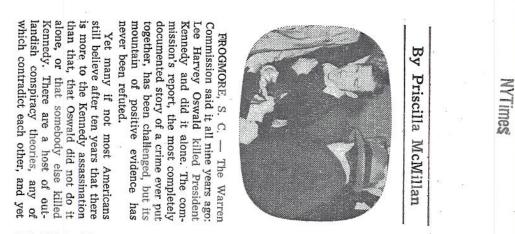
NYTimes Chron II 22 Nov 73

That Time We Huddled Together in Disbelief

by Priscilla McMillan

["In psychological terms, the Kennedy assassination and the Nixon impeachment are nothing more than paraphrases of each other."]



many rational people continue not only to believe but passionately to defend them.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1973

unsettled feelings most Americans have about that traumatic event in the emotions, in the deeper, the still Dallas. Why? The answer of course is in

peaching President Nixon. least some of the doubts about imsame deep pyschological recesses as dent Kennedy's death comes from the the emotions which are creating at emotion Americans have about Presitruth is that the unresolved residue of hind—a startling truth appears. This ined—and conspiracy theories put be And once these feelings are exam-

assassination and the Nixon impeachment are nothing more than paraphrases of each other. In psychological terms, the Kennedy

each is parricide, the murder of the The phenomenon at the heart of

sary. Fearful that the father, who mother by force, by murder if neceshis father, to dispossess him from his to psychoanalytic interpretation, the to possess his mother, desires to kill Freud said that parricide was "the primal crime of humanity." According son, yearning deep in the unconscious father by the son.

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bigger and more powerful, will punish him by castration, the son represses the wish to kill, and, in the Freudian tations, it is this act of repression that and other widely accepted interprelies at the heart of all neuroses.

dead was that of parricide. country. To Oswald, and to the rest of father. His mother was father and mother both. Yet in spite of the inus, the emotional significance of the into politics, against the father of the his family were displaced outward, most, he chose to enact the unresolved most people, and all neurotics, he completeness of the family circle, that were originally confined within part of the drama—violently. Feelings failed to resolve them. But, unlike Oswald had the Oedipal emotions. Like drama. Oswald, it is true, lacked a the political arena of the ancient nedy was a parricide, an enactment in The assassination of President Ken-

evoked more poignant still. We hold tiveness, his charm spread over us like a mantle, made the feelings he feelings. President Kennedy's attrac-He awakens the keenest memories and Because he is so relentlessly visible, the President is alive in our emotions. ings that were in Oswald are in us all. Twisted though they were, the feel-

> in ourselves against having to accept those feelings are a defense, a screen, a barrier,

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truth of our own emotions. reasons, too. The demand for more and more evidence is a blind, an obready is overwhelming. There are legal and political reasons, of course. The proof. But there seem to be emotional accusations of crimes require careful dence of guilt when the evidence alment of President Nixon is that here of our behavior toward the impeachagain we are demanding more evi-The suspiciously irrational feature

underneath are the same: the primal wish to kill the father, guilt and hor-Today it is we who are challenged to be the executioners. The rifle and after all. ror over this and, at last, a desire to protect him, to keep him in his place the bullet are missing, but the feelings

avenge his father's death and guilt at conflicting emotions of desire hesitate. having desired that very death, we And so, like Hamlet, whipsawed to

the Kennedy assassination Priscilla McMillan is writing a book on