

# Warren member agrees with report findings

By Jim Zalewski

It has been nearly 12 years since that fateful day in Dallas, Nov. 22. Many will never forget their initial reaction to the news that President John F. Kennedy had been shot by a sniper.

One former Lincoln resident, Jay Rankin, has even more reason to remember the events of those three chaotic days in November 1963.

Rankin, a New York attorney, was a member of the Warren Commission, the group that studied the events surrounding the assassination. In a telephone interview Wednesday, he discussed some of the commission's work.

Despite the new flame of interest in Kennedy's assassination, which was fanned by the showing of frames of the Zapruder film of the shooting on NBC's "Tomorrow" show, Rankin said he has no doubts in the findings of the Warren Commission.

"I totally agree with all of the findings published in the report," he said. "There is no doubt in my mind that we carefully examined all of the evidence that was available."

## Single bullet

Unlike others, Rankin said he is convinced that a single bullet could inflict the damage it did to Kennedy and former Texas Gov. John Connally.

"We spent a great deal of time on this, possibly more than any other single issue," Rankin said. "We examined many standards. From the expert testimony we received from technicians and the evidence that we had of the effects of that bullet, there was no question that a bullet could physically

do what the commission said it did."

Rankin was not quite as assertive when questioned about Kennedy's sudden backward lurch, that was seen in the Zapruder film. According to the Warren Commission's report, he should not have moved in that direction, since the shots allegedly fired by Lee Harvey Oswald came from behind.

"We never had any occasion to explain the backwards movement," he said. "It could be easily explained as a nervous reaction. In fact, we questioned doctors on this matter. They said such a nervous reaction often occurs."

The Warren Commission, which worked about one year before releasing the report, also dismissed the possibility of a conspiracy. Rankin said he agrees with this finding.

## Negative matter

"We never could aggregate any evidence of a conspiracy," he said. "Trying to prove that something was there that wasn't is a negative matter. And negative matters are very difficult to prove."

Neither the Central Intelligence Agency nor any other government agency attempted to hasten a cover up of the shooting or the subsequent investigation, Rankin said.

When asked why the Zapruder film was not supposed to be shown to the public, Rankin said the Commission made that decision as a concession to the Kennedy family.

"The Kennedy family asked us to prohibit the showing of this film," he said. "They did not want the public to remember the President as he was in the

movie, all shot up."

## Rockefeller Commission

Rankin said he has not seen the full report released recently by the Rockefeller Commission, a government commission created to see if the Warren Commission erred.

"I don't think any new evidence has been produced," he said. "I see no need for a restudy of the case. I won't comment on the Rockefeller Commission report until I read it in its entirety."

Rankin, who was asked by former Chief Justice Earl Warren to serve on the Commission, said he also rejects the theory that more than one sniper fired at the presidential motorcade.

"We thoroughly searched the area around and adjacent to the grassy knoll near the overpass," Rankin said. "We found no evidence to lead us to believe that there was more than one man firing at the President."

"Ruby's entrance...the route of the motorcade...all of this has been published and is part of the records," he said. "I don't want to repeat it. The public can look at it themselves."

"It has been my position in the past not to comment on this, and I prefer to keep it that way," he said. "I think all of the actions taken by the Warren Commission were very thorough."

"Of course there is always the possibility that new evidence will be uncovered. A lot of time has elapsed since then, but nothing new has been found yet. I believe right now the findings of the Warren Commission will stand the test of any disbelievers."

## calendar


**Friday**  
12 p.m.—Human Rights Committee—Nebraska Union Pewter Room  
12 p.m.—Shelton School-6th Grade—Union North Conference Room  
3 p.m.—Vice Chancellor Acker—Union 203  
3 p.m.—Exxon Foundation—Piaget Program—Union 243  
6 p.m.—Athletic Department—Football Clinic

Dinner—Union Harvest Room  
6:30 p.m.—Block & Bridle Dinner—Union Centennial Room  
7:30 p.m.—Nebraska Human Resources Foundation—PDP—Union Auditorium  
8 p.m.—The Sound of Music—Community Playhouse  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.—Union Program Council Art Lending Library Picture Return—Union South Conference Room

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