

NO FINAL FINDING YET, IT NOW SAYS

Oswald: Is the commission in doubt?

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION on the Assassination of President Kennedy is striving to create the impression that it has not pre-judged Lee Oswald, the man accused of murdering Kennedy in Dallas Nov. 22.

After several months of intentionally leaking information to the press that it considered Oswald to have been the lone and unaided assassin—as an FBI report concluded last December—the commission is now taking pains to stress that it has not reached a conclusion and will not issue a verdict until its own investigation is complete.

The purpose of this recent posture is undoubtedly to answer observers who have criticized the commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren for prematurely assessing Oswald's alleged guilt while still continuing to investigate pertinent facts that conceivably could determine his innocence.

THIS REVISED PUBLIC attitude was first evidenced June 3 when the UPI reported from Washington that "some feeling exists among members of the Warren commission that no final conclusion should be reached at this time that Oswald acted alone in the assassination . . . A spokesman for the commission had said previously that the group's final report would dispel all speculation that the assassination might have been part of a political conspiracy. But sources now say there is some feeling by members that it would be premature to reach such a conclusion until the investigation ordered by President Johnson is completed."

Several days later the New York Herald Tribune announced: "Reports that the commission had concluded—before its investigation was completed—that Oswald acted alone has forced the panel to go all-out to dispel doubts as to the thoroughness of its proceedings."

Warren's visit to Jack Ruby—Oswald's convicted killer—in a Dallas jail June 7 offers a particularly clear example of the conflict between the commission's previously implied belief that Oswald and Ruby were unknown to each other and the Chief Justice's lengthy questioning of Ruby about just this circumstance.

Warren spoke to Ruby for three hours, accompanied by commission counsel J. Lee Rankin and two aides, commission member Rep. Gerald Ford (R-Ill.), Ruby's lawyer and Dallas officials. "No details of Ruby's testimony were disclosed," the AP reported, and then noted that "it was learned"—apparently from the commission—"that the commission asked Ruby the following questions: Did he know Oswald? What was the nature of his [Ruby's] trip to Cuba in the late 1950s?

Was there any element of conspiracy with Oswald's murder?"

The news agency then quoted "reliable sources"—again the commission?—as stating that Ruby said he did not know Oswald and that there was no conspiracy.



CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN
He asked some questions

IT IS KNOWN that 10 persons have signed sworn depositions to the commission that they knew Oswald and Ruby to have been acquainted. The commission has said, however, that lie detector tests have proven the witnesses unreliable. Oddly, no action has been contemplated against the 10 whose sworn testimony would certainly merit such action if, indeed, they were lying.

Among the 10, according to the Herald Tribune, "were a Dallas attorney and a waitress who claimed she had once served Oswald and Ruby as they sat together in a restaurant. Ironically, several of the 10 were checked out to be homosexuals. Psychiatrists who gave Ruby extensive tests reported homosexual tendencies in the former strip-club operator."

The commission has yet to revise prior forecasts that its investigation would be completed and its report published by the end of June. But judging from the number of witnesses to be called in the next week it would seem impossible to hear, digest, interpret and publish such information in so short a time. This has led to "unofficial" reports that the report deadline will be extended.

THE COMMISSION has been extremely anxious to conclude its investigation before the presidential nominating conventions (the Republicans meet July 13) to avoid having the inquiry into Kennedy's death become an election issue, with charges of plot and counterplot polluting the political atmosphere. Despite this impetus to an early report and the ambivalence of the commission's new position on Oswald's guilt, observers are now considering this question:

Is it possible that the commission is giving credence to theories widely held in Europe and to some extent in America that Oswald may not have been the assassin or, if he was, that there is a

chance he was acting in collusion with others?

The commission is quite obviously not satisfied that it has all the answers. There could be no other reason than this for the scheduled second appearance June 11 of Marina Oswald, widow of the accused, who in her previous testimony said she believed her husband guilty of the assassination. Marina Oswald was questioned at great length during her last appearance—not to mention the endless questions put to her by the FBI and Secret Service during the six weeks she was sequestered by federal officials after Oswald was slain in the basement of a Dallas jail Nov. 24.

ALSO SCHEDULED to testify this week were several State Department officials, including Secretary of State Dean Rusk and, perhaps most interestingly, Frances Knight, director of the passport division. It was Miss Knight's office that issued with unusual haste a passport to Oswald for a visit to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union last June—a year after he returned to this country following his defection to the Soviet Union. This is a prime reason why some persons are convinced that Oswald was connected with either the State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency. Why else, it is asked, would a person of his doubtful security reputation be granted a passport?



SLAYER JACK RUBY
A three-hour grilling

Others scheduled before the commission in the second week of June included Dallas District Attorney Henry Wade, who made several contradictory statements just after Oswald's capture in a movie theater, and Dallas police sergeant Patrick Dean. Wade will probably be questioned about the possibility that Ruby and Oswald were acquainted. After Ruby was sentenced to death March 14, Wade said he had information that the two had known each other but that he had refrained from introducing such material at the trial because it could not be proven.



COINCIDING AS CLOSELY as possible with the commission report, Marzani & Munsell, publishers, will release a book June 15 casting doubt on the official FBI version of the assassination. Written by Joachim Joesten, the book is entitled, "Oswald, Assassin or Fall Guy?" Another book, "Who Killed Kennedy?" by Thomas Buchanan, has been published in England and France, but no American publisher has expressed a desire to publish it. A third book, by attorney Mark Lane, who is conducting an independent investigation into the murder, will be published by Grove Press in several months.

Lane is on a lecture tour of Europe, building support for his Committees of Inquiry which are concerned with investigating the murder. European newspapers are giving him wide publicity. In Paris, he announced that the Association of French Jurists will convene an international conference of lawyers after the U.S. elections in November to hear evidence and arrive at its own conclusions about the "murder of the century."