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**Warren Report****Revisited**

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**JOHN F. KENNEDY**, had he lived, would have been 58 on May 29. He died, as we know, nearly 12 years ago, the victim of assassination. The anniversary of his birth offers an opportunity for a few observations on the burgeoning demands for a new investigation of his death. These demands are cropping up everywhere — in Congress, on college campuses, in popular magazines.

Kennedy died of bullet wounds suffered at 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 22, 1963, as he was riding in a motorcade in Dallas. Shortly before 2 p.m., following the fatal shooting of Police Officer J. D. Tippit, police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald and charged him with both crimes. Less than 48 hours later, Oswald himself was slain by Jack Ruby, a night club operator.



One week after the assassination, President Johnson named a seven-man investigating commission, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren. The commission made its report in September of 1964. The report advanced these conclusions:

"There is no question in the mind of any member of the commission that all the shots which caused the President's and Governor Connally's wounds were fired from the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository. The shots . . . were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald. . . . The commission has found no evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate President Kennedy."

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**THESE CONCLUSIONS** were strongly attacked when the Warren Report first appeared. After a few years of quiescence, the controversy now has been revived. Non-believers contend that Kennedy was slain by a conspiracy; and that the Warren Commission collaborated in a massive cover-up to prevent the truth from coming out. They want the investigation reopened.

Some of the critics' arguments strike me as persuasive. But it takes a very accommodating gullet to swallow the conspiracy theory whole, and my present inclination is to stick with the Warren Report.

During the course of its investigation, the commission took testimony from 552 witnesses. The FBI conducted 25,000 interviews and submitted 2300 reports amounting to 25,000 pages. The Secret Service conducted 1550 interviews and made 800 reports of 4600 pages. This tremendous mass of material simply cannot be discarded as so much whitewash.

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**IN ORDER TO BELIEVE** the conspiracy theory, one must believe that all these were parties to a gigantic cover-up: the commission members, the commission staff, the slain President's brother Robert, the President's successor in office, the FBI, the Secret Service, the CIA, and the Dallas police. That is for starters. One must discount the sworn testimony of ballistics experts, the evidence of Oswald's fingerprints, and the testimony of eye-witnesses.

The dissenters ask too much. Yes, the critics have raised some troublesome doubts, but great crimes inevitably produce great doubts. Whole schools of scholars still sift the assassination of Lincoln. You can hear arguments on the role of Brutus in the assassination of Caesar. I wouldn't gag the dissenters for the world — we ought always to pursue truth — but for the moment, I wouldn't buy the hyped-up conjectures they're trying to sell.