MAY HE REST IN PEACE

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On Friday, November 22, 1963, two sharp reports from a hi-powered rifle ended the life of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States. This event shocked the world and solumnized the American people. But before the final notes of the trumpets playing taps and the minister's intonation, "May he rest in peace," had barely faded with the soft breeze which passed over his grave, the American people began clamoring for an explanation. And this sound of the American society rushing to construct a three ringed circus under a giant big top of absurdity, drowned out these final words.

Within the confines of this giant main tent is the paying audience, who laid out their good money to be entertained. A paying audience whose money supports the show. In the outer periphery of the sawdust main floor are the clowns who dance in anticipation of wealth, prestige, or monuments. They draw the attention of the audience to them, and from them to the very center of the floor. Here you find the three main rings of attention. Located in the ring on the far left are the authors amalgamated, who are united in giving their real story, however warped, of the assassination. In the ring on the far right are located the monument monsters, who go to extremes in their every attempt to associate with the name Kennedy. And in the big ring we see the Warren players, who are busy remolding the structure of the Warren Investigation.

The lights are dimmed, the music swells, and the spotlights swing their powerful beams on the authors amalgamated. The audience becomes hushed, and they soon see that when the leader of an organization, a group, or even a club ceases to exist, the loss of this individual all too soon becomes the center of attention. But for purposes other than respect. He almost becomes an inanimate object which is bounced around from person to person for their own personal gain through money or prestige. His life is continually rehashed. Words upon words are mouthed expressing this fact, or questioning that opinion. More words are set down in great eulogies. And every time a word is spoken or written, the meanings it expresses, are adjusted to the whim of the reader or writer. In time one of two things happen. Either there is a movement toward the condemning of the man, or to the opposite extreme, a movement toward the excess exultation of the man and his deeds.

This is happening today to the memory of President Kennedy. Over three years have passed since that day in November, and still the men and women of the press cause his name to ring in the minds of every individual in the country every day of the week.
For a time, while still under the emotional atmosphere of the death, the number of books, magazines, and newspaper articles that flaunted the name Kennedy, were not noticed, for the public still wanted to remember the man as he was in all his alive vitality. As the months passed, however, the number of articles did not lessen, and in some cases they increased. Titles such as "A Day in the Life of the President," and "What was President Kennedy Really Like?," began to appear. From the woman's angle, there appeared articles such as "What it was Like to be Married to a Poet in New York," and in the White House, the there were the movie magazines with articles questioning, "Were Jack and Jackie Really Happy Together?" Even though these articles would not have great accuracy, they appealed to a large audience, and they sold. So now after three years, one has to question whether the staffs of magazines really want to write about the late President, out of respect for him, or whether they are just interested in using his name to sell magazines. May he rest in peace.

Soon more books were written. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. wrote, with the permission of the Kennedy Family, A Thousand Days. From a republication of the book in serial form by Life Magazine, there arose much controversy, for Schlesinger tried to be honest, and therefore, stepped on some people's toes. But even before the writing of this book, the President's self-effacing secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, published a book, My Twelve Years with President Kennedy. This was done completely without the knowledge of the Kennedy family, and they are quoted as saying that they regretted that she portrayed her adored boss so many tasty moments.

But now the real story of the assassination and the following events comes out in a book called, The Death of a President. But the real story contained some items which were considered in bad taste, and even though William Manchester was commissioned by the Kennedy family to write the book, the courts had to be dragged in, to vetta the manuscript and could not have printed. Through the book had a field day with this new twist of events, and now almost everybody in the country knows exactly what parts of the book are under question. When this book hits the stands, it will sell. But the story doesn't stop there. Now William Manchester has announced that he is deeply involved in writing a book on the troubles he has had with the Kennedy family in trying to get his previous work published. But, Manchester has not been the first to discover that the name Kennedy can bring prosperity to those who use it to advantage. The lights dim, but the act does not cease, for as long as there is a paying audience, the authors will continue to look for new tricks. And may he rest in peace.

Now the spotlights as well as the attention of every person in the audience swings to look at the monument monsters. In this ring, the audience sees the name Kennedy used for status and prestige purposes, and they see how the monsters are developing around the country a mass action toward the idea, Viet's create a monument to President Kennedy."

Nobody knows for sure how many thousand parks, schools, airfields, roads and plazas have been renamed after the late President. It all started in genuine respect for the man, but it too has been carried to complete "absurdity. An act of absurdity, a monument to absurdity, a monument to the state of Massachusetts, seven schools have become John F. Kennedy schools, and the state legislature has before it more than 100 similar proposals to rename other buildings and public works. In Hudson, Massachusetts, the grammar school, junior high school, and high school were all renamed after JFK." It has gotten so bad that the students of Marlboro High School, located in the Boston suburb of Marlboro, have decided to withdraw their petition, signed in the emotion of the death, calling for the renaming of the school after the President. One disgruntled student pointed out that his high school has had a rivalry with the high school in Hudson for the past 65 years, but he questioned, "If we're a Kennedy and they're a Kennedy, what kind of rivalry is that?" The act is over for today, but more monuments will be built as long as there is an audience to look at them. And may he rest in peace.

Finally, all attention focuses center. The ring becomes alive with light, and the moving Warren players. The stage is set for the re-inauguration of the assassination, something that the audience has seen before, but will still pay to see again. Even though the events of the day and the days that followed are now common knowledge. The name Lee Harvey Oswald causes people to be repulsed. The name of Jack Ruby causes the people to question: "Why did he really kill Oswald?" The hateful event of the assassination has been investigated over and over again. The Warren Report was printed and it disappeared from the stands almost as fast as it could be put there. The Warren Report was supposed to have been the final say as to the total events of the assassination. But this was not so, the people of the media could not leave it alone, but this was to continue probing and questioning. So now the Warren Investigation has been investigated by Look Magazine, it has been investigated by the BBC, the British Broadcasting Company, which took five hours of its air time to completely re-inact the assassination, it has been investigated
by Life Magazine, it has been investigated by Time Magazine, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report. The Warren investigation has been investigated by almost every major newspaper in the country. This continued remolding of the events caused the validity of the report to be questioned, and it was wondered if it should be discarded. Congress stepped in, made their own brief investigation, and determined that if the Warren Commission was wrong in some spots, the areas were so small that they could be overlooked. This conclusion appeased no one's appetite, and so today, the report is still picked at, prodded into, and pried apart to see if there are new areas which can contested. Why does all this go on? It sells!!! May he rest in peace.

Because of all this continued drive for association with the name Kennedy, and the eagerness with which the crowd responds, the authors amalgamated, and monument monsters, are slowly idealizing Kennedy, placing him upon a pedestal, singling him out as a man among men. Because of all this continued remolding of facts through reinvestigation, the Warren players are creating in the minds of the people around the world, a confusion as to, "what is the truth?" Because of all this, what was once a man, has become bloated and ugly. This eager audience should stop, step back and survey what they have caused in the distortion of facts, disruption of ideals, and misrepresentation. We should realize that it is we who have created this three ring circus. The time has come when all that can be said has been said. Are the American people finally ready to let John Fitzgerald Kennedy rest in peace?