

## Tests Confirm

# Killer's Marksmanship

Washington Bureau of The News  
WASHINGTON — The Warren Commission Sunday concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald was marksman enough to fire the shots which killed President Kennedy and that the 6.5-caliber Mannlicher-Carcano rifle he owned was the one that fired the fatal shots.

After a detailed discussion of witnesses and evidence, the commission reached this conclusion about the Mannlicher-Carcano found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building:

"The various tests showed that the Mannlicher-Carcano was an accurate rifle and that the use of a four-power scope was a substantial aid to rapid, accurate firing.

"Oswald's Marine training in marksmanship, his other rifle experience and his established familiarity with this particular weapon show that he possessed

ample capability to commit the assassination.

"Based on known facts of the assassination, the Marine marksmanship experts, Major (Eugene D.) Anderson and Sgt. (James A.) Zahm, concurred in the opinion that Oswald had the capability to fire three shots, with two hits, within 4.8 and 5.6 seconds."

Zahm even told the commission: "With the equipment he (Oswald) had and with his ability I consider it a very easy shot."

THE COMMISSION pointed out in its report that there was some question as to whether the first or second shot hit the late President and Gov. John Connally.

The commission's final conclusion in this area is: "The commission agrees with the testimony of Marine marksmanship expert Zahm that it was 'an easy shot' to hit some part of the President's body, and that the range where the rifleman would be expected

to hit would include the President's head."

The telescopic sight on Oswald's rifle contained a defect which would have helped a sniper shooting at President Kennedy from the Texas School Book Depository building, the commission said.

The commission said three FBI firearms experts noticed the defect in the 4-power sight when they tested the rifle to determine the speed with which it could be fired.

"The defect was one which would have assisted the assassin aiming at a target which was moving away," the commission said in its report to President Johnson.

The commission said Robert A. Frazier, one of the FBI experts, told it:

"The fact that the crosshairs are set high would actually compensate for any lead which had to be taken (to hit President Ken-

nedy as he sat in a moving auto). So, if you aimed with this weapon as it actually was received at the laboratory, it would not be necessary to take any lead whatsoever in order to hit the intended object. The scope would accomplish the lead for you."

**FRAZIER NOTED** that the defect would tend also to cause a slight miss to the right.

The commission pointed out, however, that President Kennedy's auto was curving slightly to the right when the third shot was fired.

In its more detailed discussion of the evidence leading up to a conclusion here are some of the things the commission heard as written in the report:

"Four experts in the field of firearms identification analyzed the nearly whole bullet (found on Connally's stretcher at Parkland), the two fragments (found in the presidential limousine) and the three cartridge cases (found on the sixth floor) to determine whether they had been fired from the C2766 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle found on the sixth floor of the depository."

**TWO OF THESE** witnesses were Robert A. Frazier, FBI laboratory, and Joseph D. Nicol, superintendent of Illinois Bureau of Criminal Identification.

The report states: "After making independent examinations, both Frazier and Nicol positively identified the nearly whole bullet from the stretcher and the two larger bullet fragments found in the presidential limousine as having been fired in the C2766 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle found in the depository to the exclusion of all other weapons . . .

"After examination of the three cartridge cases found on the sixth floor of the depository, Frazier and Nicol concluded that they had been fired in the C2766 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle to the exclusion of all other weapons."

The trajectory of the bullets also came in for some detailed study in the report and the com-

mission said that the "cumulative evidence of eyewitnesses, firearms and ballistic experts and medical authorities" showed that the shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Connally "were fired from above and behind" . . . "more particularly, from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building."

**ONE OF** the biggest aids to the commission in its study of the actual shooting were motion-picture films taken by Abraham Zapruder, Orville O. Nix and Mary Muchmore.

The commission said that by numbering each exposure on the film strips it was able to determine the time elapsed between the shots.

For example, here is the way the report explains it: "The position of President Kennedy's car when he was struck in the neck was determined with substantial precision from the films and on-site tests. The pictures or frames in the Zapruder film were marked by the agents, with the number '1' given to the first frame where the motorcycles leading the motorcade came into view on Houston Street . . .

"To pinpoint their locations a man stood at Zapruder's position (in the assassination re-creation) and directed the automobile and both models to the positions shown on each frame, after which a bureau photographer crouched at the sixth-floor window and looked through a camera whose lens recorded the view through the telescopic sight of the C2766 Mannlicher-Carcano rifle."

It was at Frame 225, the report said, that President Kennedy first reacted to his neck wound.

**FROM THIS** re-creation and the camera looking through the telescopic sight, the commission received evidence that both President Kennedy and Connally were directly in line and:

"That angle was consistent with the trajectory of a bullet passing through the President's neck and

then striking Gov. Connally's back, causing the wounds which were discussed above."

Two top ballistic experts thusly testified that it is probable "that the same bullet passed through the President's neck and then inflicted all the wounds on the governor."

Over all, from the evidence given, here is what the commission said: "From the initial finds that (A) one shot passed through the President's neck and then most probably passed through the governor's body, (B) a subsequent shot penetrated the President's head, (C) no other shot struck any part of the automobile, and (D) three shots were fired, it follows that one shot probably missed the car and its occupants. The evidence is inconclusive as to whether it was the first, second, or third shot which missed."

**IN THE FINAL** conclusion nothing in this changes and the commission adds: ". . . The three shots were fired in a time period ranging from approximately 4.8 to in excess of seven seconds."

Here are some other pointed commission findings about the shooting:

1. "During the period between the time that the first and second shots struck the President, the presidential car was traveling at an average speed of approximately 11.2 miles per hour. Expert witnesses testified that the target is regarded as a favorable one because the car was going away from the marksman in a straight line."

2. "Marina Oswald testified that in New Orleans her husband practiced operating the bolt of a rifle."

3. "The ammunition used in the rifle was American ammunition recently made by the Western Cartridge Co., which manufactures such ammunition currently. In tests with the same kind of ammunition, experts fired Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle more than 100 times without any misfires."



—From Warren Commission Report.

*Camera is attached to rifle in re-enactment of shooting.*