A Day in the Life of President Kennedy." He is currently writing a book called "The Day Kennedy Was Shot" and another book on President Johnson. Bishop began his writing career as a copy boy on The New York Daily News. Under Mark Hellinger's tutelage at the Daily Mirror, Bishop became a crack rewrite man and assistant. His current three-times-a-week column for "King Features" has "the surprise of O. Henry and the dash and descriptive quality of Damon Runyon." He is currently a year-round resident of Hallandale, Florida.

MARK LANE -- BIOGRAPHY

Mark Lane is a New York lawyer who has practiced law for more than fifteen years, almost exclusively as defense counsel involved in the trial of criminal cases. In 1959, Mr. Lane with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Senator Herbert Lehmann among others, founded the Reform Democratic Movement within the New York Democratic Party. With the support of the late President Kennedy, Senator Humphrey and others, Lane was elected to the New York Legislature in 1960, where he sponsored bills calling for the abolition of capital punishment (subsequently enacted).

Following the assassination of President Kennedy, Lane formed the Citizens Committee of Inquiry and began an investigation into the facts surrounding the assassination and the murder of Oswald. He personally travelled to Dallas five times. To make known his findings in the case, Lane twice testified before the Warren Commission and has lectured widely on the case throughout the United States and Europe.

HAROLD WEISBERG -- BIOGRAPHY

Prior to writing this, his first book, Harold Weisberg was a newspaper and magazine writer, a Senate investigator and an intelligence and political analyst.

His earlier specialties included cartels and economic and political warfare. During the early days of World War II, his personal investigations and writings were widely credited with laying the foundation for the taking over of enemy property and foreign funds controls. His work was of value to the Justice and Treasury Departments, which used the proofs he developed in legal and other actions against Nazis and Nazi fronts. He has been consulted by Congressional committees, including the War Preparedness Committee headed by then Senator Harry Truman. Prior to U.S. entry into the war, he also delivered his data to agents of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare.

These earlier writings won the admiration and praise of correspondents, Congressmen, cabinet officers and the White House. During the Kennedy administration, his "Geese for Peace" project got the Peace Corps its first good publicity "break". This was an effort, later repeated with the International Voluntary Services, to foster more basic agricultural help for the newly emerging lands. It attracted page one attention throughout the world.

With his wife and an assortment of domestic animals, including tamed wild geese, he lives on a small farm in Western Maryland. He is an expert on waterfowl, which he studies and raises as a hobby, and is presently working on several books about them.

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN --- BIOGRAPHY

Born in New York City in 1935, Edward Jay Epstein holds B. A. and M.A. degrees from Cornell University and is now in a doctoral program in American government at Harvard.

Mr. Epstein, a young scholar, began this book with the intention of writing a case study of the nature and activity of an extraordinary government commission. He has accomplished this task brilliantly. But in the course of interviewing nearly all members of the Commission, and many members of its staff, he discovered that the official version of the Kennedy assassination fails to contend with serious contradictions presented by the evidence. INQUEST clearly traces the process by which this official story came into being: it does not indulge in theoretical speculation about a deliberate suppression of crucial evidence. Mr. Epstein instead proposes an explanation based on the concept of "political truth": the Commission, sincerely convinced that the national interest would best be served by the termination of rumors, and predisposed by its make-up and by the pressure of time not to search more deeply, failed to answer some of the essential questions about the tragedy.

INQUEST includes hitherto unpublished government documents and illustrations. Although the author's revelations are startling, he nowhere makes unsupported claims; his style is cool and objective. A sober, new view of the way the Commission dealt with the central event of our recent history, this book is destined to induce

LEO SAUVAGE -- BIOGRAPHY

Leo Sauvage has been American correspondent of LE FIGARO for the past eighteen years. Author of "Autopsie du Castroisme," not yet published by this country, he has written for THE NEW LEADER, THE REPORTER, and COMMENTARY.

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JACOB COHEN -- BIOGRAPHY

Jacob Cohen, writer and historian, taught for three years at Yale and for five years at Brandeis, completing a book in defense of the Warren Commission. wrote an article in the Nation called "The Missing Documents"

FORMAT

1. Opening statement by Jim Bishop.

Invitations to 22 members of Warren Commission staff.
Name all members. Acknowledge by name those who replied
in negative.

2. Opening titles over 26 volumes of Warren Report.

3. Formal opening by Bishop.

Identify program, purpose, intent.
Listing of areas to be covered, i.e. the conclusions
of the Warren Commission.

This Commission was created to ascertain the facts relating to the preceding summary of events and to consider the important questions which they raised. The Commission has addressed itself to this task and has reached certain conclusions based on all the available evidence. No limitations have been placed on the Commission's inquiry; it has conducted its own investigation, and all Government agencies have fully discharged their responsibility to cooperate with the Commission in its investigation. These conclusions represent the reasoned judgment of all members of the Commission and are presented after an investigation which has satisfied the Commission that it has ascertained the truth concerning the assassination of President Kennedy to the extent that a prolonged and thorough search makes this possible.

1. The shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired from the sixth floor window at the southeast corner of the Texas School Book Depository. This determination is based upon the following:

(a) Witnesses at the scene of the assassination saw a rifle being fired from the sixth floor window of the Depository Building, and some witnesses saw a rifle in the window immediately after the shots were fired.

(b) The nearly whole bullet found on Governor Connally's stretcher at Parkland Memorial Hospital and the two bullet frag-

ments found in the front seat of the Presidential limousine were fired from the 6.5 millimeter Mannlicher-Carano rifle found on the sixth floor of the Depository Building to the exclusion of all other weapons.

(c) The three used cartridge cases found near the window on the sixth floor at the southeast corner of the building were fired from the same rifle which fired the above-described bullet and fragments, to the exclusion of all other weapons.

(d) The windshield in the Presidential limousine was struck by a bullet fragment on the inside surface of the glass, but was not penetrated.

(e) The nature of the bullet wounds suffered by President Kennedy and Governor Connally and the location of the car at the time of the shots establish that the bullets were fired from above and behind the Presidential limousine, striking the President and the Governor as follows:

(1) President Kennedy was first struck by a bullet which entered at the back of his neck and exited through the lower front portion of this neck, causing a wound which would not necessarily have been lethal. The President was struck a second time by a bullet which entered the right-rear portion of his head, causing a massive and fatal wound.

(2) Governor Connally was struck by a bullet which entered on the right side of his back and traveled downward through the right side of his chest, exiting below his right nipple. This bullet then passed through his right wrist and entered his left thigh where it caused a superficial wound.

(f) There is no credible evidence that the shots were fired from the Triple Underpass, ahead of the motocrade, or from any other location.

2. The weight of the evidence indicated that there were three shots fired.

3. Although it is not necessary to any essential findings of the Commission to determine just which shot hit Governor Connally, there is very persuasive evidence from the experts to indicate that the same bullet which pierced the President's throat also caused Governor Connally's wounds. However, Governor Connally's testimony and certain other factors have given rise to some difference of opinion as to this probability but there is no question in the mind of any member of the Commission that all the shots which caused the President's and Governor Connally's wounds were fired from the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository.

4. The shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald. This conclusion is based upon the following:

(a) The Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5 millimeter Italian rifle from which the shots were fired was owned by and in the possession of Oswald.

(b) Oswald carried this rifle into the Depository Building on the morning of November 22, 1963.

(c) Oswald, at the time of the assassination, was present at the window from which the shots were fired.

(d) Shortly after the assassination, the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle belonging to Oswald was found partially hidden between some cartons on the sixth floor and the improvised paper bag in

which Oswald brought the rifle to the Depository was found close by the window from which the shots were fired.

(e) Based on testimony of the experts and their analysis of films of the assassination, the Commission has concluded that a rifleman of Lee Harvey Oswald's capabilities could have fired the shots from the rifle used in the assassination within the elapsed time of the shooting. The Commission has concluded further that Oswald possessed the capability with a rifle which enabled him to commit the assassination.

(f) Oswald lied to the police after his arrest concerning important substantive matters.

(g) Oswald had attempted to kill Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker (Resigned, U.S. Army) on April 10, 1963, thereby demonstrating his disposition to take human life.

5. Oswald killed Dallas Police Patrolman J. D. Tippit approximately 45 minutes after the assassination. This conclusion upholds the finding that Oswald fired the shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally and is supported by the following:

(a) Two eyewitnesses saw the Tippit shooting and seven eyewitnesses heard the shots and saw the gunman leave the scene with revolver in hand. These nine eyewitnesses positively identified Lee Harvey Oswald as the man they saw.

(b) The cartridge cases found at the scene of the shooting were fired from the revolver in the possession of Oswald at the time of his arrest to the exclusion of all other weapons.

(c) The revolver in Oswald's possession at the time of his arrest was purchased by and belonged to Oswald.

(d) Oswald's jacket was found along the path of flight taken by the gunman as he fled from the scene of the killing.

6. Within 80 minutes of the assassination and 35 minutes of the Tippit killing Oswald resisted arrest at the theatre by attempting to shoot another Dallas police officer.

7. The Commission has reached the following conclusions concerning the killing of Oswald by Jack Ruby on November 24, 1963.

(a) Ruby entered the basement of the Dallas Police Department shortly after 11:17 a.m. and killed Lee Harvey Oswald at 11:21 a.m.

(b) Although the evidence on Ruby's means of entry is not conclusive, the weight of the evidence indicated that he walked down the ramp leading from Main Street to the basement of the police department.

(c) There is no evidence to support the rumor that Ruby may have been assisted by any members of the Dallas Police Department in the killing of Oswald.

(d) The Dallas Police Department's decision to transfer Oswald to the county jail in full public view was unsound. The arrangements made by the police department on Sunday morning only a few hours before the attempted transfer, were inadequate. Of critical importance was the fact that news media representatives and others were not excluded from the basement even after the police were notified of threats to Oswald's life. These deficiencies contributed to the death of Lee Harvey Oswald.

8. The Commission has found no evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate President Kennedy. The reasons for this conclusion are:

(a) The Commission has found no evidence that anyone assisted

connection it has thoroughly investigated, among other factors, the circumstances surrounding the planning of the motorcade route through Dallas, the hiring of Oswald by the Texas School Book Depository Co. on October 15, 1963, the method by which the rifle was brought into the building, the placing of cartons of books at the window, Oswald's escape from the building, and the testimony of eyewitnesses to the shooting.

(b) The Commission has found no evidence that Oswald was involved with any person or group in a conspiracy to assassinate the President, although it has thoroughly investigated, in addition to other possible leads, all facets of Oswald's association, finances, and personal habits, particularly during the period following his return from the Soviet Union in June 1962.

(c) The Commission has found no evidence to show that Oswald was employed, persuaded, or encouraged by any foreign government to assassinate President Kennedy or that he was an agent of any foreign government, although the Commission has reviewed the circumstances surrounding Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union, his life there from October of 1959 to June of 1962 so far as it can be reconstructed, his known contacts with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and his visits to the Cuban and Soviet Embassies in Mexico City during his trip to Mexico from September 26 to October 3, 1963, and his known contacts with the Soviet Embassy in the United States.

(d) The Commission has explored all attempts of Oswald to identify himself with various political groups, including the Communist Party, U.S.A., the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and the Socialist Workers Party, and has been unable to find any evi-

subsequent assassination of the President.

(e) All of the evidence before the Commission established that there was nothing to support the speculation that Oswald was an agent, employee, or informant of the FBI, the CIA, or any other governmental agency. It has thoroughly investigated Oswald's relationships prior to the assassination with all agencies of the U.S. Government. All contacts with Oswald by any of these agencies were made in the regular exercise of their different responsibilities.

(f) No direct or indirect relationship between Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby has been discovered by the Commission, nor has it been able to find any credible evidence that either knew the other, although a thorough investigation was made of the many rumors and speculation of such a relationship.

(g) The Commission has found no evidence that Jack Ruby acted with any other person in the killing of Lee Harvey Oswald.

(h) After careful investigation the Commission has found no credible evidence either that Ruby and Officer Tippit, who was killed by Oswald, knew each other or that Oswald and Tippit knew each other.

Because of the difficulty of proving negatives to a certainty the possibility of others being involved with either Oswald or Ruby cannot be established categorically, but if there is any such evidence it has been beyond the reach of all the investigative agencies and resources of the United States and has not come to the attention of this Commission.

9. In its entire investigation the Commission has found no evidence of conspiracy, subversion, or disloyalty to the U.S. Government by

10. On the basis of the evidence before the Commission it concludes that Oswald acted alone. Therefore, to determine the motives for the assassination of President Kennedy, one must look to the assassin himself. Clues to Oswald's motives can be found in his family history, his education or lack of it, his acts, his writings, and the recollections of those who had close contacts with him throughout his life. The Commission has presented with this report all of the background information bearing on motivation which it could discover. Thus, others may study Lee Oswald's life and arrive at their own conclusions as to his possible motives.

The Commission could not make any definitive determination of Oswald's motives. It has endeavored to isolate factors which contributed to his character and which might have influenced his decision to assassinate President Kennedy. These factors were:

(a) His deep-rooted resentment of all authority which was expressed in a hostility toward every society in which he lived:

(b) His inability to enter into meaningful relationships with people, and a continuous pattern of rejecting his environment in favor of new surroundings:

(c) His urge to try to find a place in history and despair at times over failures in his various undertakings:

(d) His capacity for violence as evidenced by his attempt to kill General Walker:

(e) His avowed commitment to Marxism and communism, as he understood the terms and developed his own interpretation of them: this was expressed by his antagonism toward the United States, by his defection to the Soviet Union, by his failure to be reconciled with life in the United States even after his disenchant-

ment with the Soviet Union, and by his efforts, though frustrated,
to go to Cuba.

Each of these contributed to his capacity to risk all in cruel and
irresponsible actions.

Areas of speculation, doubt, and rumor:

- A. The multi-Oswald theory.
- B. The eye witnesses
- C. The missing autopsy photos and X-rays.
- D. The people who knew too much.
- E. The conspiracy.
- F. Ruby.
- G. Ruby-Oswald-Tippitt.

- 4. Introduction of the participants and opening statements from each.

- t. Examination of each of the Commission's conclusions.
Examination of each of the areas of speculation, doubt, and rumor.
(via personal research, re-enactments in studio, still photos, film, videotapes from Channel 5 archives of the "Four Days").

- 6. Each participant assigned to his particular areas of interest and expertise.

- 7. Concluding comments and suggestions.