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# The Warren Commission Report on the assassination is struck by **A NEW**

A SECOND WAVE OF CRITICS is assaulting the Warren Commission's conclusion of almost two years ago that Lee Harvey Oswald, unaided, shot and killed President John F. Kennedy.

The first wave, rushing into print from the wild side, has come and gone, pocketing its profits and leaving uncounted Europeans and Latin Americans convinced that Oswald was but a pawn for conspirators. If the books and articles made less impression in the United States, where political assassination plots are not considered necessary baggage of government, many people nevertheless were ready to believe that the Warren Report was less than the final word.

If the Commission, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, hoped to allay doubts in the land, it failed. A Harris Survey in the fall of 1964, soon after publication of the Report, showed that 31 percent of Americans still believed Oswald had accomplices and that less than half the people believed the Commission told the full story. If anyone thinks time has quieted the suspicions, he has only to mention a Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5-mm rifle's firing speed and the subsequent wrangle will persuade him otherwise. Not only are millions of Americans still doubters but thousands of them have become assassination sleuths, ready to cite page and line from the published testimony.

Into this fertile field of conjecture marches the new wave of critics. None of them purports to name a second assassin, much less members of a conspiracy, but almost all of them open the probability of a second assassin—a direct challenge to the seven-man Warren Commission's main findings after ten months in being, and after 552 witnesses, 25,000 FBI interviews, 1,550 Secret Service interviews and a stack of papers that fills 300 cubic feet in the National Archives.

There are two leading assailants. One is Mark Lane, a New York lawyer whose freewheeling attacks on Commission findings have stirred lecture audiences in Europe and America. The other is Edward Jay Epstein, a 30-year-old doctoral student at Harvard whose master's thesis for Cornell University turned into a hot publishing property entitled *Inquest*.

Both men are being published by prominent houses. Lane's *Rush to Judgment*, due August 15, is being launched with heavy advance publicity by Holt, Rinehart & Winston and includes a prestige introduction by Hugh Trevor-Roper, professor of history at Oxford University. Epstein's *Inquest*, just published by Viking Press, carries an enthusiastic introduction by Richard H. Rovere, a respected writer, and a vote of confidence as to Epstein's scholarship from Andrew Hacker, the Cornell professor of government who supervised the work that earned Epstein his master's degree this spring.

On first reading, and even second and third, Epstein's book appears impressive. It comes clothed in the full garments of the academy, replete with footnotes, citations, source materials and index. Epstein appears to hide absolutely nothing. His mood is muted and his style pedestrian, twin earmarks of the scholarly work. He interviewed five members of the Commission and ten members of its staff. What's more, he footnotes exactly who told him what. He read the full Warren Report and all 26 volumes of the hearings and exhibits. With such vestments of scholarship, he proceeds to an examination of the Commission. The results, put forth in his 156-page book, are explosive. Here are highlights of Epstein's conclusions:

FINDINGS OF THE OFFICIAL AUTOPSY on President Kennedy's body, conducted at Bethesda (Md.) Naval Medical Center the night of the November 22, 1963, assassination by three military physicians, apparently were later changed to accommodate the theory that a single bullet went through both President Kennedy and Gov. John Connally of Texas, who was sitting on a jump seat in the death convertible immediately in front of Kennedy.

THE AUTOPSY REPORT printed in the Warren Report evidently is

not the original version prepared by the physicians. Epstein does not say who he thinks changed the report, but he broadly implies that it was either the doctors or members of the Commission's staff.

TWO FBI REPORTS, one dated December 9, 1963, and one dated January 13, 1964, flatly contradict the autopsy report and say that the bullet that entered Kennedy's back did not exit from his body—and thus could not have struck Connally.

THE SINGLE-BULLET THEORY was adopted because the proven time span for firing the Oswald rifle was too short to embrace one shot hitting Kennedy and another striking Connally. (None of the discussion in this article involves the later fatal bullet that shattered Kennedy's brain.) Thus, if both men were struck by separate bullets, a second assassin had to be considered. But since the Commission was early wedded to a belief that Oswald operated alone, it ruled out separate bullets on insufficient evidence.

THE SINGLE-BULLET THEORY was advocated by a Commission lawyer, Arlen Specter, now district attorney of Philadelphia, and the Commission, following his lead, never thoroughly investigated the possibility of a second assassin.

THE SUPPOSEDLY MASSIVE INVESTIGATION was actually "superficial." Epstein says the probe was hampered by an impossible deadline imposed by Chief Justice Warren, by a lack of investigative manpower and by the absenteeism of the busy commissioners.

THE COMMISSION ignored possible witnesses, sifted testimony to suit its purposes, left questions unresolved and, in writing the Report, omitted "contradictory evidence and inconsistent details."

THE COMMISSION never independently investigated rumors that Oswald was a paid informant of the FBI, but merely took the word of FBI officials, principally Director J. Edgar Hoover, for it.

MOST OF THESE SINS, if not all, stemmed from the Commission's commitment, which from the outset of its assignment was less to the discovery and revelation of truth than to dispelling rumors that would damage "the national interest."

These are sensational charges. Many of them, of course, have been advanced previously by lurid and irresponsible writers, but now they appear to be buttressed by a man bound by the disciplines of academic research, skilled in analytical thought and determined to follow the evidence wherever it may lead.

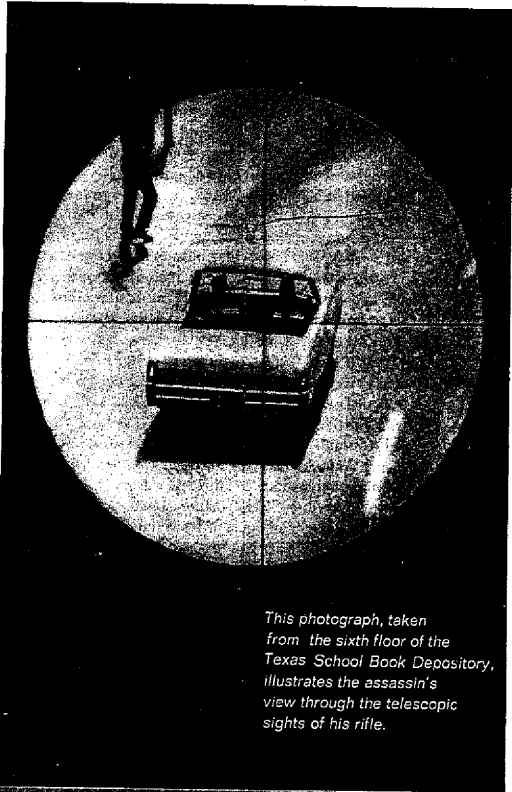
On the basis of the scholarly aura and the responsible auspices attending the book, LOOK arranged for an exclusive interview with Epstein and an advance study of the volume. I was assigned by LOOK to interview the academician and write an article about him and his product. Both the interview and the initial readings of the book were compelling. I was at first persuaded that this young man had, by dint of digging and hard analysis, come up with one of the big stories of the decade, namely, that the eminent Warren Commission had done a fantastically sloppy job and that few of its major conclusions were to be credited any longer.

Then, I started to check some of Epstein's statements . . . and I soon became convinced that Epstein was guilty of the very sins of which he accused the Warren Commission: distortion, ignoring testimony, sifting the evidence and adroitly selecting it to fit his theories and assumptions. At the worst, Epstein has written a dangerously deceptive book. At the best, he is guilty of precisely what he lays at the door of the Warren Commission—a "superficial" investigation.

Epstein's story, parenthetically, is that he began to study the operations of the Warren Commission with no expectation of writing more than a placid master's thesis on the functioning of a governmental body. Then, last summer, he interviewed Wesley J. Liebeler, a Commission lawyer, and found that Liebeler had a treasure trove of documents that indicated fights within the Commission and possible

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# WAVE OF DOUBT



This photograph, taken from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, illustrates the assassin's view through the telescopic sights of his rifle.

## Persistent critics still:

Was Lee Harvey Oswald a paid informant for the FBI?

Did a second assassin fire at the President and Governor Connally?

Did the Warren Commission ignore important witnesses?

Was the autopsy report altered by the doctors—or someone on the Commission staff?

A distinguished LOOK reporter examines the charges—and the facts.

BY FLETCHER KNEBEL

substantive errors by the Commission. From that time forward, Epstein's research became freighted with excitement as he followed the tracks of what seemed to be a big story.

When I pointed out what appeared to be overlooked chances for confirmation of facts in *Inquest*, Epstein said that he was not in the business of investigating Kennedy's assassination. His boundaries, he said, were the Report and hearings, investigative reports in the National Archives, Commission working papers, and interviews with commissioners and staff. He contended that he was not required to check statements made in his book with the person involved. Thus, he erected for himself remarkably secure and comfortable academic ramparts from which to fire a barrage at the Warren Commission. Yet any newspaperman who assumed such a stance—that people involved in highly suspect operations need not be asked for their version of the story—would be fired in a week.

There are a number of distortions in Epstein's book, but one in particular illustrates his method of operation. It can only be called devious. On the basis of this episode alone, an informed reader would weigh the remainder of *Inquest* with reservations, to put it mildly.

**A**N 18-YEAR-OLD MAN named Arnold L. Rowland testified before the Commission that he saw a man with a rifle in a sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository building before the assassination and that he also saw a Negro man "hanging out" another sixth-floor window shortly before the Kennedy motorcade passed. Previously, he had been interviewed by the FBI. He said he had told the FBI agents about this second man, but "they didn't seem very interested." No FBI report mentioned such a statement by Rowland.

Epstein alludes to this testimony three times in his book to prove that the FBI interviews were less than thorough and that the Commission tended to reject new evidence that might alter its "basic suppositions concerning the assassination."

"When a witness did give new evidence," he writes, "in the Commission hearings, it became suspect *ipso facto*, because it was not included in a prior statement. For example, Arnold Rowland testified before the Commission that he had seen a second man on the same floor with the assassin. The Commission, however, rejected this portion of Rowland's testimony partly because of Rowland's failure to report his story despite several interviews, until his appearance before the Commission." It will be recalled that Rowland insisted that he *did* mention this fact to FBI agents but that they were interested only in whether or not he could positively identify the assassin. The Commission never called the FBI agents as witnesses on this matter."

Epstein's argument seems convincing, but he fails to quote the full reason why the Commission rejected Rowland's testimony. The Commission's reason is set out on page 252 of its Report as follows:

"Rowland's failure to report his story despite several interviews until his appearance before the Commission, the lack of probative corroboration, and the serious doubts about his credibility, have led the Commission to reject" the testimony. The key phrase here is "serious doubts about his credibility." It was explained on the previous page, 251, of the Warren Report:

"Mrs. Rowland testified that her husband never told her about seeing any other man on the sixth floor except the man with the rifle in the southwest corner that he first saw. She also was present during Rowland's interview with representatives of the FBI and said she did not hear him make such a statement, although she also said that she did not hear everything that was discussed. Mrs. Rowland testified that after her husband first talked about seeing a man with the rifle, she looked back more than once at the Depository Building and saw no person looking out of any window on the sixth floor. She also said

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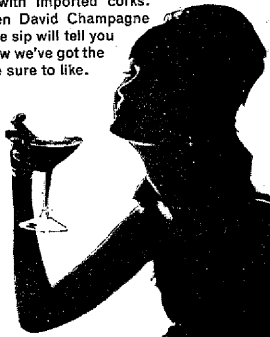
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ASSASSINATION CONTINUED

that 'At times my husband is prone to exaggerate.' Because of inconsistencies in Rowland's testimony and the importance of his testimony to the question of a possible accomplice, the Commission requested the FBI to conduct an inquiry into the truth of a broad range of statements made by Rowland to the Commission. The investigation showed that numerous statements by Rowland concerning matters about which he would not normally be expected to be mistaken—such as subjects he studied in school, grades he received, whether or not he had graduated from high school, and whether or not he had been admitted to college—were false."

Rowland's testimony and FBI matching exhibits (in Volume XXV of the Commission hearings) throw more detailed light on why the Commission and staff lawyers preferred not to believe Rowland.

He said he graduated from high school in June, 1963, but school records showed he dropped out of two high schools and had not graduated. He testified he had an IQ of 147. School records showed the figure was 109. He testified that he received straight A's in high school, with the exception of a "couple of B's" in his senior year. Records showed the B's, C's, D's, E's and F's outnumbered the A's. He testified he had been accepted by four colleges, including Southern Methodist University. The chief clerk of the SMU registrar's office told the FBI that Rowland had never applied for admission. Rowland said he had "much better" than 20-20 vision, as evidenced by a recent eye examination at Finn & Finn, Dallas optometrists. Dr. John E. Finn, noting that his firm's records covered all patients running back 15 years, told the FBI there was no evidence that Rowland had ever been examined by the firm. Further, one of Rowland's high-school counselors told the FBI that Rowland "could not be trusted and would not tell the truth regarding any matter." Another high-school official told the FBI that Rowland "would not hesitate to fabricate a story if it was of any benefit for Rowland to do so." He further stated that he had informed Secret Service agents in advance of Rowland's appearance before the Commission that "anything Rowland might tell the President's Commission would be questionable."

All this is recounted not to embarrass Rowland at this late date but to show the kind of witness on whom Epstein relies to make several supposedly telling points against the Commission. Nowhere in Epstein's book is there the slightest indication of any evidence that Rowland was a man who lied to the Commission and whose testimony was not to be trusted. To withhold this information from the reader is a form of literary rape. For a scholar, it is surprisingly shifty behavior. If Epstein, as a Warren commissioner or staff lawyer, had insisted on crediting the reliability of Rowland's testimony, his colleagues would have laughed him out of Washington.

**E**PSTEIN IS ALSO GUILTY of seemingly small but important errors. An example is provided by Kennedy's jacket and shirt after the assassination. Both show bullet holes in the back, and Epstein argues that they are too low to permit a bullet to thus enter from the back and exit through the throat, as the Bethesda autopsy report states. He is entitled to his opinion, which is essential to his theory that there may have been two assassins. But in stating his case, he deceives the reader. His book contains FBI photos of Kennedy's coat and shirt. Epstein writes: "These photographs, which were omitted from the Warren Report and the twenty-six volumes of supporting evidence, show that the bullet hole in the jacket is 5 and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches below the collar and that the bullet hole in the shirt is 5 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches below the collar." In the context of the book, this has a menacing aspect. It sounds as though the Commission withheld the measurements from its Report. Epstein footnotes the statement, and the footnote indicates that he took the figures from Vol. V, page 59 plus, of the hearings. The unwary reader might conclude that the Commission wished to bury the data.

But the Commission quite fully discussed the jacket and shirt holes, and gave measurements, on page 92 of the Report, drawn from the examination made by FBI Agent Robert A. Frazier, a ballistics expert. Furthermore, the Commission cited Frazier accurately, which Ep-

stein does not do. The Commission said, as did Frazier, that the bullet-hole measurements were from "the top of the collar." Epstein, in the case of both the jacket and shirt, says "below the collar," thus gaining at least an inch in his argument against the Commission.

A mere inch may seem a small thing over which to quibble with Epstein, but his entire case involves fractions of feet and fractions of seconds. In this instance, Epstein is trying to prove that a bullet shot from above could not enter Kennedy's back at the designated point and exit from his throat because the point on the back supposedly is lower than the throat wound. (A Commission photo disputes the point by reconstructing the probable angle.) Thus, in his battle over the jacket and shirt, if Epstein can gain an inch, he resembles a high-school team gaining a yard against the Cleveland Browns for first down.

**E**PSTEIN ACCUSES THE Commission of failing to pursue proper investigative leads because of a fear the information might damage "the national interest," but in making his case, he himself fails to pursue obvious leads. As an illustration, there is Epstein's contention that the Commission never independently investigated rumors that Oswald was a paid FBI informant, but relied on the denials of a battery of FBI officials, headed by Director J. Edgar Hoover, as sufficient evidence to dismiss the rumors as unfounded.

Epstein says the Commission heard from two Texas officials of a rumor that Oswald was a paid FBI informant. The source appeared to be Alonzo Hudkins, then a Houston newspaperman. Epstein says a Secret Service report quoted an interview with Hudkins, in which Hudkins gave Allan Sweatt, chief of the criminal division of the Dallas sheriff's office, as his source, quoting Sweatt as saying Oswald was paid \$200 a month by the FBI and had informant number S-172.

Hudkins, now a Baltimore newspaperman, says he was never interviewed on this matter by the Secret Service, that he never heard the rumor from Sweatt, that he heard a similar rumor elsewhere and that later, because of his own work on the case, he became convinced that Oswald had not worked for the FBI. Sweatt says he never made any such statement to Hudkins or to anyone else, and that he had no knowledge of Oswald's connections with any Government agency.

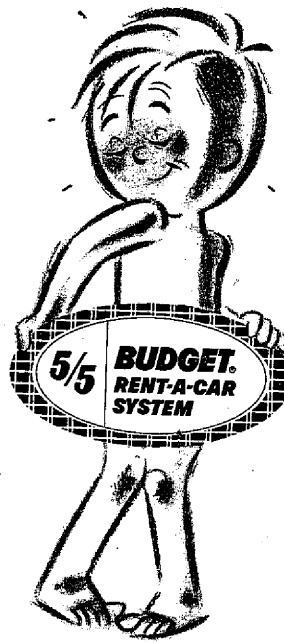
Epstein says that Leon Jaworski, special counsel for the State of Texas on the assassination, was asked to speak to Hudkins about the rumor and that Jaworski reported to Warren Commission lawyers that there was nothing to it. Hudkins says Jaworski never spoke to him about the rumor, and Jaworski says he never spoke "to anyone named Alonzo Hudkins."

"I did suggest to Rankin [J. Lee Rankin, Warren Commission general counsel] that a thorough check-out had to be made of the Oswald-FBI rumors," says Jaworski. "We did make this check, and we made it independently of the FBI. We made a thorough investigation of it in Texas, and I came to the conclusion that there was nothing to it, and so reported to the Commission staff."

Epstein's statement that the Commission did not itself probe the FBI-Oswald rumors by hearing witnesses outside the FBI is correct, but his statement that the staff made "no efforts" to investigate the rumors is challenged by two staff lawyers who worked on the matter, as well as by Leon Jaworski. Also, as the Warren Report states, the staff made an independent review of FBI files on the Oswald investigation and did not rely solely on the word of Hoover and his assistants. Epstein says that "nowhere" in the Warren Report is there a mention of the allegation. If he means the specific rumor credited to Hudkins, he is correct, but his implication is wrong. The Report does discuss Oswald's alleged role as a secret FBI agent on pages 326-327. Finally, Epstein said in an interview that he never saw a Secret Service report quoting Hudkins on the source of the rumor, but only a quotation from the report in a file supplied him by Wesley Liebeler.

Epstein contends that the Commission should have called Hudkins and Sweatt as witnesses. This is fair criticism of the Commission's methods. It is also fair criticism of Epstein's methods to say that he, Epstein, should have interviewed Hudkins, Sweatt and Jaworski as

continued



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well, before publishing secondhand reports about them in his book. Writes Epstein: "The surest and safest way to dispel the rumor was *not* to investigate it. . . ." And the surest and safest way to make sure that people don't contradict what is said about them is *not* to question them.

Epstein's most spectacular theory is that the autopsy report printed on pages 538-545 of the Warren Report is not the original one and that someone, unnamed, changed or altered that original, written following the examination of President Kennedy's body at Bethesda Naval Medical Center. In essence, this accuses either the doctors or some members of the Commission or staff of monumental dishonesty. It implies that someone in authority deliberately falsified the most celebrated American autopsy record of this century in order to support a hypothesis of how Kennedy and Connally were shot. This is altogether a sensational line of reasoning to emerge from the cloisters. Epstein hedges and qualifies his language, and well he might. For he is dealing in pure speculation, unsupported by any evidence from the doctors and lawyers whose professional integrity is at stake.

Epstein bases his theory on two FBI reports on the autopsy that he uncovered during his research. It was quite a find, and he is to be congratulated for his enterprise in coming up with these unpublished documents. The first of these reports, dated December 9, 1963, conflicts almost *in toto* with the autopsy report published in the Warren Report. The FBI report said that one bullet entered Kennedy's body "just below his shoulder to the right of the spinal column at an angle of 45 to 60 degrees downward, that there was no point of exit, and that the bullet was not in the body."

The official autopsy report, signed by three physicians—Navy Cdr. James J. Humes and J. Thornton Boswell and Army Lt. Col. Pierre A. Finck—said the bullet "entered the right superior posterior thorax above the scapula," bruised the upper right lung and went out through "the anterior surface of the neck."

A second FBI report, dated January 13, 1964, reiterated that the bullet entered the back and "penetrated to a distance of less than a finger length." The next paragraph is ambiguous as to the nature of the projectile that caused the exit hole in JFK's shirtfront.

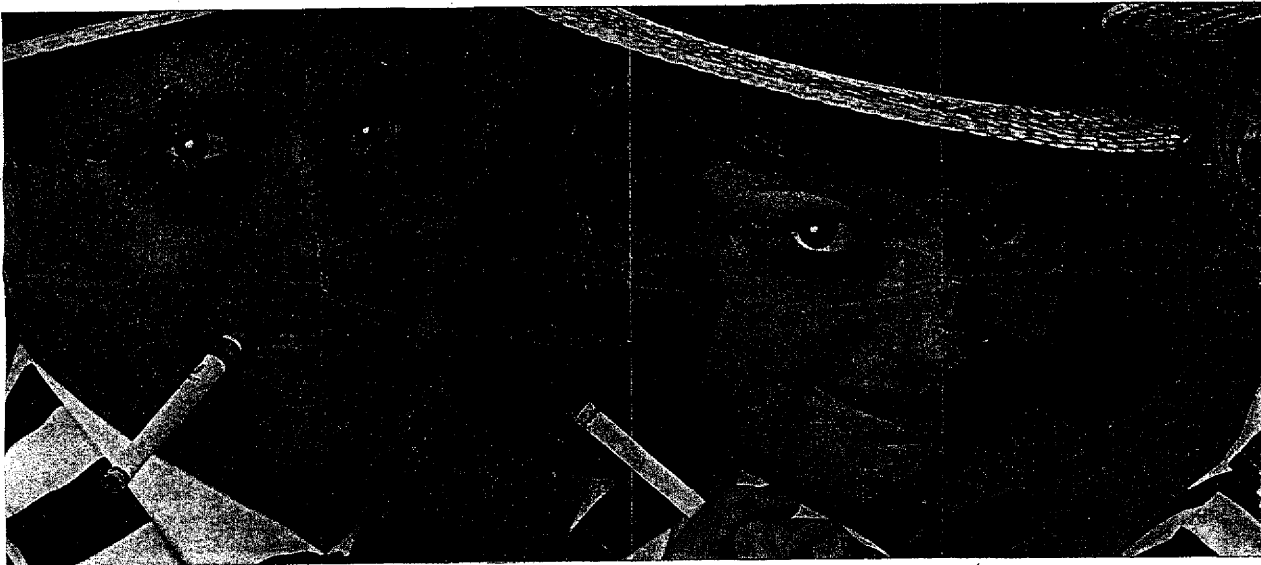
The FBI, which had observers at the autopsy, said the bullet did not exit from the body. The three doctors who made the examination said it did. In this head-on collision of reputable authorities, whom to believe? Epstein makes it clear that he believes the FBI (although elsewhere in the book he indicates that FBI agents disregarded significant data), and on the basis of his belief, he makes this sweeping assessment:

"If the FBI reports are accurate, as all the evidence indicates they are, then a central aspect of the autopsy was changed more than two months after the autopsy examination, and the autopsy report published in the Warren Report is not the original one. If this is in fact the case, the significance of this alteration of facts goes far beyond merely indicating that it was not physically possible for a lone assassin to have accomplished the assassination. It indicates that the conclusions of the Warren Report must be viewed as expressions of political truth."

Epstein cites a number of factors to show that "all the evidence indicates" that the FBI reports are accurate. Some of these are persuasive. Some aren't. In any event, the real point is that Epstein, having in hand such a startling discrepancy in reports, questioned neither the doctors involved nor the FBI on a matter vital to an assassination that rocked the world. A scholar may find reasons to put such strange restraints on his curiosity, but no police reporter could.

The fact is both Commander Boswell, one of the autopsy physicians, and the official spokesman for the FBI say that the FBI reports were not accurate.

Dr. Boswell, now retired from the Navy and practicing medicine in Bethesda, Md., says: "Our autopsy report went downtown to Admiral Burkley (Vice Adm. George G. Burkley, Medical Corps, U.S.N.,



**"Us Tareyton smokers would**

the President's physician) at the White House on November 25, after the three of us had signed it on November 24th. It appeared in the Warren Commission Report exactly as it was written November 24th, and it was never changed or altered in any way."

Says an official FBI spokesman: "It is completely contrary to the facts to indicate that the FBI and the Commission are in opposition on the findings of the Commission. Our first reports were merely to chart a course and were not designed to be conclusive. It is entirely possible that Humes's autopsy report did not get into the hands of the FBI until later, and so our initial reports did not reflect the doctors' decision."

**T**HREE COMMISSION LAWYERS and one of the autopsy doctors give this version of what happened: The autopsy on Kennedy's body was conducted from 8 p.m. until 11 p.m., November 22. Two FBI agents witnessed the autopsy and then left, as did Secret Service agents. At the time, the doctors were puzzled. They found a bullet entrance in Kennedy's back, but were unable to determine if or how it exited, although reason indicated that a high-velocity bullet would not enter a short distance and then drop out. The doctors knew that a tracheotomy had been performed on the President at Parkland Memorial Hospital in a futile effort to save his life. The Bethesda physicians conferred by telephone early the next morning with Dr. Malcolm Perry of Dallas. Dr. Perry said the surgical incision had obliterated a small bullet wound on the front of the President's neck. The Bethesda physicians then reconstructed and reanalyzed their autopsy work and came to the conclusion that the bullet passed through Kennedy, exiting at his neck. They signed their report, so stating, on November 24 and sent it to the White House, typed, on November 25. The report went from the White House to the Secret Service. When it reached Warren Commission lawyers the next month, it came as an enclosure from the Secret Service, not the FBI. When the Commission published

the autopsy report on September 28, 1964, nothing in the report had been changed from the November 24, 1963, writing.

The doctors may well have erred in their autopsy finding. They were not oracular. They even called the throat wound one "presumably of exit," and they noted that the bullet's path through the body could not be "easily probed."

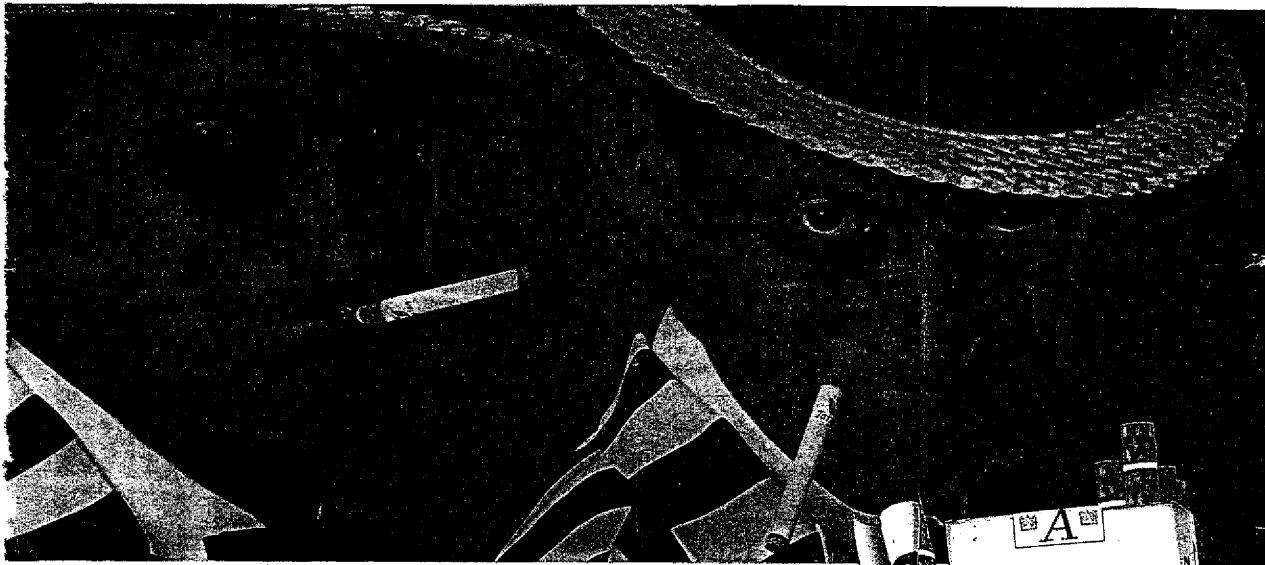
Epstein writes, "There can be no doubt that the autopsy findings were known to the FBI when it prepared" its December 9 report. This statement is contradicted by the Treasury Department. It says a search of Secret Service records shows that the doctors' autopsy findings were not forwarded to the FBI until December 23.

Norman Redlich, now executive assistant corporation counsel of New York City, was a top staff lawyer for the Warren Commission, credited by Epstein with being a prodigious worker on the investigation. "The doctors' autopsy report was forwarded to the Commission by the Secret Service, not the FBI," says Redlich. "I saw the autopsy findings on December 20 when I came to work for the Commission, and we immediately saw the conflict with the FBI's report of the autopsy. We discussed it thoroughly. Not only that, but we studied the individual reports of the FBI agents who saw the autopsy, and thus we saw how the discrepancy could have occurred."

Arlen Specter, the key lawyer on this phase of the Warren Commission's investigation, says: "It is ridiculous to indicate that the autopsy findings were changed after November 24, when Commander Humes finished the report. I saw both the longhand and the type-written reports when I came to work for the Commission in mid-January. They were identical, and neither was changed from the original in any way at any time."

Epstein may well be within scholarly bounds in doubting the conclusions of the autopsy physicians, but to leap to the assumption that the findings were later falsified to match a theory of the assassination

continued



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## ASSASSINATION CONTINUED

that proved politically appealing is quite a leap for an academician.

Writes Epstein: "If the FBI's statements are accurate, it would appear that the autopsy findings were revised some time subsequent to January 13, 1964." But those intimately connected with the situation say the FBI reports were not accurate. And, to adopt Epstein's own guarded style of exposition, if they were inaccurate, then a central pillar of Epstein's thesis collapses.

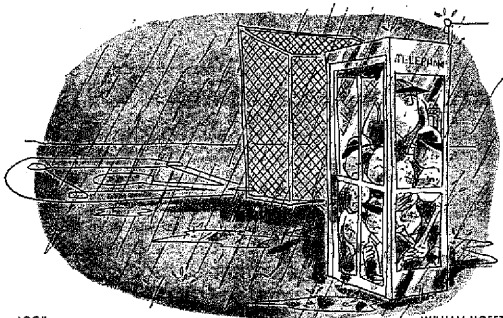
Epstein's book does reveal much that is significantly new: fights within the staff, disputes over selection of evidence for the Report, and a Commission "battle of the adjectives" over how to describe the Commission's controversial conclusion that a single bullet probably hit both President Kennedy and Governor Connally, a conclusion that Connally himself strongly doubted.

Epstein measured the seven commissioners' attendance at the hearings and found much absenteeism. He says the attendance ranged from a low of about six percent for Sen. Richard B. Russell (Dem., Ga.) to a high of about 71 percent for Allen W. Dulles, the former Central Intelligence Agency director. Only three commissioners heard more than half the testimony, Epstein calculates. This highlights a possible major flaw in establishment of the Commission. President Johnson selected very busy men whose national reputations would lend credence to eventual Commission findings. Seven men of lesser prominence, but fewer conflicting interests, undoubtedly would have bent a more attentive ear to the testimony. A similar complaint can be lodged against some of the senior counsel named to the staff. They were too busy with their own affairs.

It is when Epstein deals with the thrust of the evidence—and concludes that the Commission never thoroughly examined the possibility that Oswald was not the lone assassin—that his own methods and thoroughness stir deep doubts. Even a brief ten-day scrutiny of Epstein's book discloses, in addition to the instances cited above, six other critical areas where Epstein's reasoning runs shallow—either because of dubious selection of testimony to buttress an assumption or because of failure to pursue unresolved questions via available witnesses. In short, Epstein, author of the reputed scholarly critique of the Warren Commission, is guilty of the very lapses for which he indicts the Warren Commission. The Commission's general counsel, J. Lee Rankin, now corporation counsel of New York City, says: "This book is full of distortions."

But it is doubtful that flashing a caution light on Epstein's book will have much effect in staying the new clamor over the Warren Commission. Already, in a mighty prepublication blast, Mark Lane says he will deal with the same FBI autopsy report, and he declares the report "devastates the Commission's conclusions that all of the shots were fired from the rear and that they were fired by a lone assassin."

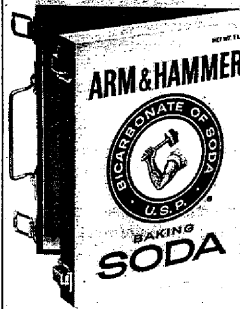
As yet undisclosed facts may perhaps demolish the Commission's findings someday. But the man who discovers them will have to do more than weave his tortured way through the Report, its 26 volumes of testimony and exhibits, and the thousands of attendant documents. As Allen Dulles said to LOOK recently: "If they've found another assassin, let them name names and produce their evidence." END



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