

HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT

I am among those who took to heart the famous inaugural address injunction of President John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." [The result was the then-famous "Geese for Peace" project. It was my idea and these were my geese. They earned the fledgling Peace Corps its first favorable press, according to its public relations officials, and dramatized throughout the world the hopes of most Americans that their less favored brothers might soon come to enjoy a better life.]

This book is a second dedication to that demand of our late President.

He was a man whose mind and presence fascinated me. His wit and intellect were a joy to me, and I was delighted at his restoration of culture to the White House.

Because of my great admiration for this man, even though I often thought his policies wrong, I was doubly shocked November 22, 1963. The loss of any President under such infamous circumstances is stupefying. More, the loss of this one dazed me. As did most of us, I spent every moment I could in front of the television, and most of the rest of the time my transistor radio was at my ear.

By the time official information started flowing from Dallas, I had regained the power to reason. The more official information we got, the more convinced I became we were being spoon-fed an improvised pap no reasonable man could stomach. The immediate launching of the "red scare" persuaded me that, although there were clearly stupid people in Dallas, there most assuredly were also sinister forces. To me, it was incredible that any government today could be party to an assassination with even the greatest indirectness. I could not see how the Russians could reasonably expect to find anyone more to their liking in the presidency than John F. Kennedy. Having begun to work out a modus vivendi

with Kennedy following the eyeball-to-eyeball Cuban missile crisis, and especially after the signing of the limited treaty prohibiting atomic testing in the atmosphere, they could hope for no improvement to what I considered their interests from Lyndon B. Johnson, whose conservative voting record was well known.

What we were being told just didn't make sense. The more I thought about it, the more suspicious and worried I became. My wife still recalls my prediction when we first turned on the television early Sunday morning, November 24, that Oswald would be killed - never brought to trial. I did not expect it to happen when and as it did, but I was certain there were people who had to destroy him.

These, then, are the biases with which I began to study the Dallas tragedies. Every meaningful word I read I saved. I have notes on some of the radio and television newscasts and tape recordings of some of the special programs. As well as one cone from such a distance, I kept my eyes and ears on Dallas.

With the appointment of Chief Justice Earl Warren to head a commission of inquiry, I became more disturbed. I had and still have a great respect for him. But with the prospect the Ruby case would reach the Supreme Court, I was troubled that the President's advisers would recommend what amounted to an automatic disqualification of any Justice, and especially the Chief Justice. Then with the formalization of the complete dependence of the Commission on government agencies which might be charged with negligence, I could only wonder when and how these gross errors would end.

As a young man I had had investigative and intelligence experience. The Commission's Report astounded me, and I determined to make my own analysis of it. With what I retained of these skills, a tape recorder and a stack of tapes, I settled down with the 900 pages of the Report. When I finished the last page, my wife had over 150 hours of notes to transcribe.

While we were deep in this project, the Commission released the 26 volumes

of hearings and exhibits, confronting me with an immediate choice: Did I then undertake to examine them? If so, how could I possibly write the book, my research for which was being typed? I determined that to the degree made possible by a willingness to work an eighteen-to-twenty-hour day, I wanted to examine these volumes. Accordingly, I went to New York, seeking a publisher and a collaborator to whom I could turn over the actual writing of the book while I continued my inquiry.

When I told Mr. Ivan Obolensky what I had learned and done, he asked how I desired to proceed. I told him that almost thirty years earlier I had known with varying degrees of intimacy four men who had worked on famous, reform-minded, post-Depression Senate investigating committees. Any one of these men, I believed, could not only do the writing, but had an understanding of investigations and could make other valuable contributions. While in the intervening years I had lost contact with all four, I hoped it would be possible to locate and interest one of them.

"Do you know Larry Brown?" Mr. John Ledes, Mr. Obolensky's associate, asked me.

"He's one of the four men on my list," I replied, incredulously. "Why?"

"We just published his book!"

While the telephone operators were trying to locate my old acquaintance and new associate-to-be, we discussed The Report on the Warren Report.

On not one point did we disagree. It was to be confined to the knowledge of the Commission. It was to be factual, without the adverbial approach that I had found so disappointing in the Commission's work. It was to be devoid of political content. It would not, as the Commission had, pretend a haughty disinterestedness and impartiality, but would say the Commission had been biased, had not sought the truth, had sought only to attempt to persuade the country to believe

its preconcept. And it would say the Commission was wrong and its assigned function had still to be performed. It was to have no idle speculation, nor was it to attempt to solve the monstrous crime. But we would examine its methods and techniques and document how it made such a witch's brew palatable to so large a part of the press and public. The Commission had presented its Report, and on this Report it must stand. But I would derive as much as time limitations allowed of the tremendous, amorphous, virtually inaccessible collection of sworn and unsworn material buried as effectively as though by deliberate design in those 26 tomes.

This is what I hope we have done.

Why?

Because I believe there are now more unanswered questions than there were at 10:25 a.m., Monday, February 3, 1964, when the Commission opened its hearings with an examination of Mrs. Marina Oswald, who was not an eyewitness and who had no personal knowledge of the crime.

Because I believe history, our national honor and the memory of a great man demand that to the degree humanly possible no unanswered questions remain.

I do not believe Larry Brown and I can answer all these questions. But I do believe a proper, 100 percent public investigation, one not emasculated by the fallacious concept that all it had to do was validate the ex parte FBI report, one not hog-tied by an unjustifiable dependence upon a staff not entirely its own, and one determined to pursue the truth and fact wherever they lead and whatever they may prove, can supply many - perhaps enough - answers.

I do believe Congress, not faced with immediate elections, is more uniquely suited to attempt so doing than any other part of our national life.

And I sincerely hope Congress will - in the spirit of the injunction of President Kennedy's inaugural address.