

27 June 1967

The Editor  
The Washington Post  
Washington, D. C.

*Acknowledged  
Wentby  
Filed*

Dear Sir,

In the Associated Press article, "The Lingering Shadow," published on June 25, 1967, the authors, Bernard Gavzer and Sid Moody, take issue with the critics of the Warren Commission on the significance of the holes in the back of the President's coat and shirt. They say:

Seeing the holes through the eyes of Lane, Epstein and Weisberg, it might seem that the bullet which made them could not have hit the President in the base of the neck. But put a jacket and shirt on any grown man with reasonably well-developed shoulders, measure 5-3/8 inches below the top of the collar and a bit to the right of the seam, have him raise his right arm slightly as the President's was and mark the spot with a pencil point. Where does this touch the body? The base of the neck.

This is exquisite argumentation but unfortunately it is absolutely untrue, as Messrs. Gavzer and Moody and your readers may easily see for themselves by looking at the inside cover of the Bantam/New York Times edition of the Warren Report. The center photograph on the inside front cover (identified on the page facing the inside back cover as "Two FBI men re-enact assassination in Dallas, May 24, 1964, for Warren Commission") shows a stand-in for the President sitting behind a stand-in for the Governor in a limousine. The stand-in for the President is a "grown man with reasonably well-developed shoulders." There is a chalk mark on the back of his coat, described as follows in the Warren Report:

The back of the stand-in for the President was marked with chalk at the point where the bullet entered. (Bantam edition, page 100)

"Where does this touch the body?" Not at the base of the neck, as Messrs. Gavzer and Moody in their folly have hypothesized, but a good few inches below the bottom of the coat collar--indeed, in a position which appears to correspond very closely with the "erroneous" dot on the autopsy diagram.

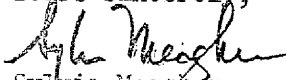
Gavzer and Moody have tried to brush aside the implications of the dot, arguing that "although the dot is wrong, the description (written in the margin) is clear." But they have not noticed or questioned the fact that this is the only instance in which a diagram mark is accompanied by annotations giving "the exact location of the wound." Needless to say, they have also failed to notice that the head wound in the same diagram is marked in a manner which conflicts with the description of that wound in the autopsy report and in the testimony of the autopsy surgeons. In the diagram marked during the autopsy, the head bullet is traveling in the wrong direction.

This example of the careless and superficial scholarship of the AP co-authors is scarcely unique. Many other parts of their article are equally vulnerable. Unfortunately, I cannot take the time to detail all the errors, omissions, and defects, nor, I imagine, would there be space available in your columns for the necessary exposition of fact.

It does not escape notice that Messrs. Gavzer and Moody, who are so discontented with criticism of the Warren Report and so scornful of the critics, at no time have independently evaluated the Warren Report nor called attention to its shortcomings. Only now, thanks to the work of the critics whom they seek to discredit, have they been compelled to acknowledge that there were defects in the work of the Warren Commission.

If the press had not defaulted on its responsibility in the first instance, if the press had applied to the Warren Report the critical zeal which it has reserved for the critics, there might be a better moral basis for such apologies and critiques as the AP article. It does not escape notice that the publication of this article coincides with attempts by CBS, NBC, and other mass media to rehabilitate a discredited and decomposing document and to reverse the direction of public opinion. The polls indicate that seven out of ten Americans question the Warren Report, despite the gargantuan efforts made to indoctrinate them. It is a tribute to their olfactory sense, native intelligence, and sense of justice that they refuse to fall into line.

Yours sincerely,

  
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cc: Messrs. Gavzer and Moody,  
Associated Press, et al