

# Press Journal

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## Kennedy Story

# *Noted Surgeon Backs Charges On Assassination*

By Lawrence Blisko

ENGLEWOOD - It is the expert opinion of Dr. John Kingsley Lattimer that Lee Harvey Oswald shot and killed President John Fitzgerald Kennedy with a Mannlicher-Carcano Italian Army rifle and that the President was killed instantly. This is the conclusion of more than eight years of research, experimentation, and investigation by the doctor.

Dr. Lattimer, chairman of the Dept. of Urology of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, is the only civilian expert who has seen the X-rays and photographs taken at Parkman Hospital in Dallas, Tex. and during the autopsy of the President's body.

Lattimer's training makes him ideally suited to investigate the matter. Beside being a practicing urologist, and head of several departments of urology, he is an expert marksman, a ballistics expert who has done research in the wounding capacity of bullets for the government, and a battle surgeon with a vast knowledge of the various types and kinds of wounds a bullet can create.

Aside from his medical capabilities, he is also a recognized expert on American history with a special emphasis on previous assassinations. This, combined with his sincere scientific interest in the Kennedy tragedy led to his being the only civilian expert allowed to view these critical materials.

### *The X-Rays Show*

"The X-rays leave no doubt that no shot hit the President, other than from the direction of the book depository," he declared.

He explained that the X-rays are significantly different from the drawings in the Warren Com-



This picture of Dr. John Kingsley Lattimer, was taken while he tested the Mannlicher-Carcano

rifle, trying to achieve what the Warren Commission stated Oswald had done in Dallas.

mission Report. "In the report," he explained, "the drawings were dictated to an artist without the benefit of any of the original graphics. They indicated a much less severe wound than actually existed."

"The actual X-rays show wounds that are of the magnitude one would expect from a bullet of the penetrating capacity of the Western Cartridge Co. shell used by Oswald."

Lattimer described the head wound suffered by the President as being so massive that he was killed instantly.

"The wound of entry," he said, "was a puncture wound to the right of the midline and slightly above the right occipital lobe of the skull. It shattered into many pieces with a large piece sheared off by the sharp edge of the skull, and left fragments in the brain tissue. The main parts of the bullet passed through the brain, exiting in the right parietal area of the skull and tearing away

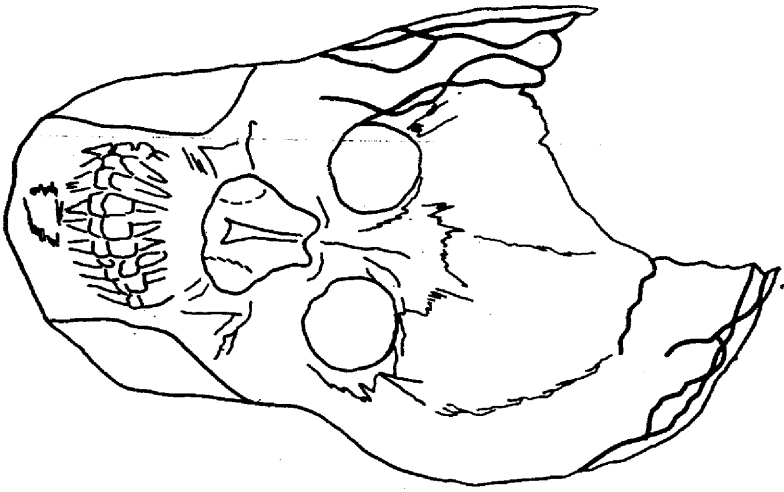
about five inches of skull and much brain matter."

Lattimer stated that other evidence also supports this fact. "In the front seat of the car investigators found the empty jacket of the bullet and pieces of the lead core. The whole front of the car was splattered with brain tissue," he stated.

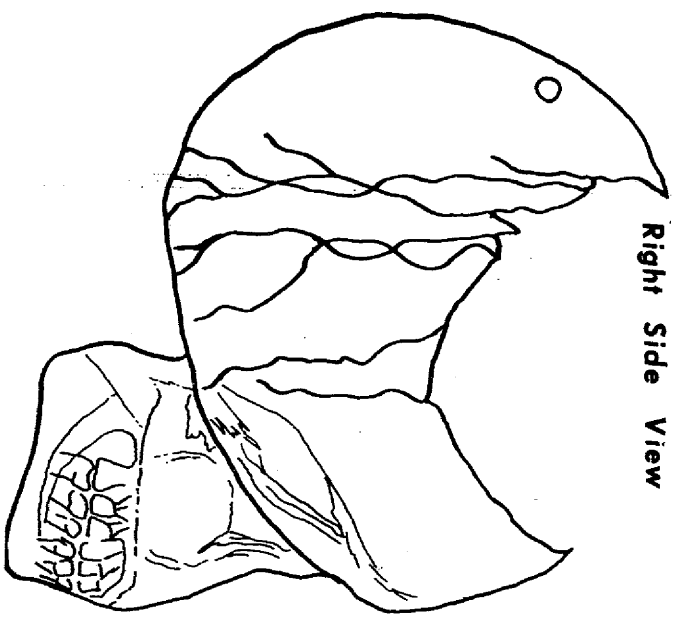
"The fragments were entirely compatible with what you would expect from an intact military bullet hitting the thick part of the skull" he continued. "The wound made by the bullet is funnel shaped. I know that the fragments are from this type of bullet. The wounds that were visible were only compatible with the very high speed and very powerful bullet that Oswald used rather than any other kind, especially a bullet such as would come from a pistol," he concluded.

The fact that the wound was from a high speed bullet with extreme penetrating capability, according to Lattimer, isolates the case against

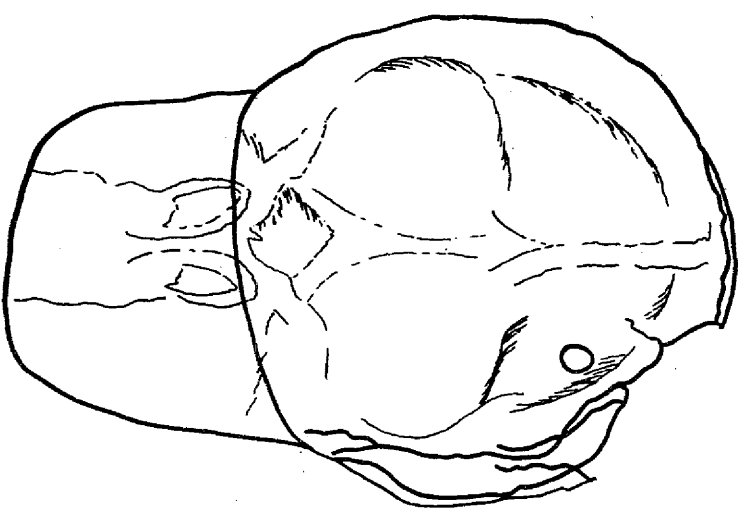
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Front View



Right Side View



Rear View

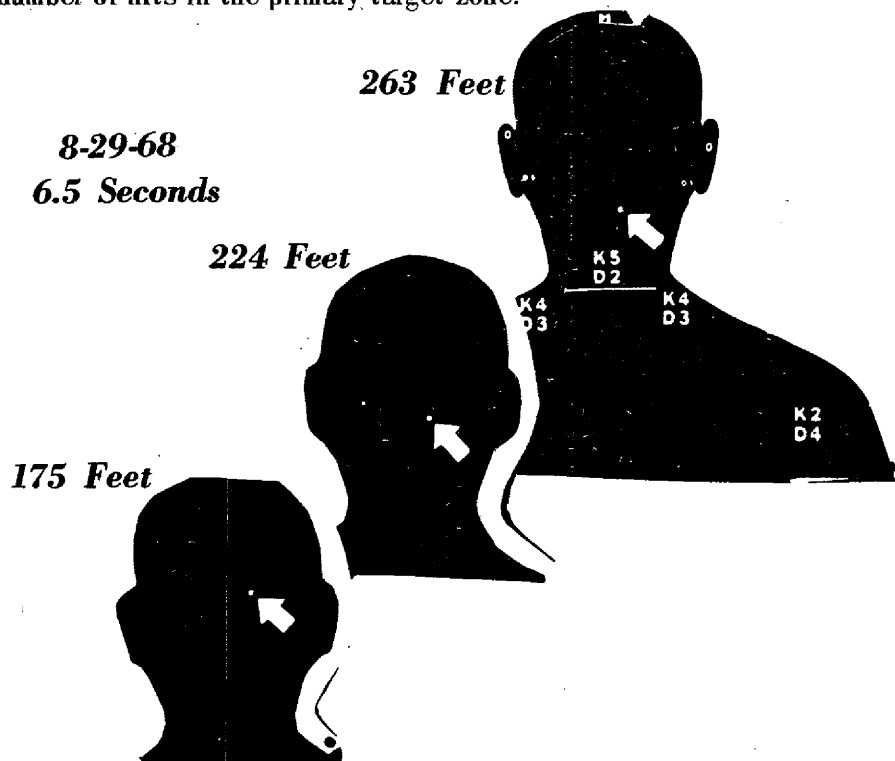
These three drawings were constructed from a description by Dr. Lattimer of the President's wounds. They are in no way intended to duplicate the X-rays of the President but rather to give an idea of the magnitude of the President's wounds.

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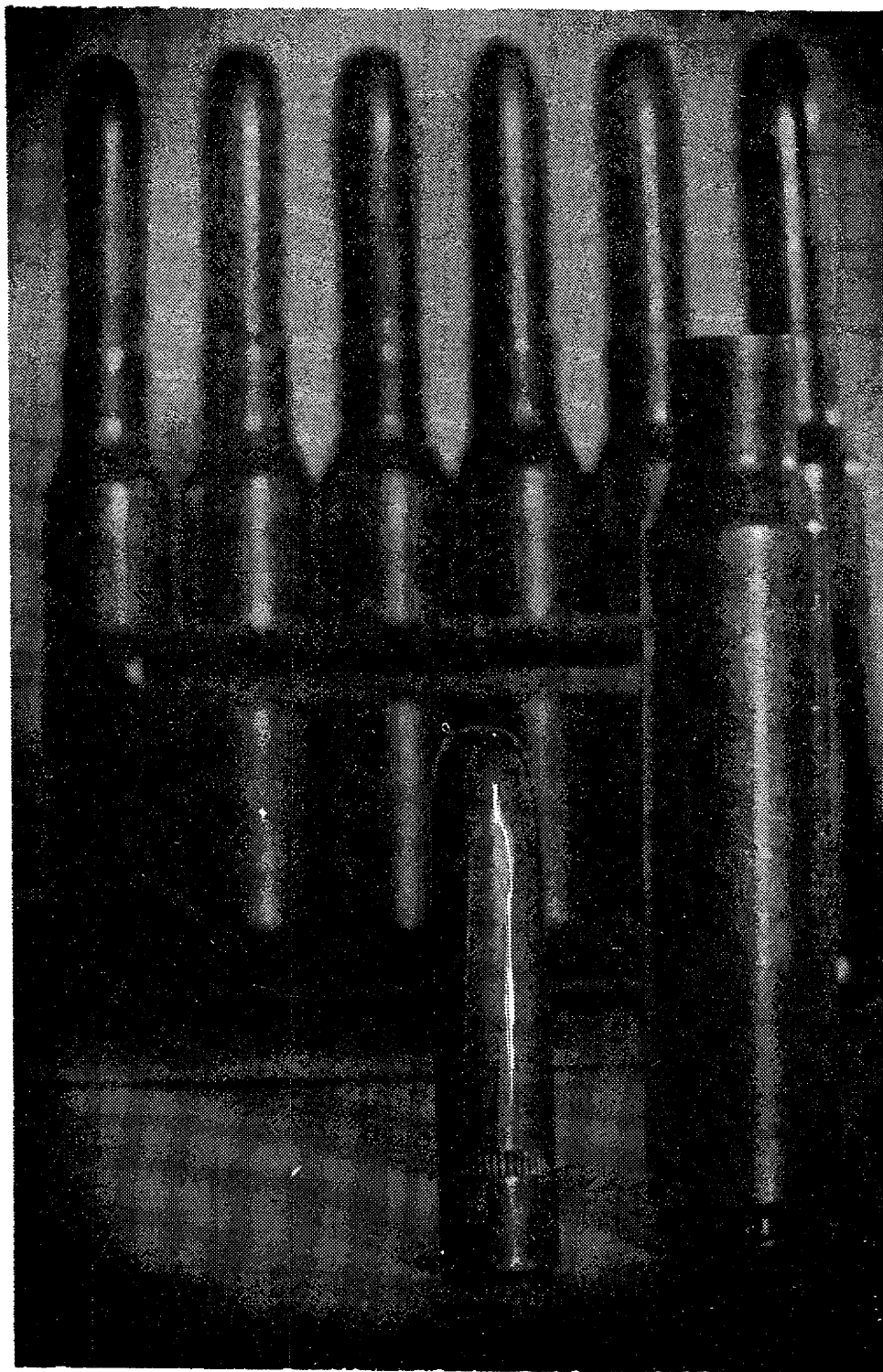
200 YARDS RAPID		DATE	HIT	NO.	VALUE
	ELEV. USED	6-0	5's		
	CORRECT ELEV.	6	4's		
	ZERO WIND	0	3's		
	WIND VEL.	0	2's		
	WIND DIRECTION	0	0's		
	REMARKS		SCORE	49	

(47)

Above is a page out of Oswald's Marine rifle score book. It was shot on a Wednesday, in sitting position. Oswald scored 49 out of a possible 50. Note the number of hits in the primary target zone.



These targets were hit at ranges from 175 feet to 263 feet in 6.5 seconds by Dr. Lattimer. The range was the same as that used by Oswald and Lattimer fired from the same position.



This clip is of the exact kind that was used by Lee Harvey Oswald in the rifle he used to kill President Kennedy. In the foreground is a bullet fired by Dr. Lattimer, through the rifle used by Oswald.

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Oswald. "Even the, so called, Nato Jacketed shell does not have the penetrating capability of this bullet. The charges are similar but the efficiency of the rifle is such that it does not penetrate as well. While one can not predict the shattering characteristic of any given bullet, the Nato shell shatters differently."

The X-rays and photographs also document the statement by the commission that the bullet that went through his throat was fired by Oswald, according to Lattimer.

"The X-rays show that the wound in the rear of Kennedy's neck was an entry wound," he said. "There are bullet fragments in the track where they should be, in the direction they would be traveling if fired from the book depository. The Pleura is bruised in the place I (as an expert on wounds) would expect. The hole in the trachea is in the right place and the holes in the shirt and necktie line up."

"Dr. Perry, the man who put the trach tube in when the President was brought to Parkman" he continued, "told me that there was very little bruising around the wound. With his experience in such wounds I tend to accept the statement."

"If the bullet had entered in the front it would have bashed in Kennedy's voice box. This means that the bullet could not have entered from the front. The direction of the bullet's flight also indicates this. To shoot the President from the front with a bullet path like that, a person would have had to be lying on the floor shooting up."

### One Bullet Theory

Lattimer supports the theory that the same bullet hit both the President and John Connally, then the governor of Texas. He states that if Connally had been hit by a separate bullet the damage would have been much more severe.

"The reconstructions show that Kennedy completely covered Connally," Lattimer details. "The matter is really quite simple. If you examine the films of the scene.

The physics of the turning bullet are equally simple. "When the bullet exited from Kennedy's neck, part of the interface was different than the rest. The result is the same as shooting a bullet out of a rifle barrel that is sawed off crooked. As the bullet exits the top is still under pressure while the bottom is free. This causes the bullet to drop down and turn sideways from the rear."

The turning bullet is in line with the elongated entry wound in the governor's back. It glanced across his rib fracturing it, and passed out just under the governor's nipple. This, says Lattimer, is also in line with a bullet that had been slowed. "If the bullet had hit the governor directly it would have disintegrated the bone and done considerably more damage than was actually done to him."

The exit wound in Connally's chest is a slash about three inches long. According to Lattimer the same interface principle applies to this exit, causing the bullet to drop even further and turn completely sideways, gashing across the governor's wrist and fracturing the wrist bones.

In the exit from the wrist the interface principle again comes into play, turning the bullet, which is now traveling very slowly, so that the rear of the bullet is pointed forward. The bullet then punctures Connally's thigh creating a wound approximately one inch deep.

### Coincidence?

Kennedy was killed by coincidence as much as anything else according to Lattimer. He bases this on the fact that the President did not collapse when the first bullet hit him.

"Kennedy used a corset type back brace to help immobilize the lower portion of his back," he disclosed. "To further support the back he had padded himself before putting the brace on and then had used an ace-type bandage over the corset, winding it between his legs. This would afford him the greatest comfort for the long day that lay ahead. It was this combination of braces which held him upright after the first shot. He could not crumble down as did Connally. Instead he fell over to the side against his wife. His head still exposed to Oswald."

The first bullet that hit him," he continued, "was not fatal. It was not even a very serious wound. Had he fallen over, he would have undoubtedly lived."

Lattimer's interest in the Kennedy assassination was a direct result of his study into the murder of President Abraham Lincoln.

On the day Kennedy was killed Lattimer was in Washington examining the National Archives transcript of the conspiracy trials in the Lincoln death. On his way home from Washington he was dictating an article when the news came over the radio that Kennedy had been shot.

"I was immediately drawn by the parallels between the two incidents," he disclosed. "In the following days, as the parallels grew, so did my interest."

Shortly after the incidents surrounding the President's death, Lattimer was offered a visiting professorship at the medical school in Dallas.

"I said I would be happy to come," he said. "I wanted to sit on the boxes that Oswald had used."

"They replied that it would be impossible for security reasons, so I refused the invitation."

He smiled as he explained that this gentle pressure got him into the book depository.

"The thing that I remember best was thinking that if one wanted to kill the President, they could not have picked a better place than Oswald did. It was a perfect position," he concluded.

In the early years after the commission issued its report a host of critical books were written. Among the statements they disputed was that both Connally and the President had been hit by the same bullet.

### Reconstruction

"There have been a great many charges thrown around," he said, "yet none of the critics to my knowledge did any experiments to support their contentions."

This started Dr. Lattimer on a series of experiments and investigations which has taken him

all over the country and has consumed much of his life for the past eight years.

The first aspect of the report he questioned was the gun. Critics said that the gun was unreliable, broken, miss-sighted, and that the ammunition could not work properly, in spite of statements to the contrary by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Lattimer first bought four rifles of the type Oswald used. Then he got the same kind of clips and went to the archives and examined the sling and sight used by Oswald, to duplicate the exact conditions, as far as was humanly possible. To get the sight and the ammunition was far more difficult than getting the rifles. However, after much searching and advertising all over the west he succeeded in getting the sights and enough ammunition.

There were four lots of ammunition produced by the Western Cartridge Co. in 1944 (the year of the ammunition that Oswald had). Lattimer was able to get three. The FBI had used the fourth.

The experiments began. First he and his children weighed the ammunition and found that the weight was very consistent, showing less than one grain average difference in weight over more than half a thousand shells.

The Warren Commission stated that the clip had stayed in the rifle when Oswald shoved the last shell home. This indicated that the rifle was broken. Lattimer explained that if the rifle had

not functioned perfectly, Oswald would not have been able to do what was alleged. In running the clips through his own rifles he found that two of them ejected the clip properly and he felt that he had come on a significant problem. Then he tested the other two and found that they both retained the clip. To make sure of his finding, he went to Washington and fired Oswald's rifle. The clip retained.

He questioned the statement that even an expert marksman like Oswald could not have fired three shells with any accuracy in the time he had (6.5 seconds) to kill the President. To test this attack an elaborate set was put together on the Lattimer family farm in Michigan. Weeks of dry firing the weapon were undertaken to both conserve ammunition and to keep in line with what Oswald actually did.

"The rifle is different from an American weapon, in that you have to both pull back and ram home the bolt very hard. However, with practice I could do this very easily," he explained.

"With practice it was possible to consistently shoot with accuracy at the ranges that Oswald fired at. Even when the rate of fire was set at the pace alleged by the commission, I could place shots in the head area of a military target, with a little more spread," he disclosed.

In the more than 500 rounds fired in the experiments there was no failure to fire. "This was so even though the ammunition was several years older than when Oswald used it," he said. The FBI also had no failures in the 100 rounds they shot.

"This weapon is a very accurate rifle with

tremendous penetrating capacity," he declared, again attacking statements by commission critics that the bullet could not have gone through Kennedy and Texas Governor Connolly.

To test the penetrating capacity of the weapon, he fired through telephone poles adding one each time the bullet went through the pole. It was only when he tied four poles together that the bullet did not go all the way through. It had penetrated 47 inches.

Next came the turning theory. It is Lattimer's contention that there was no way that Connolly could have been hit except by the bullet that hit Kennedy. First, he says, reconstructions of the scene and films show that the governor was completely covered by the president from the rear. Second, the direction of the shot was such that it could not have come from anywhere but the rear.

"The bullet passed through Kennedy's neck, hitting nothing substantial," he explained. "How-

ever, the elasticity of the skin slowed the bullet considerably (Approximately 30%)."

Lattimer documents his statement with the x-rays of the President's neck. He explained that the rest was all in the physics.

There was a second coincidence that enabled Oswald to kill the President, he said, the fact that while Oswald's rifle was miss-sighted about four inches high and slightly to the right, at the time Oswald fired the fatal shot the car was moving to the right and up in Oswald's line of vision, compensating for the miss sighting.

Another contention critics made was that the fragments in Connolly's body were too large to have come from the bullet labeled 399 by the Warren Commission.

To investigate this attack, Lattimer examined 399 and then duplicated as closely as possible the exact amount of distortion in the original. He found that the amount of lead that oozed out the back was more than enough to comprise the fragments in Connolly. In fact he was able to make 41 fragments out of the 2.1 grams of extruded lead. Connolly only had four. Even if one figures on half the weight loss, compensating for a possible deviance in the bullet weight, there would still be 21 fragments, most of which were larger than the ones found in Connolly.

Dr. Lattimer even extended his research into such areas as what had actually happened when it appeared the President's wife crawled on the rear of the car.

He explained that an examination of blowups of the film made by Abraham Zepruda show that she was actually trying to keep from being thrown out of the car when it sped up to rush to Parkland Hospital with the President's body. To test this out, he went over the course in an open automobile and found the same thing happened to him. "It is a totally terrifying experience. You are petrified that you will fall out and be crushed by the cars behind," he recalled.

### Conclusion

After eight years of investigation into both major and minor points in the report, he is ready to acknowledge the veracity of the commission report. "I would say that you have to

believe the evidence," he said, "and the evidence is not lacking. It all fits together. I no longer see any reason to doubt it."

"There is no doubt in my mind that the pieces of skull flew forward. There are no bullet fragments anywhere going sideways," he summed up. "No wound goes sideways. If Kennedy were hit from the front it would have had to be from the floor of the car."

"These," he concluded, "are factual matters that can be documented, even now. Had there been any discrepancies, I would have seized on them. However, there are none. I have searched and searched expecting there would be something that was not noticed, but so far I haven't been able to find anything. In fact, the more I see, the more I am convinced."

"At this point it is my expert opinion that shots from the Mannlicher - Carcano rifle, fired from approximately where Lee Harvey Oswald was in the Book Depository killed President Kennedy and wounded Connally. If some one can show me contrary evidence, I will be happy to investigate it."

If you ask Dr. Lattimer about his professional life, you will receive a massive understatement in reply. He has found a cure for Kidney Tuberculosis, and several operative techniques.

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Palisades Newspapers would like to thank the National Archives of the United States and the Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine for the courtesy they extended in allowing us to use the photographs of Dr. John Kingsley Lattimer, the targets, and the page of Lee Harvey Oswald's U.S. Marine score book.