

WAS THERE A SECOND ASSASSIN?

Kennedy X-ray storm grows

FROM OUR OWN REPORTERS

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THE CURTAIN of official silence that previously protected the Warren Commission from its critics is now, for the first time, under serious threat of being ripped aside. Two recent developments are causing acute concern to the Johnson Administration which—for perfectly understandable political reasons—has never made any secret of its desire to damp the whole controversy down.

The first is the decision of one of the commission's own lawyers to come out in the open with an insider's account of the commission's workings and findings. Mr Wesley J. Liebeler, one of the 14 senior counsel on the commission, recently signed a contract with a large New York publishing house for a book that, whatever else it does, will clearly breach the present "no comment" policy.

Resentment

Mr Liebeler, a right-wing lawyer now working at the University of Los Angeles, is understood to have been irritated with accounts such as that contained in Mr Epstein's book, "Inquest," on the way the commission went about its work. At the same time, while working on the commission, he is known to have had his own sharp differences with other members of the staff. It is believed that it was Mr Liebeler who led an abortive demand for the production before the commission of the photographs and X-ray plates taken at the autopsy on President Kennedy's body.

The question of both photographs and X-rays also overshadows the second development—which is reported to be causing even greater resentment within the White House. Recent unconfirmed

reports indicate that Mr William Manchester—who has spent two years writing the Kennedy-backed, specially authorised study of the assassination, "Death of a President," due to be published next year—has lately been making additions to his original manuscript. These will take account of the widespread attention now being paid both to the whereabouts and the significance of those photographs and X-ray plates.

If these reports are true—and both Mr Manchester and his pub-

lishers are, if anything, even more secretive than official Government sources—they must inevitably strengthen the view that the Kennedy family has access to the photographs.

The most widely accepted theory in Washington is that for almost three years the pictures have been kept in a Government vault to which the Kennedy family has access. It is now being suggested that in the past few weeks Mr Manchester has been granted permission to see the pictures and that in his forthcoming book he will be in a position to clear up at least some of the mysteries that currently surround them.

The photographs and X-rays would almost certainly shed light on the central problem of whether there was more than one assassin, as argued by Mark Lane and Edward J. Epstein in their attacks on the Warren Commission's findings.

Amateur film

Theories about a second assassin stem from a conclusion in the Warren Commission report that a single bullet struck President Kennedy and then went on to cause all the wounds to Governor

Connally. Two years after the Warren Commission's report into the assassination of President Kennedy a crucial doubt remains: was there a second assassin? The Warren Commission said not, but, as we show in the diagrams on the right, its answer rested on the theory that one bullet must have hit two men—a theory that is seriously challenged. Meanwhile, evidence that might shed light on these central problems—the photographs and X-rays taken at the autopsy—remain mysteriously hidden.

Connally. According to the commission, this bullet hit Kennedy at the base of the neck, exited at his throat and then struck Connally.

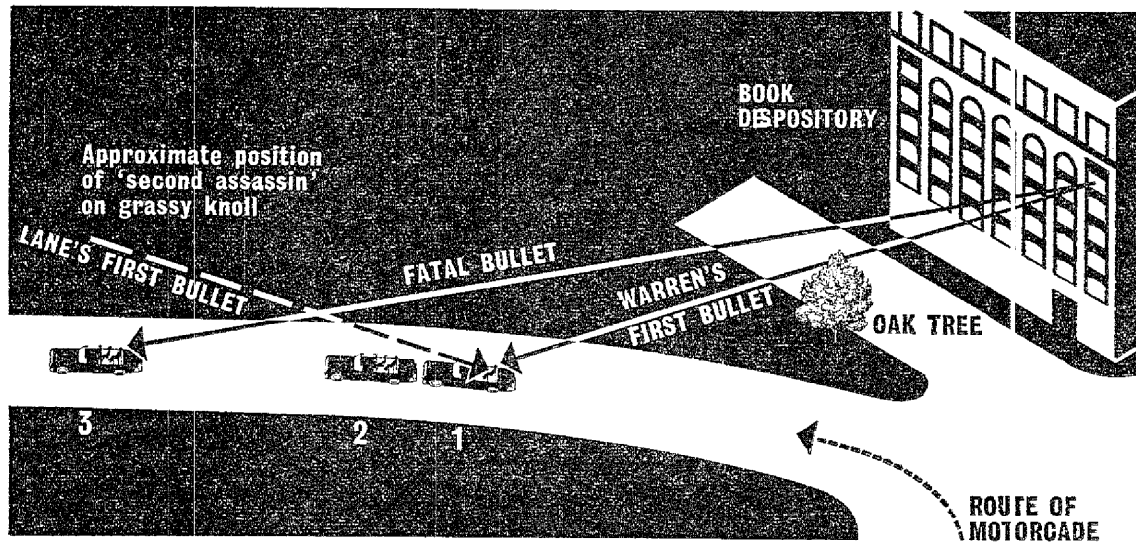
A later bullet shattered Kennedy's brain—this could have been fired from the same gun, according to the one eye-witness amateur film taken of the assassination and the time that it would take to fire the bolt-action rifle used by Lee Harvey

Oswald. However, if Kennedy's shoulder and throat wounds, plus Connally's wounds, were not caused by the same bullet, it is highly unlikely—if not impossible—that yet another bullet could have been fired in the time from Oswald's gun. Therefore—the argument runs—there must have been a second assassin.

The bullets fired by Oswald from the Texas Schoolbook Depository would have hit their victims from behind, since the presidential car had just passed this building and was heading for an underpass when the assassination took place. An important factor, therefore, is whether the wound in Kennedy's throat was an exit or an entry wound. In the case of the latter, it could have been fired from the direction of the bridge, where a marksman would have had a head-on view of the approaching car.

No autopsy

Unfortunately, on orders from the Secret Service, the Dallas hospital to which Kennedy was taken was not permitted to perform an autopsy. In an attempt to save the President's life, doctors there performed a tracheotomy by extending the throat wound. This may have confused other doctors who performed the post-mortem examination at the Bethesda Naval Hospital, Maryland, that night after



Car position 1—where Kennedy was first struck, according to the film of the assassination. (The oak tree obscured the view from the Book Depository before that point.)

Car position 2—where, approximately 1.8 seconds later, Connally was seen to slump forward.

Car position 3—where—according to all versions—Kennedy received the fatal bullet in the head.

The rifle found in the Book Depository could not have fired twice in 1.8 seconds. Therefore :

Kennedy and Connally were struck by the same bullet (the Warren Commission's finding)—or there was more than one assassin.

LANE advances the theory, based on evidence of eye-witnesses not called by the Warren Commission, that some shots came from a grassy knoll behind a fence in front of the motorcade.

EPSTEIN argues that some of the medical evidence, and the evidence of Kennedy's clothes, are strong points against the Warren Commission's finding that Kennedy and Connally were struck by the same bullet.