

WARREN REPORT:

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ATTACK AND REBUTTAL

THE DEFENDERS

CRITICS SHOULD READ THE REPORT

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● If all the critics of the Warren Report would take time to read the entire report, their questions and criticisms would be answered.

This is the essence of assertions by Joseph A. Ball and Wesley J. Liebeler, staff members of the commission.

Ball, who wrote the commission's chapter identifying Lee Harvey Oswald as the assassin, has returned to his law practice in Long Beach. The report and its 28 volumes of testimony, however, are within reach of his desk. He uses them as he continues to read and respond—to the commission's detractors.



JOSEPH BALL

Liebeler, who wrote the chapter on the assassin's motives, is continuing the exploration of the President's murder unofficially. He and 20 of his UCLA graduate students are conducting a study of commission report and rebuttals to it.

Both Ball and Liebeler reach a state of almost savage anger when queried about the commission's critics. Ball refers to attorney Mark Lane, who wrote "Rush to Judgment," as a compulsive liar. Edward Jay Epstein's book, "Inquest," he says is "silly and gossipy."

When it was suggested that the commission might have withheld some information, Liebeler snapped, "Yes, there may be some information that is regarded as confidential. The identities of Secret Service agents, for example, are matters of national security."

Both are convinced that the autopsy photographs given to the National Archives by the Kennedy family will prove that the commission's findings on the question of the President's wounds were valid.

Ball said he has been told by autopsy doctors that one of three bullets the commission claims were fired from the Dallas Book Depository entered President Kennedy's lower neck region, emerged from his throat, and then struck Texas Gov. John Connally.

"The original autopsy surgeons," he added, "have since verified that the photographs in the archives corroborate this belief."

A second bullet (one shot went wild, according to the commission's version of the story) entered the President's head from behind and burst the skull. The photographs, said Ball, also corroborate this.

Many of the commission's critics cite an FBI report that indicates the President's neck wound was only "a finger's depth."

Ball recalled from testimony and films that when the President was shot, he had his arm raised. "The President was a muscular man," he explained. "When the autopsy was performed, the body was in a relaxed position. The muscles blocked the bullet path through the body to its exit point in the throat."

Sees Conviction

In contrast to commission critics, Liebeler believes Oswald could have been convicted in court if he had lived.

"There was enough physical evidence," he insisted. "The rifle from which the bullets came was found in the book depository. The rifle was traced to Oswald. We saw no evidence of another assassin."

Ball and Liebeler responded to other critics' assertions and questions about the report:

Mark Lane has charged that the commission toned down the report to protect Americans from major trauma.

"That is foolish. We were instructed to find the facts. No one doubted our honesty before we went to work for the commission. — Ball.

Witnesses have been interviewed who claimed that Officer J. D. Tippett was shot by someone not resembling Oswald.

"That is a good example of the way Mark Lane operates. The transcript of his interview with the only witness, Mrs. Helen Markham, proves that Lane tricked her into saying things she did not mean. Mrs. Markham was hysterical anyway." — Liebeler.

Lane believes the shots that killed Kennedy came from the Dallas Sheriff's office.

"If he means the county building on the left, the autopsy proves otherwise. The shots came from the right."

— Ball.

Was it possible for a single assassin to fire all three

shots within six seconds?

111 "Yes. The critics say that it would take 6.9 seconds. All three shots could have been fired within five seconds with time to spare. The first shot could have been fired immediately (the rifle was loaded and ready). The second shot could have followed 2.3 seconds later, and the third shot 2.3 seconds after that—a total of 4.6 seconds."

—Ball.

377 Many persons believe the Nix film, released last week (Herald-Examiner, Nov. 14), shows a second assassin aiming a rifle at President Kennedy.

127 "We had this picture and the negative during our investigation. Isn't it strange that no witness came forward who saw the same thing people think they are seeing for the first time now?" — Ball.

Funny Story

573 The publicly released version of the Zapruder film is missing frames 208 to 211. Why?

8 "This is a funny story that makes them blush at Life magazine. They originally bought the film for \$500,000. Somehow, while producing copies, someone lost the four frames from the original. We saw the complete film at the hearings." — Liebel.

"Many have charged that Oswald was a poor shot.

"He was a fair shot by Marine standards, excellent by other standards." — Liebel.

Were any of the various conspiratorial theories explored?

100 "They were explored to the extent that they could be. The FBI conducted the kind of investigation that would have uncovered any conspiracy." — Liebel.

97 Others claim to have found more than 50 witnesses who believe the shots came from the grassy knoll. Were these persons checked?

101 "We interviewed more than 100 persons who said they saw the shots from various directions. In his testimony, Lee Harvey Oswald was interviewed by a team of men who were on the scene and checked his statements against the film."

grassy knoll) admitted that it was hard for him to distinguish normal sounds coming from the underpass.

Ball and Liebel stress the time that was spent building the findings release by the commission.

"We based our conclusions on the evidence we had gathered, not from isolated cases, and we did not start from basic contention," declared Liebel.

"They (the critics) started with theories they are still attempting to prove. We have not learned one damn thing from their so-called research."

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