

The Presidential Car

Before the Warren Report

Reports that the President's car had stopped after the first shot were interpreted as an indication that the driver believed that the shot came from a source in front of the car.

According to the Warren Report

The Presidential car did not stop or almost come to a complete halt after the firing of the first shot or any other shots. The driver, Special Agent William R. Greer, has testified that he accelerated the car after what was probably the second shot. Motion pictures of the scene show that the car slowed down momentarily after the shot that struck the President in the head and then speeded up rapidly.

(Page 641)

According to the Hearings and Exhibits

Mark Lane testified on March 4, 1964 that it was his impression that the Presidential car had come to a halt when the shooting began, on the basis of statements by

various witnesses, including Mr. Chaney, a motorcycle policeman, Miss Woodward, who was one of the closest witnesses to the President at the time that he was shot, and others. I think that is...conceded by almost everyone, that the automobile came to--almost came to a complete halt after the first shot...

(2H 45)

According to Lane, Mary Woodward in a telephone conversation had confirmed her story in the Dallas Morning News on November 23, 1963 that

Instead of speeding up the car, the car came to a halt.

(2H 43)

Marrison Baker, the motorcycle officer who had encountered Oswald in the Depository within two minutes of the shooting, testified on March 24, 1964 that James Chaney, another motorcycle officer, had told him that,

He was on the right rear of the car or to the side, and then at that time the chief of police, he didn't know anything

about this, and he [Chaney] moved up and told him, and then that was during the time that the Secret Service men were trying to get in the car, and at the time, after the shooting, from the time the first shot rang out, the car stopped completely, pulled to the left and stopped...Now, I have heard several of them say that, Mr. Truly was standing out there, he said it stopped. Several officers said it stopped completely. (3H 266)

Roy Truly corroborated Baker when he testified on March 24, 1964, saying,

I saw the President's car swerve to the left and stop somewhere down in this area...

Holin When you saw the President's car seem to stop, how long did it appear to stop?

Truly It would be hard to say over a second or two or something like that. I didn't see--I just saw it stop. I don't know. I didn't see it start up...The crowd in front of me kind of congealed...and I lost sight of it. (3H 221)

Postal Inspector Harry Holmes, who had watched the motorcade through binoculars from his office, testified on April 2, 1964, that,

Mr. Kennedy leaned over against his wife...as this thing, firecracker, looked like, come out. The car almost came to a stop, and Mrs. Kennedy pulled loose of him and crawled out over the turtleback of this car... (7H 291)

Patrolman Earle V. Brown, who was stationed on the triple underpass, testified on April 7, 1964, that,

actually, the first I noticed the car was when it stopped...After it made the turn and when the shots were fired, it stopped.

Ball Did it come to a complete stop?

Brown That, I couldn't swear to.

Ball It appeared to be slowed down some?

Brown Yes; slowed down. (6H 233)

Senator Ralph Yarborough, who was in the second car behind the Presidential limousine, said in his affidavit of July 8, 1964, that,

When the noise of the shot was heard, the motorcade slowed to what seemed to me a complete stop (though it could have been a near stop)...After the third shot was fired, but only after the third shot was fired, the cavalcade speeded up, gained speed rapidly, and roared away to the Parkland Hospital. (7H 440)

Mrs. Earle Cabell, the Mayor's wife, was in the third car. She testified on July 13, 1964, that,

I was acutely aware of the odor of gunpowder. I was aware that the motorcade stopped dead still. There was no question about that...Every car in the motorcade had come to a standstill. (7H 487)

Missile of the
Facts

The resistance of the Warren Commission to inferences which might be drawn from evidence that the President's car had stopped when the first shot was heard is clear from the way in which counsel led two of the witnesses. "Stopped" was transformed into "seemed to stop" and "slowed down." Counsel took advantage of the closed hearings to lead witnesses flagrantly, in a manner that would never have been permitted in an adversary proceeding and that would have raised eyebrows in a public forum.

Nevertheless, the record shows that five witnesses and two non-witnesses* saw the President's car come to a complete stop, or what was tantamount to a stop. It is noteworthy that the two non-witnesses--James Chaney and Mary Woodward--were not asked to testify on this and other observations of some importance that they were known to have reported.

It is possible that the films of the assassination (to which we are not privy) support the Commission's contention that the car did not stop or come to a near stop. If so, it is all the more baffling that the testimony of the witnesses was reflected with some lack of impartiality, and that counsel violated elementary principles of propriety in conducting the questioning.

The witnesses, who were disinterested and whose independent stories support each other, are persuasive.

*The term "non-witness" in the context of this study denotes a person who was an actual witness to an event, or who was in a position to contribute important or essential information on vital aspects of the triple murder or on the past lives of the principals, but who was not called before the Warren Commission to give testimony under oath to be used in the official investigation and findings.

The Mark on the Curb and
the Cut on the Face

It was vital to the solution of the assassination to establish the number and direction of the shots. The Warren Commission, utilizing certain physical evidence and eyewitness testimony, concluded that only three shots were fired and that they came from the sixth floor of the Depository. Was that conclusion based upon the conscientious and disinterested examination of all the evidence, the impartial consideration of all the testimony, and the rational, objective assessment of the information? Here is the chronology of two pieces of evidence which are vital to the determination of the number and direction of the shots.

November 22, 1963 Shortly after the shooting it was known that a bystander, James Tague, had been struck on the face by a bullet fragment, and that a fresh bullet mark was found on the curb near the place where Tague had been standing. The Tague incident was reported to a deputy sheriff, and to his superior (7H 546-547), to Dallas police officer Haygood (5R 116), and to the Dallas police at City Hall (7H 556). Although Tague went to City Hall and reported his experience, the police report on the assassination (CE 2003) does not include any affidavit from or any reference to Tague.

November 23, 1963 Two Dallas newsmen, Tom Dillard and James Underwood, took films or photographs of the mark on the curb (Shaneyfelt Exhibit No. 26).

November 25, 1963 Dillard was interviewed by FBI agent Kreutzer. Presumably he reported the bullet mark on the curb. However, the FBI report on the interview is omitted from the Exhibits although it was in the possession of the Warren Commission (6H 166).

April 1, 1964 Dillard and Underwood were examined by Commission counsel Ball, who failed to elicit by his questions information from either of the witnesses about the mark on the curb. Ball referred explicitly to the FBI interview of Dillard (6H 166); if that report included information about the mark on the curb, it must be inferred that Ball deliberately excluded this from the scope of his examination.

April 9, 1964 Haygood gave testimony before Commission counsel Belin, in which he reported that a bystander was hit on the face during the shooting (6H 298).

May 1964 Leaks to the press indicated that the Warren Commission had concluded that the first bullet that struck the President had also hit the Governor and caused all of his wounds.

End of May 1964 Tague took films at the scene of the assassination, prior to a visit to his parents in Indiana, observed without his knowledge by unknown investigators who informed the Warren Commission of the incident. As he later said with surprise, "I didn't think anyone knew about that." (7H 555)

June 11, 1964 Two FBI agents interviewed James Underwood about the mark on the curb (Shaneyfelt Exhibit 26). The report on the interview is not included in the Commission's exhibits. It is not known what caused the FBI to interview Underwood at this time; and it should be noted that Dillard was not interviewed now, perhaps because he had already told the FBI about the mark on the curb when he was interviewed on November 25, 1963.

Before July 7, 1964 Martha Joe Stroud, Assistant US Attorney for Dallas, sent a communication to the Warren Commission transmitting a photograph of the mark on the curb which had been taken by Dillard. (Shaneyfelt Exhibit 26)

July 7, 1964 The Commission formally requested the FBI to investigate the mark on the curb. (Shaneyfelt Exhibit 26)

July 15, 1964 FBI agents interviewed Dillard and Underwood and, accompanied by them, tried to locate the mark on the curb but reported that they were unable to find it. That information was sent to the Commission in a letter dated July 17, 1964 (Shaneyfelt Exhibit 26).

July 23, 1964 Tague and deputy sheriff Walthers gave testimony before Commission counsel Liebeler, both reporting the cut and the mark on the

(7H 544-558)
curb. / There is no indication in the record that Tague had been interviewed before this date by any investigative agency, although he had reported his experience to the Dallas police on the day of the assassination and apparently was under official surveillance at the end of May when he took films at the scene.

August 5, 1964 FBI expert Shaneyfelt located the mark on the curb and removed a piece of curbing for examination at the FBI Laboratory (15H 697-701).

August 12, 1964 In a report to the Commission, the FBI stated, "in response to your inquiry, assuming that a bullet shot from the sixth floor window of the...Depository struck the curb...evidence present is insufficient to establish whether it was caused by a fragment of a bullet striking the occupants of the Presidential limousine...or whether it is a fragment of a shot that may have missed..." (Shaneyfelt Exhibit 27).

September 3, 1964 The FBI informed the Commission that the distance from the President's car to the mark on the curb at the time of the head shot (frame 313) was about 260 feet (Shaneyfelt Exhibit 36).

September 27, 1964 The Warren Report revealed that a bystander had been hit on the cheek by an object during the shooting and that an apparent bullet mark had been found on a curb nearby. The Report stated,

the mark on the south curb of Main Street cannot be identified conclusively with any of the three shots fired. Under the circumstances it might have come from the bullet which hit the President's head, or it might have been the product of the fragmentation of the missed shot upon hitting some other object in the area.

(Page 117)

It is indisputable that in a methodical impartial investigation Tague would have been interviewed and the mark on the curb would have been examined at an early stage and certainly before conclusions were formulated about the number and the source of the shots. The evidence was known immediately to the Dallas police and sheriff's officers and almost certainly to the FBI as well, from the interview with Billard if not from local officers of the law. Yet the first overt indication of FBI interest in the curb came only on June 11, 1964, and the records do not show what provoked action at that time. It may have been the communication from Martha Joe Stroud; but that too has been withheld from the exhibits and the date is not known. Whatever that date, it is perfectly clear from the Commission's own documents that it was the communication from Stroud that led to the request for an FBI investigation of the curb, and it is entirely legitimate to wonder if the public would have learned anything whatever about the mark on the curb or the Tague matter in the absence of such an external stimulus. The omission from the exhibits of the FBI reports on interviews with Underwood and Billard, and the letter from Stroud, betrays a lack of candor on the Commission's part and perhaps an attempt to conceal its persistent inattention, and the FBI's, to vital evidence--evidence which irresistibly creates uncertainty about the actual number of shots.

If the Commission now concedes that the mark on the curb was made by a bullet, or a bullet fragment, it does so within the same undeviating context of shots which came exclusively from the Depository. To assume a priori that the mark was produced by a missile from that source, as both the Commission and the FBI assumed, without even considering any other possibility, betrays their commitment to a hypothesis with which this evidence has little compatibility. Straining to force the evidence into harmony with preconceived conclusions, the Commission suggests two impoverished possibilities.

It suggests that a fragment from the bullet that hit the President's head might have produced the mark on the curb, ignoring the fact that two large fragments (equivalent respectively to 1/4 and 1/8 of the mass of the whole bullet) had dropped into the car without even penetrating the relatively soft surfaces on which they were found. If those fragments suffered such a dramatic loss of velocity upon impact and fragmentation, how could a different piece of the bullet retain sufficient force to travel "about 260 feet" further, and to cut Tague's face and/or mark the curb?

Alternatively, the Commission suggests, the mark was made by a bullet that struck but fragmented upon hitting "some other object in the area." There is no evidence to support that conjecture. It is all but untenable, because the preponderance of testimony indicates that the shot that struck the President's head was the last shot fired.

For a proper understanding of the dilatory nonchalance with which the Commission and its servant agencies pursued the investigation of the Tague injury and the mark on the curb, one should appreciate the energy and tenacity with which other inquiries were conducted. A case in point is the report that Oswald had visited the Irving Sports Shop to have a scope mounted on a rifle. That story received a degree of corroboration from two women, who gave a detailed description of a man, accompanied by his wife and two young female children, who had come into a furniture shop to inquire about a gunsmith. The two women identified Marina Oswald as the woman. Marina Oswald denied that she had been in the furniture store with Oswald and her babies. The Commission, invariably taking Marina Oswald's testimony as gospel even when her story was inherently implausible or in conflict with credible and disinterested testimony, took considerable pains to disprove the story told by the two women in the furniture shop. This is seen in the following excerpt from an FBI report.

By letter dated June 30, 1964, the President's Commission requested that a check be made of the public record of births for the area which encompasses both Dallas and Irving, Texas, to ascertain the names and addresses of female babies born on October 20, 1963. It was requested that parents of these babies be interviewed to determine whether any of these families have an older female child approximately two and one-half years old and whether any of these families were in Mrs. Whitworth's furniture store in early November, 1963, and under what circumstances.

(CE 1338)

Although the FBI applied itself diligently to this assignment, no suitable family was found. But that is another matter. It is mentioned here solely to demonstrate the lengths to which the Commission went in some instances, in contrast to its inaction in others.

In the case of the mark on the curb and Tague's injury, the Commission's investigation and conclusions are inadequate and unsatisfactory.

Where Did the Shots Come From?

We do not agree with the contention in the Warren Report (pages 61-117 and 69-812) that all the shots fired at the Presidential car came from the sixth-floor window of the Depository. We do agree that an assassin, or a decoy, was at that window. We agree also that the known facts appear to eliminate shots fired from the overpass:

The Commission has not, however, given adequate consideration to the possibility of assassins at other locations than the window or the overpass. That possibility certainly has not been ruled out. There is a considerable body of evidence suggesting that shots were fired from the grassy knoll which lies on Elm Street, between the Depository and the overpass. Harold Feldman in his article "Fifty-One Witnesses: The Grassy Knoll" (The Minority of One, March 1965) has provided an impressive analysis of eyewitness testimony and has demonstrated that fifty-one of the witnesses found in the hearings and exhibits thought that the shots had come from the grassy knoll.

In discussing the source of the shots, we shall consider a number of specific elements in the testimony and evidence:

- (1) The inconsistent and baffling reaction of bystanders and police officers, if all the shots indeed came from the sixth-floor window of the Depository.
- (2) The strong suggestion that shots were fired from the grassy knoll, and that a man or men were seen to flee the scene.
- (3) The incompleteness and selectivity of the eyewitness testimony and photographic evidence on which the conclusions in the Warren Report are based.
- (4) Sinister circumstances, ignored by the Warren Commission, which point to the method of escape of assassins who may have fired at the President from the grassy knoll.

Inconsistent and Baffling Reactions

This is a case in which appearances constantly and repeatedly are belied by "facts" as determined by the Warren Commission. Much testimony and some photographic evidence as well show that after three shots were fired from the Depository there was a mass surge of spectators and police to the grassy knoll and the railroad yards, and that in the next five or ten minutes no attention whatever was paid to the Depository. The building had not yet been effectively sealed at 12.50 pm, as the Report indicates. A number of eyewitnesses reported immediately after the shooting that they had seen a man, or a man with a rifle, or a rifle barrel in the sixth-floor window, but no policemen rushed to that location. It was only at 1.12 pm that the first signs of a sniper's nest were found at that window, during a floor-by-floor search of the whole building. It is elementary to ask why the police paid no attention to these eyewitnesses and why they acted, in effect, as though they had no clue to the specific location from which shots had been fired, somewhere in that building. The Commission, however, did not ask that elementary question of the police witnesses who received these eyewitness reports and who took charge of the search and sealing of the building. Moreover, the Commission concluded that the source of the 12.45 radio alert for the suspected assassin "most probably" was Edward Brennan, even though Inspector Sawyer, who broadcast the alert, did not remember speaking to Brennan or anyone answering his description, and Brennan himself testified that he gave his report to Secret Service agent Conroy, who did not return to the scene until 12.50 or later. The Commission's assumption therefore flouts the testimony on this point, and the actual source of the description remains unknown. 1/

The surge of people to the grassy knoll and the railroad yards, and the absence of activity at the Depository in the aftermath of the shots, is recurrent in the testimony of many witnesses. An FBI interview with T. B. Moore states,

Mr. Moore noticed some of the bystanders on the north side of Elm Street below the concrete pavilion rushing away from the street, across the grass towards the concrete pavilion in the direction of some railroad tracks behind the concrete pavilion. Mr. Moore stated that at the sound of the first shot, he looked up towards the Texas School Book Depository because the shot sounded like it had come from a high area, however, he did not observe anything noteworthy at the Texas School Book Depository. He stated that approximately ten minutes later, the Texas School Book Depository was surrounded by police officers.

(CE 2102)

1/ (see next page)

The Commission is equivocal and uncomfortable when dealing with the source of the 12.45 description of the suspect in the assassination. On page 5 of the report the Commission states that the description was "based primarily on Brennan's observations." On page 6, the Commission refers to the "suspect described by Brennan." But on page 144 (and again on page 319) the Commission states that Brennan's description of the man he saw firing a rifle from the 14th-floor window "most probably led to the radio alert at 12.45 pm."

The improbability that the description came from Brennan is underscored by the fact that Inspector Sanyor told the police radio dispatcher only a minute or two after he had called in the description that "He's unknown whether he is still in the building or not, unless he has been in the building." (NY 1574 p.171). That report by Sanyor strongly suggests that he did not obtain the description from Brennan nor from any other witness who claimed to see a man shooting a rifle from a window of the Depository.

The Commission has not only failed to establish the exact source of the alarm but perversely insisted that it must have been Brennan when the weight of the evidence is that the description came from a witness who remains unknown, and who may not have linked the suspect with the Depository at all.

...it seems as though everyone else was running towards the railroad tracks, and we ran over there. Curious to see why everybody was running that way for... We saw the policeman, and I guess they were detectives, they were searching the empty cars...

(3H 192-193)

Kenzie Ray Williams told a similar story.

We saw the policemen and people running, scared, running --there are some tracks on the west side of the building, railroad tracks. They were running towards that way. And we thought maybe--well, to ourself, we know the shots practically came from over our head. But since everybody was running, you know, to the west side of the building, towards the railroad tracks, we assumed maybe somebody was down there.

(3H 175)

After looking at the scene to the west of the building, the three men next went to the fourth floor (3H 182 and 207). Jarman, who thought the shots had come from below the fifth floor, and Williams both testified that they had gone to the floor below--surely peculiar behavior for men who had reason to think the shots had come from the floor above--but counsel Hall showed no interest in that, and it is not mentioned in the Report.

Then the men continued down the stairs and reached the street, where they saw Brennan talking to a police officer "and they then reported their own experience," according to the report. If that is what happened, it is very strange indeed that the police did not send a search party immediately to the sixth floor, as already pointed out; and equally strange that the three men were not taken immediately to the Sheriff's office or to police headquarters, as were many other witnesses whose stories were far less important, to make a formal statement. Of the three, only Williams gave an affidavit that afternoon, in which he said that he had heard shots which sounded as if they came from just above him (OH 2003 page 65). Jarman gave an affidavit on November 23, 1963 in which he did not even mention that he had watched the motorcade from the fifth floor, much less what Norman had said or the debris on Williams' head. (OH 2003 page 34). Norman, the only one of the three who had heard the rifle bolt and the falling shells, was never taken to police headquarters at all and gave no affidavit.

Norman was questioned, for the first time apparently, on November 26, by FBI agent Kautzer. The report on that interview has been withheld from the exhibits, although Norman was questioned about the interview during his testimony before the Warren Commission and disputed some of the statements attributed to him by the FBI (3H 196). He was next interviewed on December 4, by Secret Service agent Carter (OH 493) ^{in his Commission testimony} but he denied that he had said, as the Secret Service reported, that he knew "the shots came from directly above us" (3H 194).

William M. Newman, Jr., who was watching the motorcade from a position in a street "near the west end of the concrete slab" said in his affidavit of November 22, 1963,

"I was standing at the edge of the curb looking at the car as it was coming toward us and all of a sudden there was a noise, apparently gunshot...I was looking directly at him (the President) when he was hit in the side of the head...then we fell down on the grass as it seemed that we were in direct path of him...everybody in that area had run up on top of that little mound. I thought the shot had come from the garden directly behind me...I do not recall looking toward the Texas School Book Depository. I looked back in the vicinity of the garden.

(CE 2003 page 145)

Charles Springer, who was standing on a concrete slab on the grassy knoll taking movie film of the motorcade, with his secretary standing beside him, testified that,

"...when the police were running behind me...right behind me. Of course, they didn't realize yet, I don't know where the shot came from--that it came from the knoll...some of them were motorcycle cops...and they were running right behind me, of course, in the middle of the shooting. I guess they thought it came from right behind me...I also thought it came from right behind me.

(7H 571)

Billy Levelady, the man seen in the doorway of the Depository in the Altman photograph, thought that the shots had come from "right there around that concrete little deal on that knoll...between the underpass and the building right on that knoll" (6H 330). This is the only reference we have found to a building on the grassy knoll. If such a building exists, it is inexcusable that we have not been provided with complete information about its physical structure and its occupancy, as well as the feasibility of its use to fire on the President or to serve as a hiding-place after the shooting.

Levelady's boss, Roy Truly, testified

"...I thought the shots came from the vicinity of the railroad on the WPA project, behind the WPA project west of the building...There were many officers running down west of the building. It appears many people thought the shots came from there because of the noise or what.

(3H 227 and 241)

O. V. Campbell, Vice-President of the Depository, told Mrs. Robert Field that the shots

"...came from the grassy area down this way"...in the direction...the parade was going, in the bottom of that direction.

(3H 271)

Mrs. Charles Hester told the FBI that she and her husband had been standing on the south side of Elm Street near the underpass when they heard gunshots. According to the FBI report, her husband then grabbed her and shoved her to the ground. Both Mrs. Hester and her husband believed that they had actually been in the direct line of fire (CE 2098).

John Arthur Chism said in an FBI interview that he had been standing on the curb "in front of the concrete overpass on Elm Street which is just east of the triple underpass" and that he was "of the opinion that the shots came from behind him" (CE 2092).

Russel Hudson in an affidavit dated November 22, 1963 said that he had been on the steps leading up the grassy slope, with another spectator. Hudson said, "The shots that I heard definitely came from behind and above me" (Decker Exhibit No. 5323, Volume XIX page 481).

The other spectator may have been Malcolm Summers. Summers said in an affidavit dated November 23, 1963 that he had been standing on the terrace of the small park on Elm Street when he heard a shot, and then a second shot. He hit the ground,

Then all of the people started running up the terrace ...everybody was just running around towards the railroad tracks and I know that they had somebody trapped up there ...I stayed there 15 or 20 minutes and then went over on Robinson Street to where I had my truck parked.

I had just pulled away from the curb and was headed toward the Houston Street viaduct when an automobile that had 3 men in it pulled away from the curb in a burst of speed, passing me on the right side, which was very dangerous at that point, then got in front of me, and it seemed then as an afterthought, slowed in a big hurry in front of me as though realizing that they would be conspicuous in speeding...They were in a 1961 or 1962 Chevrolet sedan, maroon in color. I don't believe I could identify these men, but I do believe I could identify the automobile if I saw it again.

(Decker Exhibit No. 5323,
Volume XIX page 500)

Jack W. Bullmer of the Sheriff's office reported on November 22, 1963 that he had been standing on Main and Houston when he heard three shots and the crowd began to move en masse toward Elm Street.

When I reached Elm Street there was much confusion. I asked a woman if they had hit the President, and she told me that he was dead, that he had been shot through the head. I asked her where the shots came from, and she pointed toward the concrete arcade on the east side of Elm Street, just west of Houston St.

(Decker Exhibit No. 5323,
Volume XIX page 511)

L. C. Smith of the Sheriff's office also reported on November 22 that he had heard a woman unknown to me say the President was shot in the head and the shots from the fence on the North side of Elm" (Decker Exhibit 5323, Volume XIX page 516).

Mary Woodward, a reporter on the staff of the Dallas Morning News, was an eyewitness to the assassination. She described her experience in a story under her by-line which appeared in the November 23, 1963 issue of the Dallas Morning News (page 3). She was not interviewed by any official agency until December 7, 1963, when she told the FBI that she and three companions had been watching the motorcade from the north side of Elm Street, near the second light post, when she heard shots.

She stated that her first reaction was that the shots had been fired from above her head and possibly behind her. Her next reaction was that the shots might have come from the overpass which was to her right...She never looked at any time towards the Texas School Book Depository building...

(SI 2084)

In her story in the Dallas Morning News, Miss Woodward has written also that

About ten feet away a man and his wife had thrown a small child to the ground and were covering his body with theirs; apparently the bullets had whizzed directly over their heads.

In widely-published photographs, this man and woman can be seen on the grass, near the steps leading to the top of the grassy knoll.

Lee H Bowers, railroad tower-man, testified that at the time of the shooting "there seemed to be some commotion" and that immediately afterwards a motorcycle officer shot nearly all the way to the top of the grassy knoll. Asked by counsel what he meant by "a commotion," Bowers replied,

I just am unable to describe rather than it was something out of the ordinary, which attracted my eye for some reason, which I could not identify.

(6H 288)

John Couch, a television reporter who was riding in the motorcade, testified,

And people were pointing back around those shrubs around that west corner and--uh--you would think that there was a chase going on in that direction.

(6H 160)

James Underwood testified,

...most of the people in the area were running up the grassy slope toward the railroad yards just behind the Texas School Book Depository Building. Actually, I assumed, which is the only thing I could do, I assumed perhaps who(ever) had fired the shots had run in that direction...

(6H 170)

Frank Reilly testified, too, that the shots seemed to

come out of the trees...on the north side of Elm Street, at the corner up there...where all those trees are...at that park where all the shrubs is up there...up the slope.

(6H 230)

Some witnesses reported that they had seen a puff of smoke in that same location. ^{1/}

S. M. Holland testified,

I counted four shots and about the same time all this was happening, and in this group of trees...there was a shot, a report. I don't know whether it was a shot. I can't say that. A puff of smoke came out about 6 or 8 feet above the ground right out from under those trees...There were definitely four reports...I have no doubt about it. I have no doubt about seeing that puff of smoke come out from under those trees either...I definitely saw the puff of smoke and heard the report from under those trees...the puff of smoke I saw definitely came from behind the arcade to the trees.

(6H 243-245)

Royce G. Skelton, asked by counsel Ball if he had seen any smoke from his vantage point on the overpass, replied,

No, sir; I just stated to your secretary that I heard people say they did, but I didn't.

(6H 238)

Austin Miller, a railroad worker who was also standing on the overpass, said in his affidavit of November 22, 1963,

One shot apparently hit the street past the car. I saw something which I thought was smoke or steam coming from a group of trees north of Elm off the Railroad tracks. I did not see anyone on the tracks or in the trees. A large group of people congregated (sic) and a motorcycle officer dropped his motor and took off on foot to the car.

(CE 2003 page 41)

1/ An FBI report (CE 3133) states that the alleged murder rifle was fired both in direct sunlight and in full shade, at the Commission's request, to determine whether any flame was visible. No flame was visible but "a small amount of white smoke" was seen. Nevertheless, no one seems to have seen or photographed any white smoke near the sixth-floor window from which the rifle supposedly was fired; but there is some photographic evidence of the puff of white smoke on the grassy knoll reported by eyewitnesses (Mary Moorman photograph, published widely in the commercial press but not included among the Commission's Exhibits), which may have resulted from the firing of a rifle.

Deputy Sheriff A. D. McCurley in his report of November 22, 1963 said that when he heard the shots

I rushed towards the park and saw people running towards the railroad yards beyond 5th Street and I ran over and jumped a fence and a railroad worker stated to me that he believed the smoke from the bullets came from the vicinity of a stockade fence which surrounds the park area.

(Decker Exhibit No. 5323,
Volume XIX page 514)

Deputy Sheriff J. L. Oxford and Chief Criminal Deputy Allan Swarth also reported that they had been told by bystanders that the shots had come from the fence; a witness told Oxford that he had seen smoke "up in the corner of the fence" (Decker Exhibit No. 4323, Volume XIX pages 530-531).

Other spectators said that they had seen someone running away from the scene. J. C. Eriice said in an affidavit of November 23, 1963 that he had been watching the motorcade from the roof of the Terminal Annex Building (a short distance from the Depository) and,

There was a volley of shots, I think five, and then much later, maybe as much as five minutes later another one. I saw one man run towards the passenger cars on the railroad siding after the volley of shots. This man had a white dress shirt, no tie and khaki colored trousers. His hair appeared to be long and dark and his agility running could be about 25 years of age. He had something in his hand. I couldn't be sure but it may have been a head piece.

(CE 2003 page 52)

Secret Service agent Paul Landis, Jr., who was riding in the motorcade on the right rear running-board of the car behind the Presidential limousine, said in a report dated November 30, 1963,

I was not certain from which direction the second shot came, but my reaction at this time was that the shot came from somewhere towards the front, right-hand side of the road...I scanned the area to the right of and below the overpass where the terrain sloped towards the road on which we were traveling.

The only person I recall seeing clearly was a Negro male in light green slacks and a beige colored shirt running from my left to my right, up the slope, across a grassy section, along a sidewalk, towards some steps and what appeared to be a low stone wall. He was bent over while running and I started to point towards him, but I didn't notice anything in his hands and by this time we were going under the overpass at a very high rate of speed...

(CE 1024, Volume XVIII page 755)

Frank Wolford told the Commission that "some lady said someone (had) run off one of the colonades and started running" (2W 181).

Jean Willis Hill testified that she had seen and attempted to pursue a man running; on trying to get away from the top of the slope west of the depository, and gave the following account of a conversation with Mark Lane.

I told him that my story had already been given, that they had an affidavit done there, and he said, "were you ever at any time...told not to say anything at this, that, and the other," and I said, "the only thing that I was told not to say was not to mention the man running," and he said, "And why?"

And I said, "well, it was an FBI or Secret Service that told me not say anything else in the just night after I was taken -- I was there in the depository, and told me in that -- I told him it was Weatherstone (a reporter on the Dallas Times-Herald) that told me. He (Weatherstone) said, "You know you were wrong about saying a man running." He said, "You didn't."...I told Mr. Lane that Mr. Weatherstone had told me that, and I said, "that I did," and he said, "You don't say that any more on the stand"...Weatherstone; and I made it clear to Mark Lane, because I mentioned his name several times...

Q. You name Weatherstone?

A. Yes, well, that the shots had come from a window up in the depository and for me not to say that any more, that I was wrong about it, and I said, "Very well," and so I just didn't say any more that I ran across the street to see the man.

(6E 221-222)

(3) Investigative and Selectivity

It is not clear from Mrs. Hill's testimony whether it was Weatherstone only, or also an FBI or Secret Service agent, who told her to cease saying that she had seen a man running away and who insisted that the shots had come from a window in the depository. Nor is it clear how soon after the shooting this pressure was put on Mrs. Hill. It would have been desirable to question Weatherstone on this point; in fact, his name does not even appear in the index to the transcript and exhibits. Normally, one would think, any reporter would have attempted to print the sensational news that Mrs. Hill offered; but this reporter merely wanted to shut her up. That merited investigation.

Price and Jendis, who also saw someone running away, were not even called to testify before the Commission. Other spectators who believed that the shots had come from the grassy knoll were never asked to give testimony--Mary Woodward or her three companions, Mrs. Charles Dexter, John Arthur Chism, Melba Summers, J.V. Campbell, William H. Upman, and Gordon Zapruder's secretary, the latter not being represented even by an affidavit or an FBI interview. Of the 23 witnesses mentioned here, only 11 gave testimony before the Commission; in one case, Austin Miller, counsel did not elicit information which appeared in his

...witness--that is, that he had seen smoke or steam coming from a group of men near the railroad tracks.

Another witness was never interviewed by the FBI or the Secret Service, and was questioned by the Commission, although she provided an important piece of information. Julia Morcor, in an affidavit of November 22 (Decker Exhibit 5323, Vol. XIX page 483) said that she had seen a man carrying a rifle case who walked across the grass and by the grassy hill which forms part of the overpass, during the morning of the assassination while she was driving toward the overpass. She gave a detailed and precise description of the incident. Ernest Sorrels, in an apparent reference to Julia Morcor, testified,

...this lady said she thought she saw somebody that looked like they had a gun case. But then I didn't pursue that any further--because then I had gotten the information that the rifle had been found in the building and shells and so forth.

(7H 352)

It would have been logical at that point to ask Sorrels how he could be sure, within an hour after the assassination and presumably before the arrest of the lone Oswald, that the discovery of the rifle in the Depository was sufficient to eliminate all assassins in other locations. No such question was asked by counsel for the Commission.

The presentation of photographic evidence by the Commission is also incomplete and selective. Few crimes other than the murder of Oswald by Ruby have been recorded so fully on film as was the assassination of President Kennedy. One would have expected the Commission to requisition every known still or motion picture and to examine this photographic evidence with the utmost care, in order to establish as far as possible the location of the assassin or assassins and other clues recorded in the photographs or in enlargements. Surprisingly, the Commission has mentioned in the Report and shown in the Exhibits only some of the photographic record, omitting films and photographs of obvious importance.

Even the Zapruder films, perhaps the most complete record of the fatal stretch of the motorcade, are not presented in their entirety (GE 885). Segments at the beginning and the end of the Zapruder frames have been omitted, perhaps to conserve space and possibly also for reasons of delicacy with respect to Mrs. Kennedy's crawl onto the back of the car. But four frames (208 through 211) have been omitted without explanation, even though expert testimony suggested that the President may have been struck by a bullet between frames 210 to 225.^{2/} The exhibits include only a few frames each from the movie films, taken by Orville Nix and Mary Kuchmore; neither Nix nor Kuchmore were asked to

1/ The four missing frames are also significant because on frame 212, which is spliced in a crude fashion, a series of streaks appear on the back of the Stemmons Freeway traffic sign which are believed by David Lifton, graduate student in physics and mathematics, to have been caused by the impact of a bullet. Such a bullet could not possibly have come from the Depository.

The writer attempted during a trip to Washington to ascertain why the four frames were missing, and was informed on the highest authority that those frames had not been included in the color slides made for the Warren Commission from the original Zapruder film by Life magazine. That allegation was flatly denied by a representative of Life magazine whose authority is above question. It appears that deliberate deception has been attempted, or that inexcusable carelessness with vital evidence has been practiced by the responsible persons.

It is regretted that the allegation was made verbally on a confidential basis prohibiting attribution and that the name or names of those concerned cannot be specified. Those who feel unable to accept the authenticity of this account should attempt to obtain information about the missing frames by written request or other means; it is believed that such requests will encounter the same frustration and misleading explanations as those elicited by the writer.

2/ The shot which struck the President in the head occurred in Zapruder frame 313. The subsequent frames (314 et seq) assume vital importance because they indicate the President's physical reaction to the impact of the bullet, which in turn throws light on the direction from which the bullet came. In the official presentation of the Zapruder frames (CE 885), frames 314 and 315 have been transposed both in sequence and label. (In other words, the frame numbered 315 should be numbered 314 and should follow immediately after frame 313.) J Edgar Hoover, FBI Director, in a letter dated December 14, 1965 responding to an inquiry by a private citizen, admits that the frames are transposed as shown in CE 885 and states that the transposition was due to a "printing error."

testify before the Commission, and there is no affidavit or FBI report found among the Exhibits to indicate what these eyewitnesses saw or what they thought about the number and direction of the shots.

Photographs which may have revealed the state of the sixth floor window at the time of the shooting, or which took in the grassy knoll area, have not been offered in support of the conclusion that all the shots came from the window. Let us consider, for example, the affidavit of Hugh William Betaner, Jr., who was standing on the south side of Elm Street (across the road from the Depository) taking photographs of the President, when he heard shots. He said,

Police and a lot of spectators started running up the hill on the opposite side of the street from me to a fence of wood. I assumed that that was where the shot was fired from...Police officers and the man in plain clothes were digging around in the dirt as if they were looking for a bullet...I went on across the street and up the embankment to where the fence is located...as the rumor had spread that that was where the shot had come from.

I started figuring where I was when I had taken the third picture and it seemed to me that the fence row would have been in the picture...Reporter Gerald Deane took my camera and told me to wait...as late as this (later) he brought my camera back and told me as soon as they were through with the film and they were dry that they would give me the film. A little later he came in and gave me the negatives and told me they were interested in a couple of pictures and implied that the negatives was all I was going to get back.

(Decker Exhibit No. 5325,
Volume XIX pages 467-468)

That is the first and the last that we hear of Mr. Betaner or his photographs. Despite the fact that a police officer indicated "interest" in the photographs which included the fence from which it was thought by some people that the shots had come, the Warren Commission did not examine or inquire about the photographs (so far as is known) nor make them available.

There is also a report from Allan Sweatt, Chief Criminal Deputy in the Sheriff's office, that after the shooting a woman who had taken some photographs was brought in to him. Sweatt said, "One picture was taken just shortly before the shooting of the President which showed the Sexton Building (i.e., the Depository) in the background. This picture was turned over to Secret Service agent Patterson..." (Decker Exhibit No. 5323, Volume XIX page 533). The Commission has provided us neither with the photograph nor any indication of what it showed at the sixth-floor window where the lone assassin was presumably waiting for his victim to appear.

The Report (page 614) does mention that a movie film of the Depository which included the sixth-floor window was taken only minutes before the shooting by Robert J. Hughes; the Commission "found" that Hughes' film did not show

...at the window, as had been speculated, but a shadow from outside
...the window. Nothing would have been simpler than to document that "Hindley"
...of the film from the film taken by Hughes "just before the assassination,"
...the Commission does not exhibit it. One may ask if it is not strange that the
...film failed to show the assassin, who was at the window "just before" the shooting
...and who was seen standing there with his gaze fixed on the overpass, by one witness
...at least (SR 116).

Still another film of the same scene was taken by Ralph Simpson, a Canadian
...and vacationing in Dallas. Simpson told Sgt Patrick Dean of the Dallas police
...that he had stationed himself on the southeast part of Victory Plaza to see the
...motorcade and that he had taken films with a wide-angle movie camera that he
...believed had taken in the Depository and the motorcade at the time the shots were
...fired. Simpson offered to furnish the films from Victoria, British Columbia.
...Dean reported that to the Commission in his testimony of June 8, 1964 (SR 256)
...as well as in an earlier deposition (SR 113-116). Again, this is the first and
...last we hear of the Ralph Simpson film--perhaps the most crucial of all the
...photographic evidence if it included both the Depository and the Presidential
...car while the shots were being fired. It is incomprehensible that the
...Commission has told us nothing beyond what is contained in Dean's testimony.
...Was the film received? Was it viewed? What did it show?

Finally, a clue to the apparent suppression of perhaps another still film or
...photograph is found in the testimony of Eva Grant, when she is questioned about
...Tom Howard, one of the lawyers defending Jack Ruby in his trial for the murder
...of Oswald. Mrs Grant testified that,

"I had found a distrust in him...where information had come to us
...that he was trying to sell a picture of the late President
...secretly...shot and half his skull is in the air, to Life
...he called...I told me to get ahold of the Secret
...Service, they came out to see us...and we went in the alley
...because I don't know if my place is bugged or not, and the
...Secret Service stopped in to either squawk the sale of this
...particular picture or get ahold of it--the films and everything..."

(SR 472)

Did you ever find out whether it was true that
...I was doing this?

"Well, since then I heard it was true, but doubly true
...heard and who told another person that there is evidence there
...is a picture of that kind in existence."

Robert You have never seen the picture?

Grant No; I haven't...but Paul told me to get ahold of the
film here and I did and I called the office and (Secret Service
agent) Minor Moore came out and I told him.

(LHW 430)

Tom Howard was not questioned about the film or photograph; and now he cannot
be questioned. Tom Howard died of an apparent heart failure on
--one of a growing list of deaths of persons directly or indirectly involved in
the Oswald case, within the two years which followed the assassination.^{1/}
The Secret Service was not questioned. Life Magazine was not questioned.
The trail ends, as it begins, in Mrs Grant's testimony.

^{1/} Many of these deaths were due to unnatural causes, including one or two unsolved
murders by the execution of a Dallas Times-Herald reporter, Jim Hothe. Bill Hunter,
another newspaperman, was shot to death in a police station where he was on duty
(involuntary manslaughter). The suicide of Betty Mooney MacDonald while detained
in the Dallas police jail is the subject of a separate chapter in this book.
Willie Wiley, the taxi-driver who took Oswald from the Greyhound Bus Terminal
to Oak Cliff, was killed on December 16, 1965 in a head-on collision (WFS-New York
radio news item 11 pm on that date). While the death of Tom Howard appeared to be
natural, the editor of the Midlothian (Texas) Mirror in the issue of
calls attention to certain features which may well raise questions
about Howard's demise.

Witnesses' Statements Reviewed

The Commission's unsatisfactory and incomplete treatment of the film-and-photographic evidence is accompanied by some deafness to certain testimony which strikes of the strange and the sinister. Before turning to that testimony, we recall the Commission's comment, that the Secret Service agents assigned to the motorcade

remained at their posts during the race to the hospital. Some stayed at the scene of the shooting, and none entered the Texas School Book Depository at or immediately after the shooting. Agent V Sorrels, special agent in charge of the Dallas office, was the first Secret Service agent to return to the scene of the assassination, approximately 20 or 25 minutes after the shots were fired.

(p. 52)

Although we are seldom able to concur unqualifiedly in the Commission's factual conclusions, it is possible in this instance to agree, after a careful check of all available information, that there was no Secret Service agent at the scene of the assassination until Sorrels returned to Elm Street and entered the Depository at 12:50 or 12:55 p.m. It is possible to account for the whereabouts of all the agents in the White House Detail by studying the individual reports in GE 1024. It is clear that the agents in the motorcade stayed with the Presidential party throughout, returning to Washington. Those stationed at the Trade Mart or at Love Field either went to Parkland Hospital or remained at their posts at the airfield until departure. Not one of the Washington contingent went to the Depository area, claimed that he went there, or could have gone there.

The Dallas field office of the Secret Service is headed by Forrest Sorrels and six agents working under him. One of these agents, Mike Howard, is now or less headquartered at Fort Worth (LH 57 and GE 2554). Of the remaining five agents, two are assigned to the Trade Mart (J J Howlett and Robert Stewart) and two (William Patterson and Roger Hanson) to Love Field (GE 1024 and GE 2554). There is no information on the assignment of the last agent, Elmer Moore; he may have been off duty that day, or occupied with other official business, and while precise information should have been provided, there is no indication that Moore was at the scene. The fact that he is the only agent who did not provide a report on his activities on November 22nd suggests that he was off duty or away from Dallas.

In the light of these facts, how are we to interpret the testimony of Deputy Constable Seymour Weitzman, Sergeant D.V. Harkness, and police officer J.H. Smith?

Weitzman testified that someone had said that the shots had come from the wall between the railroad overpass and the monument area where Elm Street became a dead end; he immediately had sealed the wall and led some into the railroad yards, where "other officers, Secret Service as well" were also present (7H 107).

Harkness testified that he reached the rear of the Depository before 12.36 pm, to make sure that the building was sealed off. When he arrived "there were some Secret Service agents there. I didn't get them identified. They told me they were Secret Service" (8. 312). Note: they told Harkness they were Secret Service agents.

Smith was stationed at Elm and Houston, to control the crowds and vehicular traffic. He did not observe anything unusual when he glanced at the Depository building from time to time. After he heard the shots, a woman came up to him "just in hysterics" and told him that "they were shooting the President from the bushes." Smith proceeded at once to the area "behind the concrete structure" in the grassy area back from Elm Street towards the railroad tracks, where he checked all the bushes and the cars in the parking lot. He testified,

Of course, I wasn't alone. There was some deputy sheriff with me, and I believe one Secret Service man when I got there. I got to make this statement, too. I felt awfully silly, but after the shot and this woman, I pulled my pistol from my holster, and I thought, this is silly, I don't know who I am looking for, and I put it back. Just as I did, he told me that he was a Secret Service agent.

Micholter Did you accost this man?

Smith Well, he saw me coming with my pistol and right away he showed me who he was.

Micholter Do you remember who it was?

Smith No, sir; I don't...

(7H 535)

The men who identified themselves as Secret Service agents to Harkness and Smith could not have been genuine agents, by the Commission's own account. The incidents occurred before Serrano returned to the scene at 12.30 or 12.55; he, in any event, was alone and must be ruled out. Who, then, were the men who claimed to be, but could not have been, Secret Service agents? Was there any possible innocent reason for such impersonation?

I believe that there are few problems in the case as important as this and we are appalled that the Commission failed to recognize the grounds for serious suspicion which existed in the testimony of these witnesses. It is reasonable that none of the five witnesses testified that if assassins had been sheltered on the grassy knoll, behind the trees or the wall or in the bushes, they might have earned themselves with false Secret Service credentials and had in places in the crowd that surged up into the area. We do not postulate that this in fact happened; but we do insist that it was a dereliction of duty on the part of the Commission to ignore the Smith and Harrison testimony, on top of the large body of testimony that shots came from the grassy knoll, which in effect it has ignored.

Another serious reference to the Secret Service which was ignored by the Commission is found in the HALL testimony, part of which has been quoted earlier. Mr. HALL said,

"I tried with this man, a Secret Service agent, and I said, 'Was I a hook or what's wrong with me?' I said, 'You know saying three shots--three shots,' and I said, 'By God I heard more.' I heard from four to six shots anyway."

Mr. HALL, "Mr. HALL, standing at the window and he heard more shots, and he saw three bullets and he saw three bullets, three shots is all that we are going to say right now."

(Italics added)

(38 221)

Conclusion: WHAT window? The Warren Report (pages 417-419) tells us that the Secret Service neither checked nor stationed men at buildings along the route. Again, the witness speaks, and the Commission is deaf.

In the aggregate, the unanswered questions and the distorted interpretation of testimony, and the failure to call important witnesses and investigate important aspects, and the fragmentary nature of the photographic evidence which has been taken into account, call into question the Warren Commission's conclusions about the source of the shots which struck the President and the Governor. By no standard could its investigation be considered conclusive, complete, or objective. But it is not, perhaps, too late to throw more light on the question--by conducting a post-study examination of all the photographic evidence which has been withheld from the public, including the photographs taken during the autopsy, discussed elsewhere in this study.

The Zapruder Film

The Warren Report, without daring to state it as a conclusive finding, makes a prodigious effort to persuade us that a single shot struck the President in the neck and proceeded to strike the Governor, causing all his wounds. The authors state that there is "very persuasive evidence from the experts to indicate that the same bullet which pierced the President's throat also caused Governor Connally's wounds." They acknowledge that there is a difference of opinion about that hypothesis (including the firm dissent of the Governor himself) but they claim that "it is not necessary to any essential findings of the Commission to determine just which shot hit Governor Connally" (HR 19).

Surely that is one of the most cynical and misleading statements in the whole Report. The Commission insists that all the shots came from the Depository. If the Governor was wounded by a pristine bullet and not by either of the two missiles that struck the President, it is self-evident under the Commission's reconstruction of the crime that the assassin got three hits in three tries, in a span of 5.5 seconds. Not one of the rifle masters who tested their skill with the Carcano achieved such accuracy, even though the experiments utilized stationary rather than moving targets. It is therefore impossible to make a serious claim that the Commission's essential findings do not hinge upon a determination of the shot that struck the Governor--if, indeed, one bullet inflicted all of his wounds.

One might expect the Zapruder film to establish when the Governor was hit in relation to the shot that struck the President in the neck. Unfortunately, neither the film nor the color slides made for the Commission by the LIFE photo laboratory and now available for examination at the National Archives enable the viewer to pinpoint the moment at which the Governor was shot. Nevertheless, careful study of the color slides has other rewards.

A significant fact recorded on the slides is that several persons are seen to move abruptly, as if in reaction to a stimulus such as the sound of a shot, before the earliest point at which the Commission believes the President could have been hit by the first bullet. Mrs Kennedy makes a sudden sharp turn toward the President, bending her head as if to look at him, at frame 204. Howard Brennan is seen sitting on a wall and looking

his left shoulder at the Presidential car until frame 207, when he suddenly turns his head to look in the general direction of the Depository. The Secret Service agent riding on the front right running-board of the follow-up car, directly behind the Presidential limousine, also looks sharply to his right at frame 207.

If the interpretation of those movements is valid, it strongly implies that the first shot was fired before frame 204, during the period in which the President was concealed from the Depository window by tree foliage (frames 166 to 210), at a time when a sniper at that window could not have seen or aimed at the President.

The President emerges to the view of a person in the Depository window at frame 219. At the same moment, he becomes concealed from Zapruder's camera behind the Siemens Freeway traffic sign (G. 2114) for 15 frames, reemerging into Zapruder's view at frame 225. At that frame, he seems to be reacting to the bullet in the neck. He is definitely reacting to the bullet in frame 226, while the Governor shows no evidence of being hit. The writer, on viewing the color slides, was unable to identify the exact frame at which the Governor can be said to show the start of his reaction to the impact of a bullet. Other viewers of the slides consider that his reaction is visible at one or another specific frame, but they differ with each other as to which frame. The earliest point suggested is frame 226 or 229. The Governor himself designates frames 231 to 234. Others believe that he was not struck until considerably later — some on the basis of his objective appearance, and others reasoning that his right hand appears to grip a metal bar at the side of the car as late as frame 233 and that his hand must still have been uninjured at that point by the bullet which ultimately smashed the right wristbone.

It is frustrating and ironic that the Zapruder film leaves the time of impact of the bullet that hit the President's neck, and the impact of the bullet that hit the Governor, shrouded in ambiguity. But the film does establish a definite delay between the reaction of the President, some time between frames 210 and 226, and that of the Governor, at an undetermined subsequent frame. That time lapse inevitably compromises the single-missile hypothesis, as is seen in the following excerpt from the testimony.

Bulles but you would then have the problem you would think if Connally had been hit at the same time, (he) would have reacted in the same way, and not reacted much later as these pictures show.

Shawcroft That is right.

Bulles Because the wounds would have been inflicted.

Modley That is what puzzles me.

Bulles That is what puzzles me.

(Italics added)

(5H 155)

The Commission tried to dispose of the puzzlement by suggesting that the Governor had experienced a delayed reaction to his wounds (WR 112-113). In presenting that proposition, the Commission does not cite supporting medical testimony. However, the records show that the Commission in fact did solicit medical opinion on the possibility of a delayed reaction by the Governor to a bullet that smashed his rib, collapsed his lung, and fractured his wrist.

Specter Could that missile have traversed Governor Connally's chest without having him know it immediately or instantaneously?

Rumas I believe so. I have heard reports, and have been told by my professional associates of any number of instances where people received penetrating wounds in various portions of the body and have only the sensation of a slight discomfort or slight clap or some other difficulty from such a missile wound. I am sure that he was aware that something happened to him, but that he was shot, I am not certain.

Ford Would that have been the potential reaction of the President when first hit, as shown in (CE) 315?

Rumas It could very easily be one of some type of an injury -- I mean the awareness that he had been struck by a missile, I don't know, but people have been drilled through with a missile and didn't know it.

(Italics added)

(2H 376)

Specter Dr Dziemian, Governor Connally testified that he experienced the sensation of a striking blow on his back which he described as being similar to a hard punch received from a doubled-up fist. Do you have an opinion as to whether that sensation would necessarily occur immediately upon impact of a wound such as that received by Governor Connally, or could there be a delayed reaction in sensing that feeling?

Dziemian I don't have too much of an opinion on that. All I can say is that some people are struck by bullets and do not even know they are hit. This happens in wartime. But I don't know about that.

Specter So that it is possible in some situations there is some delay in reaction?

Dziemian I couldn't say.

Senator Is it a highly individual matter as to the reaction of an individual on that subject?

Dziemian I don't know.

Dallas But take a wrist wound like the wound of Governor Connally. He couldn't get that without knowing it, could he?

Dziemian I think he said that he didn't know he had a wrist wound until much later.

(Discussion off the record)

Senator I have no further questions of Dr. Dziemian.

(5H 93-94)

McClay Let me ask you this, Doctor, in your experience with gunshot wounds, is it possible for a man to be hit sometime before he realizes it?

Shaw Yes. There can be a delay in the sensory reaction.

McClay Yes; so that a man can think as of a given instant he was not hit, and when actually he could have been hit.

Shaw There can be an extending sensation and then just a gradual building up of a feeling of severe injury.

McClay But there could be a delay in any appreciable reaction between the time of the impact of the bullet and the occurrence?

Shaw Yes; but in the case of a wound which strikes a bony substance such as a rib, usually the reaction is quite prompt.

(4H 115-116)

The Commission was wise to omit reference to the doctors' testimony, even in a footnote. It would be hard to argue that they supported the far-fetched conjecture of a delayed reaction, despite the pressure of leading questions. It is true, as Dr Dziemian said, that the Governor was not aware of his wrist wound until much later; but it seems obvious from the Governor's own account that severe pain from the chest wound blocked out awareness of lesser pain. Perhaps that point was clarified during the off-the-record discussion.

The net effect of the medical testimony is hardly favorable to the proposition of a delayed reaction, and it would be idle to pretend that this further violation of the single-missile thesis is immaterial to the Commission's "essential findings."

The Commission is far more persuasive when it discusses the relative positions of the President and the Governor as evidence for the single-missile

... but its arguments are by no means conclusive so long as the time of the Governor's shot and his posture at that time remain uncertain. Moreover, there is a cut-off point after which the Governor could not have received his injuries from a shot that came from the Depository window, whether or not that shot first struck the President. The Warren Report states that "at some point between frames 235 and 240 is the last occasion when Governor Connally could have received his injuries, since in the frames following 240 he remained turned too far to his right" (WR 106). A footnote to that statement cites the testimony of FBI expert Robert Frazier (5H 170). However, Frazier's actual testimony (5H 170-171) is misrepresented in the Report, since he places the cut-off point at frame 225. He states repeatedly that the Governor could have been struck between frames 207 and 225 and sustained his actual wounds; and he specifically excludes frames 235 and 240.

Both Frazier and the Commission predicate the cut-off point on a shot that came from the Depository window, refusing to confront the possibility that he might have been shot from another location--a possibility that must be examined in the light of the Governor's lack of reaction before or at the cut-off time. Instead of examining all the possibilities in an impartial and scientific spirit, the Commission resorted to pure conjecture and, as laymen, posed the highly implausible and obviously dubious "delayed reaction" sub-hypothesis. The argument that the bullet that passed through the President's neck must have struck the Governor because it did not strike the car or any other occupants or objects (and it had to go somewhere) seems compelling at first glance. Against that argument one may cite the repeated published reports after the assassination that a bullet had lodged in the President's body and testimony indicating that a bullet had hit the pavement near the Presidential car during the shooting.

Ellis So, you were standing directly in front of the Depository and on the same side of Elm Street that the Depository is located?

Mrs Baker Yes.

Liebler Tell me what you saw.

Mrs Baker Well, after he passed us, then we heard a noise and I thought it was firecrackers, because I saw a shot or something hit the pavement.

Miebler And you heard that immediately after the first noise; is that right?

Mrs Baker Yes...I saw the bullet hit on down this way, I guess, right at the sign, angling out.

(7H 508-509)

Thanks to the initiative of another witness, Royce Skelton, we know that he saw a bullet hit the pavement. He volunteered, when counsel had already asked and dismissed him, that he had seen a bullet hit the pavement at the left front of the Presidential car, although he placed it after the second shot (6H 236) while Mrs Baker was certain that it was after the first shot. In addition to the testimony of these two witnesses, a bystander was cut on the cheek and a curbstone was hit, apparently by a bullet or fragment, as discussed in detail in another chapter. In the aggregate, this evidence and testimony scarcely permits the Commission to postulate that the first bullet that struck the President must have hit the Governor because it did not hit anything else.

There are other anomalies which cannot be ignored in evaluating the single-missile thesis--for example, the trajectory of the shots. Arlan Specter, the counsel who was primarily concerned with the medical and ballistics testimony, repeatedly posed to witnesses a hypothetical set of circumstances in which the shots that hit the President and the Governor followed a trajectory (angle of descent) of 45° (see, for example, 3H 362, 3H 373, 5H 92, and 6H 110). Dr. Humes testified that the trajectory of the wounds sustained by both men was about 45° (2H 370). In his autopsy report, however, Dr Humes said that the shots came from a point "behind and somewhat above the level of the deceased" (4H 543), a description that does not seem to jibe with a sixth-storey window or a 45° trajectory. As mentioned elsewhere, Dr Humes also testified that the trajectory of the bullet that hit the President's head was somewhat steeper than that of the neck bullet, although the fact that the car was receding from the alleged source of the shots should have produced the reverse.

The 45° trajectory postulated repeatedly by Specter and others was abandoned abruptly when Dr Shaw told the Commission that its diagram of the Governor's wounds gave an incorrect locus for the exit wound on the chest. He corrected the diagram by raising the position of the wound (4H 105 and 112), thus reducing the trajectory to 25° , the figure quoted in the Report (4H 93). The Report does not base the trajectory of the President's wounds on medical or physical findings, ^{but} utilizes other data (4H 106-107). The trajectory from the Depository window to the car at frames 210-225 (where the Commission fixes the shot in the neck) ranged from $21^{\circ}34'$ to $20^{\circ}11'$, somewhat less than the Governor's 25° trajectory. In absolute terms, that might suggest that the Governor was hit before frame 210, when the car was closer to the Depository; on the other hand, if the 45° trajectory for the President's wounds put forward by Humes and Specter was maintained after Dr Shaw corrected the Governor's trajectory, it would have compelled the conclusion that the Governor was shot considerably later than the President. As a matter of arithmetic, it is also self-evident that if the trajectory decreases by $1^{\circ}23'$

15 frames (corresponding with the diminution between frames 210 and 225), trajectory of the President's head wound (frame 313) should have been 7° 38' steeper than the neck trajectory instead of somewhat steeper. What was the neck trajectory? According to the testimony (JH 153 and 162) and the Report (R 106) that trajectory was "established" by taking an average of the angle from the window to the car between frames 210 and 225, which (after adjustment to allow for the 3° slope of the street) came to 17° 43' 30", and by "piercing" stand-ins for the President and the Governor with a rod following that angle of descent (CE 903). Lo and behold! The rod went through the stand-ins at points "approximating" the sites of the entrance and exit wounds actually sustained by the victims! The disparity of almost 6° in the trajectory of the Governor's wounds is dismissed as due either to a slight deflection of the bullet or a slight shift in the Governor's posture. (WR 107). Thus, by virtue of these ingenious calculations, approximations, and speculations, we have progressed from a 45° trajectory to one of about 17°, despite the physical law that the line between two fixed points (the Depository window, and the car positioned at the Stemmons Freeway sign) is a constant. The Warren Commission has substituted its own immutable new law--that the shots came from the Depository window and no other point in the universe. Everything but that is mutable.

It would be folly to regard such capriciously fluctuating "evidence" as authoritative or authentic, all the more so when the testimony of the grounds-keeper at Bealey Plaza, Emmet Hudson, reveals that one of the two fixed points, the Stemmons Freeway sign, had been shifted from its location at the time of the assassination (7R 562-63). The inherent or deliberate obtuseness of counsel Liebeler was such that he failed to ask Hudson when that sign was first moved. (The sign disappeared completely early in 1965.) Consequently, we do not know if the sign was moved before or after the May 1964 reenactments conducted by the FBI, which provide the basis for the Commission's conclusions about the shots (WR 96-117).

The repositioning and ultimate removal of the Stemmons Freeway sign is a mystery with sinister undertones. It has been suggested that the disappearance may be related to a series of streaks which suddenly appear on the back of the sign in frame 212 of the Zapruder film. It is not possible to judge when those streaks, and possibly other marks, actually manifested themselves--because the preceding four frames (208-211) are missing, both from the black-and-white photographs (CE 885) and from the color slides in the Archives. Frame "212"

composite in which the bottom of a preceding frame (probably frame 203) and the top of a later frame (probably frame 212) have been crudely spliced together. Attempts to ascertain why four of the frames are missing were not at all reassuring. An authoritative Government spokesman said that LIFE had omitted those frames from the set of color slides, presumably because the film was damaged or destroyed at that point. An equally qualified spokesman for LIFE said categorically that the original Zapruder film was undamaged and intact, and that the color slides given to the Warren Commission provided a full uninterrupted sequence of the frames. (The information was obtained by telephone, in each instance.)

A young mathematician and physicist, David Lifton, has analyzed the streaks on the back of the Statens Freeway sign seen in frame 212 and subsequent frames, and has concluded that they were produced by the impact of a bullet. If Lifton is correct, the Commission's house of cards would suffer an irreversible collapse, because a lone assassin firing from the Depository window could not under any circumstances hit the back of that sign. The writer is not competent to evaluate Lifton's findings but his interpretation of the photographs impressed one of the Commission's counsel enough for him to suggest to his former colleagues that the evidence should be reexamined. They did not agree that such a reexamination was necessary.

Although frame 210 is among the four missing frames in CE 885 and was said by an official spokesman to be missing from the LIFE color slides, it is shown in miniature in CE 893 (WR 102). An attempt to obtain an explanation of that bewildering contradiction served only to compound the impression that evidence has been mismanaged, manipulated, or concealed.

LIFE magazine, purchaser and custodian of the original Zapruder film, scored a major scoop when it published large color pictures of some of the frames in December 1963, long before the Warren Commission turned its attention to the film. LIFE explained in the same issue that the Zapruder film "provides a frame-by-frame chronology of events, and from the movie camera's known speed ...it is possible to reconstruct the precise timing and placing and feasibility of the shots." As LIFE then reconstructed them, the first bullet struck the President at the throat at frame 192 (as against the Commission's conclusion of frames 210-225); the second bullet struck the Governor at frame 266 (as against the Commission's belief that he was hit by the first bullet); and the final shot struck the President in the head at frame 313 (as the Commission also concludes). Despite the crucial differences between the two interpretations of the film, LIFE ecstatically applauded the Warren Report when it was issued, never troubling to acknowledge, explain, or retract its premature and shockingly

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taken pronouncements on the timing of the shots.

Before leaving the subject of the Zapruder frames, it is apropos to quote a report written by Thomas Stamm after seeing a screening of the film at the National Archives in September 1965. He wrote,

Of greatest importance in the film is the sequence of the fatal shot and its aftermath. This sequence shows President Kennedy thrust violently back against the rear seat, from which he bounces forward and spins off to his left into Mrs Kennedy's arms. Almost immediately he begins to fall away from Mrs Kennedy as she rises in obvious shock, revulsion, and horror and climbs onto the back of the limousine from which she is thrust back into the car by Secret Service agent Hill.

The sudden explosive violence with which President Kennedy is slammed back against the rear seat is unmistakable. It is within the realm of speculative possibility that the violent backward thrust of the President was caused by the sudden acceleration of the limousine, as Secret Service agents Kellerman and Greer, in the front seats, made their effort to escape the murder site and obtain medical help at Parkland Hospital. Against that thesis is the fact that Mrs Kennedy is obviously not thrust back but maintains her position while the President gyrates back, forward, and into her arms.

Against that thesis, also, is the testimony of Governor and Mrs Connally, as noted in the Report: "Mrs Connally heard a second shot fired and pulled her husband down into her lap as the Governor was lying with his head on his wife's lap as she heard a shot hit the President. At that point, both Governor and Mrs Connally observed brain tissue splatter onto the interior of the car. According to Governor and Mrs Connally, it was after this shot that Kellerman issued the emergency instruction and the car accelerated" (page 50). Other testimony relating to this point is adduced in the Report, and the Commission apparently accepted the testimony of the Governor and his wife as accurate and factual.

The violent backward thrust of President Kennedy occurs, to the eye, at the instant of impact of the fatal shot. The two events appear to be simultaneous and to have the obvious relationship of cause and effect. The service of truth requires no other explanation.

That President Kennedy could have been thrust back violently against the rear seat in consequence of a bullet fired from above and behind him, seems a manifest impossibility. This sequence in the Zapruder film, occupying a mere fraction of a second, invalidates the official autopsy finding and demolishes the Commission's thesis and findings of a lone gunman firing from the southeast corner sixth-floor window of the Depository. It makes of the Report a monstrous fabrication erected to obscure the truth which must now be disinterred despite the official verdict.

The Warren Commission must have been aware that the response of the Dallas police to the stories ostensibly told by witnesses shortly after the shooting was inconsistent with those stories; but the Commission failed to acknowledge the inconsistencies or obtain satisfactory explanations. Why were the police so slow to seal off the Depository and to search the sixth floor? One possible explanation which has been suggested by Thomas Buchanan and others is that the police had their own sinister reasons for allowing the assassin time to escape. Another explanation, which seems consistent with the known facts, is that the police were convinced that shots had come from the grassy knoll area and were genuinely sceptical of any reports from witnesses, if such reports were indeed made, of an assassin in the window of the Depository.

(2) The Grassy Knoll and the Fleeing Man

Certainly there were numerous reasons for believing that shots had come from the grassy knoll. The knoll rises to a height of about 25 feet; on it there are trees and bushes, a fence, concrete monuments, and colonnades, all offering a place of concealment and a clear line of fire to the Presidential limousine. As the testimony shows, many witnesses believed that the shots came from the grassy knoll area; some saw a puff of smoke from the trees there; and some saw a fleeing man.

Forrest Gurnels, the head of the Dallas office of the Secret Service, was riding in the lead car. He testified that he heard shots and

turned around to look up on this terrace part there, because the sound sounded like it came from the back and up in that direction.

(7H 345)

James Fague, who was standing on the south side of Main Street near the triple underpass and who was cut on the face apparently by a ricocheting bullet, testified,

my first impression was that up by the, whatever you call the monument, or whatever it was...that somebody was throwing fire crackers up there, that the police were running up there to see what was going on...

Lightler You thought (the shots) had come from...behind the concrete monument here...?

Fague Yes.

(7H 557)