

JFK Death Story in Critical Study ^{T P} 3/14/70

More than six years after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, an analysis of the news of that event is primarily history. However, as journalism it poses problems that are current, and are notable in general as well as specialized history.

A study by Darwin Payne is the latest of the monographs being sponsored by the Association for Education in Journalism and issued at the University of Kentucky's Journalism Department in Lexington. It is based upon a master's thesis in history at Southern Methodist University. Mr. Payne is a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas.

Much of the information comes from the Hearings Before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, issued in 1964. Another prime source is the Report of the Warren Commission. However, Mr. Payne has read widely in newspapers, magazines and books published soon after the assassination.

His main conclusions? "The press did create a chaotic atmosphere in Dallas, primarily at the

police station. But a judgment that the press disrupted events and opened the way for Lee Harvey Oswald's murder is not supported by evidence. . . . The confusion for which the press may be held partly accountable did not kill the suspected assassin."

Mr. Payne thinks, however, that the news reports passed from law enforcement officials to the public "probably did prejudice Oswald's right to a fair trial."

His conclusions are more favorable than the Warren Commission's toward the press handling of the assassination news.