

The simplicity of evil

Thirty years after President John Kennedy's assassination, it's no easier to swallow that a chronic loser — Lee Harvey Oswald — committed the crime of the century all by himself with a \$12.78 mail-order rifle and a \$7.17 scope.

But despite more than 2,000 speculative books and films, no credible evidence shakes the Sept. 24, 1964, conclusions of the Warren Commission that "the shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald ..." and that "... Oswald acted alone."

After all this time, accepting that is wise. Indeed, it's unavoidable.

As skepticism passes from generation to generation, the nation pays a price for chronic doubts and mistrust.

Kennedy's administration was a high-water mark in national confidence.

Presidential voting peaked in 1960 at 63.1%, starting a long slide not reversed until 1992, when 55.2% voted. Trust in Washington to do what's right plum-

meted from 76% in 1964 to 23% at the moment — an all-time low.

A popular democracy needs to do much better than that.

Today, four of five Americans remain doubtful of the Warren report's conclusions. There is a national appetite for wilder theories, and it pays well. That encourages conspiracy peddlers to persist, despite the blind alleys.

The best antidote: unvarnished truth.

Many of the 20 agencies with documents relating to JFK's assassination are turning them over to the National Archives too slowly under the new JFK Assassination Records Collection Act.

Congress and the White House should order a speedup. To do otherwise encourages a damaging national fantasy.

Evil's stupefying banality — from Holocaust to Bosnia — is never easy to accept, especially when a life of seemingly mythic promise has been snuffed out.

In the case of JFK, however, the sooner the USA lets go, the better.

Do you trust the Warren Commission's conclusions?

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