

STACKING THE DECK  
AGAINST OSWALD

By

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One trait that the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) shared with the Warren Commission (besides trying to seal its records for nearly a lifetime) was a tendency to ignore provocative findings. One such discovery involves the Dillard and Powell photographs of the sniper's nest window on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. HSCA's final report states baldly:

"The panel [of photographic experts] studied two photographs taken within minutes of the assassination [Dillard and Powell]. While no human face or form could be detected in the sixth floor southeast window, the panel was able to conclude that a stack of boxes in the window had been rearranged during the interval of the taking of the two photographs."<sup>1</sup>

This finding is, in HSCA's treatment of it, unconnected to any of the evidence in the case.

While the times at which the Dillard and Powell photos were taken could not be precisely determined, the approximate times are known. Professional photographer Tom Dillard, riding in the motorcade, stated that he snapped his picture several seconds after the last shot that he heard.<sup>2</sup> Bystander James Powell estimated that he took his picture about thirty seconds after the last shot. A shadow analysis conducted by the HSCA panel confirmed that the photos "were taken at approximately the same time, with Dillard's first and Powell's second."<sup>3</sup>

In the Dillard photo only two boxes are visible in the window. The Powell photo manifests "several additional boxes" <sup>4</sup> (to the naked eye, it looks like two or three). The panel considered whether the change was apparent - caused by the different perspectives from which the two photos were taken - or real. The results of trigonometric calculation and shadow analysis caused the panel to conclude that "the additional boxes visible in the Powell photograph were moved during the interval between the Dillard and Powell photographs."<sup>5</sup>

If we do what HSCA refused to do or was incapable of doing - consider the evidentiary implications of this finding - they are indeed striking.

If it is Oswald who performs this expost facto chore of placing additional boxes in front of the window, we must attribute to him such an acute level of derrangement that it becomes difficult to imagine how he ever could have perpetrated the crime of the century. The President's head explodes, and Oswald dallies to perfect his soon-to-be-infamous layer, cosmeticizing it for the history books, no doubt.

Moreover, it is just barely possible for the official version of the case to get Oswald downstairs in time for his encounter with Roy Truely and Officer Baker, on the second floor. If Oswald paused to work on his nest, it is highly likely that he would have arrived on the second floor late for the encounter or at least out of breath.

If not Oswald, then who? I am not aware of any innocent bystanders or depository employees who are candidates for such a role. Nor were there any law-enforcement personnel there at that time.

The most logical explanation, buttressed by other data about the dubious origin and odd construction of the alleged sniper's nest, is that the nest was built not to kill the President but to frame Oswald. Given the short time between Bonnie Ray Williams' departure from the sixth floor (after eating his lunch), and the eruption of gunfire, the nest may not have been finalized until shortly after the shooting. The Dillard and Powell photographs failed to capture any conspirators on film, but may well have captured their handywork.

#### Notes

1. The Final Assassinations Report, Bantam, 1979, p. 42.
2. HSCA Appendix To Hearings, vol. VI, Photographic Evidence, p.110.
3. Ibid.
4. HSCA VOL. IV, P. 115
5. Ibid.