

OFFICIAL LEAK CONTRADICTS FBI, BUT . . .

Oswald: Startling new variation

By Jack A. Smith *MS 6/6*

FOR ALMOST A MONTH after President Kennedy was assassinated Nov. 22, 1963, investigatory officials maintained—on the basis of a report by doctors at Parkland Hospital in Dallas—that the first bullet to enter the President's body was introduced in the front of the throat. This conclusion tended to destroy the FBI's hypothesis that the assassin fired three shots at the presidential motorcade from the sixth floor of the Texas Schoolbook Depository, situated behind the President.

After speculating at first that Kennedy turned his head 180 degree to face his assailant, the FBI stated late in December that an autopsy conducted 25

days earlier at Bethesda (Md.) Naval Hospital the evening of the assassination revealed that the first bullet actually entered Kennedy's back, lodging in his body above the left collar bone. The second bullet, it was said, struck Texas Gov. John Connally—seated in front of the President—in the right side of his back, passing through the body, striking his wrist and lodging in his thigh. The third bullet, according to the FBI, struck the back of Kennedy's head, with a fragment emerging at the throat—hence the frontal wound.

Last week, the story was changed again.

THE CURRENT VERSION, according to sources with access to information being compiled by the President's Commission

on the Assassination of President Kennedy, is this: "The first bullet entered the President's body slightly above the right collar bone and exited just to the left of the tie knot, then entered the body of Gov. Connally just above the fifth rib. The second bullet struck the President in the back of the head. The third bullet . . . struck a manhole cover, then ricocheted off the curb and was never found."

The new theory, perhaps the most startling to issue thus far from the commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, is in contradiction to a statement from Connally Nov. 28, when he said from his hospital bed: "[When the first shot hit Kennedy] I turned to the left. The President had slumped. Then I was

hit." Even given a reduction in the speed of a bullet because of its passage through Kennedy's body, it hardly seems possible the governor would have had an opportunity to turn, observe the President slump down and then receive the same bullet himself. It is also questionable whether a bullet fragment would maintain enough velocity to penetrate Connally's back, wrist and thigh.

THE COMMISSION released the new version of the bullet episode in what has now become characteristic fashion: a news leak, given this time to Dallas television station KRLD. The station also received exclusive rights to a photograph of the FBI re-enactment of the assassination, with a broken line indicating how the bullet entered both men. Judging from the picture, it appears impossible for the fragment to have "exited just to the left of the tie knot."

Since the President was shot there have

been recurring rumors that a fourth and possibly a fifth bullet was fired during the episode. Several witnesses have testified before the commission that they heard more than three shots. St. Louis Post Dispatch correspondent Richard Dudman, among others, has reported that a fourth bullet was embedded in a traffic island near the murder scene.

The latest revelation from the Warren commission would seem to dispose of the alleged fourth bullet as neatly (and questionably) as the belated Bethesda autopsy did of the Parkland doctors. If another bullet is or was found (according to Dudman, police located the stray bullet), it can only be the third bullet which—six months after it had entered the President's head—is now discovered to have been fired inaccurately. It is not known by what process the commission reached its latest finding, which was told

to the television station following the latest reenactment May 29

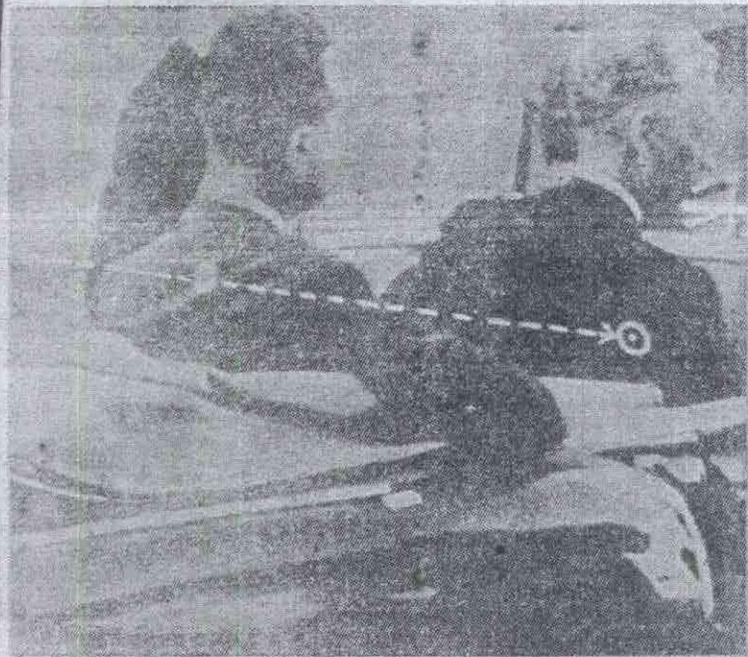
THE FBI CHARGES that Lee Oswald was Kennedy's "lone and unaided assassin." If more than three shots were fired, it would have been impossible for a single marksman to have discharged that number of bullets with any degree of accuracy in the seven seconds allotted him. Oswald said he was innocent until he was silenced two days after the assassination by a fatal shot from the gun of Jack Ruby.

The Warren commission report is expected to be published before the end of June. It is highly unlikely that the report will differ significantly (except for the new bullet story) from the initial FBI version of the slaying. According to the New York Times (June 1), whose Supreme Court reporter Anthony Lewis was given an advance briefing on the document, "a special appendix . . . will consider in detail the various theories circulating abroad about the assassination . . . Unless it finds new information, the commission will unequivocally reject these theories that the assassination was the work of some kind of conspiracy. It has no credible evidence of any conspiracy . . . The Warren commission is aware of and concerned about the foreign skepticism. It considers that its job is to dispel uncertainty and suspicion about the assassination as far as possible."

Regarding the new shooting theory, the Times reports, without mentioning that it is totally at variance with prior reports, that "the commission's data show that there were three [shots]. One hit Kennedy in the back, wounding him but probably not fatally. The fatal shot followed. A third bullet, fired either before or after these two, went wild."

THE NEWSPAPER also published a six-

Panel to Reject Theories of Con



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POSSIBLE PATH OF FIRST SHOT: Two F.B.I. agents re-enacting the assassination of President Kennedy. One, left, has a chalk patch on back of jacket, where first bullet hit President. Other, at right, with circle drawn around dot on his jacket, is seated in position of Gov. John Connally of Texas. Line indicates the possible path of the first bullet.

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION BULLET PATH

The photograph is from the New York Times of June 1, 1964

column compilation of dispatches from European capitals reporting that, with the exception of West Germany, most Europeans are skeptical of the official version of the assassination.

The Presidential commission is expected to continue hearing witnesses for at least another week. About 400 persons have given testimony thus far, only two of whom—Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, mother of the slain suspect, and Mark Lane, the New York attorney conducting a private inquiry into the assassination—have proclaimed Oswald's innocence.

According to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, May 14, the agency has provided "nothing new of substantial value" since the original FBI report on the case Dec. 5. Commenting on the report at the time, the commission made known it was dissatisfied with the FBI's five-volume ver-

sion of the slaying (GUARDIAN, Dec. 26).

Here is what the commission report will say, according to current information.

- Oswald assassinated the President. He was acting alone.

- Ruby, too, was acting alone. He and Oswald were unknown to each other.

- There is no evidence of a plot, either from the left or right. No foreign country or political group was involved.

The report is expected to be one of the most lengthy ever issued by the government. Testimony before the commission alone will occupy about 6,000 pages.

DURING THE HALF YEAR since Kennedy's death, public speculation about Oswald's guilt or innocence and the possibility that, if guilty, he was acting in concert with others, has increased despite the FBI report and press leaks and statements from the commission intended to

accomplish the opposite effect. To palliate these doubts, the Warren commission report must answer these questions or it will succeed only in compounding the speculation it was created to eliminate:

- How was it possible for Oswald to have fired the murder weapon when, according to the Dallas County Criminal Laboratory (GUARDIAN, Feb. 20), no powder burns were found on his facial cast?

- Why did the State Department issue a passport to Oswald to travel to Europe and the Soviet Union after less than a day's consideration last June 25, only one year after he returned to the United States following his defection to the Soviet Union (GUARDIAN Dec. 12)?

- How did Oswald manage to run from the sixth floor front of the Depository building down to the second floor rear (after hiding the gun), purchase a soft drink and ingest it casually without any evidence of upset during the same time it took a policeman to run from the first to the second floor (GUARDIAN, March 21)?

- Why did Oswald have a gunsight fitted onto his rifle when, according to the owner of a Chicago mail order house, "the gun was shipped from here with the telescope already mounted" (GUARDIAN, Feb. 27)?

- What did Earl Warren mean when he said that some testimony given before the commission may never be released (GUARDIAN, Feb. 6)?

- Why did Dallas authorities give misinformation about Oswald and contradict themselves on innumerable occasions in efforts to prove him guilty (Defense Brief for Oswald by Mark Lane, GUARDIAN Dec. 19)?

These are only a few of the questions about the government's case against Lee Oswald. The latest, of course, is the new version of the shooting, which can only have been divulged to the Dallas television station to prepare the American public as quietly as possible to accept what appears to be yet another rationalization before it is officially promulgated.