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'Oswald Not Alone, LBJ Believed'

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WASHINGTON — Despite the conclusions of the commission he appointed, President Johnson went to his grave convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald did not act alone in the assassination of President Kennedy, according to a former Johnson aide.

Johnson believed, according to an article published in the Atlantic Magazine released today, that Kennedy was slain in retaliation for a thwarted assassination attempt by a CIA-backed team of killers in Havana.

The article, by former Johnson aide Leo Janos, now a Time Magazine correspondent, stemmed from a conversation the writer had with Johnson at the LBJ Ranch a few months before Johnson's death last January.

"I never believed that Oswald acted alone, although I

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can accept that he pulled the trigger," Janos reports that Johnson told him.

It was the central conclusion of the Warren Commission, which Johnson appointed and arm-twisted then Chief Justice Earl Warren to lead, that Oswald did act alone in slaying Kennedy in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

When the report was issued, in 1964, it specifically rejected the conspiracy theories that had become a matter of public debate in the intervening year.

The report said the commission had come to the conclusion that Oswald, "acting alone," had taken a rifle to the Texas Schoolbook Depository where he worked, and, perched at a sixth floor window, fired twice at the President as he passed in a motorcade along the street below.

Grassy Knoll

Oswald was captured hours later and in turn was shot to death in less than 48 hours by a Dallas nightclub operator, Jack Ruby, who managed to gain entrance into the basement of the Dallas Police Station as Oswald was being moved.

Some of the other theories rejected by the commission held that Oswald was not the gunman, that the bullets that killed Kennedy came from a grassy knoll in front of the Kennedy motorcade.

The commission said it examined records of the CIA exhaustively — apparently in response to left wing suspicions that the CIA was somehow involved — and concluded that the agency was in no way implicated.

'Murder Inc.'

The Janos story is the first indication that Johnson did not accept the commission's conclusion. At the time when the report was issued, Johnson said he did accept it.

Johnson gave a written statement to the commission during its investigation, and although its contents have never been revealed, there was never any indication at the time that he believed Oswald acted in concert with others.

Janos quoted Johnson as saying that when he took office after the assassination he found "we had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Carribbean."

Janos did not quote the late president as to the specifics of the alleged CIA assassination plot in Havana nor its target.

Janos added, however, "a year before Kennedy's death a CIA-backed assassination team had been picked up in Havana."

Ramsey Clark

"Johnson speculated that Dallas had been a retaliation for this thwarted attempt, although he could not prove it," Janos said.

He said Johnson told him, "after the Warren Commission reported in, I asked (then attorney general) Ramsey Clark to quietly look into the whole thing. Only two weeks later he reported back that he couldn't find anything new."

Janos said, "disgust tinged Johnson's voice as the conversation came to an end. 'I thought I had appointed Tom Clark's son — I was wrong.'"