

... Why Do They Hide From the Evidence?

By Jerry Policoff
and Howard Roffman

Jacob Cohen laces his slick defense of the discredited Warren Report with broadside attacks at the honesty of the "critics," a group into which he lumps everyone who disagrees with him. The critics, Mr. Cohen implies, "do not wish to know the truth" about the assassination. Scholarship which lacks "frank acknowledgment of the difficulties in one's position," he says, "carries the scent of dishonesty." "The opposite of a fact is a lie," he reminds us, labeling unspecified critics "conscious liars."

We might expect some practice to accompany this heavy preaching. Instead, it is Mr. Cohen who is guilty of the charges he hurls at victims named and unnamed. Mr. Cohen's article reveals that he lies about the most basic facts and deliberately suppresses information destructive of his position.

One after another, Mr. Cohen tells his readers, the critics "riff" have dissolved "as completely as must any speculation about the head and back wound." In fact, and this illustrates

Jerry Policoff, a New York advertising salesman, has been a student of the John F. Kennedy case since 1966.

Howard Roffman's book, Presumed Guilty, was published this year by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. He is a law student at the University of Florida.

Mr. Cohen's technique, speculation about these wounds has far from dissolved. There is a virtual mountain of evidence suggesting a much lower Kennedy back wound than the Warren Commission alleged — a location that would demolish the single-bullet theory and the Warren Report along with it.

As for the head wound, experts who have examined the Kennedy photographs and X-rays have found the small entrance wound in the back of the head to be four inches away from where the autopsy doctors originally placed it. If anything, speculation about these wounds has grown more intense, rather than diminished.

Likewise, Mr. Cohen says "The photograph of Oswald, rifle in hand, is not a fabrication... the shadow under Oswald's nose notwithstanding." Ignoring other evidence that these photographs — there were two — are fakes, Mr. Cohen suggests we ignore the incongruous shadows which indisputably are present in the pictures, and believe that the pictures are genuine. Mr. Cohen states no reason whatsoever for ignoring the shadows and accepting the pictures as bona fide. His statement that any jury in the world would have convicted Oswald of shooting Tippit is equally debatable.

In his discussion of the single-bullet theory, Cohen contends that the bullet had to hit Connally because it hit nothing else in the automobile. First, this supposes that the bullet transited Kennedy's body, which is

lower wound is accurate). Secondly, bullet paths are unpredictable, and it is much more likely that the bullet would have flown free of the car than that it would have hit Connally where he was hit, then proceed to do so much further damage.

Mr. Cohen slights all the dispositive evidence negating the single-bullet theory and instead dwells on irrelevancies and ambiguities which prove nothing. When he says Gov. Connally's wrist was only in position to receive its wounds at an earlier point than Connally or many critics

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say he was hit, and that this "proves beyond honest doubt that they were hit by the same bullet," he states a non-sequitur. It remains uncertain exactly when either man was hit, but even if the Zapruder film revealed that both were hit at precisely the same time (which it does not) this would not prove or necessarily imply that they were hit by the same bullet, and in fact, all available evidence indicates that they were not.

Mr. Cohen makes a fuss about how much metal is missing from Bullet 399, an academic point at best. The significant observation is that 399 is too un mutilated to have been the infamous single bullet; even Mr. Cohen is constrained to admit the high improbability of the official case on this point. This admission, however, is not that type of practice which college professors are taught to practice as scholarship, for Mr. Cohen knowingly deceives his readers about what 399 is actually required to have done if the government's case is to stand.

To begin with, Mr. Cohen is silent about the metal fragments in President Kennedy's neck. This is no wonder, since the autopsy doctors themselves swore there was no metal in the neck. Mr. Cohen himself, in his 1966 *Nation* article, strongly implied that the theory of a frontal hit to the neck would be bolstered if the X-rays ultimately revealed any traces of metal there.

Experts, who have examined the autopsy photos and X-rays, have said that the X-rays do reveal metal fragments in the neck. These fragments have been measured as 4 millimeters and two millimeters, respectively. It happens that Bullet 399 never presented its lead base to a hard surface in the neck, and thus, if it left fragments there at all, it had to have scraped them from its copper jacket. Bullet 399's jacket is completely intact, no fragments are missing. Thus, when Mr. Cohen hides the neck fragments he denies his readers evidence that the single bullet theory he advocates cannot be true. This, it must be noted, is the same theory which Mr. Cohen admits is "indispensable to the conclusion that there was a single assassin."

Then, Mr. Cohen makes no reference to the abundant testimony by Connally's doctors that his wrist

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wound was caused by a mutilated bullet. As if this were not enough, Mr. Cohen lies about Connally's thigh wound in calling it a shallow puncture wound. The fact, omitted by Mr. Cohen, is that a fragment of metal had traveled far enough into the thigh to become permanently embedded in the bone there. Having suppressed every shred of evidence which proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the un mutilated, indeed unscratched 399 did not wound Kennedy or Connally, Mr. Cohen tries to bolster his theory by quoting entirely out of context from Howard Roffman's *Presumed Guilty*. Roffman does admit the likelihood that one bullet caused all of Connally's wounds, but he explicitly states and documents that this "one bullet" was not 399.

Mr. Cohen makes light of the fact that the commission ignored and the government has suppressed the only scientific evidence which makes the single-bullet theory even tenable, or which might forever destroy it — the spectrographic analysis. He suggests that "the recent release of that report should stymie" the line of thought that the government suppressed this scientific evidence because it would destroy the government's case. Again, Mr. Cohen lies; even the U.S. Department of Justice considers his statement a lie.

After Harold Weisberg lost his first freedom-of-information lawsuit to force release of the spectrographic analysis, Congress amended the law to permit disclosure. Back in court once again for "that report," as Mr. Cohen calls it, the Justice Department insisted under oath that such a report did not exist and that the only relevant information in the government's files consisted of virtually indecipherable, incomplete, scribbled worksheets. The case is now on appeal. Even if the government swore falsely (as it almost certainly did) that the final report did not exist, it is a fact that no such report was released. Mr. Cohen's fantasy notwithstanding.

When Mr. Cohen tells his readers that the now-famous grassy-knoll derelicts are not E. Howard Hunt or Frank Sturgis, he plays the same game played by the Rockefeller Commission,

whose executive director, David Belin, previously was a lawyer for the Warren Commission. No serious critic has ever alleged that the tramps were Hunt and Sturgis, and the Rockefeller Commission told a great deal about itself by its attempts to knock down clay pigeons while ignoring serious attacks on the physical evidence presented by the Warren Commission.

When Cohen laments Earl Warren's failure to "force" the Kennedy family to release the photos and X-rays to the Warren Commission he consciously lies about one fact that he knows to be false (that this material was in the possession of the Kennedy family when it was in fact in the possession of the Secret Service); and about another that he has reason to believe to be false (that the Warren Commission never saw this material).

Mr. Cohen knows this is a lie, because he was the first to publish evidence to the contrary. In his July 11, 1966, article for the *Nation*, he quoted a Secret Service statement that the X-rays were made available to the commission and were shown to the staff for briefing purposes. In that article, Mr. Cohen also reports the denial of a commission staff lawyer, Arlen Specter. At best the two versions present a conflict: certainly, it was never "clear" that this vital autopsy evidence was never seen by the commission. And if Mr. Specter's blanket denial was persuasive to Mr. Cohen in July 1966, why does he now hide the fact that three months later Mr. Specter admitted to U.S. *News and World Report* that he had indeed been shown at least one autopsy picture? Why also does he suppress portions of the Jan. 27, 1964, Warren Commission executive session transcript, declassified last year? Here the commission's chief counsel, J. Lee Rankin, stated that "we have the picture of where the bullet entered in the back," a glaring refutation of Mr. Cohen's assertion that such pictures were unavailable.

This review of Mr. Cohen's article cannot begin to suggest the scope of his omissions, misrepresentations, and outright lies. What has been presented should be sufficient to establish that Mr. Cohen is able to defend the Warren Report only on the basis of sheer fantasy.