

20 QUESTIONS FOR THE WARREN COMMISSION

Curtis Crawford, Philosophy Instructor, New York University

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He found the Warren Commission report impressive. It presents clear, detailed, massive evidence against Oswald and explains clearly and painstakingly why and how certain conclusions were reached. He is immensely impressed by the report but he is not convinced by it.

Before the report was issued, he had listed a number of points that the report would have to prove, as a test of its impartiality and completeness. Those points were:

- 1) that three shots were fired
- 2) that all the shots came from the sixth floor window of the TBDB
- 3) that they were all fired by the Carcano rifle
- 4) that this rifle was in the sixth floor room at 12:30 p.m.
- 5) that Oswald was in that room at that time
- 6) that the Carcano actually belonged to Oswald
- 7) that Oswald had the rifle with him that morning

The Warren Commission contends that it has proved all these conclusions.

Crawford had felt, before the report was issued, that

- 1) there were 4 or more shots fired
- 2) there was strong evidence that some of the shots came from in front of the car
- 3) there was reason to doubt that they all came from the same rifle
- 4) there was significant evidence that the rifle was a German Mauser
- 5) there was no evidence that Oswald was in the room
- 6) the rifle mailed to A. Hidell might not be the same as the alleged murder rifle
- 7) there was no evidence that Oswald had carried the rifle that morning, and some evidence against it since his package was 2 feet long as against 3.3 feet of the disassembled Carcano

Having read the Warren Commission report, he finds that the Commission admittedly was inconclusive as to the number of shots and is not sure if there were two or three.

The Warren Commission (WC) concludes that one bullet hit both Keddedy and Connolly; a second bullet hit Kennedy; and a possible third bullet was lost or hit a burbstone. Despite the wealth of detail given, the WC leaves inconclusive the assertion that three shots were fired.

Crawford's prior notes (before the issue of the WC report) had noted that there was substantial evidence that some of the shots came from in front of the car and substantial evidence against the theory that all shots came from the sixth floor window. This is perhaps the most difficult problem in the chain of evidence against Oswald.

Bullet no. 1, according to the doctors at Parkland Memorial Hospital, entered the middle of the throat next to the collar button. Two weeks later the FBI summary report was submitted to the WC and leaked to the New York Times. The FBI, according to that leak, contended that a bullet had entered the right side of the neck, where the neck joins the right shoulder. The next day, there was a leak from the autopsy report, which said that this bullet had entered the back of the neck. Therefore, there were three contradictory versions at that time of the entry position of the first bullet.

Bullet no. 2 There was clear evidence as to the point of entry in Connolly and no problem as to the path of the bullet in his body. The problem, rather, was: what was Connolly's position at the moment he was struck by bullet no.2? The FBI report leaked to the New York Times did not specify the Governor's position.

Bullet no. 3: The doctors at Parkland said that the third bullet had caused a severe head wound but they did not specify the point of exit or entry. The FBI leak said that the bullet had entered the right temple and exited from the back of the head. The autopsy leak said the exact reverse--that it had entered the back of the head and exited from the top of the head. Since the bullet knocked off part of the scalp, the motion picture film should show its trajectory and give an indication of its direction. What do the films show as to the trajectory of the scalp? There is no indication in the WC report. What was Connolly's position at the moment he was struck by the bullet? The WC is inconclusive. The WC and the Governor disagree as to his position at the crucial moment.

There are different accounts of the bullets that struck Kennedy from the doctors at Parkland, the FBI, and the autopsy. The WC specifically gives the autopsy findings: that the first bullet entered 5.5 inches below the tip of the right mastoid process (behind ear) and 5.5 inches in from the top of the right shoulder joint. The bullet then went through the upper back, neck, and exited near the collar-button. The second bullet, according to the autopsy, entered the skull near the base on the right side, blowing part of the skull up and out--careening up on an angle from the point of entry. This would be strong confirmation that the bullets had come from behind and above.

What raises the greatest question in Crawford's mind is that there are contradictions in the evidence as presented by the WC as to the location of the first bullet wound. The autopsy says it was 5.5 inches below the mastoid; the FBI evidence from Kennedy's coat and shirt indicates entry 5 and 3/8 inches below the top of the coat and 5 and 3/4 inches below the shirt. There is a discrepancy of about 5 inches.

Another contradiction is that the autopsy says the bullet entered 5.5 inches in from the top of the shoulder joint--that is, 3 or 4 inches away from the center of the back. But the hole in the shirt was 1 and 1/8 inches from the center seam and 1 and 3/4 inches from the center of the coat.

A further contradiction: the May 24 reconstruction of the assassination based on films and testimony established the angle of the bullet, the WC concludes, as from 17° to 20°. Taking the estimate of 17°, the more favourable to the WC, the first bullet would have entered a point 17° higher than its point of exit. Marking the shirt 5 and 3/4" below the collar, and the neck at the collar button, there is a minus angle rather than a plus 17°, which means that the bullet would have had to travel upwards.

Another very intriguing contradiction arises from the FBI leak which appeared in the New York Times on December 19, 1963, to the effect that the FBI in its report to the Commission stated flatly that both bullets came from the sixth-floor window of the TBDB, but the FBI report did not mention the autopsy. The autopsy was completed late at night on 22 November. Why did not the FBI report in December include the autopsy findings? Rather, the FBI said in that report that the first bullet had entered the right side of the neck and the second bullet had entered the right temple. Was this a mistake? The leak had had an authoritative ring.

On December 16 the New York Times Washington staff had gotten the FBI leak; on December 17 the leak of the autopsy findings at Bethesda contradicted the FBI on the entry points of the two bullets that struck JFK. A third leak tried to explain the contradiction by saying that the FBI report did not include the autopsy findings.

TIME magazine for December 5, page 18, Loftus is quoted on the reconstruction attempts, saying that one explanation is that JFK had turned to his right when the bullet from behind struck the front of his neck---i.e., 14 days after the autopsy the FBI attempted reconstructions of the crime were based on an entry wound in the front of the neck.

How is it that the FBI did not have the autopsy report two weeks after it was completed, or at least, not the same autopsy report that the WC has. The WC report does not make it clear whether or not the autopsy report was included in the FBI report of December 16. The WC does not even mention that FBI report.

The question arises whether the FBI was conducting an impartial experiment or a partisan exercise. In either case, there was the strongest motivation to obtain and use the autopsy findings. Why did not the FBI get and use the autopsy findings? Was the autopsy report as originally written the same as the one quoted by the WC in its report????

The FBI developed evidence on the first bullet on the basis of holes in JFK's clothing. FBI claimed that the fabric threads were pressed in, not out---so seemingly there was no need to conduct the experiment on December 6 for the purpose of determining how JFK was hit in the front from the back.

Assertion that all shots came from the Carcano: the main evidence is the ballistics tests. The WC is certain that two bullets came from the Carcano; is not sure if a third bullet was fired and if it was if it came from the Carcano.

Assertion that the Carcano was on the 6th floor at 12:30: the difficulty is that police officer Seymour Weitzman said it was a German Mauser in his affidavit of the 23 November, specifying it was a 7.65 gauge ~~(?)~~. The WC did not publish that affidavit. Crawford has seen the affidavit, courtesy of Mark Lane (a photostat of the original, or a photostat of a photocopy, he is not sure which), in which Weitzman says, as Crawford recalls, that he picked up the rifle and handed it to Day, who gave it to Fritz.

The WC recognizes that Weitzman thought the rifle was a Mauser but says that he never picked the rifle up and did not get a good look at it. That is contradicted by Weitzman's affidavit. The WC should have revealed the affidavits filed by both Weitzman and Day.

Assertion that Oswald was present at 12:30 in the 6th floor room: Before the WC issued its report, there was no evidence that he was and no evidence that he was not. The evidence of his palmpoint on a carton is not conclusive since it is impossible to determine when it was made.

Oswald's descent from 6th to 2nd floor: The WC is plausible on this point (that he had sufficient time) and in Crawford's opinion, the claim that Oswald could not have made it in time has fallen.

Assertion that the Carcano was the property of Oswald: the evidence has been strong from the beginning. It was traced via the order, the money-order, printing and handwriting analysis, and use of the same alias used by Oswald on other occasions. There is a clear linking of a chain from serial number to US distributor to Klein to A. Hidell to Oswald. The only catch is that the WC says that A. Hidell ordered the rifle from a magazine ad offering a different though similar rifle with a different but similar catalogue number. It is possible that Klein's made a mistake and sent a 40" rifle instead of the 36" rifle advertised and ordered. The WC does say that the serial number on Klein's copy of the invoice is identical with the serial no. on the rifle.

Photograph of Oswald with rifle and pistol: there are radical differences between the AP and LIFE photographs, the latter showing a telescopic sight and the former showing none. Did LIFE add the telescopic sight or did AP delete it? The WC does not give a detailed analysis of the photographs. It merely alludes to differences but does not specify what they are; and has a generous (and gratuitous) interpretation of the motives for doctoring the photograph. Why didn't the WC exercise greater candor on this--explaining why LIFE put in the telescopic sight or why AP took it out? This eagerness to establish a specific conclusion was neither recognized nor criticized by the WC and therefore raises questions and concern about the reliability of the WC report.

There are some other questions. What about the Tippit killing? The WC says that 9 witnesses identified Oswald as the killer and that the evidence is very strong. But the WC has not made clear the circumstances in which the witnesses identified Oswald. Is a lineup of 4 sufficient? Normally it is 12 or 10. How different in appearance from Oswald were the others in the lineup? How conclusive were the identifications? That is not made clear by the WC.

How rigorously were witnesses cross-examined?

There is much evidence on Oswald's capture in the theatre from Brewer (shoe-store manager). He should have been the hero of the capture but strangely enough his affidavit was not sworn until December 6---two weeks after the assassination. All the other witnesses gave their affidavits on the 22nd or the 23rd of November; yet Brewer, almost the only non-official witness, not until two weeks later! WHY? The WC should have ascertained the reasons and explained them in its report.

Passport The WC explains the grant of a passport to Oswald within 24 hours in September 1963 on the basis that about 24 other people got passports just as quickly. Oswald, however, had defected to the USSR after working in a sensitive area while in the Marine Corps. Is it true that he was working in a sensitive area? Was there any investigation for espionage? The issue of the passport in 24 hours remains a strange procedure towards a man with access to classified data who had defected to the USSR.

A very, very important question is why the assassination area was not sealed off. That is a standard procedure; yet in this case the crucial area was not sealed off.

Were Oswald's or Marina's civil rights violated? The ACLU representatives were told by the jail authorities that Oswald did not want a lawyer; but later it emerged clearly that he did want a lawyer, and a civil liberties lawyer. The WC does not mention that.

What about Marina's seclusion in custody of the Secret Service? The WC never mentions this as a violation of her civil rights.

Finally, there is this crucial question: Did the Justice Department on November 23 believe that the evidence obtained by the Dallas Police and the FBI conclusively demonstrated Oswald's sole guilt? If not, did they order an extensive manhunt? Did they believe it as of December 9? At what point did the WC become convinced that Oswald was the sole assassin? Was any manhunt initiated before and up to that point?

If the Government at any point was not completely persuaded of Oswald's sole guilt, why was no manhunt begun with appeals to the public for co-operation?

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