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**A Special Bicentennial Section**

# From Katzenbach to Hart: A Decade of Deception

by Mark Lane

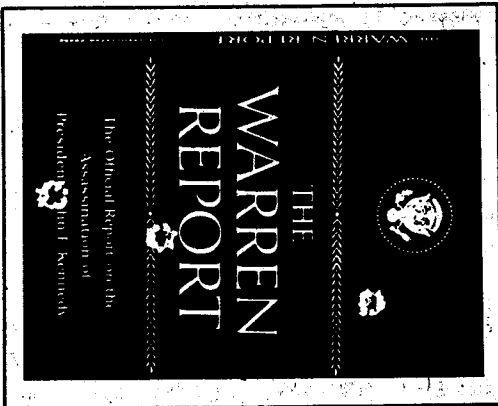
Just three days after the assassination of President Kennedy, Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach sent a letter to the White House stating that "the public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the

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evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial." The Katzenbach directive to the White House continued, "speculation about Oswald's motivation ought to be cut off." At that time, while Katzenbach insisted that the White House should condemn Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone assassin, the Warren Commission had not yet been appointed and the FBI investigation into the crime had barely gotten under way.

Katzenbach recognized the need for the establishment of some apparatus to support his rush to judgment, and he urged the White House to act since "we should have some basis for rebutting though" that there was a "communist conspiracy" or "a right wing conspiracy." Thus before Oswald had been dead 24 hours the extremists of the center were moving to cover up the facts.

Even more illuminating of the shadowy role played by Mr. Katzenbach was the letter he sent



Bruce Reedy

to each member of the Warren Commission on Dec. 9, 1963, urging that the Commission immediately issue a press release stating that Oswald was the lone assassin. Had the Commission acted favorably upon that directive, its image of integrity would likely have been thoroughly compromised, for the commission was not even to call its first witness until two months more had passed.

The Katzenbach correspondence, suppressed for twelve and one-half years, was uncovered along with other evidence by Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, chaired by Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho). The Committee's final report was published last week. This

historic work was accomplished under the auspices of Sen. Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.) and Gary Hart (D-Colo.).

DC is pretty much a chain-of-command town, with the pecking order thoroughly well established and adhered to. Therefore the question arises: on whose behalf was a deputy attorney general sending directives to the new President and then to the members of the President's Commission, including its chairman, the Chief Justice of the United States?

At a press conference held in conjunction with the release of the report, Sen. Schweiker stated that he would like to see that question answered and urged that it could be arranged if Mr. Katzenbach was asked to explain his role while under oath in an appearance before a Congressional investigating committee.

In its report, the Church Committee concluded that it had "developed evidence which impeaches the process by which the intelligence agencies arrived at their own conclusions about the assassination, and by which they provided information to the Commission." The Report continues, "the evidence indicates that the investigation of the assassination was deficient and that facts which might have substantially affected the course of the investigation were not provided the Warren Commission or those individuals within the FBI and the CIA, as well as other agencies of government, who were charged with investigating the assassination."

The significance of that finding should be examined in the light of the Warren Commission's early decision to secure no independent investigators and to rely instead for information upon the FBI, the CIA, and other existing police agencies.

The method chosen by the police agencies to prevent the Warren Commission from getting the facts was simple, yet ingenious. The report reveals that "senior FBI officials" and "senior CIA officials" and "senior government officials" were in possession of evidence that might have been invaluable to the Commission. Senior officials appointed middle-echelon bureaucrats to liaison with their opposite numbers at the Warren Commission and to share with the Commission representatives the evidence with which they were familiar.

By denying the middle-echelon officials access to the decisive materials, the police agencies had constructed an obstacle that was effective and invisible—invisible because those charged with the responsibility of briefing the Commission were acting in good faith and gave the appearance that they were carrying out their assignments fully. The intelligence coverage was operated on the old intelligence "need to know" basis and the middle-echelon representatives in many cases did not know how they had been utilized until they testified before the Senate Committee.

Sen. Schweiker, who played the major part in directing the committee's work on the assassination, recently summed up the implications of the Senate report. He said that the Warren Commission's conclusions, including the conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin, had been rendered invalid since the basic evidence had been denied to the Commission. He added that he supported the unanimous recommendation of the Senate Committee that the Permanent Senate Select Committee on Intelligence "continue the investigation in an attempt to resolve these questions." Among the questions to be resolved, Sen. Schweiker said, are: Who killed President Kennedy? and Why was he killed?

Thus more than a decade after the Warren Report was issued, a Senate committee comprised of those with differing political

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# JFK Report

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newpoints—including Sens. Tower, Goldwater, Mondale, and Baker—rendered the Warren Report inoperable and called for a serious investigation to uncover the ancient coverup.

## The Counter-Attack

The American news media, which have swallowed whole (but never really digested) The Warren Report since it was issued in September 1964, were less unanimous in understanding and reporting the implications of the report that disposed of it. The media ambiguity was aided by the curious part played by Sen. Gary Hart, ostensibly a co-author of the new document but, upon its completion a leading figure in the campaign to subvert it and to place its integrity in doubt.

Some weeks ago when the Senate Committee announced that it had unanimously recommended a new investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy, Sen. Hart told the press that the Committee had uncovered no evidence to place into question the fact that Oswald was the lone assassin. Thus the impact of the historic determination of the Senate Committee was blunted, as the *New York Times*, for example, featured only Sen. Hart's assurance that Oswald remained in solitary guilt.

When the full report was released to the media last week, Sen. Church and Sen. Schweiker were present. Sen. Hart's absence was noted by a reporter who inquired about it at the news conference; it was explained that Sen. Hart had been detained on another matter. In fact while members of the Citizens Commission of Inquiry had been visiting Sen. Schweiker's office earlier in the day, CBS called to inform Sen. Schweiker that Sen. Hart was going to boycott the press conference.

The "other matter" occupying Sen. Hart, a very junior senator, was an effort to subvert the work of the Committee of which he was a



member. He had informed the media the night before that the report that was about to be released "contained nothing of interest". The next day when the report was released Sen. Hart again urged the media to ignore it since "our committee could find no evidence at all to question the fact that Oswald was the lone assassin." That assurance was given considering the media play despite the fact the Committee's investigation had never contemplated that question.

On the first page of its report, the Committee explained its scope: "The Committee did not review the findings and conclusions of the Warren Commission. It did not re-examine the physical evidence which the Commission had. It did not review one of the principal questions facing the Commission: whether Lee Harvey Oswald was in fact the assassin of President Kennedy." The report continued: "Instead the Committee examined the performance of the intelligence agencies in conducting their investigation of the assassination and their relation-

ships to the Warren Commission."

As Sen. Gary Hart emerged as the Nicholas Katzenbach of 1976, those concerned with the continuing search for truth were disconcerted to learn that Sen. Schweiker had not been appointed to the Permanent Senate Intelligence Committee, while Sen. Hart had.

Those in the media still clinging to the old discredited and now officially discarded "official truth" began to perceive the Senate reports as a threat. Sen. Schweiker as an object of derision, and Sen. Inouye (D-Hawaii, chairman of the Permanent Committee) as a target. Fred Graham, in commenting upon the Senate Report on CBS, wondered aloud if at long last with this report we could now put this matter to rest—a rather curious observation, since the report is a recommendation for a new full-scale investigation.

Charles Bartlett, in the *Washington Star*, began to look at Sen. Schweiker in an odd light and concluded that "buffs will be stimulated into new frenzy" by Sen. Schweiker's discovery.

And Sen. Hart in a televised network interview urged that the report which he signed be benignly neglected, lest we "toy with the reputations of important men."

Lemming-like, the extremists of the center were trying once again to lead us anywhere except to the terrible truth about a man-made tragedy, a tragedy that has dramatically altered our lives. Yet this is not 1964, and a full and open discussion of these events is possible. One hundred and thirty-seven members of the House have submitted resolutions calling for an investigation of the assassination by a Select Committee of the House. The Senate Committee has acted. Segments of the media have fairly represented the work of the Senate Committee.

Although much has been recently published about the Committee's suspicions that Fidel Castro may have been the assassin, the media has universally failed to quote the report's conclusion—"that it has no evidence that Fidel Castro or others in the Cuban government plotted President Kennedy's assassination in retaliation for U.S. operations against Cuba."

If a serious investigation now ensues, before long we may learn that Lee Harvey Oswald worked for the FBI in New Orleans and Dallas, that he spent an inordinate amount of time with contract agents for the CIA in New Orleans, that he was the military adviser to the CIA's anti-Castro front organization, the Free Cuba Committee, while he gave out literature for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and that Jack Ruby, who killed Oswald in the Dallas police basement, had been an FBI informant since March 11, 1959.

If the press allows, if the members of Congress with integrity persist and prevail, our bicentennial year may be the time we return to old values and bring an end to the decade of political assassinations. We may even find out who killed John Kennedy and why he was killed. *NW*

*Mark Lane, author of Rush to Judgment is Director of the Citizens Commission of Inquiry and a Capitol Hill resident.*