

November 30, 1966

Mr. Marshall Lumsden  
Editor, WEST Magazine  
Times Mirror Square  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Sir:

By way of introduction, I am an upper-middle-class, suburban housewife, who has taken the time and the trouble to read, study and research carefully and thoroughly the Warren Report and every one of the 26 volumes of Testimony, Hearings and Exhibits issued by the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy. It follows, then, that I am a critic of the Warren Commission's conclusions as to the circumstances of President Kennedy's murder (and that of Officer Tippit), for I do not believe it is within the realm of possibility to make so complete a study of the available material and evidence and agree that one "lone", "alienated" man murdered the President, that there was no conspiracy, either foreign or domestic. Despite the self-righteous proclamations of some of the most revered figures in our government, the time has come when writers, editors, reporters and people from every walk of life in the United States must familiarize themselves with some of the more pressing questions in this matter.

I have not written a book, simply because I do not consider that I possess the necessary ability to do so. Thus, the charge cannot be leveled at me that I am, in the recent words of Governor Connally of Texas, "a journalistic scavenger". I am not seeking public office, and there is nothing in my background to warrant any attacks or investigations as to my possible motives. I am seriously concerned that the truth about the Kennedy assassination has been distorted, concealed and misrepresented. These are serious charges and I do not make them lightly. I believe that we are past the point where we must be labeled "kooks", "nit-pickers", "extremists" and mentally unbalanced for daring to question the validity of the government's case by those whose outrage and indignation merely reflect their ignorance. I, therefore, address myself to the article which appeared recently in WEST magazine by John D. Weaver. For if, as he says, "seeds of doubt and suspicion have caught on like crabgrass" then it is because the evidence supplied by the Commission is crumbling from lack of support and not because those who are

knowledgeable about the 26 volumes are "emotionally dispossessed".

And now to Mr. Weaver. In his third paragraph, Mr. Weaver makes the first of his erroneous statements. He writes, "No one could say for sure whether the bullets struck the President from the front or rear, or perhaps both directions..."

Either Mr. Weaver has not read the testimonies of the Doctors at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, who first examined the President's wounds, or he is less than honest to make such a categorical statement.

I quote from the Doctors (and a nurse) at Parkland Hospital:

Dr. Charles Carrico (the first one to observe the throat wound before the tracheotomy was performed by him): "...a small, penetrating wound" (of the throat) Comm. Ex. 392

Dr. Ronald Jones: "The hole was very small and relatively clean cut, as you would see in a bullet that is entering rather than exiting.."

Mr. Specter: "Would it be consistent then with an exit wound, but of a low velocity...?"

Dr. Jones: "Yes; of very low velocity to the point that you might think that this bullet barely made it through the soft tissues and just enough to drop out of the skin..." (Vol.6, pp. 55-56)

Dr. Malcolm Perry: "There was a small wound in the ..midline of the neck... it was rather clean cut..." (Vol. 6, p.9)

(Dr. Perry now denies that he ever referred to this "neck" wound as a front entrance wound. In an interview with Jimmy Breslin in the Saturday Evening Post of December 14/63, however, Dr. Perry told Breslin "the wound in the throat was small and neat..the damage a rifle bullet does as it comes out of a person's body is unbelievable".)

Dr. Charles Baxter: "...wound not jagged as I would expect with a very high-velocity bullet. Judging from the calibre of the rifle found later, the wound more resembled an entrance wound." (Vol.6, p.42)

Dr. Paul Peters: "...we speculated as to whether he had been shot once or twice because we saw the wound of entry in the throat and noted the large occipital wound and it is a known fact that high-velocity missiles often have a small wound of entrance and a large wound of exit". (Dr. Peters explains that by "we", he meant all of the Doctors who were present). (Vol. 6, p. 71)

Dr. Kenneth Salyer: "...I observed that he did have some sucking wound of some type on his neck..." (Vol.6, p.81)

Nurse Margaret Henchcliffe: "...a little hole in the middle of his neck.. about as big around as the end of my little finger".

Mr. Specter (Commission lawyer): "Have you ever had any experience with bullet holes?"

Nurse H.: "Yes".

Mr. Specter: "And what did that appear to you to be?"

Nurse H.: "An entrance bullet hole - it looked like to me..I have never seen an exit bullet hole..that looked like that". (Vol.6,p.141)

Mr. Specter (p.145): "What was there about the wound, if you recall anything special, which gave you the impression it was an entrance wound?"

**\*\*PUNCTURE WOUNDS ARE CAUSED BY ANY PENETRATING OBJECTS"**

"The Book of Health"-Drs. Clarke & Cumley  
Elsevier Press - Houston, New York September 1953

Nurse H.: "Well, it was just a small wound and it wasn't jagged like most of the exit bullet wounds that I have seen."

I, therefore, challenge Mr. Weaver's statement that "no one could say for sure whether the bullets struck the President from the front or rear", in view of the sworn testimonies of seven qualified doctors and one registered nurse (with twelve years experience, seven of which she has spent in emergency rooms). They were the first people to observe the wounds. In addition, Doctors Baxter, Perry, and Clark held a press conference on television that afternoon, which I personally witnessed, wherein they confirmed the wound of entrance in the President's throat. Qualified reporters and correspondents from the leading newspapers in the U.S. and around the world carried the Doctors' statements to that effect. (I have, in my files, the quotations to support the claim from both the N.Y. Times and the then N.Y. Herald-Tribune of 11/23/63). Despite the Warren Commission's and Mr. Weaver's efforts to discredit the Parkland doctors' descriptions of that wound, and the multitudinous correspondents' interpretations, the Commission's conclusion that both the doctors and the reporters were mistaken about so vital a subject as a murdered President's wound is, in my opinion, a distortion of fact. Richard Dudman, Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, on December 1st, 1963, stated that after the autopsy had been performed at Bethesda Naval Hospital two Secret Service agents, armed with the autopsy report, made a trip to Dallas, talked with the Doctors at Parkland, and obtained a reversal from them. Prior to that encounter, all of them had agreed on an entrance wound in the throat. Logically, this could only have been the result of the President having been struck from the front by that particular missile.

Mr. Weaver derisively states that "extremists of the right and left found themselves..agreeing that it was a political murder", as if no respectable or responsible individual - only extremists - could be so unpatriotic as to suspect a conspiracy of a political nature. If present demands for a new investigation reflect the doubts of concerned individuals that the crime was a lone, wanton, unassisted act" by Lee Harvey Oswald and that there was no conspiracy to assassinate the President, then 63% of the nation (according to the latest poll, Nov.21-26) is composed of "extremists". Among the 63% who are now demanding a new investigation are the following:

Harrison Salisbury of the New York Times (see "The Progressive" Oct. '66.  
 Sen. Russell Long of Louisiana  
 Congressman Theodore Kupferman of New York  
 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.  
 Bishop James Pike  
 Richard Goodwin, former ass't. special counsel to President Kennedy  
 Max Lerner, noted political commentator and journalist  
 Raymond Moley  
Life Magazine

Are these extremists of the right or the left, Mr. Weaver?

Are those who have done their homework and those who do not accept the findings of the Warren Commission to be so carelessly tossed into two camps, that nothing remains but the followers of Reילו Oliver of the extreme right wing or Thomas G. Buchanan, whom Mr. Weaver labels "a left-wing American expatriate"?

The Dallas tragedy does not demand "a more emotionally satisfying denouement...drawn from the evidence that the President had met his death at the hands of an insignificant youth". The Dallas tragedy demands a concerned citizenry, capable of making an honest examination of the facts and of the presently-available evidence. What Mr. Weaver has blithely overlooked, in his zeal to "put down" the critics and to dismiss them as "cultists," is the fact that there is no substantial evidence to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Lee Harvey Oswald, killed President Kennedy or Officer Tippit.

1. The rifle requested by "A. Hidell" to be sent to the Dallas Post Office Box on March 13th, 1963, weighed 5½ pounds and was 36 inches in length. (Warren Report, p. 114 & Vol. 7, p. 367)  
 (See enclosed "American Rifleman" as of February 1963)

The alleged murder weapon found on the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository at 1:22 p.m. on 11/22/63 weighed 8 pounds and was 40.2 inches long. (W.R., p. 31)

If Klein's Sporting Goods mail-order house made a mistake and shipped to A. Hidell a rifle which was more than 4 inches longer and 2½ pounds heavier than the one requested, there is, throughout the 26 volumes, not a single reference to the existence of such an error; yet we are dealing here with the murder weapon, one of the most important pieces of evidence in the entire case. If Oswald (a.k.a. A. Hidell) ever owned a Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5mm rifle, the one he ordered differs notably, in both weight and length, from the alleged murder weapon. It must be emphasized, at this point, that ownership, purchase, or possession of a rifle, does not constitute proof of murder.

2. Not one witness (and more than 552 were interviewed) has been produced, who ever saw Oswald enter the Book Depository building on the morning of 11/22/63 (or at any other time) with a rifle or with a paper package that might have contained a rifle. (See testimonies of Linnie Mae Randle, Vol.2, pp.245-251; Buell Wesley Frazier, Vol.2, pp.210-245; Jack Dougherty, Vol.6, pp.373-382)
3. Not one witness can place Oswald on the 6th floor at, or even close to, the time of the shooting. The only witness who gave a description of someone shooting from that window at that time, Howard Leslie Brennan, failed to identify Oswald at a police line-up later that afternoon (whatever his excuse may be). He admits to having seen Oswald's picture on television prior to the time of the line-up. (C.E.2003). Brennan, of course, gave the man's height as part of the description of the suspect. The Commission tells us that the sniper was sitting or kneeling when he took aim. (Warren Report, p.144). If the suspect was sitting or kneeling and was described by Mr. Brennan as being "possible 5 foot 10"-(Supra p.144. then the "Lakers" missed a formidable basket-ball player! A line on page 8 of the Warren Report tells us that, "A carton had apparently been placed on the floor at the side of the window so that a person sitting on the carton could look down Elm Street..and scarcely be noticed from the outside." (!) Police Captain Will Fritz says: "When I got to the building some officer there told me..the man who did the shooting out of the window is a tall, (Oswald was 5'9"), white man, that is all I had. That didn't mean much..because you can't tell 5 or 6 floors up whether a man is tall or short". (Vol.4, p.237). This is all there is of eyewitness identification!

Bonnie Ray Williams, an employe of the Book Depository, testifies that he ate lunch at the second pair of windows next to the alleged sniper's perch. He says he remained there until 12:20 and was all alone, heard no one moving or stirring around him, and finally rejoined his co-workers on the floor below to watch the motorcade. (Vol.3, pp.168-169)

William Shelley, manager of the Texas School Book Depository, says in a sworn affidavit, "Lee was already filling some orders just outside my office. I saw him periodically all morning with the exception of when we (Shelley and other workers) were on the sixth floor." Mr. Shelley's office is located on the first floor (C.E.1061), and he says that he saw Oswald on that floor "periodically all morning until noon." (C.E.2003, p.226)

We have already learned from Bonnie Ray Williams that no one was on the 6th floor as late as 12:20, (10 minutes before the shots rang out from there). I must, therefore, challenge the Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was present at this window at the time of the assassination. (Supra, p.137). First, no witness saw him on the 6th floor at any time close to the firing of the shots. Secondly, we must assume that he was able to execute the physical preparations necessary to kill the President from the 6th floor window within 10 minutes (Williams had finished his lunch at 12:20). Next, we must take into account the fact that he had to produce the rifle from somewhere (surely he wasn't carrying it around in his pocket),- he had to assemble it, build a barricade of book cartons, (each of which weighs 50 pounds) behind his perch, and he had to create a foundation out of the cartons on which to rest the rifle. Then he had to aim the rifle with the faulty sight, fire 3 shots at the motorcade, walk or run across the

warehouse floor, 60' in an east-west direction, and 70' in a south-north direction, to the point between the cartons where the rifle was found. "The man did not seem to be out of breath; he seemed calm" says Mr. Truly, when he and Policeman Baker saw him walking around the lunch-room on the second floor at 12:32. (Supra, p.152) If, indeed, such a feat was possible there are no witnesses to attest to it.

4. The rifleman had to remove the disassembled weapon from the paper bag, and assemble it. He then had to load it with cartridges, aim rifle and scope, and handle the bolt action and trigger. Yet, an FBI Report says, "the latent prints appearing in the photograph taken of the rifle..are too fragmentary and indistinct to be of any value for identification purposes..Photographs taken by this Bureau also failed to produce prints of sufficient legibility for comparison purposes", that "no latent prints of value were developed on Oswald's..cartridge cases, the unfired cartridge, the clip in the rifle, or the inner parts of the rifle" (FBI Report, fingerprint analysis, C.E.2003, pp.263-264). Only 1 palmprint was lifted from the underside of the gun barrel and "in the opinion of these experts, it was not possible to estimate the time which elapsed between the placing of the print on the rifle and the date of the lift"(Supra, p.124). The Report goes on to tell us that "a palmprint could not be placed on this portion of the rifle, when assembled, because the wooden foregrip covers the barrel at this point." Thus, we are left with the startling fact that not a single finger or palmprint identifiable with Oswald was found on the assembled rifle, the clip, the stock, the trigger, the telescopic sight, or the cartridges. The Commission dismisses the possibility of gloves or rags having been used. If one assumes Oswald's ownership of the rifle, a single palmprint is hardly synonymous with murder; it indicates, at the very most, that at some time, which cannot be established and could have been considerably previous to 11/22/63 Oswald handled the rifle, and rather gingerly, at that.

5. As for Oswald, the "poor shot" (See testimony of Marine Corps Lt.Col. Folsom, Vol.8, p.303) being capable of firing 3 shots at a moving target, from a window 70' above the ground and at distances ranging from 175 to 265 feet, in 5.6 seconds, this "conclusion" has been so thoroughly discredited by 3 sets of Commission experts as to render it absurd:

FBI TESTS: Killion: 3 shots in 9 seconds  
Cunningham: 3 shots in 7 seconds  
Frazier: 3 shots in 6 seconds

ARMY TESTS: Hendrix: 3.25 seconds & 7.0 secs.  
Staley: 6.3/4 secs. & 6.45 secs.  
Miller: 4.6 secs. & 5.15 secs.

NAT'L RIFLE ASS'N TESTS: 1.: 3 shots in 11 secs.  
2.: 3 shots in 8 secs.

(Vol.3, pp.402,  
404, 407, 420, 446,  
449).

Of all the EXPERT marksmen who attempted to duplicate Oswald's alleged feat, only one, Miller, came close to the mark in time but not in the head or neck areas. Although the Commission would have us believe that the tests were made under "similar conditions":

- a) All of the marksmen were shooting at STATIONARY TARGETS.
- b) The tests were conducted at a height of 30', in some instances, as opposed to 70'(from the 6th floor window)

- c) The marksmen were instructed to "take as much time as they desired at the first target", in one series of tests (Vol.3,p.444)
- d) In all 3 series, they were shooting under ideal circumstances, with no emotional pressure.

Before we leave the subject of Oswald's capability to accomplish a feat which eight experts couldn't duplicate, let us briefly examine the testimony of Oswald's Marine Corps "buddy", Nelson Delgado, (Vol.8,p.233):

Delgado: "...he (Oswald) didn't show no particular aspects of being a sharpshooter at all."

Mr. Liebler: "He didn't seem to be particularly proficient with the rifle..?"

Delgado: "That's right".

\* \* \* \*

"He just barely shot his score, which I think was about 170... just barely sharpshooter".

Mr.L.: "Sharpshooter is the minimum?"

Delgado: "...marksman is the lowest..Oswald had a marksman's badge.. he just qualified, that's all. He wasn't as enthusiastic as the rest of us".

Mr.L.: (p.236): "...you had been interviewed prior to this time?"

Delgado: "Yes".

Mr.L.: "By whom?"

Delgado: "FBI agents"... "they talked to me about 5 times".

Mr.L.: (p.237): "You told the FBI that in your opinion Oswald was not a good shot..?".. "And he did not show any unusual interest in weapons than the average Marine?"

Delgado: "Yes. He was mostly a thinker, a reader..."

Mr.L.: (p.249): "Did you get the impression that the agent (FBI) was trying to get you to change your story?"

Delgado: "Yes..am I allowed to say what I want to say?"

Mr.L.: "Yes; I want you to say exactly what you want to say".

Delgado: "I had the impression now, wholeheartedly, I want to believe that Oswald did what he was supposed to have done, but I had the impression they weren't satisfied with my testimony of him not being an expert shot".

Mr.L.: "...you say you got the impression that the FBI agents that talked to you didn't like the statement that you made about Oswald's inability to use the rifle well; is that right?"

Delgado: "Right".

What possible reasons could the FBI agents have had for not liking Delgado's insistence that Oswald was not interested in guns and was, at best, an inferior marksman, unless it didn't fit the picture that Oswald was the President's assassin and was capable of accomplishing what even the finest rifle experts in the country were incapable of doing?

Mr. Weaver would do well to provide us with answers to such questions. Instead, he prefers to continue his myth by giving us a direct quotation from the testimony of Oswald's loyal widow, Marina; Oswald wanted "to do something to make him outstanding, that he would be known to history". ~~She~~ Marina Oswald was one of the Commission's

star witnesses,

after nearly 3 months of being held in "protective custody" by the Secret Service, and she is the origin of much of its most damaging testimony against her deceased husband. The fact that there is no evidence to support Mrs. Oswald's claim, ~~and~~ that she is the sole source of this enlightenment, and <sup>that</sup> even the Commission itself did not succeed in attributing a motive for Oswald's alleged crime, does not get in Mr. Weaver's way, in the least.

Last week (LA Times, 11/22/66, Pt.1,p.10), Senator Richard Russell, a member of the Commission, told the Associated Press that he "had strong criticism of the questioning of most witnesses before the Commission" and that he had been reluctant to attach his signature to the Report but was finally persuaded to do so by Chief Justice Earl Warren. According to an analysis of the Warren Report made by a Commission staff member, Alfreda Scobey, (American Bar Association Journal, Jan. 1965), "...There are 'many facts' that appear only in Mrs. Oswald's uncorroborated testimony... More important, only Mrs. Oswald identified the weapon as the one he owned... this, is the only eyewitness testimony connecting Oswald with the assassination weapon". (When Marina Oswald was first shown the alleged murder weapon by the Dallas Police on the night of 11/22/63, she said it was not Oswald's rifle ). Although Senator Russell expressed grave reservations about the validity of Marina's testimony, Mr. Weaver, nevertheless, singles out her assessment of Oswald's motives as the denouement to the Dallas tragedy which best satisfies his curiosity. If Mr. Weaver is satisfied with Marina's indictment of her husband, certain Commission members are not, and I am not.

At this point, I am obliged to restrict myself to just a few of the more obvious facts:

1. There is no proof that Oswald fired at General Walker. There is considerable proof that he did not.
2. The Zapruder frames are indisputable evidence that President Kennedy and Governor Connally were struck by separate bullets, thus definitively establishing the involvement of at least 2 assassins.
3. A Deputy Constable, Seymour Weitzman, who is a college graduate in engineering and the former owner of a sporting goods store, as well as a Deputy Sheriff, the Captain of the Dallas Department, and the District Attorney of Dallas all referred to the rifle found on the 6th floor as a German Mauser 7.65 mm. The Warren Report pretends that Constable Weitzman "had little more than a glimpse of it" (Supra,p.645) that he is, indeed, the source of "the speculation" that it



was a Mauser. One can hardly regard as "speculation", however, the signed, sworn affidavit of Weitzman (which I enclose and which appears in C.E. 2003, p.228) wherein he clearly specifies nearly twelve hours later (11/23) that this rifle is "a 7.65 Mauser..equipped with a 4/18 scope, a thick leather brownish-black sling on it". He is not "speculating" as the Commission would have us believe. He had to have "more than a glimpse" of it in order to give the type of scope and the description of the sling. (The Report doesn't mention the existence of Weitzman's affidavit; one has to study the exhibits in order to discover it.) Deputy Sheriff Boone, who assisted Weitzman in the search for the rifle, also describes it as a Mauser in two typewritten reports (which are enclosed). He is even more specific about his description of it, "a brownish, black stock and blue steel (sick), metal parts". (No mention of Boone's two reports appears in the Warren Report, either). Commission counsel, Joseph Ball recently explained this major discrepancy by saying that the Italian rifle is built on the Mauser patent and, thus, such a mistake could easily have been made by someone who hadn't examined it closely. This explanation might be acceptable were it not for the testimony of Deputy Sheriff Boone. Boone testifies that Captain Fritz had knelt down to see the rifle more clearly (Vol.3, p.295) "and he said it looks like a 7.65 Mauser". Capt. Fritz clarifies the matter further; he says, "you can read on the rifle what it was". Vol. 4, p. 206). In C.E. 541 (2) is a photograph of the Italian Mannlicher-Carcano. The words "MADE ITALY" are easily visible on the top of the rifle, as are the indications as to the calibre "6.5". Finally, at a Press Conference in the Dallas jail at 12:30 a.m. 11/23/63, District Attorney Wade, when asked "What's the make of the rifle, sir?" answers, "It's a Mauser, I believe". (Vol.24, p.830) (Again, no mention of Fritz' and Wade's reference to the rifle being a Mauser is made in the Report.)

4. There is no substantial proof that Oswald could have or did, in fact, kill Officer Tippit.
  - a) One witness to the Tippit murder scene, T.F. Bowley, was careful to make note of the exact time when he first beheld the dead Police Officer lying in the street and subsequently used the officer's police-radio-'phone to report the incident. He says in a sworn affidavit (although he was not called to testify as a witness), "I looked at my watch and it said 1:10 p.m." (C.E.2003, p202) Oswald was still seen standing at a bus stop 9/10ths of a mile away between 1:04 and 1:05 p.m.
  - b) The Commission's star witness to the Tippit murder scene, Helen Markham, also signed a sworn affidavit in which she pinpointed the time at 1:06 p.m. when she saw "a young man walk up to the squad car". Her timing coincides with Bowley's but how could Oswald, nearly a mile away at 1:05 p.m., have been the "young man" who approached Tippit's car at 1:06 and seconds later shot him?

These are but minor, isolated instances in the enormous panorama of events, to be sure, and can, in themselves, only raise serious questions. But there is a wealth of persuasive information and evidence which makes Oswald's guilt in both the murder of the President and Officer Tippit so questionable and so tenuous as to be unacceptable. It does not bear analysis and close examination.

As for Mr. Weaver, one can only exhort him to buy or borrow the 26 volumes of Testimony, Hearings and Exhibits, read them, and then take up the defense of the Warren Commission's case.

Those of us who have made a study of the case are becoming accustomed to the accusations of "demonologists", "cultists", "extremists" of one stripe or another by those defenders of the Report and Volumes, whose knowledge of the case is less impressive than the degree of their indignation at responsible criticism. Those who cry out the loudest are often fortified by the least amount of knowledge. In his recent Press Conference, Governor Connally suggested that those who do not agree with the Commission's findings should be investigated. He, at the same time, admitted that he had not read the Report or any of the books critical of it. Obviously, he accepted on blind faith. This admission was singularly significant. Not having read it, he cannot be held responsible for its contents when history makes its final judgment of the case. I, for one, say "go ahead and investigate me!". For, the result would be the startling revelation that I have not only not been interested in profiting financially from this dreadful tragedy and national disgrace, but <sup>that</sup> I have spent thousands of dollars of my own money trying to uncover the truth.

We are titillated into anticipating Mr. Weaver's next installment by the promise of his examination of Mark Lane's "lurid" attack on the Warren Report!. I think it is lurid to obfuscate the truth, as the Warren Commission has done. I think it is necessary and courageous to seek the truth, as Mr. Lane, Mr. Sauvage, Mr. Weisberg and the many other serious critics have done.

No, Mr. Weaver, the Young Prince was not killed by a stockroom clerk. I challenge you and the Warren Commission to prove that he was. The conclusions of the Warren Commission are not good enough for me or for 63% of the American people.

*Marjorie C. Field*

All parentheses are the writer's.  
All underlining is the writer's.