

Gun Experts Dispute Doubter Say Assassin Could Fire Fast

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Special to The New York Times

DALLAS, Dec. 3—Skeptics who have expressed doubt that an assassin could have fired three times on President John F. Kennedy within five or five and one-half seconds seem to have been led into a mathematical trap.

From motion pictures of the President's assassination taken here on Nov. 22, authorities have concluded that the three shots were fired over a period of five to five and one-half seconds. But that period is calculated from the moment when the first bullet was fired.

Thus, the rifle experts say, the assassin had five to five and one-half seconds in which to fire not three shots, but only the two remaining shots—a relatively easy task for a man familiar with a bolt-action rifle.

The rifle experts also say that before the first bullet was fired the assassin had an undetermined number of seconds to find and hold the President in his telescopic sights.

These seconds before the first shot, the experts say, have not been taken account of by persons who have shown doubt that Lee H. Oswald, the accused assassin, had time enough to fire his rifle three times and still strike a moving target.

George R. Whittington of Amarillo, Tex., who was president of the National Rifle Association in 1958 and 1959, commented on this today. Reached by telephone in Washington, Mr. Whittington said:

"The man starts the interval himself with the first shot. Therefore, if the interval is five seconds, as some people say it was, he has to fire two shots in five seconds, not three shots."

"It is possible, and it can easily be done. It's no trick at all."

Authorities also have made tests with small-caliber rifles. These indicated that a man could fire three shots within five seconds.

Further evidence—which also tends to discount the notion of another assassin—shows that all three bullets came from the same rifle. This was the 6.5 mm. Mannlicher-Carcano that Oswald ordered last spring from a mail-order store and that bore his finger and palm prints after the assassination.

The ballistics evidence was developed during a test on the weapon at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Laboratory in Washington. The result of the test was announced two days after the assassination on the

day Oswald was slain by a Dallas citizen.

At no time since the assassination have authorities indicated that there was more than one man involved in the shooting. But some persons have continually expressed skepticism that one man could have fired the three bullets so rapidly.

The first and third bullets, said authorities, struck the President. Either could have killed him. The second bullet missed the President but struck and wounded Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas, who was riding with Mr. Kennedy.

Oswald also was accused of slaying a Dallas policeman, J. D. Tippit, while fleeing the scene of the assassination. The police said today that Mr. Tippit had been cruising along in a patrol car when he saw Oswald and tried to stop him.

Mr. Tippit's police radio had broadcast an alarm for the suspected murderer.

As authorities reconstructed the scene from reports of three witnesses, Mr. Tippit had stepped from his car to question Oswald when Oswald pulled out a .38-caliber revolver and shot the policeman three times.

The police said today that in areas where few crimes are committed, such as the Oak Cliff District where Mr. Tippit encountered Oswald, one policeman drives a patrol car alone in the daytime.

After the second shooting, passers-by saw Oswald hasten into an empty lot. He threw away his jacket, which he had picked up a few minutes before at his rented room, and removed the three empty cartridges from his revolver.

Oswald then walked down West Jefferson Street. When a police car sped by, its siren screaming, he stepped into the doorway of a shoe store.

The manager of the store, Johnny C. Brewer, watched Oswald walk down the street and into a motion-picture house six or seven doors away. Mr. Brewer went to the theater and told Mrs. Julie Postal, the cashier, about Oswald.

Mrs. Postal called the police. They entered the theater within a few minutes.

Later, they recounted that Oswald had risen and cried, "this is it," and then pulled out the revolver. He attempted to fire at a policeman, they said, but the weapon failed to fire. Then Oswald was subdued and taken to the jail.