

LA Times NOV 3 1966

Viewing the Warren Report

BY ROSCOE DRUMMOND

The way things are now going, the nation is headed into a morass of pernicious rumor and speculation about the assassination of President Kennedy.

This miasma is being fed from two directions:

1—By some pious innocents who foolishly suggest that it would be better if some facts bearing on the assassination did not come out, that a little cover-up might be a good thing.

2—By a spate of books by authors—mostly mischievous and one-sided, sometimes reckless and one or two honestly fascinated by some of the unanswered questions—who suggest a vast, unfinished conspiracy and charge the Warren Commission with either being grossly incompetent or a tool of the conspiracy.

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I am confident there is no cover-up and if there are any new facts to shed any new light whatsoever on the Kennedy tragedy, let them come out. They should.

The truth is that in the hundreds of thousands of words in the six main books and other articles attacking the motives, acts, and conclusions of the Warren Commission, there is no evidence of a plot, a conspiracy or any assassin other than Lee Harvey Oswald.

Since they produce no new evidence, where are these conspiracy-prone writers drawing their information from? Mostly from two sources—from the 888-page report of the Warren Commission and the 26 volumes of testimony and exhibits which it made public, and from their own fertile imaginations and theorizing about the same evidence which brought the commission to its unanimous conclusion.

Obviously, if there is a cover-up of the real assassin the Warren Commission must have perpetrated it or, if it failed to discover the assassin, then it must have falsified the

evidence on which it based its verdict.

Do you recall the make-up of the Warren Commission which President Johnson named within a week after President Kennedy's murder? I doubt if a more experienced, able, single-minded, honorable and detached panel could be put together than this:

Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the United States; Democratic Sen. Richard Russell of Georgia and Republican Sen. John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, two of the most trusted and respected men of the Senate; Rep. Hale Boggs of Louisiana, assistant Democratic leader of the House; Rep. Gerald Ford of Michigan, Republican House leader; Allen Dulles, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency; and John McCloy, lawyer, banker and diplomat who has served five presidents.

If there were a conspiracy to cover up the truth about the assassination, it would have to involve the chief justice, the Republican, Democratic, and non-party members of the commission, the FBI, the CIA, the Secret Service, the distinguished doctors of the armed services and the White House—a conspiracy so multiple and complex that it would have fallen of its own weight.

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A conspiracy to what purpose? Nothing is cited. And with what motive? None is offered. Only one writer, Richard H. Popkin, provides even an imagined reason for the kind of cover-up he alleges. It is suggested that possibly President Kennedy's successor was involved and as evidence the author refers only to "rumors I have often heard."

My own judgment is that most Americans do not want to see the tragedy of the Kennedy assassination turned into a witch-hunt. But if there are new facts—not merely fictions—they will want them brought out.