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STUDY OF TRANSCRIPT CONTRADICTS THE 'LONE ASSASSIN' THEORY

Warren report is challenged

IT IS SAFE to assume that not too many Americans have actually read the 26-volume transcript of hearings published by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, despite the widespread interest in the assassination.

The transcript of the hearings, however, casts a grave shadow over the accuracy of the one-volume Warren Report which is based on the 26 volumes of testimony and research. Attorney Mark Lane has already voiced his opinion that the hearings transcript contradicts the one-volume report's finding that a "lone-assassin," Lee Oswald, murdered the President with three bullets fired from the Texas Book Depository. Now another lawyer who has read the full transcript has reached substantially the same conclusion.

Confining himself to the full transcript and the report, matching the conclusions in the report against the evidence in the 26 volumes, attorney Vincent Salandria of Philadelphia wrote in the March issue of *Liberation* magazine that the "Warren Commission appears to have involved itself wittingly or unwittingly in fabrication and withholding of vital evidence," that the commission is "mistaken" on several significant points, and that its "findings have to be considered in themselves inconclusive . . . based on insufficient and secondary evidence."

The 18-page *Liberation* article was an elaboration and extension of a six-page critique of the Warren Commission Salandria published in *Liberation* in January (*GUARDIAN*, Jan. 2). The article concerned only one aspect of the assassination: the several-second shooting sequence, during which Oswald is alleged in the Warren Report to have fired a World War II-vintage Italian bolt-action rifle three times at the passing presidential motorcade.

Salandria analyzed the Warren Commission's conclusion that "President Kennedy was first struck by a bullet which entered at the back of his neck and exited through the lower front portion of his neck." He found, on the basis of testimony and evidence appearing in the hearings transcript, that this conclusion was a non sequitur.

The wound in the back of Kennedy's neck, according to the commission, was produced by a bullet entering from behind, emerging at the throat. This con-

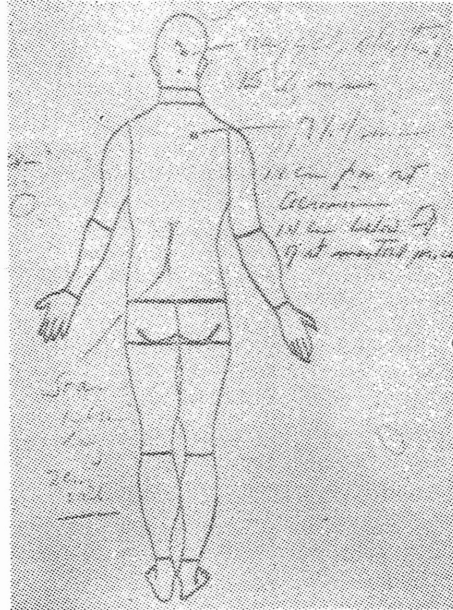
clusion was reached, Salandria pointed out, despite testimony to the contrary by the doctors and nurses at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, all of whom indicated their belief that the entry wound was in the throat, not in the back of the neck. (This would have made it impossible for Oswald, allegedly situated behind and above the President, to have fired the shot.)

The so-called "neck wound," Salandria pointed out, was actually about five to six inches below the top of the President's collar, in the upper-right portion of the back. Assuming for argument's sake that the neck wound was an entrance wound, Salandria noted that in order to emerge at Kennedy's throat, its downward course would have to be deflected upward, because according to testimony the point of alleged entry was lower than the point of exit. The author noted that although X-rays and photographs of the wounds were in the possession of the Secret Service, the Warren Commission did not reproduce them in either the report or the transcript of the hearings. The visual evidence to support the commission's contention consisted of a drawing of the exit and entry wounds admittedly done without the artist's having seen the photographic evidence.

Speaking of the photographs and X-rays, Salandria declared: "They happen to constitute the best extant evidence of the wounds. If the U.S. government will not produce this vital data, we must conclude that their omission from the Warren Report was purposeful. They must now be produced for the scrutiny of non-governmentally connected scholars. Not to do so would be to place the Warren Commission under the dark cloud of failure in its obligation to the American public . . . The evidence gathered by the Warren Commission certainly indicated the existence of one entry wound in the front of the President's neck and a separate wound in his back. To avoid this obvious conclusion the Warren Commission appears to have involved itself wittingly or unwittingly in fabrication and withholding of vital evidence."

The nature of the neck wound was again brought into question by the wounds received by Texas Gov. John Connally, who was sitting in front of the President and, according to the Warren Commission, was the victim of

anew on bullets



Commission Exhibit 385 (left) shows bullet course downward after entry high in back. But Exhibit 397 (above) shows bullet entering lower in back, therefore coursing upward.

the same bullet that passed through the President. For this to be true, Salandria noted, the bullet, after having entered the President's neck coursing downward, would have had to reverse itself to move upward to emerge at the neck, then again reversed itself—if the report was to be believed—and plunge downward through the governor's back. The governor and his wife consider this to be "not conceivable." The hearings transcript, Salandria wrote, also quoted a number of witnesses who concurred with Connally's comment.

"The heavy weight of evidence," Salandria declared, "requires us to conclude that the commission was mistaken in its determination that Gov. Connally was struck by the same bullet or bullets which wounded the President. This evidence consists of the governor's testimony, his wife's, that of all the eyewitnesses to the assassination, the [eyewitness] films, the ballistics evidence with respect to Commission Exhibit 399 (the bullet), and the anatomical findings indicating an irregular missile had punctured Gov. Connally's wrist."

Turning to Kennedy's head wound, Salandria quoted a number of witnesses who stated that the President suffered an exit wound on the left side of his head. (The commission concluded that the bullet which pierced his head entered the right side from behind, causing a tiny wound, and emerged from the right side, leaving a huge hole. This is consistent with the theory that the bullet was fired from behind and above the President.)

Among these witnesses are the two

motorcycle policemen riding on the President's left, each of whom was splattered with blood and other physical matter when Kennedy was hit; doctors and eyewitnesses.

"Six people in all thought there was a wound in the left temporal area of the skull," he wrote. "If these six people were mistaken, the government can prove them in error by producing the X-rays and photographs taken at the autopsy. These six witnesses are backed up by [the motorcycle policemen] . . . All of the above points directly to a hit from the right and not from the rear of the President."

As further evidence, Salandria quoted the testimony of several doctors and nurses at Parkland, all of whom noted the large opening on the right side of Kennedy's skull but failed to observe the smaller "entry" wound the commission maintained was but a few inches away.

If Salandria's observations are correct (and all of his material is directly from the testimony before the commission), the case against Lee Oswald has suffered another setback.