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Coming: another sensation on the killing of Kennedy

THE most important study of the assassination of President Kennedy since the report of the Warren Commission has at last been completed.

After a lonely and monkish labour of more than two years, Mr. William Manchester, lean red-haired scholar with a gigantic appetite for work and no unnecessary modesty, has a manuscript ready which, he says, will shed exciting new light on one of the darkest deeds of modern times.

Few events in history have produced more amateur sleuths, crank pamphleteers and wild-eyed theoreticians than the shooting in Dallas. But Manchester is no eccentric. He was personally selected by the Kennedy family to conduct an independent inquiry into the assassination accurate and searching enough to become the standard source for historians of the future.

He is, in effect, the Kennedy's own unpaid, one-man travelling Warren Commission.

Working 15 hours a day and interviewing more than 1000 people, Manchester has now produced a report which he claims contains more new information

than all the 26 volumes of testimony published by the Commission.

I predict that it will create a sensation on publication.

Manchester will not produce any startling melodrama related to the killing itself. After suspending judgment on the identity of the assassin for 12 months he is now convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald did indeed shoot President Kennedy in Dallas.

CONSPIRACY

"The question of a conspiracy is more subtle," Manchester told me. "I have a great deal of material connected with Oswald's associates, his reading and the books that were circulating among the people who worked at the Texas Book Depository. He was certainly influenced by the political climate in Dallas, but I find no evidence of a formal plot to kill the President."

"No one slipped Oswald money, or whispered in his ear."

But the real fascination of Manchester's painstaking research is that it has led him to be extremely critical of the work done by the Warren Commission. After interviewing hundreds of fresh witnesses and excavating countless new facts, Manchester is convinced that the blue-ribbon Commission so

carefully set up by President Johnson skimmed its task, cheated the public out of a complete investigation and "left itself wide open to attack by independent critics."

This opinion is not new. It has been developed in a recent book by Edward Epstein, a graduate student at Harvard, and will be taken up this summer by Mark Lane, a New York lawyer, the crusading West Coast magazine Ramparts, and Leo Sauvage, New York correspondent for Le Figaro, who compares the members of the commission to the French generals in the Dreyfus case and calls their report "unadulterated trash."

But Manchester is distinguished from all these other critics by the fact that he represents the Kennedy family. He wrote with complete detach-

ment and even with some distaste. He will be paid no money.

So that if, when his book is published next year, it is by accusation or inference hostile to the Warren Commission, his words will carry weight. He may even force Robert Kennedy to abandon his hitherto ambiguous opinions on the Commission's hearings and come out openly for the Manchester version—even though, as Attorney-General, he was responsible for the quality of the FBI research on which the Warren Report based its most important findings.