

from Dave Perry 11/26/93

re Posner

As Friedrich Nietzsche said, "Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies."

Forum member "Sunshine" David Stager (71256,1560) -- the JFK Forum's resident law enforcement specialist, WC apologist extraordinaire, and "Case Closed" promoter and defender -- has been having a debate with Fort Worth researcher and WC critic Gary Mack, who has criticized Gerald Posner's book for various inaccuracies and misrepresentations (in his view). It is this debate upon which this paper focuses. The reader is referenced to the following documents on DL2:

- CASE2.TXT - Mack's "Eyes Closed" critique of "Case Closed"
- CASE5.TXT - Stager's rebuttal to "Eyes Closed"
- CASE6.TXT - Mack's response to Stager
- CASE7.TXT - Stager's response to Mack's

(The reader is also referred to CASE3.TXT and CASE4.TXT by David Perry (75300,3115) for further discussion of this landmark book. No rebuttals or other commentaries have followed Perry's posting of this file, which leads me to wonder: is he THAT RIGHT?!)

MACK vs POSNER; STAGER vs MACK; MACK vs STAGER vs ANYONE BUT POSNER

A Lesson in Misdirected Debate

David Stager is so overwhelmed by the arguments put forth in "Case Closed" that he cannot for a moment conceive much less concede that Gerald Posner so much as misspelled a word. Anyone who fails to see the clarity and acuity with which Posner presents what The Washington Post (which he also vilifies for criticising CC and Posner) categorized as "the prosecution's brief," but which Stager considers the epitome of unbiased logic and truth, is due for similar ridicule, derision and vilification. Where an error is so much as suggested, Sunshine Dave leaps forth to defend Posner and his book with alacrity, a zeal that makes one wonder whether Stager WORKS for Posner... or whether he's merely been BAPTIZED by him.<G>

In reality, this sort of perspective should not be surprising from someone a veteran in law enforcement, who by profession if not disposition is prosecutorial and who, in many cases, has never experienced a "bad bust" (no such thing, the courts let the SOB go) and, in most cases, could never imagine police or other officials setting up an innocent person for the sake of a conviction or solution to the crime. Conspiracy? Likely excuse. It's what they ALL say.

Nevertheless, in Stager's initial "rebuttal," he misses or deliberately avoids several of Mack's points, and addresses others that were not raised, while later demanding those "issues" be answered. Stager charges Mack with being an "assassination profiteer" (as if Posner donated his six-figure advance and all future earnings to charity?), of spreading misinformation, and of not responding to the new points which Stager raised in his initial response, which he chooses to call "errors."

Stager charges Mack with resorting to circumlocutions to avoid the issues he raised in his rebuttal, and states that Mack "shows a high degree of deception and misrepresentation of the original rebuttal." What he fails to note, as the reader will see, is that the issues he raises in his "rebuttal" often have little to do with the points raised by Mack in his original post. How this is "deception" or "misrepresentation" thoroughly confounds this writer. Let's examine some of these points:

HOWARD DONAHUE, BALLISTICS EXPERT

1) Mack suggests that Posner's use of Howard Donahue as a ballistic expert was misleading, saying that "Case Closed" (CC) "covered up" the fact that Donahue is the author of "Mortal Error," a book which postulates that Secret Service agent George Hickey was responsible for the shot which fatally wounded JFK, albeit accidentally. Stager asserts that "Donahue's qualifications as a

ballistic expert are not in question" because his "evaluation of the physical evidence (CE-399) is fully consistent with many, many other ballistics experts" and that the head shot sequence, while "demonstrably erroneous," should not be considered in determining those qualifications.

2) Mack notes that his contention was meant to reflect on Posner's "great delight in bashing certain critics for their pro-conspiracy writings," while presenting Donahue as an "expert" who deserves no such bashing himself even despite his baseless and irresponsible charge against Hickey, which while I would be hesitant to use the phrase "covered up," was most certainly avoided and never mentioned. It is a material point. Stager responds merely by saying that Mack "did not address the issue" Stager brought up in his rebuttal.

Leaving asside for the moment that the purpose of "rebuttals" is NOT to bring up NEW issues but to REBUT (hence the name) existing ones, Sunshine Dave is forgetting or ignoring that Donahue's sole claims to fame insofar as this case is concerned are his analyses of the head shot and of CE399's flight; he has no other. Of these, 50% are "demonstrably erroneous," according to Stager's own description. One out of two does not an expert make.

If that kind of track record does not in itself give pause to the advisability of calling someone as an "expert witness," consider that his "scientific method" does not even call for examining ALL of the known and available evidence or even verifying his information with other researchers, such as the Bronson film which clearly shows that his theory is mistaken. Indeed, neither Donahue, Menninger or their publisher even knew the film existed prior to charging George Hickey, an innocent man, a professional bodyguard of the highest caliber, of the inadvertant murder of his charge, the President of the United States.

Stager suggests that we should not question Posner's use of Donahue as an

"expert witness" because he got the part about CE399 right?!?
Let's get real!
What he's done with "Mortal Error," despite any "saving grace" of his ballistic analyses -- or rather, half of them -- is more irresponsible than anything by the most incredible of the conspiracy writers. He deserves all of the ridicule and more such as Posner heaps upon those who write of conspiracy, yet he's held forth as a respected "expert witness," with which Dave Stager apparently agrees.

Because his analysis of CE399's flight, however, was "right," Donahue apparently doesn't qualify as an "assassination profiteer" despite the fact that he published -- and his publisher has re-issued -- a book with such an irresponsible charge. Instead, he is an "expert witness," and "rightly so."
If "As long as he proved the SBT, his other sins can be forgiven" is the refrain, "Double Standards" is the title of the tune. Both sides of the issue play it equally well and criticise the other's rendition.

We must also realize that if Donahue's expert analysis of the head shot trajectory is correct EXCEPT for the part about Hickey firing on his boss, then he raises an interesting possibility: by removing Hickey from the picture and maintaining the trajectory Donahue posits, we find that it leads back to some point OTHER than the "sniper's nest" window, ipso facto a second gunman and conspiracy. The other alternative is to state that since, in Donahue's scenario, Hickey was not only in the line of fire but was in fact the source of it, that his trajectory analysis must be completely dismissed.

If we follow the latter choice, we can only conclude that his "scientific method" is flawed, and that he merely CHANCED upon a "correct" solution to the CE399 problem despite the flaws, the "proof" of which is that others have independently arrived at similar conclusions. CHANCE does not an expert make, either.

If Donahue IS in fact "expert," then Stager and others should disprove his head shot analysis with something other than the mere fact that the Bronson film shows Hickey did not fire. The *trajectory analysis* needs to be disproved, and reconciled against how the other was correct. If the "expert analysis" of the trajectory is correct and Hickey didn't fire, then someone else did... and it wasn't Lee Harvey Oswald.

THE SPEED OF CE399

1) Mack notes what he feels to be a discrepancy in the description of the flight of CE399 in CC, noting a 2300 fps muzzle velocity determined by the HSCA panel, versus a 2000 fps bullet velocity at the moment of impact at JFK's back cited in CC. Stager is correct in pointing out the difference between MUZZLE velocity and IMPACT velocity, but calling Mack's citation of the muzzle speed "a sweeping generalization" that is "out of context" and "[distracts] from the issue in question" really only serves to cloud the issue.

2) Mack clarifies that the issue he was raising was whether Posner, in miscalculating or mis-citing the muzzle velocity attributed to the weapon by HSCA, may have also miscalculated or arbitrarily decided upon the other velocities at various points in CE399's travels as well. While the issue is not clear in Mack's original post, Stager responds by saying that "Mack does not address the issue I pointed out in the rebuttal," which is "the single bullet theory has very little to do with the muzzle velocity... but rather the speed at impact," which he posits "can only be approximated due to a variety of unknown factors." Mack, Stager charges, "just restates his original position which has nothing to do with the point in question."

What one must realize is that Mack's original position *IS* the point in question; if Stager chooses to redirect it, to not answer the

point raised,
it does not change the "point in question" to Stager's new one.
He never
quite identifies what that NEW "point in question" is, and one
can only
presume it is that the muzzle velocity has "nothing to do" with
the SBT,
which he does in fact explicitly state.

THAT is a distraction and a misstatement. Re-reading Stager's
"rebuttal" on
this point, one finds that no issue, new or old, was raised;
Stager merely
states his opinion that Mack was trying to cloud the issue or
make one where
there is none. Even in his later response, following Mack's
clarification
that "When I found [Posner] arbitrarily lowered the muzzle
velocity by 13%
[from the 2296 fps at HSCA 6H317], I wondered if the other
figures were
arbitrary, too." Instead, Stager supports Mack by explicitly
stating that
"only a range of values can be posited... no specific numbers can
be
calculated." In short, yes, they're arbitrary, a guess, nothing
more or less;
they cannot be calculated.

Interestingly, by noting that "Posner's single bullet theory has
very little
to do with the muzzle velocity of the round, but rather the speed
at impact,
which obviously is much slower," Stager actually supports Mack's
contention.
How? "Posner posits that the bullet was slowed down enough during
transection
of the neck to place the bullet speed at a point where it is
moving fast
enough to damage bone, but not fast enough to deform the bullet,"
which
indeed Posner does. Stager admits, however, that there is no real
basis for
the figures Posner cites other than conjecture because, once
again, "they
can't be calculated." They are no more or less than a hypothesis
to explain
how it COULD'VE happened, and by no means proves it did.

Nevertheless, let us examine the "evidence" in CC on which this
part of the
debate centers. On page 338 that "The 6.5mm slug *LEFT OSWALD'S
RIFLE AT
2,000 FEET PER SECOND* and hit Kennedy at the base of the neck

between 1,700 and 1,800 feet per second" [emphasis added]. The impact velocity was less than the muzzle velocity, and on impact it was not going fast enough to deform the bullet. According to Sturdivan (HSCA 1H396), the bullet "will begin to deform if it strikes say, soft tissue... at something in excess of 2,000 fps, in other words, at the muzzle velocity of the Mannlicher-Carcano," thereby explaining why CE399 is as undeformed as it is given those velocities.

However, ten pages earlier (p328), Posner describes "The bullet... ENTERING THE BODY AT *MORE THAN 2,000 FEET PER SECOND*..." [emphasis added] to explain how there may have been damage to the the vertebra as the bullet passed, but did not touch, that area. If the bullet IMPACTED at 2,000 fps, then a) it would have had an even FASTER muzzle velocity, and b) the bullet would have deformed on impact. Obviously, as Dave Perry pointed out, you can't have it both ways. Is there any wonder that Mack was curious where Posner got his figures?

This, it should be noted, is what Stager cites as a "reasoned and thorough analysis" of the single-bullet theory. He also states that "Posner allows for a reasonable range of error concerning bullet speeds and the impact speed in particular." As we've seen, he most certainly does, even allowing that the bullet EITHER SLOWED DOWN OR SPEEDED UP between firing and impact. It's a "range of error," but I'm not so sure I'd call it "reasonable."

(It is also worthwhile to note that David posted a message on the board that this "oversight" would be corrected "in the next printing" of CC. It is therefore "not an issue," and needn't be considered nor addressed. Just a typo is all, not to worry, heh-heh. It will be interesting, then, to see which of the velocities will be changed.)

THE WALKER BULLET

1) Stager contends that Mack is "relying upon the absolute accuracy of [the Dallas Police Department]" to state that the bullet was a .30-06 caliber steel-jacketed round rather than a 6.5mm (.259 cal) copper-jacketed round, which he says "is not accurate enough." Why? Because DPD's "estimation of the bullet caliber is a mere dead [sic] reckoning" and that "a common bullet caliber was merely opined." In other words, they eyeballed the bullet and guessed at its size.

2) Mack, in his reply, notes that the bullet was identified by a detective at the scene; that both original and supplementary police reports filed the night of the shooting, and newscasts as late as the following night identified the slug as a steel-jacketed .30-06 bullet. "Silver [the color of a steel-jacketed slug] and copper [that of an MC round] are two different colors, and the bullet sizes are different," Mack notes. "To simply assume the police were wrong... is wishful thinking." Stager simply says that "The DPD report does not say the bullet is silver in color and... does not state any measurement in size," and that "the DPD can't be trusted to maintain a chain of evidence." Mack, he says, does not "address the issues in question."

Again: what are those issues? Initially that CC did not deliver on its dust jacket's promise of "new details about Oswald's attempt to kill Major General Edwin Walker," and had completely omitted information about DPD's identification of the bullet as OTHER THAN a full metal jacketed 6.5mm Carcano bullet. Stager managed to redirect that to the validity of the identification of the bullet, which Mack only noted Posner left out of the book: he neither resolved it nor even mentioned it; it was yet another "non-issue." Again, Stager missed the point and moved to defend the unchallenged.

Mack rose to the bait, pointing out that "if the bullet in evidence today is

not the same bullet that just missed the late General Walker, all the neutron activation analysis tests in the world are irrelevant," which is correct as stated and qualified. This causes Stager merely to roll his eyes skyward and say that "Mack resorts to the wild accusation that the bullets have been switched," and asks for "any factual data" to back that up, disqualifying the DPD reports as such for reasons noted above.

Mack, Stager says, relies wholly upon DPD's "absolute accuracy," while Stager, a law enforcement officer himself, must rely upon their absolute inaccuracy. "Steel-jacketed," he opines was "used generically" in the DPD report. One might wonder why, if it was intended as a "generic" description, that the detective who used it didn't just say "bullet." Why specify "steel-jacketed" if he had no reason to think it WAS steel-jacketed?

Steel-jacketed bullets are uniformly silver in color; copper-jacketed bullets are uniformly NOT. Stager sarcastically notes that "The DPD can't be trusted to maintain a chain of evidence" (presumably alluding to some critics' charges, which he blankets all with charging), and chides Mack for relying upon their report as "100% reliable and precise," as if to say "you can't have it both ways, Mack."

And right he is at that, you can't! We must remember that DPD took their sweet time in getting the bullets that killed Officer Tippit to the FBI, giving them but one at the outset, then begrudgingly turning the others over much later. There is no question, however, that these are the bullets which actually hit and killed Tippit. Yet the self-same police department which maintained such an impeccable chain of evidence with the Tippit bullets, is in reality so inept that they don't know a silver-colored, steel-jacketed bullet from a copper one! Or conversely, the department which was so inept to not know a steel/silver bullet from a copper one nevertheless was able to

maintain proper and verifiable chains of evidence with regard to the Tippit killing. How does one know whether to have confidence in them or not?

Remember, too, that the officer who identified the bullet as he did was NOT a rookie beat cop, but rather an experienced detective in the homicide department. Are we to believe that he didn't know steel from copper, or that he'd call a copper bullet "steel" just to be "generic?" Or, considering that he saw fit to point out that the report didn't say it was a SILVER-COLORED steel-jacketed bullet, that steel-jacketed bullets must sometimes come in copper, hence the obvious and excusable mistake? If you buy that one, I'll throw the Golden Gate in free!

Nope, you can't have it both ways.

However, should you have any doubts, Stager has "personally examined" the bullet at the National Archives and assures us that he is "as certain as [he] can be" that this is a bullet "exactly like those used by Oswald." A homicide detective can't tell steel from copper and wouldn't know a .30-06 from a 6.5mm (.25 cal), but David Stager can tell you that it is "exactly" like the other bullets supposedly used by Oswald. I'll lay even money on the fact that the homicide detective was JUST as "certain as he could be" that it was a steel-jacketed .30-06 bullet. The problem only arises if they're BOTH right, and we have no reason to believe either is wrong unless we want it to be so. And then, we have to determine which it was, which then leads us to the unpleasant possibilities that suggest themselves.

If the proof of Stager's better eyesight is not sufficient to bring the reader to the truth, he also points out that Mack has "ignored" the Neutron Activation Analyses (NAA tests) conducted by both the Warren Commission and HSCA, which he implies link all of the bullets through the C2766 M-C rifle to Oswald. But DO they?

The WC NAA test results are unpublished, and the handwritten notes available from the National Archives are too faint to make sense of. Where these are inconclusive, it is noted by "apologists" that NAA testing was in its infant stages and the FBI inexperienced in its use at the time. However, fifteen years later, Dr Vincent Guinn conducted NAA tests for the committee's panel and found that bullets from the same lot as CE399 could not be identified conclusively from among bullets in the same box, their characteristics varying to such a large degree. Guinn noted that this was "unique" in his experience. This "margin of error" is sufficient for Stager to suggest that the NAA tests "conclude" that the bullet was a 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano bullet fired by C2766.

That NAA testing is unable to identify two bullets from the same box, in Stager's estimation it is nevertheless able to identify the Walker bullet as being "linked" to Oswald. How? The FBI, in December 1963, wouldn't even state that the Walker bullet was manufactured by Winchester-Western to the exclusion of all other manufacturers; how then did Posner "resolve all the issues regarding the Walker shooting," as Stager says, when nobody else has?

GARY POWERS AND THE U-2

In discounting Mack's assertion that Gary Powers' opinion that his U-2 was shot down because of Oswald (as, in my opinion, it should be discounted because it was ONLY an opinion), Stager notes that "Posner had access to all the KGB files," as if this is strictly true.

Posner may have had access to various KGB files, but there is no indication that he had access to "all" of them, nor that the Russians, even under their new, more open leadership, would provide them. Even American society, which remains more open than Russian, does not have access to "all" of the CIA files on this 30-year-old case; on what basis do we presume

Posner had access
to all or even most of the KGB files?

While such assertions are relatively inconsequential, they are indicative of the sweeping generalizations HE accepts as incontrovertible fact, but does not allow to others.

THE TIPPIT TIMINGS & HELEN MARKHAM

1) Mack states "In a desperate attempt to get Oswald from his rooming house to the Tippit murder scene within the firmly established time frame, Posner ignored the only timing reconstructions made by the Warren Commission."
Stager responds that, since Mack cites Helen Markham, he needn't "rebut this very much." Why not?

2) Mack points out that Friday, November 22, 1963 was a regular work day for Helen Markham, who was following her established routine to get to the 1:12 bus when she witnessed the Tippit killing. For this reason -- that it was established routine -- her testimony regarding her movements PRIOR TO the shooting is both accurate and important, and the WC's timings by David Belin show that it was impossible for LHO to get there from the rooming house, and nobody saw any young man hurrying. It is unimportant, Stager counters, because we don't know all sorts of factors which COULD'VE put him there on time such as what time he ACTUALLY left the rooming house, the speed he was walking, etc. As for Helen Markham, Stager demands proof the bus arrived on time and that traffic wasn't affected by the assassination. Moreover, to show how Mack's thesis "strains credulity," Stager makes the utterly astounding statement that "If the bus arrived on time, Markham would have been on it and never seen the murder."

I cannot say that with a straight face. Let's try it again. "If the 1:12 bus was on time, and Helen Markham witnessed a murder a block away from the bus stop at 1:16, then Helen Markham would've been on the bus and not

on the street corner." No, hold on, I'm missing something here, and am having a difficult time reconciling how, if the bus was on time at 1:12, Helen Markham wouldn't have been *a block away* from the bus stop *3-5 minutes later* to watch the cop get shot. Is he suggesting, perhaps, that the bus was late, so she walked back a block and hence saw the murder? This plainly doesn't make sense, but it at least points out the "folly" of Mack's reliance upon anything she says, doesn't it? DOESN'T it?

Stager's blanket derision that any critic would rely upon anything Helen Markham said because most don't consider her a reliable witness shows a thoroughly black-and-white perspective which ignores the fact that her hysteria in the face of tragedy, while affecting her memory of immediate events, should have little if any bearing upon her knowledge of her own daily routine. Hysteria and amnesia are not the same, and anyone with a modicum of sense would know that, as I'm certain Stager does. He would seem, however, like to have it that, if one is to consider Markham unreliable about ANYTHING, then she must be unreliable about EVERYTHING, or the converse that if you consider her RELIABLE about anything, you must consider her reliable about EVERYTHING. This is a thoroughly baseless argument that does nothing to bolster his case against Mack.

David Stager also wonders whether traffic might've been backed up in the Oak Cliff area on account of the assassination, making Markham's bus late. This, of course, ignores the fact that she was *on her way to* the bus stop and was not at it when the shooting occurred, but in any case, we must wonder why he would think or suggest that traffic was backed up three miles away, an hour later?

David Stager claims to have walked the "official" route with Gary Mack and timed it. He should know, then how far from Dealey Plaza it was

that Tippit got killed, and how unlikely it is that any traffic jam downtown would affect the Oak Cliff area. While Jefferson Blvd, the main thoroughfare on which the bus ran, runs into downtown, Oak Cliff is a full three miles from downtown, and connects to Market Street some eight city blocks south of Dealey Plaza, implying a traffic jam of massive proportions for which we have no evidence, and if anything, evidence to the contrary (weren't cars travelling through Dealey Plaza almost immediately after the assassination?). If he can't remember that, he might remember Julia Postal and Johnny Brewer's description of police cars with sirens "speeding" past the Texas Theater on Jefferson Blvd, the same street Helen Markham would've caught her bus on, a mere 4-5 blocks away and within half an hour. Did this massive traffic jam suddenly just clear up or what?

Stager obviously has never had to rely upon public transportation in his lifetime. If he had, he would be well aware of the fact that even if your regular bus comes five minutes late every day, you never arrive at the bus stop after its SCHEDULED time because the day you do is the day it arrives and leaves on time. Busses DO NOT wait for passengers, even "regulars" unless they're clearly in sight, which Helen Markham was not. Since she took the 1:12 bus, she would have been at the bus stop BY 1:12 or sooner. That she was not is not testimony to the movement of the traffic or the lateness of the bus, but IS strong testimony -- which is backed up by TF Bowley, Domingo Benevides and the time of the DPD radio call at 1:16 -- that the murder took place PRIOR TO 1:12 pm.

(David may have in fact walked and timed the route, but he did NOT go with Gary Mack, whom I know for a fact has never walked the route and had never even been to 10th & Patton until 1989. What did Stager's "Gary Mack" look like, I wonder?)

ACOUSTICS

1) Mack notes finding some news footage taken in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1964, a year following the assassination. This film, he says, includes a similar bell sound, to which Stager devastatingly replies "so what? We're talking about November 22, 1963." He continues to say "there's a whole lot wrong" with the acoustics studies, and other issues which have nothing to do with the bell sound. He even notes that "HSCA concluded that the 'shot from the grassy knoll' missed!" [exclamation in original] as if this scores a point against Mack's contention. Mack, unfortunately, never discussed any such shot, leaving Stager's ringing denunciation a muted thud falling on deaf ears.

2) Mack replies that "The problem with the carillon bell sounding 7 seconds after the last shot was that no one could remember such a bell anywhere within earshot of Dealey Plaza. But the 1964 Plaza film I found has a carillon bell striking a very similar tone." Stager pounces upon this to suggest that "Mack says no one recalls hearing a bell in Dealey Plaza in 1963," which is not what he said at all. At least now, however, Stager appears to be almost willing to accept the sound of a bell in Dealey Plaza with similar tones, but "it was at 1:00 in 1964, not 12:30. If there is supposed to be a 12:30 bell in 1963, then there should be a 12:30 bell in 1964." The dispute over the difference in time has now shortened from a year to half an hour, anyway. (Will it soon be over the harmonic frequency of the bell tones, the quality of the tape on which it was recorded and finally whether the photographer's watch was set correctly?)

Not only does Stager apparently not know much about public transportation, but seemingly little about chiming clocks either (or even time, it would seem, judging from his Helen Markham comment!). Anyone who's heard the

chiming of a grandfather clock knows that they chime on the hour
the number
of the hour (i.e, once at 1:00, twice at 2:00 and so on), and
ONCE ON THE
HALF-HOUR. That is, in this scenario, once at 12:30 on 11/22/63,
and once at
1:00 on 11/22/64. There is nothing inconsistent or unusual about
these
occurrences at all, and add to the conclusion that the carillon
bell tolled
IN DEALEY PLAZA following the assassination rather than detract
from it.

That nobody heard a bell tolling in Dealey Plaza, were that the
case, seven
seconds after the President of the United States had his head
blown off in
front of their eyes should come as no surprise to anyone... if
the question
had ever been asked, which I'm not aware of it ever having been.
What is
known is that nobody could recall the LOCATION of such a bell
within earshot;
that is not a statement that nobody recalls ever hearing it, or
being curious
about the source of a sound they heard every day and probably
didn't notice
after a short while anyway. It is quite apparent from the sound
being
recorded in Dealey Plaza on the hour that there was, in fact, a
bell nearby.

While knowing its location would be more conclusive, so might it
be to
compare the sounds on the DPD tape as well as the news footage to
see what if
any similarity there is between them. NOT knowing these things
does not
disprove anything, but knowing them would tighten a loose end.

Stager notes, too, that while Mack does not identify a source
(i.e, location)
for the carillon bell sound on either recording, Posner does. In
CC (p241n),
Posner notes that retired Dallas sheriff Jim Bowles has
"discovered" the
source of the carillon bell sound recorded on the DPD tapes
which, he said,
was a replica of the Liberty Bell at the Trade Mart, which
passersby often
gave a rap, thus producing the sound. This is satisfactory
evidence, it would
seem, to explain the sound on the tape to both Posner and Stager;
there is no

need for corroboration and none is presented.

Moreover, Posner cites information from a former WFAA Radio news reporter, Travis Linn, that he had had a tape recorder positioned atop a column that recorded the sound of three shots and no more. Unfortunately, the tape was recorded over in the studio and no longer exists, but is presented as irrefutable proof of the invalidity of the tape studied by HSCA and therefore their findings. Again, no corroboration, just a simple "fact."

Readers may be interested to note, however, that neither of these two pieces of "evidence" has been corroborated, and I'm not referring to just what's in CC. For those who have read other of my postings, they know I don't agree with the official conclusions on many points, but also know that I don't swallow the conspiracy theories whole either: I check out what I doubt or have questions about, and I checked out both of these stories. If I'd found even the slightest corroboration, I would say so now; I haven't, so I won't.

If Linn recorded those sounds, he never told any of his associates; it doesn't seem to have happened until he spoke with Posner. Those with whom I've been able to speak so far have only the highest compliments for Professor Linn, but none had heard the story of the tape even second- or third-hand until I'd related it to them. None would call it a fabrication, but none could understand why in all the years they'd known him -- at least one who'd worked with him on that afternoon -- they'd never heard the story once. In fairness, there is more inquiry to be done on this, but so far the story does not seem to be entirely factual. It seems that Posner merely took the professor at his word because it fit his thesis.

There is also nobody who can recall a Liberty Bell replica or any other bell having been outside at the Trade Mart until the Kennedy memorial statue was raised in 1964-65. There IS a "Liberty Bell" there, however: it

is inside,
beside the receptionist's desk. If this was the bell that was
recorded on the
police tape, it would explain why the Trade Mart operator always
asks me to
speak up when I call since the sound would've had to deafen
anyone inside to
make it onto the police tape. Again, more inquiries will be made,
but the
bland acceptance of Jim Bowles' assertion seems so far without
basis.

(It is also interesting to note that a Dallas-area researcher of
my
acquaintance told me that Bowles' story some ten years ago was
that the bell
was on some sort of cart or other mobile conveyance, and had been
--
conveniently? -- moved sometime after the assassination, hence no
evidence
exists to support or refute his contention. It is also worthwhile
to note
that a more recent book, Harry Livingstone's "Killing the Truth,"
uses Bowles
extensively throughout the book, including to "refute" the
acoustical
evidence, more than Posner does in CC, yet never once does Bowles
even
MENTION this supposed "Liberty Bell.")

Stager chides Mack (on another topic) by saying that "Hard
evidence proves
you wrong on this one," yet never seeks hard evidence from CC and
its author.
Where is there a picture of the bell supposedly tapped by a
passerby? Where
is there any corroboration to Bowles' statements? There is not;
it is not
even asked for but taken on faith. While Posner can chide Carolyn
Arnold for
having possibly changed or embellished her story after 15 years
to include
seeing Oswald on the 2nd floor of TSBD, how can he so blandly
accept the word
of another man -- whom he has no more or less reason to believe
is lying --
who, *30* years after the fact, says he'd recorded ONLY three
shots but,
well, it no longer exists and nobody else heard it?

This is how Stager assures us that CC provides represents the
"truth," and
the proves the charge made by Dave Perry that CC uses many of the
same

methods as the "conspiracy books" so often derided by Posner and his acolytes: when lacking in evidence, make a statement that sounds authoritative and credible (like "if the bus wasn't late, she'd have been on time"). It makes for a fine refrain to that song, "Double Standards."

CAROLYN ARNOLD

1) Another instance of misdirection occurs when Stager notes that both "Posner and Mack agree that [Carolyn] Arnold was mistaken [about seeing Oswald in the second story lunchroom during the assassination], but for different reasons."

2) Mack responds to Stager's misdirection that "maybe she never changed her story; perhaps the agents took it down wrong," to which Stager that "The issue was your claim Posner misrepresented Arnold's statement."

In reality, Mack made *no mention* of Mrs Arnold's veracity or accuracy in his original essay; his entire discussion of her was in this sentence: "Earl then brought the film to House Assassinations Committee photo consultant Robert Groden, who confirmed what we had already seen: movement in at least two sixth floor windows at about the same time Depository employee Carolyn Arnold claimed to have noticed Oswald in the second floor lunchroom." There is no other mention of Arnold in Mack's essay; where did he agree with Posner that she was "mistaken?"

In Stager's second "rebuttal," he's now changed Mack's non-existent "agreement" with Posner to Mack's non-existent contention that Posner "misrepresented" Arnold's statements. In fact, it was Stager who first brought it up by pointing out that "Posner opined that Arnold's revision of her original statements to now include that Oswald was in the second story lunchroom was made 15 years after the fact and was disproved by other witness who were in the lunchroom at the time." Mack suggested that perhaps her story

had never changed, but had merely been recorded incorrectly or incompletely, to which Stager breathes a sigh of relief: "At least Mr. Posner is off the hook." Thank goodness, eh? We'd surely hate to find he was WRONG about something, wouldn't we?

THE BRONSON FILM

1) The above exchange began when Mack noted that he has been working closely with Bronson's attorney on the original film to learn more about the apparent movement in the "sniper's nest" windows of TSBD. Stager notes "I've seen the Bronson film and Groden's enhancement. It shows absolutely nothing. Nothing! Nothing is visible at all in the sixth floor windows other than the changing perspective of the windows as Bronson pans his camera. This is wholly imagination that people are visible and moving in the window."

2) Mack replies that seven people "including film and computer technicians and scientists, saw apparent movement in at least two of the sixth floor TSBD windows," and notes that the HSCA scientists did also, recommending further study (which was not done because of copyright considerations and the use of public funds). He also points out that Bronson did not pan his film as Stager had noted, and suggests Stager might be confusing the Bronson with the Hughes film. "I'm not confused," avers Sunshine Dave. "If there's no tilting, panning or movement in the original, why would be film have to be rotoscoped to stabilize the image?" he asks, presumably to make Mack -- who has been in the television film industry for longer than Stager's been in law enforcement, and who has been working over the years with many of the original photographers and their original works -- appear to be in error.

Stager cannot accept the possibility that there is any movement in the TSBD windows. "There is no movement in the windows. Any apparent movement is just imagination. Certainly nothing is proven by the Bronson films. Everyone will

just have to judge for themselves by looking at it. Better experts than me have opined that there is nothing human visible in the windows." Therefore, there is nothing in the window and if you see it, you're obviously mistaken because Stager and "better experts" say so. Among these experts are those who put together the "Frontline" special on "Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?" who concluded that there was no human movement apparent in the TSBD windows.

Because he believes that anything purporting to show anything not accounted for by the WC and/or Gerald Posner must lead to one conspiracy theory or another, Stager and other experts have turned a blind eye to the fact that the eyewitnesses who were used to place Oswald in the "sniper's nest" windows indicated that they had seen movement in the sixth floor windows, two of them even noting that they'd seen a gun barrel sticking out of the window. Apparently this did not happen either, giving lie to the important testimony that helped "convict" Lee Oswald of the assassination. Even Lee Oswald didn't move around in that windows, and if not, where did the shots come from?

THE HUGHES FILM

1) Mack, it should be pointed out, only briefly mentions this film, which shows the 6th floor windows as the limo turns from Houston onto Elm, saying that "Frontline has also acquired, at my urging, the original Hughes film of the motorcade turning onto Elm Street with the sixth floor windows fully visible. Enhancement improvements since 1978 will hopefully reveal new evidence from these crucial home movies." This is the full quotation. Stager responds to this hope by saying that "I have seen the Hughes film and Groden's most recent enhancement of it. Only a shimmer can be seen in the two easternmost sixth floor windows. No way, no how, does this film show two figures on the sixth floor at the time of the shots. IT DOES NOT SHOW THIS."

Here again, Stager makes an issue out of something that was not.

2) Mack again rises to the bait, responding that "If Stager had the opportunity to view the original Hughes or Bronson films, he would notice movement in the windows. If his evaluation comes from home video, multi-generation copies, he should know better. Too much resolution is lost to distinguish 'shimmer' from a moving person." Stager responds that "I've seen the same film that you've seen. As is clear in my rebuttal there is no human figure in the window, the movement is just a shimmering from the extreme blow-up revealing variances in the film.... Each person will have to judge for themselves. It takes quite an imagination to see anything resembling people in this film."

This is interesting. Mack has been working with the original film, which to my knowledge has not been subjected to any "extreme blow-up," which can only be done to a COPY. Ergo, I suspect that it is as Mack suggests, that Stager has seen the film in other than its optimum condition.

His comment that "[it] is clear in my rebuttal there is no human figure in the window, the movement is just a shimmering from the extreme blow-up revealing variances in the film" is truly a masterpiece since when I last read his rebuttal, there were no moving figures in it whatsoever, although I must admit some of his WORDS moved me (to what is best left unsaid). All that is clear from his rebuttals is that his OPINION is that there is nothing moving in the windows, not even Lee Harvey Oswald. Howard Brennan, Amos Euins and all the rest were just plain wrong. Sunshine Dave said it himself, in not quite as many words. "THERE IS NOTHING THERE." "Frontline" backs him up.

Lee Oswald was on the second floor, right where he and Carolyn Arnold said he was. Even if he was not, we at least now know where ELSE he wasn't now, don't we.

If these "rebuttals" don't indicate a growing desperation to disprove any and all statements made -- and sometimes NOT made! -- by any "conspirati," perhaps this will:

BADGE MAN

1) Mack discusses the Badge Man image in the Moorman photo which he says "has consumed 11 years of my life." He talks about working with "the clearest Mary Moorman picture known to exist," the arrangements made with Nigel Turner for its inclusion in "The Men Who Killed Kennedy" (it is a copyrighted photo), and the various tests it's been subjected to and the potential processes available to perhaps regain the detail that was only on the original, as well as the pitfalls of taking advantage of that technology. He notes that his Badge Man study "has been criticized by people who know little or nothing about it aside from what appears in 'The Men Who Killed Kennedy,'" implying probably correctly that few of his critics have held a copy of the Moorman that wasn't reproduced in or from a book.

Mack's recounting of this detail occupies nearly two full pages in ten paragraphs in hard copy. It is all thoroughly debunked and discredited in one eloquently phrased rebuttal: "I am Badgeman. I didn't do it. Gordon Arnold was not there. Ed Hoffman did not see me. I took Jackie's poodle out of the limousine and fed it a cherry flavored snow cone. I'm sorry for the littering, but I was upset when the president was killed. There was no back-up man." Hooray. I'm convinced. No wonder he can't see anyone in the TSBD windows: Stager was behind the picket fence.

2) Mack replies graciously under the circumstances, saying only that "The Badge Man images have intrigued many image enhancement experts." Stager was wise enough to do the same ("The burden of proof is on you") but not without his final "dig" ("The Badgeman figure is a huge stretch of the imagination") which strikes me to say that "even if you prove it, I won't

believe it."
Neitzsche all over again.

There's not a whole lot that can be said about this except that it is an attempt to argue a point not raised, and Stager came to the shootout unarmed.

CONCLUSION

It is interesting to note the fervor with which some people will defend Gerald Posner and his best-selling "Case Closed," a fervor which not even the author himself approaches. Indeed, he has been quoted as saying both that he wishes now he'd never written the book since he's "pleased nobody on either side of the issue," and that he's amazed at the amount of positive celebrity he's received from the media as a result of the publication. While his mistakes are acknowledged, in general they're forgiven in light of the larger picture: "Oswald did it and even if he didn't, we'll never know who did, so it's time to put this all behind us and accept what we do know as fact." Not unlike the Warren Commission seeking to calm the nation's fears of a Communist conspiracy....

Religion, they say, is the opium of the masses. If this case can be said to "have religion," I would suggest that several of us are overdosed and in need of detoxification, as our senses belie us. It's time to get back to the facts ... and remember Friedrich.

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