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The Warren Report Destroys the Rumors

The Warren Commission deserves a special word of commendation for the care with which it ran down every supposition and theory about the Kennedy assassination, however bizarre and preposterous those theories might appear to be.

It would have been easy to sweep aside most of this rubbish. The essential facts about the assassination formed a pattern so clear and so credible that they left no room, in any rational assessment, for the doubts that persisted in some quarters and for the wild conspiratorial theories that were raised in others. Yet despite this credible pattern of what happened and why, the Warren Commission exercised a great deal of diligence and patience trying to track down every doubt and to explore every theory.

An example is offered in the case of Revilo P. Oliver, a professor at the University of Illinois and a member of the John Birch Society. Professor Oliver theorized that President Kennedy had been collaborating with the Communists. A point finally was reached, the professor testified, at which the President decided to break his Communist ties and "turn American." When the Communists got wind of this break, Professor Oliver says, they conspired to have him assassinated.

This is a sample of the kind of nonsense that the Warren Commission came upon. But instead of ignoring the nonsense—and the temptation to do so must have been strong—the commission summoned Professor Oliver, heard him out, and questioned him at length. The professor's testimony runs to 17,000 words in the commission report. It

boils down to a curious fantasy, concocted out of myths and lacking even a shred of supporting fact.

Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, Lee Harvey's mother, also was questioned at length—to the extent of 60,000 words of testimony in the commission report. But the commission found not a whit of evidence to support her idea that Lee Harvey was somehow connected with the CIA, or that the FBI knew about Jack Ruby and questioned her about him on the day before Lee Harvey was slain.



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It was inevitable that a tragedy as shattering as the assassination of a President would raise doubts in many minds. It probably was equally inevitable that some persons would seek to capitalize on those doubts.

Thomas B. Buchanan, an American living abroad, produced a book entitled "Who Killed Kennedy?" which elaborates on many of the doubts. The book has enjoyed a wide sale.

Mark Lane, a New York lawyer, thrust himself into the case early in the proceedings and for a brief period served as attorney for Mrs. Oswald. He then took to the lecture circuit advancing the theory that Lee Harvey Oswald could not have been the assassin. The commission did its best to hear out Mr. Lane and pin down his theories. At one point the commission even paid his travel expenses so Mr. Lane could return from Europe to testify before the commission again. But Mr. Lane turned out to be a difficult witness who was unusually secretive about his "sources of information."

To the great credit of the Warren Commission, it left no stone unturned in its search for the truth. It examined every witness who it thought might contribute even the smallest bit of evidence and it tried to explore in detail every doubt that had been raised.

The resulting report is a splendid example of painstaking research. It puts to rest the wild rumors and doubts and offers a convincing explanation of what happened on that tragic day in Dallas a year ago.