



Donald Stanley's Book Corner

SF Examiner
Sept 7 1966

JFK Slain in Racist Plot?

Leo Sauvage has been Le Figaro's correspondent in this country for 18 years. His book, "The Oswald Affair," therefore, is well grounded in American realities and institutions, unlike most of the sensational European interpretations of what happened in Dallas.

The most sensational of his chapters, in fact, is relatively brief—he believes Kennedy was slain in a racist plot and Oswald was killed with the assistance of Dallas authorities who feared that if Oswald were brought to trial their professional reputations would be ruined by the defense exposure of the flimsiness of their case.

The greater part of Sauvage, however, is concerned with a point by point destruction of the Warren Commission's chief findings. It seems to be perilously easy to accomplish this destruction and one wonders how much longer the President can keep mum in the face of the rising barrage directed at his blue ribbon panel.

MOST OF SAUVAGE'S criticisms have been seen — with slightly different emphases — in the already published works of Lane, Weisberg, Fox and Epstein. He is highly critical of Lane himself, whom Sauvage feels should have either put up the unidentified witnesses he told the Commission he had found or shut up. He is very complimentary about Epstein's "Inquest."

Sauvage's organization and readability is superior. Despite a tendency to be snide and condescending, the book is a pleasure rather than a chore. It is, however, without an index, which seems inexcusable.

The possibility that Oswald had an alibi is examined in detail by Sauvage and this is new. Sauvage argues rather convincingly that it was impossible for Oswald to get off his shots, ditch the rifle, get down four flights of stairs to the lunchroom and buy a Coke before he was seen there by a policeman who charged into the building as soon as the shots were fired.

Other facts I don't recall others treating but which Sauvage finds peculiar — to say the least — are such things as:

There were no other arrests than Oswald's apprehension by Tippit based on the vague description broadcast by the police 14 minutes after the shooting; Oswald, allegedly trying to escape, carried only \$13.87 in his pocket; since the FBI discovered in one day the mail-order house that had sent the rifle to A. Hidell (Oswald's pseudonym) it should have been able in 10 months to find the firm that

provided the cartridges, if there was such a firm; if the Commission's job was to discover the truth about the assassination why, for its first three witnesses, did it call people who knew nothing about the assassination — Oswald's wife, mother and brother?

SAUVAGE ASKED himself why, from the very outset, was the "lone assassin" theory the one accepted by Dallas authorities to the exclusion of all contradicting testimony and evidence?

His answer is provocative, if not greatly illuminating:

Because if more than one person were involved it meant a conspiracy. And if there were a conspiracy the shooting would have automatically become a federal crime. Chief Curry and District Attorney Wade—the latter a monster of ego and ambition—would have had no central role in the crime of the century.

THE OSWALD AFFAIR. By Leo Sauvage. World; 418 pages, illus.; \$6.95.