

With that single shot the outrage of a nation turned to skepticism and doubt. The atmosphere was poisonous and had to be cleared. I was aware of some of the implications that grew out of that skepticism and doubt. Russia was not immune to them. Neither was Cuba. Neither was the State of Texas. Neither was the new President of the United States.

Lady Bird had told me a story when I finally arrived at our home in northwest Washington on the night of November 22. She and Liz Carpenter had driven home immediately after our arrival at the White House, while I stayed on to work. On their way to our house, Liz had commented: "It's a terrible thing to say, but the salvation of Texas is that the Governor was hit."

And Lady Bird replied: "Don't think I haven't thought of that. I only wish it could have been me."

Now, with Oswald dead, even a wounded Governor could not quell the doubts. In addition, we were aware of stories that Castro, still smarting over the Bay of Pigs and only lately accusing us of sending CIA agents into the country to assassinate him, was the perpetrator of the Oswald assassination plot. These rumors were another compelling reason that a thorough study had to be made of the Dallas tragedy at once. Out of the nation's suspicions, out of the nation's need for facts, the Warren Commission was born.

The idea of a national commission was first mentioned to me by Eugene Rostow of the Yale Law School. He called the White House the day Oswald was shot and suggested that with the prime suspect now dead, a blue-ribbon commission was needed to ascertain the facts. Dean Rusk and columnist Joseph Alsop soon made the same recommendation to me.

While I was considering what sort of investigative body to commission for this task, two facts became abundantly clear. First, this could not be an agency of the Executive branch. The commission had to be composed of men who were known to be beyond pressure and above suspicion. Second, this represented too large an issue for the Texas authorities to handle alone. Several columnists reported that a "Texas commission" would be set up. Waggoner Carr, the Attorney General of Texas, considered setting up a board of inquiry. I urged him to examine every possible aspect and to explore all avenues fully, but I also told him that I hoped he would sit in on the national commission, and that is what he wisely did.

The commission had to be bipartisan, and I felt that we needed a Republican chairman whose judicial ability and fairness were unquestioned. I don't believe I ever considered anyone but Chief Justice Earl Warren for chairman. I was not an intimate of the Chief Justice. We had never spent ten minutes alone together, but to me he was the personification of justice and fairness in this country.

I knew it was not a good precedent to involve the Supreme Court in such an investigation. Chief Justice Warren knew this too and was vigor-

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