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*"Is there a need for yet another book on the assassination of John F. Kennedy? I would not have thought so prior to reading Michael Kurtz' CRIME OF THE CENTURY."*—PROFESSOR WILLIAM I. HAIR, GEORGIA COLLEGE, MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA

The assassination of President John F. Kennedy has generated countless books, virtually all of them heavily biased for or against the "lone assassin" conclusion of the Warren Commission. Now, in the first scholarly treatment of the assassination, Michael Kurtz brings all the skills and objectivity of the professional historian to bear on the key question: "Who killed President Kennedy?"

This book recounts the tragic events of November 22, 1963, and provides a detailed critical analysis of the investigations of the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee on Assassinations. Professor Kurtz outlines the major areas of controversy about the assassination and sifts all the known evidence before concluding that both official inquiries failed to evaluate the considerable evidence of an assassination conspiracy. Operating on the *a priori* assumption that Lee Harvey Oswald was guilty, the Commission and the Committee both ignored and distorted the overwhelming evidence that more than one assassin fired shots at the President. Professor Kurtz also shows why the most prevalent conspiracy theories fail to fit the facts and concludes by offering a new and more plausible theory of how the assassination occurred.



Jacket design: Bill Cason

Thoroughly documented and based on the most exhaustive research carried out to date on John Kennedy's murder, *Crime of the Century* draws on a variety of primary source materials from the National Archives and the FBI's and CIA's declassified assassination files. It utilizes the latest source materials released by the House Select Committee's investigation. The depth of research, the rigorously objective sifting of evidence, and the incisive critique of official investigative bias make this a book of importance not only to students of the Kennedy assassination in particular, but also to scholars of government response to political violence in general.

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the Army. Considering the testimony and evidence before it, the commission arrived at a reasonable conclusion. As we shall see, however, much of the medical evidence was never shown to the commission, and the panel was given misleading information by Arlen Specter, the legal counsel in charge of the medical and ballistics evidence.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE SINGLE-BULLET THEORY

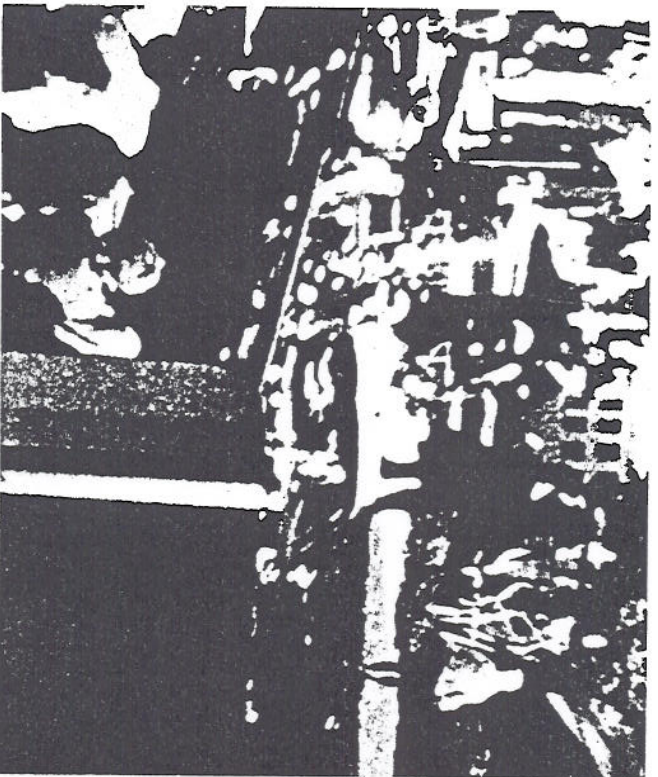
According to the Warren Commission, "it is not necessary to determine just which shot hit Governor Connally." This, however, is not true. It is, in fact, essential to determine which shot struck Governor Connally, for that determination forms a vital link in the chain of evidence indicating the number of assassins.<sup>3</sup>

The critics of the Warren Commission rarely agreed with the commission about anything. One aspect of the medical and ballistics evidence that has generated the most controversy is the single-bullet theory. As discussed in Chapter Two, the theory maintains that a bullet from the rifle of Lee Harvey Oswald struck President Kennedy in the back of the neck and exited from his throat just below the Adam's apple. That same bullet entered Governor Connally's back, exited from his chest, went completely through his right wrist, and lodged in his left thigh. Because Oswald could not fire his bolt-action rifle fast enough to wound Kennedy and Connally with separate shots, the single-bullet theory is essential to the Warren Commission's lone-assassin thesis.<sup>4</sup>

Because the Zapruder film showed Kennedy reacting in pain to a shot in frame Z225, the shot must have been fired prior to that frame. The shot could not have been fired before frame Z210, however, because an oak tree blocked Oswald's view of the limousine before that frame. As the commission observed, "Even the most proficient marksman" could not have fired through the leaves of the tree and hit the president. Therefore, Kennedy must have been struck between frames Z210 and Z225.<sup>5</sup>

Governor Connally, however, appears to be uninjured in frame Z225. In that and in the succeeding ten frames, Connally shows no indication of pain or any other sign of being wounded.

*Could it  
be that  
Oswald*



1. Zapruder Frame Z189. Kennedy and Connally at the time of the first shot.

*See his testimony of Warren*