

The Number and
The Direction of the Shots

The Warren Commission in its summary and conclusions states

There is no credible evidence that the shots were fired from the Triple Underpass, ahead of the motorcade, or from any other location.

The statement is not accurate, because the Warren Commission elsewhere insists that the shots did come from another location--the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository. The Commission insists that there were three shots only, and that they all came from that window. In order to arrive at this conclusion, essential to the thesis that Oswald was the lone assassin, the Commission has had to ignore or reject some of the testimony before it and to select and interpret arbitrarily other testimony of no greater inherent credibility.

Nine witnesses at the assassination scene thought that three shots were fired. But the following witnesses thought, and some insisted, that four shots were fired:

Amos Lee Euins
Mary Woodward and 3 companions
Jean Hill
Mary Moorman
Royce Skelton
S.M. Holland
James Worrell

Ten witnesses out of a total of nineteen thought that four shots were fired and two of them (Jean Hill and James Worrell) refused to be shaken on this point despite considerable pressure to do so. In addition to these ten witnesses, Governor Connally and Mrs. Connally persist in maintaining that the Governor was struck by a second and different bullet after the first shot that struck the President and, by implication, thus support the testimony that there were four shots. If they are correct about the separate bullet, and if the Commission is correct in its conclusion that there were three shots only, it would mean that all three shots fired by a single assassin in a time-span of 4.6 seconds hit their targets--a feat which even the Commission is not prepared to attribute to Oswald.

Since the Commission could not conclude that there were more than three shots or that there were three hits out of three and still find that Oswald was the lone assassin, the Commission has chosen to ignore the evidence of more than half the nineteen witnesses as well as the particularly competent evidence of the surviving victim and his wife.

Has the Commission an equally iron-clad case with respect to the direction of the shots? Many witnesses saw a rifle protruding from the sixth-floor window and one witness testified that he saw the rifle fire the last bullet. No one has disputed the fact that some of the shots came from the Texas School Book Depository. However, the question at issue here is whether or not some of the shots came from "any other location" as well; and here again the Commission has chosen to disregard or reject testimony of equal or greater credibility than the testimony it has rightly accepted concerning the shots from the sixth-floor window. What is this rejected testimony?

(1) The first bulletin which came over the Dallas police radio, as heard and reported by Thayer Waldo of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, said:

Bulletin: the President has been shot. It is feared that others in his party have been wounded also. The shots came from a triple overpass in front of the Presidential automobile.

(2) Bonnie Ray Williams, who with his companions Jarman and Norman heard shells dropping overhead but ran to the west windows looking towards the overpass, commented in a television interview on 27 September 1964 that it was a funny thing that although the shots came from the Book Depository "everybody ran the wrong way."

(3) The Warren Commission itself acknowledges that "many people near the Depository believed that the shots came from the railroad bridge over the Triple Underpass or from the area to the west of the Depository" and that "many of the spectators ran in the general direction of the Triple Underpass or the railroad yards north west of the building."

(4) The following witnesses on the scene thought that the shots came from the Triple Underpass or thereabouts:

Seymour Weitzman
 Weitzman's "partner" (policeman, unnamed)
 James Mitchell
 Mary Woodward
 Woodward's 3 companions (names available Dallas Morning News)
 Bonnie Ray Williams)
 James Jarman) by implication
 Harold Norman)
 O.V. Campbell
 Roy Truly
 Billy Lovelady)
 William Shelley) by implication
 James Vachule
 Jerry Flemmons

We have, then, sixteen witnesses (give or take a witness) whose testimony was discounted as mistaken. The Commission has not even acknowledged the existence of several of these witnesses (Woodward and companions, Vachule and Flemmons) who are members of the working press and, presumably, qualified observers.

How has the Commission disposed of these sixteen embarrassments to the unalterable doctrine of Oswald the lone assassin? It toyed first with hypothetical echoes and reverberations—a speculation pure and simple which together with many other such exercises of imagination betray the extent to which the Commission departed from its "fact-finding" and "impartial" mission—and then settled on an unblushing piece of sophistry:

The Commission does not have knowledge of any witnesses who SAW shots fired from the overpass.

No one claimed that there were such witnesses. But it is fair to claim that the testimony of sixteen witnesses, including several trained observers by profession, that the shots came from the triple underpass or that general area has been discounted by the Warren Commission too eagerly by far and with little objective reason. The Commission has also discounted too readily the testimony of Jean Hill and James Worrell, both of whom said that they saw a man fleeing from the scene immediately after the shooting.

Why has the Warren Commission discounted the evidence of twelve witnesses who thought or implied that there were four shots, not three, and the evidence of sixteen witnesses and the first police radio bulletin that the shots came from the triple underpass, and the testimony of two witnesses who saw a man fleeing the scene? Clearly, because the testimony on any of the three issues by itself would greatly undermine the official thesis that Oswald was the lone assassin. In the aggregate, the testimony of the three ^{SETS OF} witnesses deal this thesis a devastating and fatal blow.

Throughout the report the Warren Commission has tailored the evidence to fit the accused; where this was not possible, the evidence has been misrepresented, discounted, or ignored. Why has the Commission done such violence to elementary logic? why does it ask the world to believe that there were only three shots even though more than half the witnesses heard four? that all the shots came from the Depository even though "everyone ran the wrong way" towards the underpass? that the President was shot in the back even though he clutched his throat and a team of ten doctors at Parkland Hospital were so certain that there was an entrance wound there that they never investigated to determine whether there was another entrance wound of which this was the exit wound? that the Governor's five senses and his reflexes were quite perfect except for the lapse of two or three seconds when his body failed to register ^{on his mind} the fact that he had been struck by a bullet? Why has the Commission invented a preposterous fable of a single bullet that struck both the President and the Governor when a photograph of the FBI "reenactment" renders that conclusion absurd, unless one is to believe that a bullet fired from above and behind can change from a downward to an upward trajectory in flight and then return undeviatingly to the downward trajectory with which it had started?

Of all the puzzles in this case, this is the easiest to solve: The Commission has sweated and strained, "leaked" and procrastinated, flayed and pummelled plausibility---all with the single purpose, the never-changing purpose of endorsing the very thesis enunciated early in the four dark days of November 1963 by the Dallas police and District Attorney Henry Wade, the very objects of scathing public contempt and the Commission's own harsh if tactful criticism. With the publication of the massive report of the Warren Commission we have arrived back at the point of departure eleven months and 25,000 witnesses ago---back to Oswald the lone assassin, and back to the heart of the black and evil ~~moment~~ ^{moment} in which this country stood naked before the world, ~~as~~ a nation in which the official agencies of Justice were themselves the instrument and accomplices of murder.