

AN "AGAIN" ARGUMENTATION

ARGUMENTS FOR REOPENING THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION
INVESTIGATION IN 1967

In the ongoing controversy^S over whether the Kennedy assassination investigation should be reopened, the ~~onus~~^{onus} now clearly rests with the defenders of and apologists for the Warren Report. It is President Johnson, J. Edgar Hoover, Gov. John Connally, Time magazine, and Commissioners Gerald Ford and Allen Dulles who ~~must~~^{should} put forth arguments why a reopening of the case, in whatever form, is not called for. As a New York Times editorial stated last week, "Further dignifiedⁱ silence, or merely mere denials by the Commission and its staff, are no longer enough."

The transparent sophistry of the "no new evidence" argument some of them have advanced is rebutted by the fact of new evidence uncovered by LeBeauf, by implications of unconsidered old evidence, and, we submit, by the Twelve Arguments we present below in favor of a 1967 reopening of the matter. We do so in the forensic theological style of St. Thomas Aquinas — as befits such a weighty national affair of state.

The Argument From RATIONALITY should set to rest the wailers' irrational assumption that the doubts and aura of mystery surrounding the assassination, like that of Lincoln, can never be satisfactorily dispelled, resolved or even reduced to something that could be "lived with." "Futile, it's too late now ever to find the alleged other culprits since they have long since fled the country, etc." ^(Even) in the face of uncertainty and such a stale trail, why give up? It's not rational. Jack Ruby and many witnesses not yet killed are still available. Our technological age possesses tools of

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criminal investigation not available in 1865, for example, fingerprinting.

The Argument From PRACTICALITY, which should appeal to the American pragmatic temper, suggests that the Commission's job is patently undone.

Their "Unfinished Symphony" has accomplished neither of its goals. It has not uncovered the whole truth nor has it dispelled the rumors and doubts. As a

result, ~~but~~ people are humming their own by the dozens. The "missing movement" is lucidly pointed out in an Esquire article which shows just how incomplete the nine-month wender is, and indicates the remaining areas to be looked into, and many of the tests that should be conducted.

The Argument From PRECEDENCE answers those who say reopening would cast doubts on our national institutions and be unprecedented. Pearl Harbor was investigated seven times. There is even an accessory precedent in the recently concluded Shephard trial, in which the doctor was acquitted largely on a bit of blood test evidence which was not "new," having been prohibited by the judge from the first trial.

The Argument From PIVOTALITY has been given new weight by the recent contention of Gov. Connally that he and Kennedy were not hit by the same bullet -- the Commission theory that seems vital or pivotal to the one assassin conclusion. The Argument from CREDIBILITY is a composite of all the seemingly valid demonstrations of error and inconsistency in the Warren Report pointed out by the critics in their books and articles. These are especially those dealing with the Kennedy and Connally wounds, the bullets, the autopsy photos, the timing of the actions of Oswald and others, and the evidence indicating (1) shots from another direction, and (2) the existence of men falsely giving their name as Oswald.

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The Argument From INTERNAL INTEGRITY rests on the fact that the Commission itself was by no means as unanimous on many points as formerly supposed. This revelation was made in Inquest, and by Sen. Richard Russell's statement that he was the only Commissioner to "buck the report." The internal integrity of the Warren Commission stands challenged by one of its own members, even though he put his name to the finished product. *reverse the clauses*

The Argument From Critical Respectability rests on the prestigious and unassailable stature of the most recent advocates of a new look at the tragedy, including The New York Times, Life magazine, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Congressman Kuperstein of New York, and Senate Democratic Whip Russell B. Long of Louisiana. Gov. Connally can hardly refer to Life and the Times as "journalistic scavengers", the epithet he hurled at Mark Lane, Harold Weisberg and other critics hitherto unknown to the general public. "Enough responsible inquiry has been aroused," said the Times, defending the "scavengers," "to deserve responsible answers."

Although he has never expressed any such opinion in public, the late President's brother, Sen. Robert Kennedy, is rumored to be privately unhappy with the Warren Report and gives sub rosa encouragement to its critics, giving rise to the Argument From FRATERNITY. And if he thought the Warren Report would provide the official historical version, why did Sen. Kennedy in March 1964 commission William Manchester to write "Death of a President?" "If his brother is satisfied with the Warren Report, why shouldn't you be?" -- this question can no longer be meaningfully put to reopening advocates.

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The Argument From MAJORITY is quite simple. A recent Louis Harris survey showed that three out of every five Americans are doubting Thomases when it comes to the lone assassin hypothesis. It would seem that the same pelled majority would favor a reopening. The Argument From NEW DEVELOPMENTS since the assassination is somewhat nebulous and sinister. However, the outcome of the second Jack Ruby trial, in which one judge threw out an element of self-incrimination which should have been obvious to the first judge who tried the case, the entombing of key documents in the National Archives ^{safely} away from non-governmental and public view, the alleged killing of assassination witnesses in Texas, and the incipient, Communistic strategy of character assassination being directed toward the Report critics, are all creating nagging suspicions that a cover-up is under way, either by those who may have been responsible for the assassination or by those who were assigned to "ascertain the truth" about it.

The Argument From BALANCE is that on balance, much more good than harm would be accomplished and that the time is particularly auspicious because politically expedient. Unfortunately, 1964 and 1966 were national election years. 1967 is not. There is no need to "rush to judgment" a second time without examining ^{ing} all the possibilities, simply because of the possible impact of the findings on the upcoming November elections.

The final and perhaps most compelling argument is the Argument From HISTORICITY. This again is a composite of several considerations. For the sake of Americans' faith in their own country's credibility, institutions, and official pronouncements, for the sake of historical truth, for the sake of our world image as a nation dedicated to democracy, dissent and truth, even for the sake of fair play to a dead man posthumously convicted of a heinous crime, the doubts must be reduced to the vanishing point, as Arthur Schlesinger has indicated. MORE

The peaceful and orderly transition of political power from the fallen President to his successor (in spite of the rhabarb on the airplane) destroyed the "banana republic" spectre, but a successful whitewash of a successful coup from another direction would establish a precedent far more fraught with danger to the republic.

The United States has survived a revolution, a Civil War, a Pearl Harbor, a depression, and challenged presidential elections. The timorous notion that it could not also survive a finding that the leader of the world's mightiest nation was gunned down (as in Bolivia or Russia) in a conspiracy it took three or four years to uncover, that a deranged mind was tragic but a plot positively lethal for American democracy, this notion is utterly preposterous. A nation that has lost the will to find out the truth about ^{it} ~~itself~~ has also lost the will to ^{survive} ~~survival~~. And so the most persuasive argument of all is the Argument From ~~the~~ SURVIVAL !

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