

Harrowing Official Report

By **BOB CONSIDINE**
Examiner Correspondent

WASHINGTON — The full, harrowingly detailed official report of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the murder of assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was released to the nation and the world last night.

The historic 300,000-word document, issued after a 10-month study by Chief Justice Earl Warren's commission, contains no major revelations. But historian and everyday reader will find in it endless veins of collateral footnotes about the epic tragedy and its principals, ranging all the way from the then 15-year Oswald's longing to kill President Eisenhower to an aborted attempt by Dallas officials to seize President Kennedy's body for an autopsy.

Oswald alone, without the aid or urging of co-conspirators, killed President Kennedy with two shots from the muzzle of a mail-order rifle, the Warren Report declares without equivocation.

AGAINST MAN

It recreates in laconic language the very course of the shots, graphically reconstructs the "cruel and shocking act of violence directed against a man, a family, a nation, and against all mankind."

The first bullet plunged into the back of the President's neck and emerged from his adam's apple. The second struck JFK in the right temple and ripped away a massive portion of his skull and brain. But, incredibly, he was still alive when admitted to the hospital 13 minutes later.

The 888-page report charges bluntly that Secret Service agents assigned to protect President Kennedy were remiss in carrying out proper precautionary procedures in the days and hours leading up to the assassina-

tion, and criticizes liaison between the Secret Service and FBI. It praises the men concerned for their courageous actions in the wake of the shooting, recommends changes designed to strengthen presidential security.

FATEFUL REMARK

But at the same time the report recalls, resignedly, that on the morning of the killing President Kennedy told Kenneth O'Donnell that any President could be prey to the combination of an assassin, a high building and a telescopic sight.

The fatal shots from Oswald's \$12.78 Italian Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5 mm rifle, to which he had affixed a 4-power telescopic sight costing \$7.17, whistled down from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository just as the President agreed that the cheering peple of Dallas did, indeed, love him.

In other critical sectors of the report, the commission questions whether Oswald, had he lived, could have obtained a fair trial in Dallas "or elsewhere." It equally blames Dallas law enforcement personnel and the news media which covered the tumultuous event of last November 22-24 for creating an atmosphere in which Oswald could not have obtained his constitutional rights.

TRACED TO OSWALD

The report states clinically that Texas Gov. John B. Connally Jr., who rode in the death car with the President, was struck by a bullet that pierced his back, collapsed a lung, emerged from under his right breast, proceeded through his right wrist and imbedded itself in his left thigh. Ballistic experts traced the extracted shell to Oswald's abandoned rifle.

It conceivably could have been the same bullet that pierced President Kennedy's neck—the first shot—but Gov. Connally told the commission he believes he was hit by the second of the three shots Oswald fired. A fragment of the temple lodged under and behind his right eye.

In the course of his rudderless escape pattern, Oswald pumped four fatal bullets from his Smith and Wesson .38 into Dallas police officer J. D. Tippit when the patrolman emerged from his car to question him, 42 minutes after the assassination. Cornered in a nearby movie house, Oswald would have killed at least other arresting officer had not his gun jamed.

WALKER PLOT

The 24 year old ex-Marine marksman and Marxist misfit emerges, in the endless report, as a one-man scourge. The report examines at new length the well-laid plans to kill Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, resigned Army officer who had become a controversial political figure, and the near miss that followed.

From the lips of Mrs. Marina Oswald, attractive Russian-born wife of the assassin, the committee learned and reveals that Oswald talked about killing the then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson when he visited Dallas in April, 1963, "if the opportunity arose."

Nov. 22, Johnson's life may have been spared by the quick reaction of Secret Service agent Rufus W. Youngblood, who was riding in the front of the car that bore the Vice President. Youngblood knocked the Vice President, then sat on him, thus providing a human screen.

Nowhere in the blizzard of infinite detail covered by the report could the Commission put a positive finger on the motive of assassin Oswald or avenger Jack Ruby.

Oswald, in the words of the report, "was profoundly alienated from the world in which he lived. His life was characterized by isolation, frustration, and failure.

"He had very few, if any, close relationships with other people and he appeared to have great difficulty in finding a meaningful place in the world. He was never satisfied with anything.

"He accused his wife of preferring others to himself and told her to return to the Soviet Union without him but without a divorce. At the same time he professed his love for her and said that he could not get along without her.

RUBY'S EMOTIONS

As for Ruby, the Commission observed warily that his death sentence is under appeal and any search of his motives might compromise his case. But it produces a portion of Ruby's testimony as to his emotions on Sunday, November 24, the day he slipped into Dallas police headquarters and sealed Oswald's lips forever with a .38 bullet into the assassin's abdomen in full view of a nationwide telecast:

"... I saw a letter to Caroline. Someone had writ-

ten a letter to Caroline. The most heartbreaking letter. I don't remember the contents. Alongside that letter on the same sheet of paper was a small comment in the newspaper that, I don't know how it started, that Mrs. Kennedy may have to come back for the trial of Lee Harvey Oswald.

TELL TRUTH

"I don't know what bug got ahold of me. I don't know what it is, but I am going to tell the truth word for word.

"I am taking a pill called Preludin. It is a harmless pill, and it is very easy to get in the drugstore. It isn't a highly prescribed pill. I use it for dieting.

"I don't partake of that much food. I think that was a stimulus to give me an emotional feeling that suddenly I felt, which was so stupid, that I wanted to show my love for our faith, being of the Jewish faith, and I never used the term and I don't want to go into that—suddenly the feeling, the emotional feeling came within me that someone owed this debt to our beloved President to save her the ordeal of coming back. I don't know why that came through my mind."

Though he was a professed Marxist, Castro sympathizer and would-be-defector to the Soviet Union, Oswald was under no direction by any foreign power, ideology or domestic extremist group as he pulled the trigger, the report flatly declares. In this respect, it specifically hammers at any implication of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk told the commission last June 10:

"... I think also that although there had been grave differences between Chairman Khrushchav and President Kennedy, I think there were evidences of a certain mutual respect that had developed over some of the experiences, both good and bad, through which these two men had lived."

HEAVY CRITICISM

The report does not spare criticism of the activities of the Dallas Police Department, the Dallas County District Attorney, and the news media which swarmed on Dallas after the assassination.

It focuses dourly on the many and often erroneous

statements given out by Dallas police authorities, particularly Chief Jesse E. Curry and Capt. J. Will Fritz, and those of District Attorney Henry Wade. It reveals that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, angry over news leaks of FBI information in Dallas, personally requested Chief Curry to "not go on the air any more until his case is resolved."

The report accuses the police and District Attorney Wade—who later won a death verdict against Ruby after a sensation-laden trial—of creating an atmosphere which "endangered Oswald's constitutional right to a trial by an impartial jury."

For example, though expressly recognizing that Oswald's wife could not be compelled to testify against him, District Attorney Wade revealed to the Nation that Marina Oswald had affirmed her husband's ownership of a rifle like that found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository.

NO LIE TEST

"Curry stated that Oswald had refused to take a lie detector test, although such a statement would have been inadmissible in a trial. Wade might have influenced prospective jurors by his mistaken statement that the paraffin test showed that Oswald had fired a gun. . . .

"Captain Fritz said that the case against Oswald was 'clinched.' Curry reported on Saturday (Nov. 23) that 'we are sure of our case.' Curry announced that he considered Oswald sane, and Wade told the public that he would ask for the death penalty.

"The commission agrees (with the American Bar Association) that Lee Harvey Oswald's opportunity for a trial by 12 jurors free of preconception as to his guilt or innocence would have been seriously jeopardized by the premature disclosure and weighing of the evidence against him."

PRESS BLASTED

In the section of the report directed toward the news media, the commission said:

"Had the police not released the specific items of evidence against Oswald, it is still possible that the other information presented on television and in the newspapers, chiefly of a biographical nature, would itself have had a prejudicial effect on the public."

After condemning the Dallas police for failing to con-

trol the press and check the flow of undigested evidence to the public, the report continues:

"The commission believes, however, that a part of the responsibility for the unfortunate circumstances following the President's death must be borne by the news media. The crowd of newsmen generally failed to respond properly to the demands of the police."

It charges that certain unnamed members of the press persuaded Dallas police to expose Oswald to a news conference late on the night of the assassination to prove that he had not been the victim of Gestapo manhandling.

SHARE BLAME

"The general disorder in the Police and Courts building during November 22-24 reveals a regrettable lack of self-discipline by the newsmen. The Commission believes that the news media, as well as the police authorities, who failed to impose conditions more in keeping with the orderly process of justice, must share responsibility for the failure of law enforcement which occurred in connection with the death of Oswald.

"The experience in Dallas is a dramatic affirmation of the need for steps to bring about a proper balance between the right of the public to be kept informed and the right of the individual to a fair and impartial trial."

The commission avoided exclamation points in the report, though some of its unvarnished drama and stunning quotes would prompt a forest of such punctuation in any other document of such nature.

The report covered starkly and violently the chilling moment in the Presidential limousine when Oswald fired from his sixth floor sniper's aerie. (See story Page —).

In kaleidoscopic action the President grabbed "at himself and lurched forward," Mrs. Kennedy cried out, "Oh, my God, they have shot my husband," and she cradled the mortally wounded President in her arms.

Then she was climbing out of her seat up onto the back of the car, to be saved by Secret Service Agent Clinton J. Hill was dashed up from the following auto in the cavalcade.

Then the 80 M.P.H. dash to the hospital, with Mrs. Kennedy again cradling the President in her arms.

When the motorcade screeched up to the hospital's emergency entrance, initially, she refused to release her hold on her husband. And then she did.

Dr. Charles J. Carrico, first surgeon to work on the expiring Chief Executive, testified:

"The President was blue-white or ashen in color; had slow, spasmodic agonal respiration without any coordination; made no voluntary movements; had his eyes open with the pupils dilated without any reaction to light; evidenced no palpable pulse; and had a few chest sounds which were thought to be heart beats." A tracheotomy was quickly performed.

Jacqueline Kennedy alternated between watching the doctors work furiously to maintain life in her husband, and waiting outside the operating room. During this vigil, Secret Service men urged Vice President Johnson to leave the hospital and return immediately to Washington, for he might be earmarked for assassination too.

LONG WAIT

Johnson refused to leave until he received definite word about the President's condition. When it came to him at 1:20 p. m. (CST), he prepared to take Mrs. Kennedy with him to the waiting jet.

She refused to leave without the dead President's body. Johnson then told the Secret Service he would not leave Dallas without her. A compromise was reached. LBJ was rushed to Love Field, keeping his head below the window level of his car en route.

Jacqueline Kennedy ordered her dead husband's casket and saw him wrapped in a blanket and placed in it. But then two men, identified in the report as "Dallas officials," appeared and informed the mourners that the body "could not be removed from the city until an autopsy was performed." The report adds, cryptically:

"Despite the protests of these officials, the casket was wheeled out of the hospital, placed in an ambulance, and transported to the airport."

Still in her blood-spattered suit and torn stockings, Jacqueline Kennedy somberly witnessed the administration of the oath of office to her husband's successor. Air Force One, the big jet, took off quickly thereafter, some of its occupants believing,

until the wheels lifted that Dallas officials might try to prevent the departure and take possession of JFK's body.

The autopsy that took place late that night at National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., noted that "President Kennedy was 46 years of age, 72½ inches tall, weighed 170 pounds, had blue eyes and reddish-brown hair. The body was muscular and well developed with no gross skeletal abnormalities except for those caused by the gunshot wounds."

Under "pathological diagnosis" the cause of death was set forth "gunshot wound, head."