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NOV. 2

THE KENNEDY KILLINGS

By Allard K. Lowenstein

From Warren Commission supporter to militant assassinologist, an ex-Congressman recounts his chilling odyssey to find the truth behind these American tragedies.

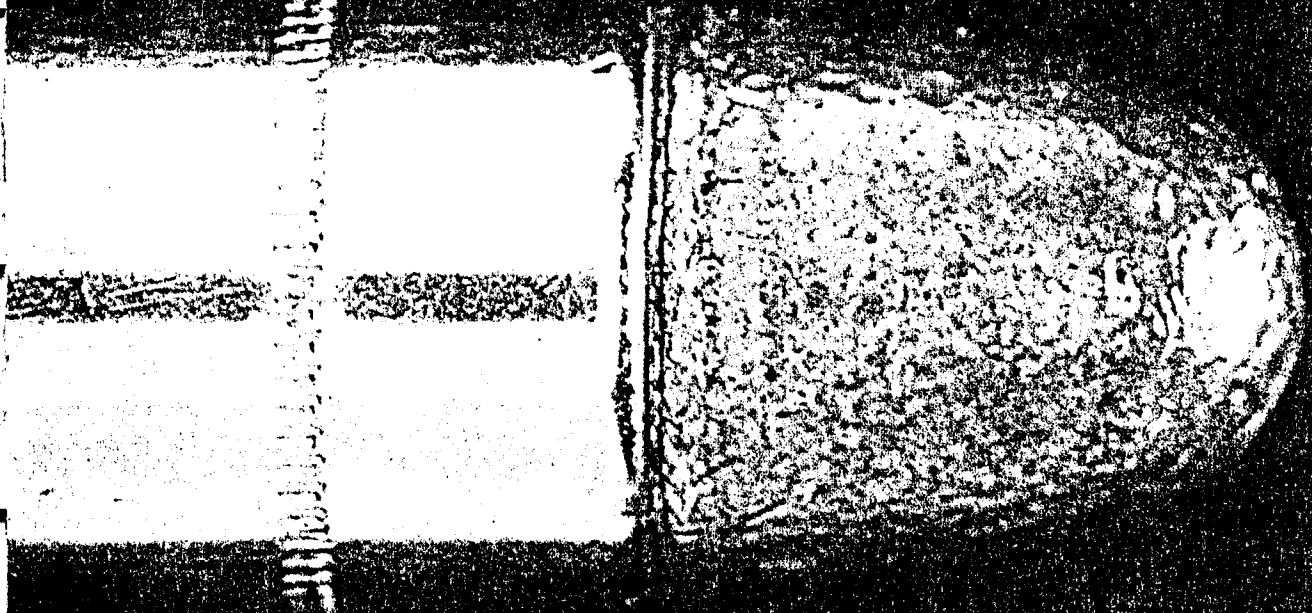
I am one of those who accepted the Report of the Warren Commission without question from the very beginning. It is now clear that that attitude was wrong, as was my unwillingness to listen to questions about the other major assassinations. We had better start to deal effectively with the doubts about how these

assassinations occurred, and I hope this account of my experience will be instructive to other Americans.

Whatever high purpose the Warren Commission thought it was serving at the time, it is now clear that the Report omitted too much and misstated too much to stand the test of a new time.

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PHOTO: WERNER STEGMEYER

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riticism was left largely to people who seemed flakey—which in turn made it easier to regard as flakey people who were critical.

Serious problems about the Report were discovered soon after it was issued, and much has happened since then that casts an eerie light on earlier events. The most reliable and thorough of the early analyses is a book called "Accessories After the Fact" by Sylvia Meagher, first published in 1967 and soon to be reissued in paperback. Few, if any, of the questions raised by Mrs. Meagher have ever been answered.

Since many ascertainable facts about the Kennedy and King murders and the attempt on George Wallace are still in dispute, competent new investigations would seem in everyone's interest. But the lone assassin theorists oppose any re-examination, as if accepting the need for one prejudged its outcome.

Others see this resistance, and the support it has received from the national media, as the continuation of a deliberate cover-up. So the resistance itself has fed a fanatic revisionism that has polarized discussion further.

The devotion of the national media to the official theories has not eased the suspicions of the general public. It has, however, made it difficult to challenge these theories without inviting gossip about one's motives, if not one's sanity. For a long time, therefore, audible criticism was left largely to people who seemed flakey—which in turn made it easier to regard as flakey people who were critical.

It is not hard to understand why so many informed people simply shut out the whole issue. The family most devastated said it was satisfied with the official accounts. Government itself, including its most respected figures, proclaimed lone assassins, and nobody sensible doubted the government in those innocent days.

In fact, informed opinion, conditioned to lone assassins, concluded that there was something ghoulish or disreputable about picking away at scars so close to the heart. It was a relief to accept Harrison Salisbury's view of reality: "Our logical minds," he wrote, "have rejected again and again the tawdry evidence

which exposes these crimes as the haphazard acts of random psychotics . . . In our agony, we instinctively clutch for the supernatural."

By now, it should be clear that Mr. Salisbury had it backwards, that in fact "logical minds" have generally rejected evidence that suggests these crimes may *not* have been "haphazard acts of random psychotics." Sensible people recoiled from a murky abyss, clutching at the fantasy that America is somehow exempt from conspiratorial political murder: here, only loose nuts could commit crimes of such enormous consequence.

We arrived at this evasion almost absent-mindedly, and many thoughtful people never realized they had failed to deal with questions that threatened some cherished assumptions about America. Then came the discovery that things had happened in this country that few of us had believed could happen.

The Enemies List helped to wake me up, and although I was confused about some of its implications, one thing was certain: tales of tapped wires and planted provocateurs could no longer be dismissed simply as signs of hysteria.

I began wondering why I assumed that only obscure people could arouse illegal meddling. If the White House, the CIA, the FBI, the IRS, and other prime instruments of an impartial government could be used against civil rights groups, churches, members of Congress, and anyone else who incurred official displeasure, clearly someone, somewhere, might have organized some of the events that had changed America.

The implications of that possibility were staggering, and drove me to take a belated look at the assassinations. But murder is a long way from improper surveillance, and when I started to look, I doubted that there was much to find. I chose the Robert Kennedy case partly because it hardly seemed open to question at all, and I was sure that meetings with Robert Vaughn, Ted Charach, Lillian Castellano, John Christian, Betsy Langman and other skeptics would quickly end my involvement.

I had no idea of the complexity of the facts in that case, much less of the difficulty of getting those facts across to the public, or of the near-impossibility of getting officials to act responsibly when confronted with pressing conflicts in the evidence as it stood.

The Robert Kennedy case presented three central problems:

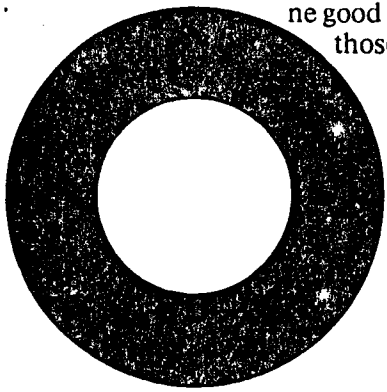
(1) No eyewitness could place Sirhan's gun closer than one and a-half to two feet from Senator Kennedy, although both the autopsy report and the police expert said he was hit by bullets fired at almost point-blank range.

(2) Sirhan's gun could fire eight bullets. Seven were recovered, two from Senator Kennedy and five from bystanders who were hit. Another bullet exited Senator Kennedy's chest, and still another passed through the right shoulder pad of his jacket. In addition, three bullet holes were discovered in ceiling panels which were booked into evidence by the LAPD, and at least one more bullet was reported to have been found in a door frame just outside the pantry. This door frame was also booked into evidence.

(3) A number of firearms experts concluded that there are significant differences between the bullets recovered from Senator Kennedy's neck and from one of the bystanders. Soon after these apparent differences were discovered, the bullets themselves were made unavailable for further examination, and even experts selected by Sirhan's defense were not permitted to complete studies that were underway.

No reasonable person confronted with these odd discoveries could say flatly that Sirhan had been the only person shooting at Robert Kennedy. That, however, is what I wanted to believe. My mind, like an errant eye, would wander off to the comfortable fantasy that nothing else could have been going on, and I would have to pull it back, consciously, to grope with unexplained facts.

In this state of mind, I decided to take a list of questions and of suggestions for tests to the District Attorney, as one



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might confer with an experienced friend. The questions were finite, answerable, and central to the case. The tests were inexpensive, widely used in criminal cases, and essential if apparent discrepancies were to be resolved.

I asked, for example, that impartial experts be permitted to study the ceiling panels and the door frame. If the three bullet holes in the panels were entry holes, at least ten bullets had been fired; if the bullet reported in the door frame were confirmed, at least nine; if either of these things were true, Sirhan's gun could not have done everything by itself. Nobody suggested the panels or the door frame no longer existed, or that they couldn't provide valuable information. In fact, it was clear that they could cast critical and possibly definitive light on one of the major areas of doubt.

I expected satisfactory explanations, and I was so sure the authorities would want to check into anything they couldn't explain that it never occurred to me it would be necessary to raise these issues publicly.

But the official response was as peculiar as the problems presented by the evidence. Everyone was polite and talked about cooperation, but nobody did anything with the list except periodically to request more copies. The case was in disarray, and all I could get from those responsible for it were delays, evasions, and misstatements. Still, it took another year of fruitless private discussions to convince me that the authorities would do nothing voluntarily.

That is why Paul Schrade and I finally spoke out in December, 1974. Mr. Schrade is a former United Auto Workers official who almost lost his life on June 5, 1968. He is a man of rare good sense and integrity.

"We offer no answers today," our first public statement said, "only questions. Nor have we any prejudice or preconception about what may ultimately be found to be the whole truth about the assassination of Senator Kennedy. . . . In short, facts must be determined free of any dogged precommitment to any theory."

We listed a number of the specific measures which I had earlier proposed to the authorities, and expected enough public support to encourage official action. It turned out to be almost impossible to arouse public concern, because the major media generally declined to report accurately—if at all—what we said.

Our press conferences were ignored in the news columns of the Los Angeles *Times*, the only widely read newspaper in the city where the murder occurred. The *Times* did, however, run an editorial which misrepresented our unreported statement, and ascribed ". . . such suspicions" principally to "an unwillingness to conclude that mundane facts can explain such fearful dramas. . . ." It dismissed the whole matter as "wispy" and "long since discounted by the authorities." This was one of a series of such editorials in the *Times*, none of which have dealt with the evidence and most of which have managed to question the motives of those seeking to deal with the evidence.

CBS Evening News ended its report with a statement that precisely reversed the facts: that every eyewitness had seen Sirhan shooting Robert Kennedy. The Washington *Post* saw nothing newsworthy about the press conferences, but ran, instead, a remarkably timed front page story claiming that William Harper, a leading forensic expert of unimpeachable integrity who had first raised the firearms issues, had repudiated his findings.

"The nationally recognized ballistics expert," the story began, "whose claim gave rise to a theory that Robert F. Kennedy was not killed by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, this week admitted that there is no evidence to support his contention"—a statement so imaginative that not even the article that followed could support it. Mr. Harper issued new demands for a reopening of the case.

Nothing Mr. Harper did, however, merited further notice in the *Post*, whose definitive view of the matter was presumably expressed by Ben Bradlee, the Executive Editor. "Ron Kessler," he said, "did a recent story knocking down the second gun theory . . . and nuts from

both coasts were all over me . . . I've been up to my ass in lunatics."

Finally, on May 20, 1975, Lester Hyman, former chairman of the Democratic party of Massachusetts, managed to get a letter printed in the *Post* protesting the failure to report Mr. Harper's protests. "It is more than just disturbing," Mr. Hyman wrote, "to note that the *Post* can devote so many column inches of space to the fantasies of the so-called lunatic fringe in this matter, while failing to devote equal space to the findings of men like . . . William Harper. . . . The fact that . . . charlatans . . . also are involved in the assassination story should not be allowed to deter a responsible search for the truth."

The strange response of the media was not aimed at Paul Schrade or me personally, nor did it reflect a decision that news about the assassinations is not worth reporting. When a special panel at the convention of the prestigious American Academy of Forensic Sciences called for a fresh investigation, this too was virtually ignored by newspapers that managed somehow to find space for far-out theories propounded by fringe figures at bizarre gatherings.

Meanwhile, columnists like Victor Gold and Garry Wills were making their contribution to the effort to deal rationally with the problems presented by the evidence. Mr. Gold described the posing of questions as an example of "the errant crackpotism of the radical left" (a comment he reiterated in spirit even after William F. Buckley, Jr., had called for a new study of the bullets and the Sirhan revolver), and "a pernicious infection of our national body politic." Mr. Wills announced that "the ghouls are coming back again to dance on Robert Kennedy's grave."

Not even the belated discovery that police officials had destroyed the ceiling panels and some other crucial items, not the subsequent inconsistent explanations of how this came about, moved the authorities or the Los Angeles *Times*. Tom Kranz, the Special Counsel appointed by the Acting District Attorney,



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denounced the destruction, but Police Commission President Sam Williams' only audible indignation was reserved for Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky, who had brought the situation to the attention of the City Council.

In fact, the *Times* seemed less disturbed by the destruction of evidence than by efforts to enable experts to assess what evidence might still exist. On August 17, the *Times* denounced "inane suspicions" about "an official conspiracy to conceal evidence"—a "conspiracy" that nobody had suggested existed. The discovery four days later that evidence had not been merely "concealed" but destroyed inspired no comment until September 3.

"Mistakes did occur," the *Times* then concluded in an editorial primarily devoted to attacking Councilman Yaroslavsky for "grandstanding," and to deriding "two gun" theorists who "argue" that "bullet holes in the panels would support their contention." The continued refusal of the Police Commission to make remaining items available for study was ignored, as was the right of the public not to "theories" but to facts. "Politicians should stay out of it—it should be left to the courts," the editorial concluded, apparently hoping nobody would remember that the matter would never have gotten to court at all if "politicians" had stayed out of it—and hoping further that nobody would notice that the LAPD was still trying to deny or limit the court's jurisdiction.

During the difficult half-year after Paul Schrade and I went public, only Bill Buckley, the *New York Post*, and the *Washington Star* covered the situation fairly in the United States.

The behavior of the media may help explain why officials in Los Angeles and elsewhere think they can get away with stonewalling—why they *did* get away with it, to be more accurate. Stonewalling does not look like stonewalling if nobody finds out statements made are not true.

But once the decision to resist is made, facts have to be concealed or misstated, and critics have to be discredited

as self-seeking or unhinged. "If you listen to these idiots long enough," then-District Attorney Joseph Busch announced, "they'll convince you that John Wilkes Booth didn't kill Abraham Lincoln."

On NBC's *Tomorrow* show Mr. Busch said, "Every eyewitness that you talk to—every eyewitness—there is nobody that disputes that he (Sirhan) put that gun up to the Senator's ear and fired in there." When I asked him to name one such witness he replied: "Would you like Mr. Uecker, the man that grabbed his arm? Would you like any of the fifty-five witnesses . . .?"

The simple fact, however, is that neither Mr. Uecker nor any other eyewitness has ever placed Sirhan's gun at Senator Kennedy's head. It provokes distrust when high officials, who know this perfectly well, continue to say the opposite.

But misleading official statements are almost the norm in these situations. One LAPD spokesman referred to a TV film of the shooting as evidence supporting the official theory. Is it possible that he was unaware that no such film exists? In April, 1975, Mr. Busch told a college audience that Sirhan himself "is making no real attempt to refute the accuracy of the investigation." Had Mr. Busch already forgotten about Sirhan's appeal for a new trial filed three months before and based precisely on the contradictions in the official investigation? Which is the more reasonable interpretation: that these officials were ignorant of the case they were trying to defend, or that they were unwilling to tell the truth when asked?

The conduct of the Los Angeles Police Commission has been just as mysterious. On July 24, in person, and by letter on July 30, I asked the Commission to make available relevant items of evidence within its jurisdiction.

"As you may recall," I wrote, "it is more than a year and a half since I submitted a list of questions. . . . I believe the Commission can sculpt a formula to deal with legitimate questions in a manner that would be consistent with legal precedents, the public interest, and the rights

of everyone concerned. . . . Such a formula would include granting appropriate access to certain physical items, such as ceiling panels and articles of clothing, access which in no way would risk disclosures that could be embarrassing to any private citizens."

The Commission ignored these suggestions and invoked high principles about civil liberties to reject all applications for access to anything. A threat to the right of privacy was detected in the request to allow experts to study LAPD records about bullet holes in the pantry.

Chief of Detectives Robert Houghton was in charge of the investigation of the murder. He collaborated in writing an earnest book ("Unit Senator") that used whatever information in official files he thought might buttress the official theory or increase interest in the book.

Mr. Houghton and his co-author were permitted unlimited access to otherwise secret materials. Their book is littered with utterly inaccurate assertions, and with information that must be awkward at best for various private citizens. Now, however, such was the Police Commission's zeal for civil liberties that ceiling panels and spectrographs had acquired rights to privacy.

In short, the progress that has been made in the effort to find out what happened when Senator Kennedy was murdered has come only in the face of enormous media distortion and official resistance. Thus it was September, 1975, before a fair-minded judge named Robert Wenke ordered firearms' experts to study the bullets and Sirhan's gun.

The experts could make only limited findings about possible matching of guns and bullets, but these findings were generally misreported and even more generally misunderstood. Lowell Bradford, perhaps the best-known member of the panel, protested the misreporting and stated the central conclusion of the experts as follows: "The firearms evidence does not in and of itself establish a basis for a two gun proposition; likewise, this same proposition, on the basis of other evidence, is not precluded either. . . . The

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firearms examination . . . should not constrain further efforts to resolve valid questions concerning the possibility of the firing of a second gun at the assassination scene."

Mr. Bradford's statement went generally unreported (one is tempted to add: "Of course"). But the inconclusiveness of the first tests necessitated an effort to organize further tests, despite the renewed public misunderstanding about the state of the evidence.

It will be no surprise that these unexpected adventures in the Los Angeles case made me wonder about Dallas, Memphis, and George Wallace. Assassinations of Presidents and other national figures are not ordinary murders. When bullets distort or nullify the national will, democracy itself has been assaulted. An event of such consequence cannot then be put to rest until the public is satisfied that it understands what happened, and that the possibility of recurrence has been minimized. This will not be achieved by zealous upholders and detractors of official theories thrashing at each other while crucial questions hang in limbo.

For when all is said and done, the fact remains that the Warren Commission was appointed to resolve the doubts of the American people about who had killed President Kennedy. Simply to state its goal is to announce its failure, and to make clear that further *debate* about what did or did not occur is dilatory.

We must now do for several shootings what the Warren Commission was supposed to do for one. This will require new investigations, a distasteful course greatly to be preferred to the alternative, which is to allow old suspicions to cause half the nation to half believe things that may be worse than the facts justify.

And since there may be no connection between any of the assassinations, whatever is discovered about one cannot eliminate the need to re-examine the others. Senator Edward Kennedy has agreed that these questions should be dealt with only on the merits. "It's painful to the members of the family," he has

said, "but that shouldn't be the consideration."

A recent Los Angeles *Times* editorial helped explain why it has taken so long to begin to deal rationally with the problems raised by the official versions of the assassinations. The editorial was entitled *On and On*, and it blamed those trying to get at the facts for the awful endlessness of the effort. But the truth is that people seeking facts are not dragging matters "on and on," nor are they prejudging answers. People who oppose or obstruct the inquiry are doing that.

It is difficult to understand why this simple distinction still eludes some intelligent people. How needlessly difficult this struggle has been because scattered individuals with limited resources have had to carry it alone.

A great deal is known about the broad outline of events and myths surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy, although which is which is often uncertain. But it is important to realize that at least three separate theses of the Warren Commission are in dispute, and that if the Commission was wrong about any of the three, all its conclusions fall.

In each of the three, the evidence against the Commission's findings is substantial and has gone largely un rebutted to date. Thus, if Oswald did not shoot at the President, the Commission's conclusion that he was the killer is obviously inaccurate. If he did shoot at the President but others were shooting as well, he was not a "lone assassin." Finally, even if he alone shot the President, the Ruby coda and other unusual happenings demand inquiry into the possibilities of conspiracy.

All of these issues are so complex that it is exhausting simply to try to figure out how to begin an adequate new investigation. Still, one would have to start *some-where*, and the Los Angeles experience suggests the most sensible way to proceed. Central, answerable, and finite questions should be compiled, and scientific tests organized to resolve as many of these questions as possible. Some answers will eliminate problems, others will

suggest new questions. How to deal with these subsequent questions will be clearer if they are arrived at step by step.

There follows one possible list of such kinds of tests and questions.

(I.) Tests.

1. Duplicate the firing conditions under which Oswald is purported to have killed President Kennedy, and invite everyone to reproduce what Oswald had to do if he was the only assassin.

2. Reveal the results of the Neutron Activation Analysis of the recovered bullets, and conduct new NAA if necessary to study the history of these bullets.

3. Invite Marina Oswald to submit to a polygraph test to try to determine why she changed her testimony, and what the truth is in some key situations where her testimony is crucial.

4. Conduct a Mercator test on the lift of the palmprint belatedly discovered on the barrel of the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle—the only print found on the rifle connecting it with Oswald.

5. Simulate again the conditions which the Commission says produced the nearly undamaged bullet CE 399, and see if this time it is any more possible than it was in 1964 for a single bullet to achieve what that bullet had to achieve and still emerge with 98.4 percent of its original weight.

(II.) Witnesses.

Call witnesses whom the Commission ignored, and whose testimony could be valuable. Among these should be:

1. Waitresses who may have seen Oswald and Tippit in the same restaurant at the same time two days before the assassination.

2. Various police officers who might illuminate the peculiarities of Tippit's movements that brought him to the place, far from his proper post, where he was killed.

3. The reporter and the Assistant District Attorney of Dallas who first informed the Attorney General of Texas that Oswald worked for the FBI, and whose basis for these assertions has never been checked by the Commission.

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(III.) *Odd Omissions About the Possibility of Conspiracy.*

1. Three Dallas policemen searching for suspects immediately after the assassination encountered men who identified themselves as Secret Service agents. The Report rules out the presence of any bona fide Secret Service personnel in these places, but fails to probe the question of who the men were who said they were members of the Secret Service.

2. A Presidential motorcade was cancelled in Miami two weeks before the assassination, after the Miami Police had taped a warning of a plot to kill the President in a manner almost identical to that which occurred in Dallas. This warning was transmitted to the Secret Service, but is nowhere even mentioned in the Warren Commission volumes.

3. A Cuban emigre named Sylvia Odio and her sister reported that they were visited by three men who talked about assassinating the President in September, 1963. One of these men said he was "Leon Oswald." The Commission argues that Oswald could not have been in Dallas at that time, but does not deal with the question of what this visit was all about, much less with the problem of who was calling himself "Leon Oswald" if it was not in fact Lee Harvey Oswald.

4. The general problem of duplicate Oswalds was raised by J. Edgar Hoover three and a half years before the assassination, in a memo to the State Department that inquired whether someone might be impersonating Oswald overseas. This was nowhere mentioned in the Warren Report or supporting volumes. (Nor is an alleged demand by the FBI that the Dallas police chief retract a statement he had made about possible Oswald-FBI connections; nor a threatening note delivered by Oswald to the Dallas FBI office shortly before the assassination, which it is now conceded was subsequently destroyed by the FBI.)

IV. *Warren Report Misstatements that Require Clarification or Further Investigation.*

1. The report states that "the last known [Book Depository] employee to see Oswald" before the assassination was one Charles Givens, who said he saw him on the sixth floor. Not only did Givens's memory change belatedly about this matter, but two other witnesses testified that they saw Oswald later on the first floor.

2. The Report states that Oswald used the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle to try to kill General Edwin Walker in April, 1963. However, two men were observed leaving that scene, and the calibre of the bullet that was recovered would have prevented its being fired from a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle.

3. The Report concludes that a bullet

exited the President's throat, to do which it had to enter his neck. Yet five autopsy witnesses, the autopsy sketch, the FBI report, photographs of Kennedy's shirt and suit coat, and the death certificate signed by his personal physician all place the point of entry of that bullet approximately five inches below the neck.

4. The Report states that "the three doctors who attended Governor Connally at Parkland Hospital expressed independently their opinion that a single bullet had . . . caused all the governor's wounds." Only two of these doctors testified before the Commission after seeing the alleged bullet; and they say nothing of the kind.

Such flagrant misstatements about central issues can be listed almost endlessly. The Report's assertion that the ammunition used in the Mannlicher-Carcano was manufactured "currently" is false. So are its assertions that Oswald "flew to Helsinki" on October 9, 1963; that Captain Westbrook of the Dallas Police "discovered" a discarded jacket that was said to link Oswald to the murder of Tippit; that Robert Adrian Taylor retracted "upon reflection" his earlier identification of Oswald as the man who sold him a rifle in March or April, 1963; and so on.

The pattern of misrepresentation is disturbing, and while by itself it does not mean that the Report's conclusions are wrong—any more than similar misrepresentations in Los Angeles necessarily mean that Sirhan was part of a conspiracy—it does add to the atmosphere of doubt that has overwhelmed the work of the Warren Commission.

This atmosphere will not be cleared by disparaging the motives or rationality of skeptics, or by discussing who killed Abraham Lincoln, or by assigning people involved in past investigations to reinvestigate themselves.

One good way *not* to deal with difficult questions is to ignore those questions and respond to others that you would rather deal with. The Rockefeller Commission, for example, chose to probe the murder of President Kennedy by investigating a wispy story about photographs of "tramps" arrested in Dallas on November 22, while ignoring basic and damaging flaws in the Warren Report that have gone unexplained for a decade. Its choice to direct this distracting exercise was a man who had been an assistant counsel on the Warren Commission.

But the Rockefeller Commission's greatest contribution to cynicism about Dallas was its effort to support its conclusions by distorting the testimony of Dr. Cyril Wecht. Dr. Wecht is the Coroner of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and a past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. He has brought the considerable weight of his professional reputation to his conclusion that the

medical evidence demonstrated that Oswald could not have been firing alone. It disgraces the Rockefeller Commission to pervert Dr. Wecht's views to suit its own, and then to refuse his request to release the transcript of his testimony.

Events continue to remind me how foolish I was to accept Harrison Salisbury's notion that political assassinations must be "the haphazard acts of random psychotics." In real life, things are not that simple or clear.

Even if we decide that only psychotics try to assassinate American political figures, all we have done is to define assassins as psychotics. Does that mean they all must be "random"? If we decide to call the murderers of Huey Long or Joseph Yablonski psychotic, does that make their murders non-political? Were the Puerto Rican nationalists who tried to kill President Truman psychotic, and if so, were they any less conspiratorial?

When a member of the Manson "family" tries to shoot the President of the United States, is that the act of a "random psychotic" or the product of a conspiracy? Or could it be both—a conspiracy of psychotics, perhaps? Were Little and Remiro of the S.L.A. psychotic or part of a political conspiracy when they murdered Dr. Marcus Foster, the Superintendent of Schools of Oakland? Can't people who are crazy conspire to murder political figures? And if they can't, what are we to make of the two men, one of whom had recently escaped from a mental institution, who were arrested in Santa Barbara on charges of trying to kill President Ford?

I do not know if there was a conspiracy to murder President Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, Dr. King, or Governor Wallace; I do know it is *possible* that there may have been such a conspiracy. If there were more than one such conspiracy, I do not know if any of them were connected; I do know it is *possible* there were connections of some kind between some of them.

I do not know if we can ever find out the full story of these events, if indeed there is a "full story" not yet found out. I do know we had better free ourselves of preconceptions and do our best to find out. Those of us who have preached that the electoral process is the way to decide policies and leadership ought to feel a special obligation to help this effort.

We are about to go through another campaign to choose a President. The last three presidential elections were distorted by bullets. If somewhere there are groups or organizations that have aborted the electoral process for political purposes—and that could do so again—the rest of us may be characters in a charade.

To face that possibility is not to assume it is a fact. Not to face it is to take an unacceptable risk with the future of the Republic. ■