As I pointed out in WHITEWASH, the FBI does not account for the wound in the front of the President's neck. It is entirely unmentioned in the Summary Report of December 9, 1963, and is only hinted at in the Supplementary Report of January 13,1964, where there is an inaccurate reference to the damage to the front of the President's shirt, without reference to any underlying wour wound. It says that this "has the characteristics of an exhit hole for a jrojectile", does not describe or even hint at what projectile, whether a fragment of a bullet or a fragment of bone (and FBI Firearms Expert Robert A Frazier testified he could say only that this was consistent with an exit only if no one had touched the garments).
Internal evidence is that this report was prepared with the FBI in possession ofnthe autopsy report, which it seems to quote, yet it does not say of the nonfatal injury what that report does and it does say of the rear non-fatal wound what that report does not say, that it was in the back and "had penetrated to a distance of less than a finger' length".

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Mr. Hoover's statement of Nov. 25 does not, in my opinion, satisfactorily answer the critics' questions concerning the performance and reporting of the autopsy of President Kennedy.

First, let us examine Mr. Hoover's interpretation of the FBI Supplemental Report of Jan. 13, 1964. He states that the doctors' early observation that "the bullet had penetrated only a short distance into the President's back was referred to "in conjunction with the laboratory findings" concerning the damage to the front of the President's clothing ."to point up" the "probability" that this early observation was in error.

right!

Frankly, I do not see how any such intention on the part of the FBI can be read into the relevant section of the Report,(entitled "Laboratory examinations ... President's clothing.") The first half appears primarily intended to show that traces of copper from the bullets allegedly used were found in the clothing at the back wound. The second paragraph deals with the throat wound. Since no bullet fragments were found in the clothing, why was the fragmentation of the bullet which struck the skull mentioned? The implication seems to be that a fragment of metal (or bone) from the last shot caused the exit wound in the throat.

It should be noted that the latter interpretation was common in news reports apparently based on the FBI version of the shooting. (E.g., Washington Post, Dec. 18, 1963; NYT, Jan. 26, 1964, p. 56)

Since the intent of the Jan. 13 report is not clear from its text, one may ask whether, in fact, the laboratory examination of the clothing did indicate that the bullet had passed through the body. The Warren Report, on the basis of the testimony of FBI agent Frazier, states that "although the characteristics of the slit established that the missile had exited to the front, the irregular nature of the slit precluded a positive determination that it was a bullet hole." (P. 92) As Frazier put it, "that [the shape] is not specifically characteristic of a bullethole to the extent that you could say it was to the exclusion of being a piece of bone or some other type of projectile." (5H61) Testifying on the basis of his examination of the clothing, he said,"I can say that this hole in the [front] collar area could have been made by this bullet but I cannot say that the bullet which entered the back actually came out here or at some other place because I am not aware of the autopsy information as to the path of the bullet through the body." (5H61)

This unusually careful testimony, plus the text of the report itself, suggests that the Jan. 13 report did not mean to imply (or at least should not have meant to imply) that the laboratory examination "clearly" indicated that the medical observations were "probably" in error.

Even if my analysis is incorrect, how is one to interpret Mr. Hoover's statement that " since the F.B.I. knew the commission had a copy of the official autopsy, its contents were not repeated in an F.B.I. report "?(Emph. added) The point at issue is not why there was no FBI report specifically on the autopsy report, but why the Jan. 13 report did not reflect the autopsy report. At best, the Jan. 13 report is supposed to have pointed up the probability that the original observation was in error. Yet the autopsy report, which the FBI admittedly had in hand, seems to be a much stronger statement, precluding the possibility that the original observation was correct. Is is customary for the FBI to hint that an observation is in error (by putting it in the past perfect tense and "in conjunction with" a statement that may be a refutation) when it has solid evidence that it was in fact in error?

Mr. Hoover's statement is inadequate in other ways as a response to questions that have been raised. For example, it may well be that the FBI obtained a copy of the "original uncut" Zapruder film and "reproduced this for the commission, which since has turned it over to [the] national archives." However, FBI agent Shaneyfelt testified that he prepared Commission Exhibit 885, which he (incorrectly) described as the "majority" of the frames in the Zapruder film. As published by the Commission, four frames were spliced out, and two others were printed in reverse order. No explanation has ever been provided publicly. Also, Mr. Hoover's account of when and how the doctors decided that the bullet had gone through the body is inconsistent with the account on pp. 88-89 of the Warren Report, but that is another story altogether.

One would be much less suspicious of the entire investigation into the assassination if the FBI (or the Warren Report) had admitted, clearly and unequivocally, that they had made some mistakes. It is true that Commission staff members are now admitting that there were loose ends, contradictions, mistakes, and misstatements. (For example, Mr. Liebeler has advised that the Dec. 9 FBI report was not "of principal importance," as the Warren Report had claimed.) How many more "imprecise" statements are there in the Warren Report, which will be acknowledged only when the critics turn up irrefutable counter-evidence?

References: Statement by J. Edgar Hoover, New York Times, Nov. 26, 1966, p. 25.
FBI Supplemental Report, Jan 13, 1964 (See Appendix B of Inquest.)

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" I, personally, feel that any finding of the Commission will not be accepted by everybody, because there are bound to be some extremists who have very pronounced views, without any foundation for them, who will disagree violently with whatever findings the Commission makes."

J. Edgar Hoover
May 14, 1964