

William F. Buckley Jr.

And So On and On...



HOW DOES the tortured matter stand? Every day, another objection is developed, or at any rate stressed, to the findings of the Warren Commission. Every other day, that development is at best shot down, at least vigorously undermined, by experts associated with the Warren Commission. The bullet entered the President's body at spot X and so could not have emerged at spot Y and gone on to travel through Governor Connally's body?

Oh but it didn't enter at spot X — one of the autopsists comes forward — it entered at spot Z.

The original FBI report contradicts the Warren Report?

Yes — it does; but the Warren Report was the result of a more careful survey, and such things do as a matter of fact happen.

THE PRESIDENT could not have been shot before frame 210 of the Zapruder film? Oh but in fact he might very well have been shot at Zapruder 185, because at that moment there was an opening in the foliage that subsequently, until Z210, stood between Oswald and Mr. Kennedy.

Well but the President didn't make any convulsive movement until 210, suggesting that he was not struck until then. Oh but in fact human beings are known to delay a second, or a second and a half, before registering the shock of a bullet.

And so it goes, on and on and on. With everyone now fueling the fires, most lately Life Magazine which on the flimsiest authority — Governor Connally's identification, in a poor film, of the frame 230

which he believes recorded the entry of the bullet into his body. As if one could tell . . .

What does it all mean, beyond the sleuthful absorption of a society of riddle-fanciers? It can mean, and probably does, that the Warren Commission didn't do the best conceivable job — not so much by not coming up with the correct solutions, as by leaving itself exposed to the nit-pickers, and by demonstrating here and there a kind of enthusiasm for its adopted hypotheses, which are not an exact transcript of the supporting documentation.

There are people around who are making a very good thing out of the affair. No doubt many of them are quite sincere. No doubt a sincerity which is also profitable is a conjunction that is the cause of joy abounding. Life Magazine chooses the anniversary of Mr. Kennedy's death to blow the thing up all over again. Any excuse to use those morbid, exciting, ghoulish pictures which bring in, and continue to bring in, the paying customers, as Madame Tussaud long ago taught us.

AND, FINALLY, politics. It has actually been spoken, by men either mad or malevolent, and no doubt in many cases both, that the assassination was arranged by President Johnson. Those who say such things are in a class with Oswald — killers; though less daring than Oswald, who no doubt anticipated his own punishment.

We can expect the worst. In the decades to come, there will be as many neurotics and romancers stepping forward to confess that they were Oswald's accomplice, as have come forward claiming to be Anastasia.