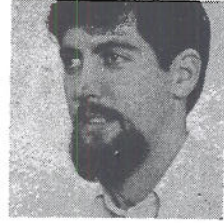


Patrick Sullivan

Warren Commission's purpose(s) challenged



Hot on the heels of the recent criticisms of the Warren Commission's conclusions about the death of John F. Kennedy has come a dirge of pro-Commission articles and statements.

Many have come — predictably enough — from Washington, D.C. LBJ announced last week there was “no new evidence,” which presumably put the minds of many of the faithful at ease. For others, Drew Pearson claimed “the Warren Commission did not suppress anything” — because the work sheets were included in the final report. And Sunday, UPI reporter Merriman Smith — 25 years in Washington — branded all questions and doubts about the Report as “assorted theory and hokum.”

Without questioning the motives of two correspondents who must earn their bread and butter in official Washington circles and of LBJ, who HAS to say those things, the three statements fall short of proving anything and end up as mere patronizing placations.

The utterings, it is apparent upon even a cursory examination, were designed mainly to quiet critics while purporting to defend the Warren Report's conclusions.

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Ironically, one of the main charges of Warren Report critics has been that the Commission itself had a “dualism in purpose:” explicitly to ascertain and expose facts, and implicitly to protect the national interest by dispelling rumors.

The author who best described how the Commission confused the two purposes time and again and how the implicit purpose emerged as dominant is Edward Jay Epstein. His work, “Inquest,” is the one book the pro-Commission flacks have a hard time running down.

Smith took a weak shot at Epstein by calling “Inquest” “sometimes querulous” for questioning the actual number of shots that rang out that day. Writer Smith maintained there were only three because that was the number he and most witnesses heard — and because he is also “a hunter and target marksman.”

But no matter what the pro-Commission mouthpieces want to say — whether it be that the doubts are “hokum” or “half-truths” or that there is “no new evidence” — the fact remains that a sizeable amount of “old” evidence was ignored by the Warren Commission and a number of rumors based in fact were not followed up.

Consider these examples:

- **The Deaths.** Penn Jones Jr., who visited an Experimental College workshop on the assassination two weeks ago, disclosed that 17 persons who had become entangled in the web surrounding the assassination had met “mysterious deaths,” including Lee Harvey Oswald's former rooming house manager, Mrs. Earlene Roberts. Also on the list: three of five persons who attended a meeting at Jack Ruby's apartment a few hours after Ruby shot Oswald; both the taxi driver and bus driver who drove vehicles used by Oswald on the day of the assassination.

- **The Bullet.** Ulov G. K. Leboeuf in his four volume work “Time of Assassins” — as reviewed in Ramparts magazine — offers interesting evidence about the man who found the pristine bullet in Parkland Hospital. The bullet in question was found by a Mr. Tomlinson, who (1) had worked at the hospital for six months, and (2) whose previous address in Johnson City was phoney. (3) Jack Ruby's cousin-in-law, Artemis Heverford, lived in Johnson City until June 1963, where he had worked as a janitor. (4) Upon moving, he disappeared. However, he had a club-footed wife named Mary, from whom he was divorced. (5) So did Mr. Tomlinson.

These examples hardly scratch the surface of evidence left untouched by the Warren Commission—whose findings are increasingly coming to look like the proofs against Pyrot.

It is hard to see how a jury could have convicted Oswald — acting alone — in '63.

And if it had, you can bet your copy of the Warren Report that the case would have been back in court by now to seek — at least — a re-hearing of the evidence.