

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT
JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY
NOVEMBER 22, 1963
DALLAS, TEXAS

- Dep. AD Adm. —
- Dep. AD Inv. —
- Asst. Dir.:
- Admin. —
- Comp. Syst. —
- Ext. Affairs —
- Files & Com. —
- Gen. Inv. —
- Ident. —
- Inspection —
- Intell. —
- Laboratory —
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- Plan. & Eval. —
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~~IN FOCUS~~ In Dallas They're Fed Up With JFK Assassination Talk

By James R. Dickenson
Washington Star Staff Writer

DALLAS — People sure are tired of the talk and theories about the Kennedy assassination here in Dallas and none professes to be more tired

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of it than William Alexander, the flinty-eyed, acid-tongued former assistant district attorney who prosecuted Jack Ruby.

"I'd like to kick the — out of every fat-ass Yankee you see hanging around the Book Depository," he tells Yankee and non-Yankee visitors alike. "In shorts and with camera, looking up and getting the roofs

of their mouths sunburned. One asked a policeman where was Kennedy shot? He tapped the back of his head and said, "Right here, friend, right here."

In the 12 years since John Kennedy's assassination, Texas hunters on their way home have tossed their empty rifle cartridge shells on the grass near the site and it's generally just minutes before they are gone. They figure there are more tourists with "souvenir" shells of the killing than there are religious pilgrims who have "genuine" splinters from the cross on which Christ was crucified.

People like Alexander tell of this to make the point that the area was

searched and policed so stringently for everything, including brain tissue and skull fragments, which were found as far as 100 feet away from the President's limousine, immediately after Kennedy's assassination that there is no chance that anyone got a genuine souvenir.

THIS IS BY way of making their final point: That nothing as far as they're concerned has ever turned up to make them doubt the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, fired the shots that killed President

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Kennedy, that there were just three shots, the first one of which hit Kennedy in the throat and passed through to inflict the wounds of Gov. John B. Connally, the second of which missed completely, and the third which killed the President.

There is a growing number who disagree or at least think enough questions have been raised that the investigation should be reopened. There are a number of resolutions before the Congress, some of which call for a reopening of all the assassinations and assassination attempts

since 1963 — the two Kennedys, Martin Luther King Jr., George C. Wallace.

This is partly because of the fallout from governmental deception on Vietnam and Watergate and recent revelations about the FBI and CIA involvement in assassination attempts on leaders of other countries. It is also partly because a whole generation of young is growing up with no memory of public events that were not in the context of Vietnam and Watergate and they are far more inclined to conspiracy theories than their elders.

There were believers in a conspiracy 12 years ago. They included

President Lyndon B. Johnson, Connally, and such members of the Warren Commission as Gerald R. Ford, the late Sen. Richard Russell of Georgia and the late Rep. Hale Boggs of Louisiana.

They thought it was a Communist plot because of Oswald's leftist ties and his defection to Russia after his Marine Corps discharge in 1959. Johnson put the commission on a tight deadline — June of 1964 — which it was unable to meet. Its report was published in September.

THE REASON for the haste was the urge to reassure the American

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public and dispel doubts in the wake of the dreadful event. Critics now contend that reassurance rather than truth was the commission's goal but that its haste created the opposite. They contend that it has left too many questions open with a resulting increase in the public's cynicism.

They also argue that the commission's finding that Oswald was the lone assassin was dictated in advance by J. Edgar Hoover. Moderate critics who think the investigation should be reopened think the problem was that the commission was looking for a foreign conspiracy and that the idea of a domestic conspiracy didn't even occur to them.

Now the focus of criticism is switching to the possibility of Oswald's having ties with the FBI and CIA and to suspicions that possibly the Mafia, tied to the CIA because of its interest in Cuba, was involved.

But the critics have questioned everything, starting not just with the argument that Oswald was innocent but that there were two or even more imposters using his name and identification.

This is because people had trouble identifying Oswald. In Mexico City, where he had gone to try to get a visa to Cuba in September 1963, the CIA reportedly released pictures purporting to be Oswald but which were actually someone else. Critics contend that his height varies from 5 feet 8 to 5 feet 11 on his service medical records. This has led one, Peter Dale Scott, a professor of literature at the University of California, to conclude there was not one Oswald or two, as Richard Popkin, a philosophy professor, has argued, but several.

THERE IS A story that Oswald couldn't drive but that a man identifying himself as Lee Harvey Oswald est-drove a used car he was talking about buying with a salesman at 70 miles per hour. There are allegations that the Life magazine photo of Oswald with a rifle and pistol is a composite with Oswald's head im-

Harvey Oswald" who took to practice near Dallas the assassination was someone other than the man the Warren Commission identified as the assassin.

Next is the question of his acting alone. The critics cite witnesses who claim they saw puffs of smoke and heard bullets coming from the grassy knoll by the Texas Book Depository, which was to the front and right of the limousine at the time of the shooting; Oswald's shots came from the left rear.

They also claim that witnesses saw an armed man by the knoll and that the films of the shooting show shadows that could be armed men. Defenders of the Warren Report say that the acoustics of rifle shots are misleading, that no other cartridge cases were ever found, that no other bullet holes were found in the car, that any frontal shots would have hit the windshield, and that no sounds were heard to go with the alleged smoke puffs.

"I talked to postal inspectors who were on the fifth floor of an annex building who are very sharp-eyed and they looked at the knoll when they saw some people look and start to move in that direction and they didn't see anything," says Alexander. "There are also railroad

detectives in the area because of attempts to hijack boxcars of valuable shipments, such as liquor, and I can't imagine they wouldn't have had some tough questions for any strangers who were armed and running around there."

THE CRITICS also refer to the famed Zapruder film, which shows Kennedy's head move forward under the impact of the shot and then jerk back. On Newton's third law of action and reaction they reason that this was the result of a hit from the front.

"A motorcycle officer who was riding at the right rear fender testified that he was almost knocked off his bike by the force of blood and brains from the fatal shot," says Mark Lane, the earliest of the Warren Re-

the rear of the car. Some answer by theorizing that muscular reactions account for it. Alexander thinks sudden acceleration of the limousine could be the reason although Lane says the film sequence disputes this.

Time magazine reported last week that tests by Dr. John K. Lattimer of the Columbia University Medical School and Prof. Luis Alvarez, a physicist at the University of California, offer another conclusion. Lattimer has fired a similar rifle at human skulls filled with gelatin and found that they jerked forward and then fell back. Alvarez got the same result firing rifle bullets into melons.

Their explanation is that the material being blown out the exit wounds in front had a jet effect that snapped the skulls to the rear.

OTHER CRITICS contend that while there may not have been frontal shots, there was more than one rifleman firing from the rear and they fired more than three shots.

The critics also contend that the bullet holes in the rear of President Kennedy's jacket and shirt were too low to allow a trajectory that would have made it possible for the bullet, which hit him in the neck, to hit Connally. The Warren Commission determined that the bullet hit Connally in the back, broke a rib, came out his chest, went through his wrist and was embedded in his thigh.

It determined that the bullet began tumbling possibly after it struck bone, which would account for the shape of his wounds. The critics scoff that the nearly intact bullet found on one of the stretchers, presumably after falling out of Connally's thigh wound, couldn't have done all that damage and not fragmented.

Test firings into bone, cotton batting and other materials are inconclusive; some bullets fragment and some don't.

There are disagreements based on minute examination of the Zapruder film over whether Connally was in the right angle for the single bullet to hit both and

theory for the single bullet theory to stand up. It all depends on whose analysis you believe, whose interpretations of Kennedy's and Connally's early moves you accept.

The critics also contend that there was barely time, according to the film sequence, for Oswald to work the rifle's bolt, let alone aim. They also contend that the telescopic sight was off, which caused expert riflemen to fire high at silhouette targets.

THE COMMISSION'S defenders reply that Oswald had been a rifle sharpshooter, the next to highest category, in the Marines and that if he was aiming at