

## The Killings

In the aftermath of the incredible events in Dallas, three questions remain unanswered:

(1) *Did Oswald kill the President, and if so why?*

(2) *Why did Ruby kill Oswald?*

(3) *Are the police concealing anything?*

Whether the cloak of mystery that now shrouds the Dallas events will ever be penetrated fully is uncertain. President Johnson's appointment of a special commission to inquire into the assassination was clearly a response to the misgivings felt throughout the nation and the world that a host of questions remained unanswered and that the handling of the situation by the Dallas police was inept and had in itself created new grounds for suspicion.

"The President is instructing the special commission to satisfy itself

that the truth is known as far as it can be discovered, and to report its findings and conclusions to him, to the American people and to the world," the Presidential order said. The feeling was that only such a full-scale investigation by a commission of eminent members might help resolve the many mysterious aspects of the Dallas events, and possibly answer the questions that have arisen.

As for the question of whether Oswald was the assassin, these were the main items in the chain of circumstantial evidence against him as reported by the Dallas police:

His palm prints were found on or near the window of the book warehouse from which the President had been shot. His palm print was also found on the rifle identified as the murder weapon. The serial number of the rifle checked with one Oswald had purchased from a Chicago mail order house under an assumed name. A man who drove Oswald to work at the book warehouse on the morning of the assassination said he was carrying a long paper package which Oswald said was a window shade.

Oswald denied throughout his interrogation that he had shot the President and police did not indicate whether he had offered any explanation of the incriminating evidence. Criminal attorneys pointed out that while the case against Oswald seemed strong, it was almost entirely circumstantial. Such evidence they said can only be fully tested under rigid cross-examination, when sometimes a quite different interpretation will develop.

## Oswald's Motive

As for the question of Oswald's motive if he was the killer, this is perhaps the most mysterious aspect of the entire case. Police have been seeking to unravel that perplexing question by trying to piece together a picture of Oswald's life. As an adolescent and later as a Marine, he seems to have been a withdrawn person—several acquaintances described him as a "loner"—of somewhat erratic and unstable behavior. His family was poor and rootless (his father died before he was born) and he became enamored of Marxism in his teens.

But there seems to have been an unsteady quality in his left-wing allegiance as well as the other aspects of his life. Moreover there is no clear and necessary link between Oswald's left-wing and pro-Castro sympathies and the assassination of the President.

There has been speculation that Gov. John Connally of Texas, who was shot at the same time as the President, might have been the real target. While Secretary of the Navy he received a letter from Oswald protesting against his "undesirable" discharge from the Marines. In a hospital interview last week, Mr. Connally said, "I think the man did what he intended to do—shoot both of us." That still threw no clear light on motive and many persons are convinced that the motive for the assassination will always remain shrouded in mystery because it probably lay in the dark and twisted recesses of an insane mind.

The murder of Oswald, of course, has enormously complicated the problem of bringing the motive for the assassination of the President to light. Oswald's murder precipitated a storm of criticism of the Dallas police throughout the nation and a good part of the world. Although they had been warned that an attempt might be

made on Oswald's life, they announced in advance the approximate time of his transfer from one prison to the other and they permitted live television coverage of the event.

It was from the crowd of newsmen and detectives that Ruby suddenly stepped forward, placed a gun against Oswald's abdomen and fired. Although known to the police and thus easily identifiable as a person who had no right to be present, Ruby had little difficulty in slipping into the basement and waiting undisturbed for his victim.

As for Ruby's motive, there was also a deep atmosphere of mystery and suspicion around that question. Members of Ruby's family described him as a deep admirer of President Kennedy who had "grieved terribly" over the assassination. His attorneys said they would plead temporary insanity.

## Wild Rumors

But speculation was rife and there were wild rumors. One had it that Oswald may have been murdered to prevent his revealing the names of other persons or groups involved in the assassination and the real motives behind it. This rumor was given some credence behind the Iron Curtain where it was said that the assassination might have been engineered by right-wing extremists or segregation fanatics, and that Oswald's left-wing associations were a decoy.

As for the question of whether the police are concealing anything, they claim to have spread all the relevant facts on the record. Dallas authorities came in for a storm of criticism and even cries of "collusion" when they announced immediately after Oswald's murder that the "case was closed." Among the questions raised were: Did the police have evidence of Oswald's connection with a right-wing or other plot as charged behind the Iron Curtain? Did they have leads about possible accomplices which for some reason they had failed to pursue or disclose? Did they have evidence of an association between Oswald and Ruby prior to the murder, or significant evidence about Ruby's own associations? Why was Ruby permitted in the police station basement?

No one has propounded any clear theory about why the Dallas police should have withheld any information. The hope is that the Presidential commission will clear up the question about whether any important facts have been deliberately concealed.