

Notes on broadcast, August 2, 1966 9:15-10 p.m. WOR radio
Barry Farber (and Victor Riesel) interview Edward Jay Epstein

BF.....Fletcher Knebel accused you of literary rape, shifty behavior, etc...

EE.....There is nothing in the book to offend people. It was written as a thesis, for professors...If Knebel wishes to believe in the chastity of the WR, he is entitled to his opinion...I do not believe that Knebel has an axe to grind...there are two sides to every story...The book originated as a master's thesis at Cornell under Andrew Hacker...it is a study of the WC, not the WR...

VR.....Then it doesn't go into the question of 2 assassins...group, or conspiracy?

EE.....It does, I had to deal with that question, but I did not reach conclusions, I merely set forth the problems...The WC could not reach conclusions that JFK and Gov. C. were hit by one bullet...they said such a finding was "not essential" ...but the lawyers showed that it WAS essential, in relation to determining one assassin, or two assassins, and the staff decided that a single missile had struck both men...but Russell, Cooper, and Boggs had doubts...the WC was not in agreement on it...and the WC agreed..."no evidence of conspiracy"...the question I raised was if an investigation of that quality PRECLUDED a second assassin...Was it adequate to find a second assassin if there was one?

VR.....I am not an expert, I have not read the 26 volumes. My interest is emotional...professionally, I was struck by Ruby's shooting Oswald...(Chicago, union, gangsters)...But you are a specialist...What do you think? Was there more than one assassin?

EE.....I just don't know. There was no one on the overpass. WC did a good job in showing there was no link between Oswald and Ruby...but ~~WC~~ really wasn't able to reach a conclusion on whether there was more than one...I did find that the WC left an unresolved contradiction...between the FBI and the autopsy...FBI reports contradicted the WC on a central autopsy finding, and the FBI version was supported by photographs which were not published by the WC...

BF.....WHY? WHY? (would they cover up, etc.)

EE.....I also believed the WR at first. Then I got access to their working papers and two FBI reports and found that there was a very glaring central contradiction ...On page 1 of the FBI Supplemental Report of 1/13/64 it says that the bullet entered under the shoulder, a finger's length in depth, and that the bullet fell out...But the WR said that the bullet entered the back of the neck, exited from the throat, and struck Gov. C. There is a clear contradiction on the location of the bullet wound. The Zapruder film showed that there was not enough time for JFK and Gov. C. to be hit by separate bullets from the same rifle...there was a maximum of 30 frames or 1.8 seconds, but the bolt needs 2.25 second without aiming time...So the lawyers concluded that a single missile had hit both men...but that requires the bullet to exit from the front of JFK, and the FBI says there was no exit...

VR.....One news story said that a bullet had been found on JFK's stretcher...

EE.....Yes, that was the story for about two months...Then the WR said it was found on Connally's stretcher...So there are two possibilities, either the autopsy report was altered, or the FBI was in error...The two reports cannot co-exist...

BF.....(reads excerpt from Fletcher Knebel's LOOK story, "...started to check, found Epstein was guilty of the same sins...")

EE.....Let me explain how Knebel "checked" my statements.....(commercial).....I had noted that Hudkins told the Secret Service that Oswald was on the FBI payroll at \$200 a month...etc....Knebel phoned Hudkins, who said nothing like that ever happened...So Knebel took his word and in his article insinuated that I was being dishonest, that I had invented the story...but the SS document 767 is in the Archives and it says exactly what I said in Inquest...I sent a copy of the SS document to Knebel...true, I sent it after he wrote his article...but it didn't really bother him.

VR.....Do you give any credence to that....(FBI paying Oswald as informant story)....?

EE.....No, not at all, especially since Hudkins ~~misstated~~ lied to Knebel, shows he is not reliable...the point was that the WC never called Hudkins to testify...

VR.....Do you think that if the WC had done a more diligent job they might have come to a different conclusion?

EE.....It is all a question of probabilities...there were pressures to finish the investigation before the Presidential election...it isn't that they didn't WANT to do a good job...the WC members and lawyers told me that they wanted to "clear the air" before the election...

VR.....I haven't read your book, but I intend to read it...Do you think that the WC neglected evidence that could have made a difference in their conclusions?

EE.....Yes, the autopsy photographs and x-rays...they could resolve in a minute the question of where the bullet entered...I don't know why they were not seen...

VR.....Wm. Greer retired recently...

EE.....Yes...he was questioned by the WC and his testimony (about the autopsy) was in harmony with the FBI reports...

VR.....I thought all along that one bullet had hit both men. Is it true that there wasn't enough time for two bullets (from the same rifle)?

EE.....Yes, according to the lawyers, there was not enough time.

VR.....Some Italian sharpshooters proved that two shots could be fired in a few seconds....

EE.....The WC had 8 experts (master riflemen) test the rifle, only 2 were able to match (the feat attributed to) Oswald...

BF.....(plays tape of comments by Fletcher Knebel: "Here he was faced with a clear difference...the FBI said the bullet did not go in very far, the doctors said it went through the body...What did Epstein do? Nothing. He only speculates and takes the side he like, the FBI side. Why didn't he call the doctors or call the FBI? His excuse is that that was not his province...")

EE.....True, I was confronted with a contradiction...I said that the contradiction exists...not in the realm of speculation...it is in the realm of ascertainable fact...I could have called the doctors...but Humes told reporters "no comment"...

BF.....(plays more tape...)

FK.....Exact source was fuzzy but Epstein said Hudkins told Secret Service (LHO on FBI payroll, etc. etc.)...Published that without any attempt to check it...all he does is say that the WC never called Hudkins or Sweatt...I called Hudkins and he denied the whole thing...

EE.....I SENT Knebel the SS document 767 signed by the SS agent in charge of the Houston field office...Knebel has it in his opossession...Is Knebel accusing the SS of lying? He didn't bother to check the documents at the National Archives...After my book came out, I received the full document...Anybody who wants to see it, we will send a copy...

VR.....I am more interested in the fact that the WC did not call Hudkins...

EE.....Three members of the WC—Cooper, Russell and Warren—agreed to call Hudkins, but they never called him....

VR.....We all live in hope that people will denounce what we do and thus make us famous...Don't get excited about Knebel's attack on you...the important thing is...did you find any other important areas not covered by the WC creating reasonable doubt?

EE.....No, I think the WC -- if their evidence is accurate -- did prove it was Oswald...but left wide open the possibility that there was a second assassin...

VR.....Oh, yeah, Dick Rovere, that's the fellow, a Great journalist...(station break)...Did you find any reason for Earl Warren saying we won't know the whole truth in our lifetime?

EE.....Warren said it was for reasons of national security...that may be true...WC not necessarily suppressing information....I don't think all the facts will ever be known...Oswald is an enigma to me...There is no doubt that Oswald did assassinate Kennedy...WC made a convincing case...I don't know if he actually shot JFK but the WC evidence makes it hard to believe he was not involved...# # #