

HOW THE PRESIDENT WAS SHOT

Firearms experts scoff at suggestions that Lee Harvey Oswald might have shot President Kennedy by mistake while intending to kill only Governor John Connally of Texas.

These experts say meticulous planning went into the fatal shooting. They reconstruct this planning as follows:

Preparations. Oswald's gun, a 6.5-mm. Carcano Italian carbine, had its telescopic sight aligned for the distance from which the sniper fired at the presidential car—about 250 feet.

This meant the gun had presumably been "zeroed in"—test-fired several times over the distance the sniper intended to fire from, with cross-hairs on the gunsight adjusted accordingly.

This, in turn, indicated that the sniper had made careful calculations of the distance between his vantage point in a storage-building window and the parade route.

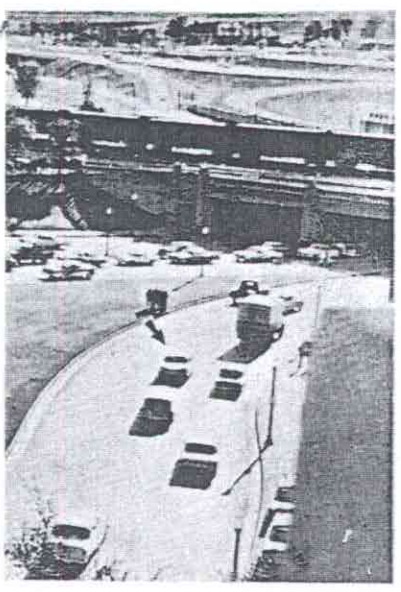
The sniper, too, almost certainly had carried out target practice to check his calculations. He had been out of the Marine Corps for four years. Without practice he might have been rusty.

What sniper saw. The four-power telescopic sight on Oswald's rifle gave him a field of view about as wide as the limousine's length.

By magnifying four times, it enabled the assassin to distinguish clearly between passengers in the presidential car. He could have had no doubt, the experts believe, as to the man he aimed at.

Three shots were fired. The first hit the President, apparently in the neck. The second shot hit Governor Connally in the back. The third shot struck the President on the back of the head.

At 12 miles an hour— Given the circumstances, with the President's car moving at only 12 miles



an hour, the assassin's accuracy is described by the experts as not phenomenal, but much better than could be expected from even a Marine marksman unless he had maintained his skill by practice.

The reason: A target moving at 12 miles an hour travels nearly 2 feet during the tenth of a second that a 6.5-mm. bullet takes to travel 250 feet.

Thus the gunman had to "lead" his target—aim for a spot slightly in advance and fire at that spot. Had he not, he would have missed entirely.

To get the right lead for a slow-moving target is described as much more difficult than hitting a stationary one.

If President Kennedy's car had been moving even 20 miles an hour, the experts say, it might have made the lead time too difficult a problem for the sniper lying in wait.