

Commission Sifts Many Stories, Spikes Post- Assassination Rumors

Washington Bureau of The News
WASHINGTON — Noting that myths have traditionally surrounded the dramatic assassinations of history," the Warren Commission Sunday went into detail in its report to knock down many of the speculative rumors and false reports in the slaying of President Kennedy.

The commission said it had inquired intensively into all types of conjectural matter about the events of last Nov. 22.

"Many people," its report said, "who witnessed the assassination and the killing of Oswald or were present in the area were a major source of diverse and often contradictory information.

"As is easily understood under such circumstances, all of the witnesses did not see and hear the same thing or interpret what they saw and heard the same way and many changed their stories as they repeated them."

THE COMMISSION said that even the occupants of cars in the presidential motorcade differed in their accounts.

"... Those closest to the assassination were subjected to a physical and emotional strain that tended to affect their recollections of what they thought they saw or heard," the commission said.

The commission said its work was complicated by numerous people reporting they had seen Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby at various times and places in this country and abroad.

In addition, the report stated, "throughout the country people reported overheard remarks, conversations, threats, prophecies and opinions that seemed to them to have a possible bearing on the assassination."

SOME INFORMANTS, who told their stories initially to the press, later retracted them to official investigators, the commission said.

In an appendix to its report, the commission gave a long list of speculative information and its own findings on each of them.

The text, in part, of this appendix follows:

Speculation.—The shots that killed the President came from the railroad overpass over the Triple Underpass.

Commission Finding.—The shots that entered the neck and head of the President and wounded Gov. Connally came from behind and above. There is no evidence that any shots were fired at the President from anywhere other than the Texas School Book Depository building.

Speculation.—The railroad overpass was left unguarded on Nov. 22.

Commission Finding.—On Nov. 22 the railroad overpass was guarded by two Dallas policemen, Patrolmen J. W. Foster and J. C. White, who have testified that they permitted only railroad personnel on the overpass.

Speculation.—There are witnesses who alleged that the shots came from the overpass.

Commission Finding.—The commission does not have knowledge of any witnesses who saw shots fired from the overpass. Statements or depositions from the 2 policemen and 13 railroad employes who were on the overpass all affirm that no shots were fired from the overpass. Most of these witnesses who discussed the source of the shots stated that they came from the direction of Elm and Houston Streets.

Speculation.—A rifle cartridge was recovered on the overpass.

Commission Finding.—No cartridge of any kind was found on the overpass nor has any witness come forward to claim having found one.

Speculation.—A witness to the assassination said that she saw a man run behind the concrete wall of the overpass and disappear.

Commission Finding.—Mrs. Jean L. Hill stated that after the firing stopped she saw a white man wearing a brown overcoat and a hat running west away from the depository building in

the direction of the railroad tracks. There are no other witnesses who claim to have seen a man running toward the railroad tracks. Examination of all available films of the area following the shooting, reexamination of interviews with individuals in the vicinity of the shooting, and interviews with members of the Dallas Police Department and the Dallas County sheriff's office failed to corroborate Mrs. Hill's recollection or to reveal the identity of the man described by Mrs. Hill.

Speculation. — Immediately after the shooting a motorcycle policeman was seen racing up the grassy embankment to the right of the shooting scene pursuing a couple seeking to flee from the overpass.

Commission Finding. — There are no witnesses who have ever stated this and there is no evidence to support the claim. A motorcycle policeman, Clyde A. Haygood, dismounted in the street and ran up the incline. He stated that he saw no one running from the railroad yards adjacent to the overpass. Subsequently, at 12:37 p.m., Haygood reported that the shots had come from the Texas School Book Depository building.

Speculation. — Oswald could not have known the motorcade route before he arrived at work on Nov. 22.

Commission Finding. — The motorcade route was published in both Dallas papers on Nov. 19 and was therefore available at least 72 hours before Oswald reported for work on Nov. 22.

Speculation. — The route as shown in the newspaper took the motorcade through the Triple Underpass via Main Street, a block away from the depository. Therefore, Oswald could not have known that the motorcade would pass directly by the Texas School Book Depository Building.

Commission Finding. — The motorcade route as published showed the motorcade turning right off Main Street onto Houston for one

block and then left on Elm to the access road to the Stemmons Freeway. This route was clearly indicated in published descriptions and maps of the motorcade route. There was no mention of continuing on Main Street through the Triple Underpass.

Speculation. — The motorcade route was changed on Nov. 22 after the map had been printed. The motorcade was shifted from Main Street over to Elm Street to bring it by the Texas School Book Depository Building.

Commission Finding. — The motorcade route was decided upon on Nov. 18 and published in the Dallas newspapers on Nov. 19. It was not changed in any way thereafter. The route called for the motorcade to turn off Main Street at Houston, go up to Elm, and then turn left on Elm Street.

Speculation. — The normal and logical route would have been straight down Main Street through the Triple Underpass to the Stemmons Freeway. It is possible to drive from Main onto the access road to the Stemmons Freeway from a point beyond the underpass.

Commission Finding. — The normal, direct, and only permissible route to the Stemmons Freeway from Main Street is via Houston and Elm streets. Any attempt to turn onto the access road to the Stemmons Freeway from Main Street beyond the Triple Underpass would have been extremely difficult because of a concrete strip dividing Elm and Main streets. Such an attempt would have required making an S-turn beyond the strip at a very tight angle, thereby slowing the presidential car almost to a stop.

Speculation. — Oswald may well have carried curtain rods to work on Nov. 22 in the brown paper package he was observed to bring into the building because he lived in a room where he needed them.

Commission Finding. — The rooming to Oswald's landlady at 1026 North Beckley Avenue, Mrs. A. C. Johnson, the room had vene-

rian blinds, curtain rods and curtains while Oswald was living there. The curtain rods in the Paine garage that belonged to Mrs. Paine were still there after Oswald went to work on Nov. 22. Mrs. Paine and Marina Oswald testified that Oswald had not spoken to them about curtain rods. After the assassination the empty package was found near the window from which the shots were fired, but no curtain rods were found.

Speculation. — Oswald spent the morning of Nov. 22 in the company of other workers in the building and remained with them until they went downstairs to watch the President go by, no later probably than 12:15.

Commission Finding. — Oswald did not spend the morning in the company of other workers in the building, and before the assassination he was last seen in the building on the sixth floor at about 11:55 a.m. by Charles Givens, another employe.

Speculation. — It is probable that the chicken lunch, remains of which were found on the sixth floor, was eaten by an accomplice of Oswald who had hidden on the sixth floor overnight.

Commission Finding. — The chicken lunch had been eaten shortly after noon on Nov. 22 by Monnie Ray Williams, an employe of the Texas School Book Depository, who after eating his lunch went to the fifth floor where he was when the shots were fired. Oswald did not eat the chicken lunch, nor did he drink from the

soft drink bottle found near the chicken lunch.

Speculation.—An amateur 8-millimeter photograph taken at 12:30 p.m., 10 minutes before assassination of President Kennedy, showed two silhouettes at the sixth-floor window of the depository.

Commission Finding.—A film taken by an amateur photographer, Robert J. E. Hughes, just before the assassination, shows a shadow in the southeast corner window of the sixth floor. This has been determined after examination by the FBI and the U.S. Navy Photographic Interpretation Center to be the shadow from the cartons near the window.

Speculation.—A picture published widely in newspapers and magazines after the assassination showed Lee Harvey Oswald standing on the front steps of the Texas School Book Depository building shortly before the President's motorcade passed by.

Commission Finding.—The man on the front steps of the building, thought or alleged by some to be Lee Harvey Oswald, is actually Billy Lovelady, an employe of the Texas School Book Depository, who somewhat resembles Oswald. Lovelady has identified himself in the picture, and other employes of the depository standing with him, as shown in the picture, have verified that he was the man in the picture and that Oswald was not there.

Speculation.—The post office box in Dallas to which Oswald had the rifle mailed was kept under both his name and that of A. Hidell.

Commission Finding.—It is not known whether Oswald's application listed the name A. Hidell as one entitled to receive mail at the box. In accordance with U.S. post office regulations, the portion of the application listing the names of persons other than the applicant entitled to receive mail was discarded after the box was closed on May 14, 1963. During the summer of 1963, Oswald rented a post office box in New Orleans, listing the name "Hidell" in addition to his own name and that of his wife. Hidell was a favorite alias used by Oswald on a number of occasions. Diligent search has failed to reveal any person in Dallas or New Orleans by that name. It was merely a creation for his own purposes.

Speculation.—A detailed and remarkably clear description of Oswald was sent over the police radio in Dallas at 12:36 p.m., Nov. 22, 1963.

Commission Finding.—The radio logs of the Dallas Police Department and the Dallas County sheriff's office show that no description of a suspect in the assassination of the President was broadcast before 12:45 p.m. on that day. No reference to Oswald by name was broadcast before he was arrested. The description of the suspect that was broadcast was similar to that of Oswald, but it lacked some important specific details such as color of hair and eyes. The information for the initial broadcasts most probably came from Howard

Brennan, who saw Oswald in the window when he was firing the rifle.

Speculation.—Oswald did not have time for all of the movements imputed to him between his departure from the Texas School Book Depository and his encounter with Tippit.

Commission Finding.—Time tests of all of Oswald's movements establish that these movements could have been accomplished in the time available to him.

Speculation.—Oswald was stopped by police as he left the building and was permitted to pass after he told them he worked in the building.

Commission Finding.—The commission has found no witness who saw Oswald leave the building. This speculation is probably a misinterpretation of the fact that he was stopped in the lunchroom by Patrolman Baker before he left the building and was allowed to proceed after Truly, the Depository superintendent, identified him as an employe there. Police did not seal off the building until at least several minutes after Oswald could have left.

Speculation.—The log of the cab driver who took Oswald to North Beckley Avenue, William W. Whaley, shows that Oswald entered his cab at 12:30 p.m. Since this occurred at some distance from the point of the President's assassination, Oswald could not have shot the President.

Commission Finding.—Whaley's log does show 12:30 p.m., but he has testified that he was not accurate in logging the time that passengers entered his cab, that he usually logged

them at 15-minute intervals, and that it was undoubtedly some time later than 12:30 when Oswald entered his cab. Sometimes he did not make entries in his log-book until three or four trips later. The bus transfer in Oswald's possession was issued after 12:36 p.m. The commission has determined that Oswald probably entered Whaley's cab at about 12:47 or 12:48 p.m.

Speculation. — Tippit could not have recognized Oswald from the description sent out over the police radio.

Commission Finding.—There is no certain way of knowing whether Tippit recognized Oswald from the description put out by the police radio. The Dallas Police Department radio log shows that the police radio dispatcher at 1:29 p.m. noted a similarity between the broadcast descriptions of the President's assassin and Tippit's slayer. It is conceivable, even probable, that Tippit stopped Oswald because of the description broadcast by the police radio.

Speculation. — Tippit and his killer knew each other.

Commission Finding. — Investigation has revealed no evidence that Oswald and Tippit were acquainted, had ever seen each other, or had any mutual acquaintances. Witnesses to the shooting observed no signs of recognition between the two men.

Speculation. — Mrs. Helen Markham, a witness to the slaying of Tippit, put the time at just after 1:06 p.m. This would have made it impossible for Oswald to have committed the killing since he would not have had time to arrive at the shooting scene by that time.

Commission Finding. — The shooting of Tippit has been established at approximately 1:15 or 1:16 p.m. on the basis of a call to police headquarters on Tippit's car radio by another witness to the assassination, Domingo Benavides. In her various statements and in her testimony, Mrs. Markham was uncertain and inconsistent in her recollection of the exact time of the slaying.

Speculation. — Mrs. Helen Markham is the only witness to the killing of Tippit.

Commission Finding. — Other witnesses to the killing of Tippit include Domingo Benavides, who used Tippit's car radio to notify the police dispatcher of the killing at 1:16 p.m., and William Scoggins, a cab driver parked at the corner of 10th Street and Patton Avenue. Barbara Jeanette Davis and Virginia Davis saw a man with a pistol in his hand walk across their lawn immediately after they heard the sound of the shots that killed Tippit. The man emptied the shells from his pistol and turned the corner from 10th Street onto Patton Avenue. All of these witnesses, except Benavides, subsequently picked Oswald out of a lineup as the slayer. Benavides did not feel that he would make a positive identification and never attended a lineup for the purpose.

Speculation. — Mrs. Markham said that the man she saw shooting Tippit was about 30, short, with bushy hair, and wearing a white coat. Since Oswald does not fit this description he could not be the killer.

Commission Finding. — In evaluating Helen Markham's testimony the commission is aware of allegations that she described the killer of Patrolman Tippit as short, stocky, and with bushy hair, which would not be a correct description of Oswald. It has also been alleged that Mrs. Markham identified Oswald in the lineup because of his clothing rather than his appearance. When Oswald appeared in the lineup at which Mrs. Markham was present, he was not wearing the jacket which he wore at the time of the shooting, and Mrs. Markham has testified that her identification was based "mostly from his face." Moreover, Mrs. Markham has denied that she ever described the man who killed Tippit as short, stocky, and with bushy hair. The commission reviewed the transcript of a telephone conversation in which Mrs. Markham was alleged to have made such a description. In the transcription

Mrs. Markham reaffirmed her positive identification of Oswald and denied having described the killer as short, stocky, and bushy-haired.

Speculation. — Another witness to the slaying of Patrolman Tippit, an unidentified woman, was interviewed by the FBI but was never called as a witness by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. This witness is alleged to have stated that she saw two men involved in the shooting and that they ran off in opposite directions afterward.

Commission Finding. — The only woman among the witnesses to the slaying of Tippit known to the commission is Helen Markham. The FBI never interviewed any other woman who claimed to have seen the shooting and never received any information concerning the existence of such a witness. Two women, Barbara Jeanette Davis and Virginia Davis, saw the killer immediately after the shooting as he crossed the lawn at the corner of Patton Avenue and 10th Street, but they did not witness the shooting itself. They were both interviewed by the FBI and appeared before the commission.

Speculation. — Oswald could not have received an American passport in June 1963 within 24 hours without special intervention on his behalf (for his trip to Mexico City).

Commission Finding. — Oswald's passport application was processed routinely by the Department of State. No person or agency intervened specially on his behalf to speed the issuance of the passport. The passports of 24 other persons, on the same list sent to Washington from New Orleans, were authorized at the same time. The passport office of the Department of State had no instructions to delay issuance or to deny a passport to Oswald.

Speculation. — The Walter McCarran Act specifically requires any one who has attempted to renounce his U.S. citizenship to file an affidavit stating

why he should receive a U.S. passport. Therefore, Oswald should have been required to file such an affidavit before receiving his passport in June 1963.

Commission Finding.—The Internal Security Act of 1950 (Walter McCarran Act) contains no reference to an affidavit being required of a U.S. citizen who has attempted to expatriate himself.

Speculation.—Oswald did not have money for his trip to Mexico in September 1963.

Commission Finding.—An analysis of Oswald's finances by the commission indicates that he had sufficient money to make the trip to and from Mexico City. There is no evidence that he received any assistance in financing his trip to Mexico. The total cost of his 7-day trip has been reliably estimated at less than \$85.

Speculation.—Oswald was accompanied on his trip to Mexico City by a man and two women.

Commission Finding.—Investigation has revealed that Oswald traveled alone on the bus. Fellow passengers on the bus between Houston and Mexico City have stated that he appeared to be traveling alone and that they had not previously known him.

Speculation.—While in Mexico, Oswald made a clandestine flight to Havana and back.

Commission Finding.—The commission has found no evidence that Oswald made any flight to Cuba while he was in Mexico. He never received permission from the Cuban government to enter Cuba nor from the Mexican government to leave Mexico bound for Cuba. A confidential check of the Cuban airline in Mexico City indicates that Oswald never appeared at its office there.

Speculation.—Oswald came back from Mexico City with \$5,000.

Commission Finding.—No evidence has ever been supplied or obtained to support this allegation. Oswald's actions in Mexico City and after his return to Dallas lend no support to this speculation.

Speculation.—On Nov. 27, 1963, in a speech at the university of Havana, Fidel Castro, under the influence of liquor, said "The first time that Oswald was in Cuba . . ." Castro therefore had knowledge that Oswald had made surreptitious visits to Cuba.

Commission Finding.—Castro's speeches are monitored directly by the U.S. Information Agency as he delivers them. A tape of this speech reveals that it did not contain the alleged slip of the tongue. Castro did refer to Oswald's visit to the "Cuban Embassy" in Mexico which he immediately corrected to "Cuban consulate." The commission has found no evidence that Oswald had made surreptitious visits to Cuba.

Speculation.—Since Oswald did not have the money to repay the \$435.61 he had received from the Department of State to cover part of the expenses of his return from Russia, he must have received help from some other source. Ruby lent Oswald money to pay back the loan and lent him small amounts of money thereafter.

Commission Finding.—The commission has no credible evidence that Oswald received any money from Ruby or anyone else to repay his State Department loan, nor that he received small amounts of money from Ruby at any time. An exhaustive analysis of Oswald's income and expenditures, made for the commission by an Internal Revenue Service expert, reveals that Oswald had sufficient funds to make the State Department repayments from his earnings.

Speculation.—The Dallas police suspected Oswald and Ruby of being involved in an attack on Gen. Walker and planned to arrest the two when the FBI intervened, at the request of Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, and asked the police not to do so for reasons of state.

Commission Finding.—This allegation appeared in the Nov. 29, 1963, issue (actually printed on Nov. 25 or 26) of a German weekly newspaper, Deutsche National Zeitung und Soldaten Zeitung, published in Munich. The allegation later appeared in the National Enquirer of May 17, 1964. The commission has been reliably informed that the statement was fabricated by an editor of the newspaper. No evidence in support of this statement has ever been advanced or uncovered. In their investigation of the attack on Gen. Walker, the Dallas police uncovered no suspects and planned no arrests. The FBI had no knowledge that Oswald was responsible for the attack until Marina Oswald revealed the information on Dec. 3, 1963.

Speculation.—Oswald and Gen. Walker were probably acquainted with each other since Oswald's notebook contained Walker's name and telephone number.

Commission Finding.—Although Oswald's notebook contained Walker's name and telephone number, there was no evidence that the two knew each other. It is probable that this information was inserted at the time that Oswald was planning his attack on Walker. Gen. Walker stated that he did not know of Oswald before the assassination.

Speculation.—Ruby's sister, Mrs. Eva Grant, said that Ruby and Tippit were "like two brothers."

Commission Finding.—Mrs. Grant has denied ever making this statement or any statement like it, saying it was untrue and without foundation. Ruby was acquainted with another Dallas policeman named Tippit, but this was G. M. Tippit of the Special Services Bureau of the department, not the Tippit who was killed.

Speculation.—The shooting in Dallas on Jan. 23, 1964, of Warren A. Reynolds, who witnessed the flight of Patrolman Tippit's

slayer on Nov. 22 and followed him for a short distance, may have been connected in some way with the assassination of President Kennedy and the slaying of Patrolman Tippit. A man arrested for the attempt on Reynolds, Darrell Wayne Garner, was released as a result, in part, of testimony by Betty (Nancy Jane Mooney) MacDonald, who had allegedly worked at one time as a stripper at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club.

Commission Finding.—This rumor, originally publicized by a newspaper columnist on Feb. 23, 1964, was apparently based on the alleged connection between Betty MacDonald and the Carousel Club. Investigation revealed no evidence that she had ever worked at the Carousel Club. Employees of the club had no recollection that she had ever worked there. Betty MacDonald was arrested and charged with disturbing the peace on Feb. 13, 1964. After being placed in a cell at the Dallas city jail, she hanged herself. The commission has found no evidence that the shooting of Warren Reynolds was any way related to the assassination of President Kennedy or the murder of Patrolman Tippit.

Speculation.—Sheriff (Bill) Decker of Dallas County came on the police radio at 12:25 p.m. (Nov. 22) with orders to calm trouble at the Texas School Book Depository.

Commission Finding.—The final edition of the Dallas Times Herald on Nov. 22 (P. 1, Col. 1) reported that "Sheriff Decker came on the air at 12:25 p.m." and stated: "I don't know what's happened. Take every available man from the jail and the office and go to the railroad yards off Elm near the Triple Underpass." The article in the Times Herald did not mention the time that the President was shot. The radio log of the Dallas County sheriff's office shows that Sheriff Decker came on the air at 40 seconds after 12:30 p.m. and stated: "Stand by me. All units and officers vicinity of station report to the railroad track area, just north of Elm—report to the railroad track area, just north of Elm." The radio log does not show any messages by Sheriff

Decker between 12:20 p.m. and 40 seconds after 12:30 p.m.

Speculation.—Police precautions in Dallas on Nov. 22 included surveillance of many people, among them some who did no more than speak in favor of school integration.

Commission Finding.—The Dallas Police Department notified the commission that on Nov. 22 it had no one under surveillance as a precaution in connection with President Kennedy's visit except at the Trade Mart. The commission received no evidence that the Dallas police had under surveillance people who spoke in favor of school integration.

Speculation.—Oswald could drive a car and was seen in cars at various places.

Commission Finding.—Oswald did not have a driver's license. Marina Oswald and Ruth Paine have testified that he could not drive a car, and there is no confirmed evidence to establish his presence at any location as the driver of a car. Mrs. Paine did give Oswald some driving lessons and he did drive short distances on these occasions.

Speculation.—Oswald received money by Western Union telegraph from time to time for several months before the assassination of President Kennedy.

Commission Finding.—An employe in the Western Union main office in Dallas, C. A. Hamblen, made statements that he remembered seeing Oswald there on some occasions collecting money that had been telegraphed to him. In his testimony before the commission, Hamblen was unable to state whether or not the person he had seen was Lee Harvey Oswald. Western Union officials searched their records in Dallas and other cities for the period from June through November, 1963, but found no money orders payable to Lee Oswald or to any of his known aliases. A Western Union official concluded that the allegation was "a figment of Mr. Hamblen's imagination." The commission has found no evidence to contradict this conclusion.

Speculation.—Oswald or accomplices had made arrangements for his getaway by airplane from an airfield in the

Commission Finding.—Investigation of such claims revealed that they had not the slightest substance. The commission found no evidence that Oswald had any prearranged plan for escape after the assassination.

Speculation.—After Oswald's arrest, the police found in his room seven metal file boxes filled with the names of Castro sympathizers.

Commission Finding.—The Dallas police inventories of Oswald's property taken from his room at 1026 North Beckley Avenue do not include any file boxes. A number of small file boxes listed in the inventory as having been taken from the Paine residence in Irving contained letters, pictures, books and literature, most of which belonged to Ruth Paine, not to Oswald. No lists of names of Castro sympathizers were found among these effects.

Speculation.—The headquarters detachment of the U.S. Army, under orders from (Secretary of Defense Robert S.) McNamara's office, began to rehearse for the funeral more than a week before the assassination.

Commission Finding.—This assertion is based on an interview with U.S. Army Capt. Richard C. Cloy that appeared in the Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger of Feb. 21, 1964. The newspaper quotes Capt. Cloy, who was a member of the Army unit charged with conducting funeral ceremonies in honor of deceased chiefs of state, as having said that, "We were in a state of readiness and had just finished a funeral rehearsal because there was grave concern for President Hoover's health. But we never expected that our practice was preparing us for President Kennedy."

Speculation.—The ship in which Oswald went to Europe in 1959 stopped in Havana on the way.

Commission Finding.—Oswald boarded the SS Marion Lykes in New Orleans and it sailed on Sept. 20, 1959. It docked in Le Havre, France, on Oct. 8 with only one previous stop—at another French port, La Pallice.