

November 19, 1965

Mr. Vincent J. Salandria
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Dear Vince:

After reading your article, I started making notes on various aspects and got as far as: Page 6 - "He failed to fall until around frame 300." Mrs. Connally (V4-p147) says he did not ever fall but that she pulled him over. Page 6 - "Mrs. Connally's recollection of this shot driving her husband to the right is only compatible with a tangential strike while the Governor was in the process of turning." I disagree - I would say it is only compatible with a shot coming from the southwest but the sequence of his wounds would be impossible from the southwest.

Then I got snagged on: Page 6 - "Governor Connally's recollection was that he was struck by a separate bullet which hit him after he had turned right, and after he had commenced turning left." I know definitely that it was a separate bullet but "his recollection of" the bit about "after he had commenced turning left" has a special explanation. So, I have decided that the best way to tell you about what I have learned from my long and intensive research into Connally's shot is to give you the complete history of how my conclusions evolved and the reasons for them.

On Wednesday, November 27, 1963, I had watched and listened, together with millions of others, while Governor Connally, from his hospital bed in Dallas, was interviewed by the press and TV. I had heard him say on TV and had saved the AP dispatch which appeared in the L. A. Times on Thursday, 11/28/63, which read as follows:

DALLAS (AP)-- Gov. John Connally, wounded during the assassination of President Kennedy, said Wednesday that after being shot the President "slumped over and said nothing."

"As I turned to the left, I was hit," Connally said. "I knew I was hit badly. I said, 'My God, they are going to kill us all!'"

"Then there was a third shot and the President was hit again. Mrs. Kennedy said, 'Oh my God. They killed my husband. Jack . . . Jack.'"

At the time Connally made the above statement (11/27/63), he knew that Oswald had been caught and charged and murdered. But, the first LIFE pictures had not yet appeared and he did not know that those first LIFE pictures would prove him to be a liar.

My questioning began the moment I looked at the series of 31 small black and white pictures that appeared in the regular edition of LIFE magazine dated 11/29/63. The description said: "Governor Connally, who glances around to see what has happened (eighth picture), is himself struck by a bullet (ninth picture) and slumps over (tenth picture). (The eighth, ninth and tenth pictures correspond with Frames 237, 244 and 248.) Anyone not lucky enough to have obtained a copy of that first regular issue of LIFE would never have seen those particular pictures, because the Memorial edition, which followed, contained only 9 enlarged color pictures in the Frame sequence of 183, 226, 232, 258, 277, 309 plus three beyond 334.

LIFE magazine had bought the original Zapruder film, had it in their possession, and could study, unlimitedly, the motion pictures and the motions of the bodies therein. LIFE said the ninth picture (Frame 244) was where Connally was shot in the back. I could see that Connally had turned only to the right - never to the left, and that in the ninth picture, where LIFE said he was shot, his face was facing northwest but his back was facing southeast when he got a bullet in it.

So, Connally lied. He lied specifically and with not an ounce of doubt. He did not say, "as I turned I was hit," nor did he say, "I think" or "I believe". He said, "As I turned to the left, I was hit."

Now, if you are at all like my fellow researchers and various friends and relatives, with the exception of my husband, you will immediately hit the ceiling and fly off in all directions at once. But that is the hard, cold fact and there is no getting around it. Connally lied - deliberately - specifically - making a point of it and leaving himself no margin for error when he said "As I turned to the left, I was hit."

On April 4, 1964, I sent a letter to every member of the Warren Commission, an excerpt from which follows: "Connally turned to his right, facing outside the car, and was struck in the back by a rifle bullet which 'sped downward from the collarbone through the right side of his chest. It smashed three ribs, punctured his lung, shattered his right wrist in two places and lodged in his thigh.' This shot could not have been fired from the book depository. It could easily have been fired from an upper story or roof of the County Jail building, which also houses the Sheriff's Office and an arsenal of rifles."

On April 7, 1964, I sent the Commission a Xerox copy of the AP dispatch mentioned before together with a sketch of an aerial view of the assassination scene and a lithographed copy of the LIFE pictures. With these enclosures, I wrote: "Why did Governor Connally lie? I heard him lie on TV. He said he turned to the left. See attached LIFE pictures for visual proof that Connally turned only to the right and, therefore, the bullet which struck him could not have been fired from the book depository building!"

Less than two weeks later, I was most gratified to hear that Gov. Connally and his wife had been called in to testify before the Commission on April 21, 1964. I believed that probably hundreds of other people had written to the Commission about this same matter but I was sure of one letter, my own. So, I had done my duty and my conscience was clear. Now, I could leave it to the Commission to find out the truth. Ha! What a dreamer I was!

When the report came out, I read: "Before the shooting started, Governor Connally had been facing toward the crowd on the right. He started to turn toward the left and suddenly felt a blow on his back. The Governor had been hit by a bullet which entered at the extreme right side of his back at a point below his right armpit. The bullet traveled through his chest in a downward and forward direction, exited below his right nipple, passed through his right wrist which had been in his lap, and then caused a wound to his left thigh. The force of the bullet impact appeared to spin the Governor to his right, and Mrs. Connally pulled him down into her lap."

When I got my 26 volumes, I read Connally's testimony to see how he had explained away his lie about the turn to the left. I found it had not been made necessary for him to explain away anything - - he had not been questioned about the TV interview in the hospital or the news story I had sent to the Commission. He simply changed his story to: (V4-p133) - (At the sound of the first noise) ". . . I turned to look back over my right shoulder, . . . , but I did not catch the President in the corner of my eye, . . . , failing to see him, I was turning to look back over my left shoulder into the back seat but I never got that far in my turn. I got about . . . a little bit to the left of center, and then I felt like someone had hit me in the back."

Connally's testimony above is in complete contradiction to the evidence in the Zapruder pictures. Nowhere in those pictures is Connally shown to be looking back over his right shoulder as he testified that he did. In the LIFE eighth picture, Frame 237, Connally has turned his body to the right, but his head is still turned to look to the front right side of the car, as if he is still searching for the source of the former shots. He never even glances in President Kennedy's direction until after he, himself, has been shot.

There is another strange statement in his testimony which does not agree with either the TV interview, the AP news story, or the Zapruder pictures. In V4-p134, he is asked if he observed any reaction in President Kennedy or Mrs. Kennedy? He says, "No, I did not see him." "I did not see her." "This almost sounds incredible, I am sure, since we were in the car with them."

In the TV interview and the AP story, he had said that after being shot the President "slumped over and said nothing." How did he know that the President "slumped over" if he never saw him? Zapruder frames 261 to 290 show Connally looking directly at the Kennedys - even while reclining backward into his wife's lap - he does not face away from them until frame 290. On the cover of LIFE 10/2/64 - the third full picture (Frame 273) - the shadow on Connally's face shows his head turned to look at Mrs. Kennedy. In picture #4 on page 45 (Frame 277) - Connally turns back from looking at Mrs. Kennedy and looks directly at President Kennedy.

In the medical evidence regarding Connally's wounds, there appears to have been quite a little struggle going on behind the scenes among the doctors. In comparing V17 - Exhibits 679, 680 and 689, Diagrams, with V20 - Dr. Charles F. Gregory Exhibit #1, Diagrams, it will be noted that the entry and exit wounds on the wrist - prepared originally in reversed positions to fit the neat diagram showing how the bullet traveled through Connally's body with the wrist under the nipple - have been corrected by Dr. Gregory, making it necessary to have placed the wrist across the left thigh for the angles of the wounds to coincide.

Another evidence of struggle can be found in V17 - Exhibit 392 - page 19 - "The post operative diagnosis for the right forearm remains the same and again I suggest that you incorporate this particular dictation together with other dictations which will be given you by the surgeons concerned with this patient. (Signed) Charles F. Gregory, M. D. "

It is my belief that Dr. Gregory refused to compromise his

principles for any reason and would not allow those incorrectly designated entry and exit wounds on the wrist to pass. For that reason, I trust him and believe what he says. He expressed my feeling exactly, when, he is asked (V4-pl39) whether he has any doubt that Connally's bullet came from the rear, he answers: "There has never been any doubt in my mind about the origin of the missile; no."

Now we come to the point which proves conclusively that Connally's shot could not have come from the TSBD building. In V4-pl24, Dr. Gregory says that the bullet through Connally's wrist, beside shattering the bones, partially transected a sensory nerve and totally transected a tendon leading to the thumb. In the 10/2/64 LIFE - Picture #2 - page 43 which corresponds to Frame 232, you can see that Connally has his right hand on the right end of the handhold in front of him. (See V17 - Exhibits 697 & 874 for pictures of handhold). He seems to be pulling himself forward preparatory to turning to the right.

I submit that he has not yet been wounded in the above picture because, if the sensory nerve had been partially severed and the tendon to the thumb completely severed, then he would have been unable to grasp the handhold or make any use whatsoever of his right hand, to say nothing of the blood and the pain and the fact that his wrist is in his full view in front of him. He would not even have been able to hold his right hand upright near his necktie knot (as Sylvia believes) because his hand would flop over and hang useless from the broken wrist.

I think you will agree that the 10/2/64 LIFE Picture #2 proves that Connally has not yet received his wounds in Frame 232.

In V5-pl170, FBI firearms expert, Frazier, who was sighting the telescopic camera lens from "Oswald's" window testified that the only time Gov. Connally could have received his wounds from that window, was between Zapruder Frames 207 to 225. He was questioned specifically about Frame 231? - No. Frame 235? - No. Frame 240? - No. Frame 249? - No. Frame 255? - No. And he gave the reasons.

We know from the LIFE 10/2/64 picture that Connally had not yet been shot in Frame 232.

Therefore, we know that Connally could not have been shot from that 6th floor window of the TSBD building at all.

There has never been any doubt in my mind that the fatal shot to President Kennedy's head must have been fired from ahead of and to the right of the limousine (the direction of the grassy knoll). Study of the Zapruder frames had proved this to me even before I read a most graphic description of the motion pictures written by Thomas Stamm. Also, I have always believed that the throat wound was an entry wound and that it would have had to have come from the same direction, from the right front side of the car.

Nevertheless, it is extremely foolish of my fellow researchers to ignore or try to attribute the same direction to Connally's shot. Frazier has testified that Connally could not have been wounded from that window at Frame 231 or any frame thereafter. We know from the LIFE picture that he had not yet been wounded in Frame 232. But, the nature of his wounds make Connally's shot to have been impossible from the grassy knoll. What's wrong with a third direction?

I have lined up the background showing in Zapruder Frame 244 (where LIFE says Connally was shot) on the map and have drawn a line through Connally's body in the way he was wounded and find that the other end of that line winds up between the Records and the Jail buildings. Those two buildings on Houston Street, while separated at the street, are joined together across the back. This forms a shaped well between the buildings with each building having windows that open on the well.

Read V19-p495 - Decker Exhibit #5323 - The voluntary statement given on 11/22/63 by a man standing on Houston Street near the corner of Main, a part of which says: "During the time I was standing there I did look up into the building where the Texas Book Depository is and saw some people, maybe 12 or 14, hanging out of windows, but I didn't see anyone with a gun. When the sound of this shot came, it sounded to me like this shot came from away back within a building. I have heard this same sort of sound when a shot has come from within a cave, as I have been on many big game hunts. (Signed) G. G. Slack"

(Curiouser and curiouser - - G. G. Slack is the same man who later testified on 4/2/64 (V10-p378) that he had seen Oswald at the Sports Drome Rifle Range. He was not questioned about the above voluntary statement made on the day of the assassination nor the fact that he had been just outside Sheriff Decker's office windows on Houston street at the time of the assassination.)

No American newspaper or magazine will touch any of this -- we have been under a conspiracy of silence since immediately following the assassination. No pictures - no maps - no nothing. Why would CBS censor Oswald's remark "I'm a patsy!" out of their tape when it was first shown - even before Oswald was murdered? I think it is an interesting point that Sylvan Fox, who was with the New York World-Telegram & Sun, had to take a leave of absence to write his book, then went back to the same paper as city editor, after it was written.

Any amount of speculation seems to be okay but you meet a dead wall of silence with any thing that can be proved. Nobody answers.

I doubt if Liberation will want any part of the material I sent you because it is solid proof of wrong-doing, not merely speculation.

I am not interested in any sort of recognition and if you can place anything I have given you before the public, please do so. I will help in any way I can.

Please let me hear from you.

Sincerely,

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