

DALLAS REVISITED

THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION -- FINANCING AND EXECUTION

by Andrei Moscovit

Synopsis

The book will contain about 120,000 words

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE: THE OSWALD MURDER

- Chapter 1: November 24, 1963. Dallas, Texas.
- Chapter 2: Impulsive Avenger or Conspirator?
- Chapter 3: The Word of the Law or Common Sense.
- Chapter 4: How Did Ruby Enter the Garage? (The Official Version)
- Chapter 5: How Did Ruby Enter the Garage? (The Skeptic's Version)
- Chapter 6: A Portrait of an Average Gangster.
- Chapter 7: Matters Cuban.
- Chapter 8: The Last Month of Freedom.
- Chapter 9: Ruby on Friday, November 22, 1963.
- Chapter 10: Ruby on Saturday, November 23, 1963.
- Chapter 11: The Investigation.
- Chapter 12: The Syndicate's Stamp.

PART TWO: OFFICER TIPPIT'S MURDER

- Chapter 13: The Officer Meets his Murderer.
- Chapter 14: Unheard Witness, Rejected Evidence.
- Chapter 15: How could it Have Happened.
- Chapter 16: The Dallas Police Covers its Tracks.
- Chapter 17: Two Policemen in the Vicinity of the Third One's Murder.
- Chapter 18: The Witness With the Two Empty Shells.
- Chapter 19: Where Did Oswald Spend his last Half Hour of Freedom.

PART THREE: THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

- Chapter 20: The Preparations.
- Chapter 21: The Preceding Seven Weeks in Dallas.
- Chapter 22: November 22, 1963. Dallas.
- Chapter 23: Wounds and Bullets.
- Chapter 24: Recreation of the Shooting.
- Chapter 25: Recreation of a Life (Oswald as an Active Marionette)
- Chapter 26: The Trail of Blood (The Death of the Witnesses)
- Chapter 27: Characters on the Sidelines. (De Mohrenschildt and Brandig)
- Chapter 28: Interrupted Lines of Investigation.

PART FOUR: THE SUSPECTS

- Chapter 29: Why Did the Investigation Not Look for the Real Murderers. (Motives of Johnson, Warren, Hoover, the press, etc)
- Chapter 30: Suspects From Government Agencies.
- Chapter 31: Suspects From The Syndicate.
- Chapter 32: Castro and Khrushchev.
- Chapter 33: How to Find the Murderers.

Dozens of excellent books criticizing the Report of the Warren Commission have been published during the last twenty years. Each presents a new and convincing version of the various elements of the tragedy, based on a new analysis of the existing evidence. However, just as a bad novel may have many more readers than brilliant articles which explain its faults, the Report continues to be regarded as the most important study on the Kennedy assassination. No wonder, for it is the only chronological narration of the events. The other narratives written by William Manchester (*The Death of a President*, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1967), James Bishop (*The Day Kennedy Was Shot*, N.Y., Funk and Wagnalis, 1968), and David W. Belin (*November 22, You are the Jury*, N.Y., Qadrangle, 1973) are mere recapitulations of the Warren Commission Report. The Stokes Committee Report (House of Representatives. Select Committee on Assassinations. *Report of the Select Committee on Assassinations*. Washington D.C., U.S. GPO, 1979), an official document, controlled in its tone and most careful in its choice of words, remained inaccessible to most readers. David Lifton (*Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of JFK*. N.Y., Macmillan, 1980) and Antony Summers (*Conspiracy*, N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1980) books are well documented and fascinating in their own way. However, they are centered around a sensationalist idea which places the blame on the nameless and faceless conspirators within government circles, and rejects all testimony refuting their thesis.

Moscovit approaches the task differently. It is as if he has

created a new investigative commission, including the best critics of the Warren Commission Report: Robert Blakey, Edward Epstein, Joachim Joesten, Penn Jones, Seth Kantor, Michael Kurtz, Mark Lane, Sylvia Meagher, Leo Sauvage, Peter Dale Scott, David Scheim, Gary Shaw, and Harold Weisberg. He writes a new "report" based on the "findings" of his imaginary commission, organizing it according to his own concepts and conclusions.

In his investigation Moscovit adheres to two main principles.

First: He begins with the assumption that the conspirators had planned their actions carefully and purposefully. Therefore he refuses to accept any version that makes them look inane. For example, there is a theory which suggests that Oswald had a double, and that the conspirators included him in the scheme to confuse the investigators. Had this been the case then nothing would have been easier than to have the double use Oswald's name to order a high powered rifle through the mail, instead of a pitiful Italian carbine. The ammunition could have been bought in a store and Oswald's name used on the receipt. Then, the rifle and some empty shells could have been planted by the window on the sixth floor of the Book Depository. The double would have portrayed a lone psychopath instead of appearing in the company of suspicious Latin Americans, and bragging about the considerable sums of money expected to come his way. These were the actions of the true Oswald.

The second principle: Rejection of all references to testimony given by dubious witnesses even in those instances

where they were plausible. Many of the critics of the Warren Commission Report followed suit in relying on the testimony of people who were obviously not trustworthy. Among those people were those who took part in the crimes (Oswald, Ruby), as well as their close friends and relatives (Marina Oswald, Ruth Paine, Ruby's sister Eva Grant, his roommate George. Senator), characters with shady pasts and indeterminate sources of income (George De Mohrenschildt, Ralph Paul), and individuals with self contradictory testimonies (Mary Bledsoe, Helen Markham), and finally, those who were obviously lying (Domingo Benavides, Sergeant Kenneth Croy, Officer Harry Olsen, and others.) It is only the actions of these people that have been taken into account, not their words.

The book consists of four parts:

- 1) The Oswald Murder.
- 2) The Murder of Officer Tippit.
- 3) The Assassination of President Kennedy.
- 4) The Suspects.

In the first part of the book the author relies heavily upon the investigations of Seth Kantor (Who Was Jack Ruby?, N.Y., Everest House, 1978), Robert Blakey and Richard N. Billings (The Plot to Kill the President, Times Books, N.Y. 1981), and David E. Scheim (Contract on America, Argyle Press, Maryland 1983). Moscovit's disagreements with these authors are inconsequential. For instance, contrary to Kantor, Moscovit contends that on the morning of November 24th, 1963 Ruby was either in or around the

Police Headquarters and did not go to the post office to send a money order at 1:20 pm. The money, he contends, was wired by an accomplice, and the time-stamped receipt given to Ruby was an attempt to create an alibi for him, in case he managed to slip away in the confusion. Contrary to Robert Blakey, Moscovit believes that Ruby remained in contact with Castro's Cubans even after the revolution of 1959. Instead of rifles it was expensive electronic surveillance equipment that was being smuggled. Finally, contrary to David Scheim, the author does not believe that the Mafia was some kind of centralized organization, capable of making the decision to assassinate the President and carry it through. The risk would have been tremendous, while the potential returns -- marginal, at best. The assassination of public officials is not part of the syndicate's tradition, for such actions usually result in a great flurry of activities on the part of the police and the FBI. This in turn leads to the closing down of various illegal businesses and therefore to the decrease in profits. There does not seem to be much doubt, however, that the team of professional assassins was supplied by the syndicate.

In the second part (**The Killing of Officer Tippit**) Moscovit is left to rely upon his own investigation. Although an entire book dedicated to this subject has yet to be published, there are some interesting ideas expressed in the books of Gary J. Shaw, Larry R. Harris (**Cover-Up**, Self-published, TX, 1976), and Penn Jones (**Forgive My Grief**, 4 vols., Midlothian, TX 1966-74). Moscovit's theory is that Tippit and two other officers, all friends of Jack Ruby, planned "stage" Oswald's arrest and his subsequent murder, following the assassination of the President.

The plan failed and Ruby had to risk his own life to correct the mistakes of his accomplices. The author recreates this piece of the puzzle by rearranging previously known facts and introducing new ones.

In his analysis of the assassination (Third Part) Moscovit relies predominantly on the investigations of Josiah Thompson (*Six Seconds in Dallas*, N.Y. Bernard Geis. 1967), Sylvia Meagher (*Accessories After the Fact*, Bobbs-Merrill, N.Y 1967), Michael L. Kurtz (*Crime of the Century*, The University of Tennessee Press, 1982), and the Stokes Committee Report. Moscovit's interpretation differs from all these investigations: he proves that the wound in the President's back was an exit wound, inflicted by the first bullet which entered through the throat. Moscovit agrees that Oswald was set up, but not that he was completely uninvolved in the crime. The conspirators could manipulate him so successfully only if he believed himself to be an equal, if not central, participant in the conspiracy. Therefore, a great deal of attention is paid to Oswald's environment, especially, to his contacts with the Cubans and the Soviets. The author uses information received from both Soviet emigres who knew Oswald in Minsk, and official Soviet propaganda which tried to blame the assassination on financial circles in the US.

The main conclusions of the "Moscovit Commission Report."

1) Lee Harvey Oswald did not kill President Kennedy, because there were no entry wounds in the President's body which could have been inflicted from behind.

2) The evidence against Oswald is quite convincing in both

the Tippit murder and the attempted assassination of Governor Connally.

3) President Kennedy was assassinated by a group of hired professional assassins who had Mafia connections.

4) Jack Ruby was a representative of the Mafia, who was in charge of that part of the conspiracy responsible for presenting Oswald as the lone assassin. Since his accomplices were unable to dispose of Oswald immediately after the assassination, two days later, in front of the whole world Ruby was forced to do the job himself. He had to protect himself from Oswald's potential accusations, as well as the vengeance of the co-conspirators.

5) It remains unclear who hired the assassins. There are number of suspects: unknown conspirators from within US government circles (the FBI, the CIA, the Secret Service, the Police); the Mafia boss in New Orleans Carlos Marcello; the Mafia boss in Florida Santos Traffikante; the extreme right; Fidel Castro; Nikita Khrushchev.

The last part of the book is dedicated to the analysis of the existing evidence which incriminates the above mentioned suspects.

However, the first question is: how was the cover-up of the truth about the assassination possible? Moscovit's answer is that the investigation was headed by three of the most powerful men in the country each of whom had different reasons for making Oswald seem to be the only assassin.

To Lyndon Johnson it was a question of power. Had it come to light that under a democratic administration the country was in such a state that a conspiracy to kill the President could be

carried out and the perpetrators left unpunished, Johnson would have had no chance of being elected in 1964. (That is why he rushed the investigation insisting that the Report be published before the elections.)

It is well known that at first Justice Warren refused to participate in the investigation. But President Johnson called on his patriotism stating that the fate of the country was in the Justice's hands. "The President said the crisis was so grave it might lead to war -- even nuclear war. 'As your Commander-in-chief, I'm ordering you back into service.'" (From *Inside the Warren Court*, by Bernard Schwartz, Doubleday, N.Y. 1983. p.215.) This gives away the President's conviction that the assassination was the work of a foreign intelligence organization. Having found out that the CIA had planned the assassination of Castro, Warren considered it his duty to save the country from war and shame. When, during the questioning of Jack Ruby, Gerald Ford tried to pursue the "Cuban connection," Warren interrupted him several times.

J. Edgar Hoover had given thirty years of his life to the FBI. In trying to elevate his organization to a legendary status and pronouncing it to be all knowing, he stated that organized crime was a myth created by foreign propaganda. Were he to admit that he and his all knowing bureau had missed a conspiracy of such proportions his life's work would be for nought. Two weeks after the assassination the FBI slapped together a four volume report which served as a blueprint for the Warren Report.

All the proceedings took place behind closed doors, so the

only sources of information about the investigation for the press were the Warren Commission itself and the FBI. When a journalist has such limited access to information he can not afford the luxury of a critical approach -- he must accept what he is given. That is why at the time dozens of newspapers, magazines, and TV stations gradually began to support the official version. Later the support continued in part to protect their reputations. And so the results of the Stokes investigation of 1979, which finally admitted that the President was assassinated as a result of a conspiracy, did not get nearly the media coverage it deserved. Ordinary anchormen, in reference to a recent fire in the Texas Book Depository, stated that it occurred in the "building from which Oswald fired the fatal shots at the President," as if it was a well established fact. To speak out against the official version would have meant attacking very important personalities such as TV ancormen Walter Cronkite, Dan Rather, David Susskind, Senator Arlen Specter, former President Gerald Ford, etc.

The Stokes Committee Report stated that it could establish neither the size of the conspiracy nor the identity of its participants. Moscovit divides all the existing evidence to support three separate theories:

- a) the conspirators as the government officials.
- b) the conspirators as Mafia bosses
- c) the conspirators as foreign agents.

In his investigation of the three versions equal time is given to both the "prosecution" and the "defense" as presented in the books of Harold Weisberg (Oswald in New Orleans, N.Y. Canyon, 1967), Antony Summers, David Lifton, George Michael Evica (And We

Are All Mortal, West Hartford, Conn., Univ. of Hartford, 1978), Edward Epstein, Peter Noyes (Legacy of Doubt, N.Y.:Pinnacle, 1973), David Scheim, Gary Shaw, and Michael Eddowes (November 22: How They Killed Kennedy, London, Spearman, 1976). The author, however, does not hide his conviction that at the time there were only two men in the world who had the means and could have remained unpunished: Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev.

To Castro Kennedy was the president plotting the invasion of his country (First attempt -- the landing in the Bay of Pigs in 1961) planning his assassination (he could not have known that the CIA was making the plans without the President's knowledge.) To Khrushchev John Kennedy was the president who caused his humiliating retreat in West Berlin in 1961 and an even more humiliating one in Cuba in 1962. The assassination of a political opponent must have seemed perfectly normal to Khrushchev. A trusty comrade-in-arms of Stalin he was a witness and a participant in mass killings within the USSR, and the numerous hunts for the opponents and defectors abroad. During Stalin's rule dozens of defectors were murdered in the West. Among the victims were Trotsky, Ukrainian nationalist leaders Bendera and Rebet. The assassination of Yugoslavian Premier Tito was in the plans. Even during Khrushchev's rule, defector Stashinsky admitted that he was sent to the West by the KGB, section #13 with the assignment to kill. (Note that Oswald was meeting with the head of KGB's section #13 Kostikov in the Soviet embassy in Mexico City.) The recent assassination attempt on the Pope shows that a) Moscow has no intention of abandoning assassination as a method, b)the

Soviets now prefer to employ their vassals (Cubans, Bulgarians) for these purposes. The money allotted for these projects is under no control and can be given in the form of an increase in foreign aid to any given country. (There is an opinion that Cuba costs the USSR one million dollars a day; with that kind of financing an extra 10 million would not attract any undue attention.)

Immediately following the assassination of President Kennedy there were two clumsy attempts made to take suspicion away from the Soviet Union: a booklet was rushed into print blaming America's big business for the assassination and a false defector Yuri Nosenko was sent, whose sole purpose was to convince Americans that Oswald was not a Soviet agent. Both attempts were so badly planned that any observer familiar with the Soviet system from within could see that they could have been issued only by highly placed officials. They can demand their orders to be executed "at any cost," without taking into account the real capabilities of their services.

While Moscovit makes no secret that in his opinion Castro and Khrushchev, remain the main suspects, he concludes his book by asking readers to become the "jury" and send the publishers their "verdict" -- an answer to the question: who among the suspects seems to be the most likely perpetrator.

As an appendix, Moscovit presents a list of people who, if the investigation is restarted could be called as key witnesses.

PART ONE

THE OSWALD MURDER

CHAPTER ONE: NOVEMBER 24, 1963. MORNING. DALLAS, TEXAS

That morning Dallas police chief Jesse Curry came to work at 8:30 am. The first thing he saw in the basement garage of the Police Headquarters was a large TV camera. (1) It blocked the entrance to the jail office; its thick cables stretched outside along the Commerce Street ramp. Curry called lieutenant Wiggins and told him to move the camera out of the way.

"Now if the news media come down here and want in put them over behind the rail." (2)

He gave a few more orders and went up to the third floor. Lights and cameras were waiting for him there as well. Although Curry himself had announced a day earlier that Oswald would not be transferred to the county jail any earlier than 10:00 am, (3) the hallways were already filled with reporters, who were besetting the policemen with questions and trying to peek into the constantly opening office doors. (4) So far there were only thirty of them, but how many would crowd in within the next hour? (5) What if there were as many as there had been on the evening of the 22nd. Captain Fritz had to have officers escorting him every time he tried to make his way from his office to his boss'. (6)

"A mob, an absolute mob," mumbled Fritz, trying to get away from the attacking reporters, making his way through the forest of microphones aimed at him from all directions.

In those few days reporters had become a genuine curse for the police. But what was to be done? The day before, when Curry and his men were making plans for Oswald's transfer, someone suggested doing it quietly at night, and leaving the press empty-

handed. (7) Nobody supported the idea.(8) The Dallas police were already being accused of negligence, in protecting the president. The last thing they needed was to antagonize the press, who could start screaming that the prisoner was being tortured for information, or that he was being hidden from the public lest he disclose his ties with the police, or some other nonsense. (9)

After all, was it not Curry himself who in the beginning of the year had issued the general order that compelled every officer to cooperate with the press in every way possible?

"...as a Department we deal with public affairs. It is the right of the public to know about these affairs... Implied in the General Order is a prohibition the Officer to improperly attempt to interfere with the news media representative, who is functioning in his capacity as such. Such activity on the part of any Police Officer is regarded by the press as an infringement of rights, and the Department shares this view." (10)

Some of the officers came in and reported to the chief that two phone calls threatening Oswald had been received during the night, one at the sheriff's office and one at the FBI. (11) The anonymous callers warned that some hundred people, "neither right nor left wing," (12) were determined to attack the police escort and "kill the man who killed the president" (13) Consequently the decision was reached to transport the prisoner in an armored truck. Since the police did not have one, a call was made to the Armor Motor Service. (14) The next step was to discuss the safest route from the police station to the county jail. Although the distance was only about a mile, in a case of this importance it behooved them to work out every detail.

Meanwhile downstairs, the garage was being prepared. Anyone who was not directly involved, including the press and

maintenance workers, was ordered out. (15) Officers under the command of Captain Talbert, Lieutenant Pierce, and Sergeant Dean were searching the cars parked in the garage, locking the doors, and checking the elevator shafts. They also checked the storage rooms, the rafters, the tops of air-conditioning ducts, and the stairwells. Guards were posted at both exits--the South auto ramp to Commerce Street, and the North ramp to Main Street. They were ordered not to let anybody in except the police and reporters with proper ID cards. In the course of the search nothing suspicious was discovered, except for a small-caliber rifle left in the back seat of a police car.(16)

At 9:45 am Captain Talbert dispatched a dozen more officers to Sergeant Dean, to patrol all the intersections along the proposed route of the armored truck. The Sergeant directed each officer to his post, after ordering under no circumstances to disclose the route to be taken by the armored truck. The officers got into their cars and, one after another, left the garage through the South ramp.(17)

Oswald's interrogation continued into the morning, of the very day of the planned transfer. By 10:00 am it was still going on. The reporters were getting restless. To keep them occupied Chief Curry announced that the prisoner would be transported in an armored truck, and that they would be allowed to take pictures in the garage. (18) They responded by rushing for the stairs and the elevators. A few stayed behind between Captain Fritz's office and the elevator to await their prey.

Around eleven o'clock Curry made a phone call to the county

jail to tell the sheriff that everything was ready.

"...Okay, bring him in..."

"I thought you were coming after him..."

"Either way, I'll come after him or you can bring him to me"

"...Okay, we'll bring him to you."(19)

The armored truck drove up to the South ramp at 11:07 am. (20)The driver cautiously backed it up. As it turned out the ceiling was too low. A few more inches and the top of the truck scraped the concrete. Then the truck stopped, blocking the exit.(21) Inspector Batchelor and Sergeant Dean climbed inside to check all of the compartments. (22) Photographers were standing on their tiptoes to take pictures. The police could barely keep them in their designated area--behind the railings, along the ramps. The cameramen by the office in the back of the garage, as well as those in the street, having as yet nothing to do, fidgeted while taking shots of the gathering crowd. Yet another camera was brought down in the elevator from the third floor and was hurriedly rolled through the double doors into the garage (23). As the tripod on which it was positioned was being moved it swayed ominously high above people's heads. Officer Lowery stepped out of the line to help the camera crew steady the shaky contraption. (24)

Upstairs, in Captain Fritz's office, the interrogation was coming to an end. (25) Obviously the FBI, the Secret Service, and the Captain himself had hundreds more questions to ask Oswald, but that had to wait. They were late in transporting him already.

Chief Curry stepped into the office to announce that the truck had arrived and that all the precautions had been taken.

(25)

"What truck? An armored money wagon? That's the first time I hear about it." (26)

Captain Fritz was extremely worried. He explained his concerns to the Chief. First, the trucks were clumsy and awkward. In case of an attack one could easily get stuck at an intersection. Secondly, the driver would not be one of their men, but someone without a security clearance. (27) Could he be trusted? Besides, a truck like that could be seen from afar, it was too noticeable.

The Chief had to agree with the Captain's arguments. After a short discussion it was decided that the prisoner would be taken in an ordinary police car and that the truck would be used as a decoy. (28) The car with Oswald would go last, then leave the motorcade and take a shortcut to the jail. (29) Let the conspirators, if they exist, attack an empty truck.

Lieutenant Pierce was ordered to lead the motorcade. (30) He swiftly went downstairs, made his way through the crowd of reporters, called two officers, and proceeded with them to the car. (31) Since the armored truck was still blocking the South exit, the men decided to exit through the North ramp, (it was generally used as an entrance only), circle the block, and assume their position in front of the truck.

A number of reporters impatiently pushed up to the very doors of the office, thereby blocking the way. One of the officers had to get out of the car to talk them into stepping aside. Officer Vaughn, who was guarding the entrance above, stepped aside, looked to the left along Main Street, and having

made sure it was free of traffic, signaled. (32) The patrol car with Lieutenant Pierce and two other officers drove out onto the street and turned left. The clock read 11:20. (33)

Meanwhile, Oswald, still in Captain Fritz's office, was putting on a sweater, which was brought to him. Chief Curry stepped in for one last time to ask if they were ready.

"When the security downstairs is ready, we are ready."

"The lights have been moved back and the people have been moved back in the basement, back of the rail, and the other people have been moved across the street." (34)

On the way to the elevator the Chief was called to the phone. The Mayor was on the line. He wanted to know how things were developing and how soon the prisoner would be delivered to the county jail. The Chief found it necessary to go into details. The conversation became involved and Curry never made it to the garage. (35)

Captain Fritz told one of the detectives to handcuff himself to Oswald. (36) In the hallway they were greeted by camera flashes. There were almost no familiar faces in the crowd of reporters and photographers. (37) The sensational murder had drew them from all over the country. There were also some foreigners. How were the guards to check the authenticity of every ID card?

Stepping over the cables, and weaving between the spotlights, Captain Fritz led the detectives with Oswald in the middle, to the elevator. (38) They were taken downstairs to the jail office. Behind the windows separating the office and the hallway the cameras immediately sprang to life. (39)

"How is it out there?"- asked Fritz. "Everything is taken care of, Captain, don't worry,"-said one of the officers. "I

think there are about seventy policemen in the garage now. Every corner is guarded."

Captain Fritz was the first one out. (40) He was immediately blinded by the spotlights.

"Here he comes," somebody shouted. The waiting crowd moved closer. The police car that was backing up towards the prisoner had to slow down. The breaks squealed. Captain Fritz was only a few feet away and was already reaching for the back door. (41)The reporters kept pushing forward, and the passage between the two lines of policemen was getting more and more narrow.

At that moment a dark silhouette swiftly slipped between the police and the moving car. Millions of TV viewers saw on their screens a man wearing a hat, his arm extended. Then they heard a shot.

Oswald's hands fell to his stomach as he began to collapse. The police immediately rushed the man in the hat wrestled him to the ground and took away his gun. Sergeant Dean jumped over the trunk of the car and threw himself onto the pile of bodies. (42)The man on the floor wheezed: "You all know me. I am Jack Ruby." (43)

One of the cameras recorded not only the central scene, but also the clock on the wall. It read 11:21. (44)

CHAPTER TWO: IMPULSIVE AVENGER OR CONSPIRATOR?

Two hours later Oswald died from a stomach wound in Parkland hospital. (1) The same hospital where President Kennedy died from his wounds two days earlier.

The fact that the alleged assassin managed to outlive his victim by two days was purely accidental. Had the officers, who arrested Oswald in the movie theatre Texas an hour after the assassination, not displayed the needed self restraint and shot him on the spot upon seeing a gun in his hand, the tragedy in Dallas would have lost its murder mystery--air. (2) All of the evidence would have incriminated a lone madman, infected by communist ideas, who bought a telescopic rifle through the mail, climbed to the sixth floor of a Book Depository, and took three shots at the president who was driving by below. The madman was identified by the police, an arrest was attempted, in the course of which he drew a weapon and was shot on the spot. That would have been it. No murder mystery. Nothing unclear.

Possibly someone would have criticized the Dallas police for negligence. But what can one expect? There is no way to guarantee a president's safety in a free country where anyone can by a telescopic rifle.

Ruby's shot changed everything.

Millions of people all over the world were asking themselves this simple question: why would a proprietor of a night club, a man with a rather shady past and close ties to the underworld attempt a murder where he had no chance of escape, and which could result in the death penalty or a life sentence? Another

madman? But how could a madman manage to penetrate a cordon of seventy policemen at that precise moment, two steps away from the victim?

One answer surfaced relentlessly: a conspiracy.

Perhaps a complex one that involved many links.

Perhaps it involved the police.

Perhaps it involved the mafia.

Perhaps Moscow and Havana were also involved.

Perhaps a great deal of money was spent. So much, in fact, that it was possible to find a "kamikaze" and through him destroy a dangerous witness--Oswald.

The general confusion was so great that the matter could not simply be left in the hands of the Texas authorities. On November 29, 1963 Lyndon B. Johnson, who assumed the duties of the President, issued executive order #11130 appointing a special commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren to undertake the investigation. (3) The commission included two senators, (a Democrat and a Republican) two congressmen, one of whom was the future President Gerald Ford, former director of the CIA Allen Dulles, and former President of the International Bank John Mccloy. (4) The staff of the commission consisted of two dozen experienced lawyers and government officials. They were supported by dozens of clerks, administrators, and various experts. The FBI, the Secret Service, and the CIA, were ordered to cooperate with the Commission in every way, to answer any questions, and to supply it with the necessary information. The Commission was authorized to subpoena any witness for questioning. Hundreds of people testified under oath, from average policemen to such

important figures as the Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, CIA Director John McCone, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, and Secret Service Chief James J. Rowley. (5)

The Warren Commission worked for ten months. The results of the investigation were collected in an 800 page report which was presented to President Johnson on September 24, 1964. (6) Testimonies of 552 witnesses and other materials and documents were published as a 26 volume appendix. (7) However it became known that part of the documents were not included in the appendix, but were placed in the National Archives to be kept in secret for 75 years. (8)

The main conclusions of the Warren Commission were basically as follows:

1) The shots that killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald from a sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository.

2) 45 minutes after the assassination of the President Oswald, using a handgun, shot and killed officer Tippit, who was trying to detain him.

3) Motives for the assassination were a deeply rooted hatred of authority figures, Marxist-Communist ideas which were feeding his dissatisfaction with the policies and political structure of the United States, the vain desire to find a place in history at any cost, and thus compensate for his sense of inferiority.

4) Oswald operated alone. No evidence in support of a conspiracy theory was found.

5) Jack Ruby killed Oswald two days later in a Dallas police station as a result of an emotional outburst; desiring to avenge the dearly beloved President.

6) The information, evidence, and testimony on hand do not allow for the conclusion that Ruby and Oswald had known each other or that they were links in a large conspiracy. (9)

The publication of the report received mixed reactions.

On one hand the news that this terrible crime has been investigated and solved, and that the guilty (those who were alive) were being handed over into the hands of justice, and that law and order had been restored calmed the minds. It also restored people's trust in their country, law, government institutions, and elected officials. It seems that the publication of the report a month and a half before the 1964 presidential elections, played a significant role in Lyndon Johnson's overwhelming victory over Barry Goldwater--61% to 38.5%.

(10) The very scope of the investigation, and the prestige of those who signed the report induced trust. The media, with a few exceptions, expressed its full support for and agreement with the conclusions of the Warren Commission.

On the other hand, upon careful reading many things in the report seemed shaky, haphazardly thrown together. Skepticism was not openly expressed at first. However even during the first months it was strong. A poll taken in October of 1964 showed that 31% of the population did not believe that Oswald had operated alone. (11) In a few years that figure would double.

Books and articles criticizing the Report began to appear. The authors of these critical works did not have the benefit of

such lengthy investigation as did the Warren Commission. But now they could use the testimony and other documents included in the 26 volume appendix. Careful reading allowed them to weigh the existing evidence, analyze the information, and uncover weaknesses in the reasoning on which the Commission had based its conclusions.

Mark Lane's book **Rush to Judgment** achieved great popularity. After being rejected by a dozen publishing houses, it reached the top of the bestseller list immediately upon its first publication in the Fall of 1966, and maintained that spot for almost six months. (12) Oswald's mother, Marguerite, asked Lane to represent the interests of her late son. Lane believed that Oswald's guilt was not sufficiently proved and that the Commission believed him to be the lone assassin before they started the investigation. Lane also contended and showed in the interrogation reports that the Commission either rejected, or distorted, or doubted any testimony contradicting this version and pointing to the possibility of other parties participating in the assassination. The lines of investigation that could have lead to a possible discovery of Oswald's or Ruby's accomplices were artificially severed.

Another independent author, Edward Epstein, published a book, **Inquest** in the same year. His conclusions were that the Commission was under great political pressure from various groups, and that this pressure lead to the distortion of truth.

Former Investigator for the Senate Commission, Harold Weisberg entitled his work **Whitewash**. He investigated the federal

institutions' involvement in the events that lead to the President's assassination, and the attempts to cover up the evidence of that involvement. Nobody wanted to publish such a book, so the author published it himself in a manuscript form.

(13)

Josiah Thompson, a PhD from Harvard and an expert on Kierkegaard, attempted to explain the events of the assassination using ballistic and medical evidence in **Six Seconds in Dallas**. (14) Sylvia Meagher, a UN administrator, published a solid work **Accessories After the Fact**, that lead to the following conclusion: the testimonies do not support, but rather refute the conclusions reached by the Warren Commission. French researcher Leo Sauvage, not unlike Mark Lane, pulled apart every argument of Oswald's guilt. (**The Oswald Affair**)

Proponents of the "lone assassin" theory did not hold back either. They also published books and articles defending the conclusions of the Warren Commission, attacking their adversaries, accusing them of paranoid suspicions and tendencies to see conspiracies everywhere. Ruby's attorney Melvin Belli wrote, in his book **Justice in Dallas**, "We of the defense considered it part of our obligation to the nation to reject that [conspiracy] theory out of hand -- it simply did not square with the facts and it did the United States no good" (15) Another attorney at Ruby's trial, Joe Tonahill, told the jury in his summation in March of 1964, that if they were to find Jack Ruby guilty of premeditated murder it would mean that they considered the Dallas police to be involved in the crime. (16) Despite this grave warning the jury stated their verdict just so

and sentenced Ruby to death.

When the verdict was announced Belli displayed unprecedented courtroom behavior when he cursed the city of Dallas which refused to believe three psychiatric experts who testified to the defendant's insanity while committing the crime. He even refused to shake Judge Brown's hand saying that he "saw blood on it."
(17)

In Summer of 1967 CBS released a four-hour documentary about the President's assassination and its subsequent investigation by the Warren Commission. While the film completely supported the Report, its narrator Walter Cronkite asked the following question at its conclusion. "Why, by a considerable margin, more people have bought copies of books attacking the Report than have bought the Report itself?" (18) In response another commentator, Eric Sevareid, declared that the conspiracy oriented American mentality was to blame. He also stated that to think that a "skinny, weak-chinned, little character" like Oswald did not act alone was the same as to believe that the Elders of Zion were conspiring to take over the world, or that President Roosevelt knew about the Japanese plan to attack Pearl Harbor. And to think that the Warren Commission "knowingly suppressed or distorted decisive evidence" was "idiotic" (19)

It is difficult to agree with commentator's angry reproaches of the American public. The wide-spread distrust of the official version of the tragedy in Dallas reflected, perhaps for the first time so obviously, the gap that had separated, by that point in history, two ways of thinking: judiciary-formal (lawyers') and

everyday rational (common sense).

This notion merits further discussion.