

Letters to the Editor

JFK Assassination

SIR: Dr. Lattimer's views in the article "MD-Historian's Target Is JFK Assassination" (MWN, Dec. 12, '69) require more perspective than is provided.

No serious student would dispute his proof that Oswald could have fired three accurate shots in seven seconds. The central point at issue, which Dr. Lattimer does not discuss, is that Oswald could not have fired two shots in 1 1/2 seconds.

The Zapruder film shows the President's first reaction to being hit not earlier than frame 207 and not later than 225, while Connally doesn't react until about 235, give or take a frame. Since Zapruder's camera advanced the film at 18.3 frames per second, the maximum time between apparent hits is about 1 1/2 seconds. But an FBI firearms expert testified that he could not operate the bolt and fire Oswald's weapon—let alone aim it—in less than 2.3 seconds.

Thus, if a second apparent hit followed the first in less time than Oswald's weapon could be operated, then either there must have been another weapon firing, or both hits were caused by the

In order to enter at that place, at the correct angle, then exit from the throat and go on to hit Connally in the back, the first bullet would have had to make two abrupt changes of direction inside the President's body, and—as Dr. Lattimer accepts to be the case—do that without encountering bone.

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[Mr. Miller is MWN's Photography Director.—ED.]

SIR: If Lee Harvey Oswald was President Kennedy's assassin, as Dr. Lattimer proposes in your Dec. 12, '69, issue, then he was one of the most atypical political killers in our history. No American Presidential assassin ever committed his deed without making an immediate statement to the world.

Richard Lawrence said that it was "generally assumed" that he intended to kill Andrew Jackson. John Wilkes Booth cried "Sic semper tyrannis!" when he slew Abraham Lincoln. Charles J. Guiteau wrote that President Garfield had to die because he wrecked the GOP. Leon Czolgoz stated that President McKinley was an enemy of the people. John N. Schrank explained that President Theodore Roosevelt was a murderer. Giuseppe Zangara confessed that he was out to kill capitalists. Collazo tried to kill President Truman "for the liberty of my country."

Asked if he had killed President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald said, "No. I have not been charged with that. In fact, nobody has said that to me yet. The first thing I heard about it was when the newspaper reporters in the hall asked me that question."

So there seems to be a poor historical or psychological thesis for incriminating Oswald.

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[Dr. Lattimer responds: "The Zapruder movie of the shooting of President Kennedy quite clearly shows the two points at which the President was hit. Unfortunately, Governor Connally is silhouetted against a dark background which makes it difficult to tell exactly when he was hit.

"Certain facts about the governor's 'hit' are available, however. First, he was not even aware that he had been shot through the wrist, even though the bullet had shattered the bone. It is too much to ask of a man just shot through the chest to know all that happened.

Secondly, the penetrating power of the bullet recovered was so great that it surely would have broken his femur if it had not previously been slowed (as by traversing President Kennedy's neck). Thirdly, any third bullet coming out of the President's neck would have left a hole in the car, and none was reported. Fourthly, the President's upright body shielded the Governor from other bullets.

"As to the high location of the bullet hole in the back of President Kennedy's shirt, his coat and shirt can be seen folding upward toward his head as he waved to the crowds.

"If Oswald's first shot missed because it hit a twig of the tree, then Governor Connally could have heard the first shot (as he says) before he and President Kennedy were hit by the second.

"Experiment as I will, I still am unable to discredit the Warren Commission data on these points.

"In reply to Dr. Kupper's perceptive remarks, I can only agree that Oswald marched to a different drummer than the theatrical Booth or the courtroom dramatist Guiteau.

"Oswald showed what the educated, modern-day, traitorous guerilla can do among his own people—working with religious-type conviction, willing to lay down his life, but proposing to kill as many anti-communists as possible. Oswald was devious, skilled at his business, and amazingly cool.

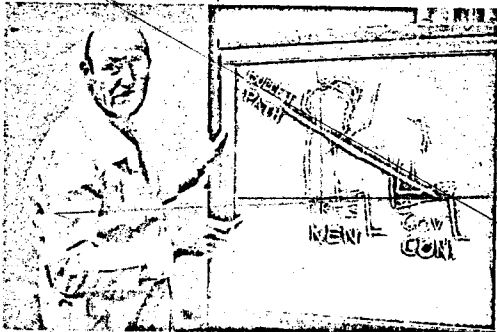
"Whether he would have elected to make some dramatic statement to explain his action we will never know.

"The facts are too persuasive: Oswald just had a different, tougher personality, and less time."—ED.]

Hormone's Hormone

SIR: The article "Hormone's Hormone Re-created—Twice" (MWN, Jan. 16) makes a great accomplishment appear in a rather silly light by emphasizing petty arguments and snide statements. The exciting aspect of this study is that a neuro-hormone has for the first time had its structure fully elucidated and that it has been synthesized. And, amazingly, it turns out to be simply a tripeptide.

It is clear that in 1966 Dr. [Andrew] Schally and co-workers at the VA Polypeptide Laboratory published the three amino acids and later, in 1969, gave their proper sequence. It is both interesting and instructive that the full activity did not appear until amidization of the terminal amino acid plus cyclization of the glutamine took place.



Dr. Lattimer maps possible path of bullet, first bullet, with Connally exhibiting a delayed reaction to being hit.

Dr. Lattimer's blackboard sketch provides a clear picture of the main shortcoming of the single bullet/delayed reaction theory. He shows the bullet entering the President's neck, at a point higher than the exit wound in his throat, to show its continuing on a straight downward path into Connally's back.

But published FBI photographs of the backs of JFK's jacket and shirt—the only incontrovertible, publicly verifiable evidence of the location of the entry wound—both show a hole five to six inches below the top of the collar, in the upper back, and somewhat below the exit wound in his throat.