Assassination Controversy Mounting

By the Associated Press

Controversy over the shots fired during the assassination of President John F. Kennedy reached new heights on this Nov. 22, the third anniversary of the Dallas tragedy.

Sen. Russell B. Long, D-La., and former Kennedy adviser Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. called for further investigation.

But Sen. Richard B. Russell, D-Ga., a member of the Warren Commission, and former Kennedy press aide Malcolm M. Kilduff, while disputing commission findings about the shots, took no issue with the over-all commission conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed Kennedy.

Many recent books and magazine articles has questioned the commission report. But this week's newest round of debate is the most concentrated yet by present and past government officials.

Sidelight to Controversy

And as a sidelight to the controversy, Kilduff has indicated that there was friction aboard Air Force 1 as it flew Kennedy's body—and the newly sworn-in President Johnson—back to Washington from Dallas. Kilduff, who was the only White House press aide on hand in Dallas, said "there are things that happened, especially on the plane coming back, that could be embarrassing to both the Kennedys and the Johnsons." But he refused to elaborate.

Starting point for the new questioning is the commission finding that one bullet wounded both Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Connally, who was in Kennedy's car. Some—but not all—of the critics move from here to the question of whether a second person fired at the Kennedy motorcade in Dallas.

Long said in New Orleans yesterday he has always thought that a second person was involved.

The assistant Senate Democratic leader, told a reporter that although there is no doubt that Oswald played a part in the assassination, "whoever fired that second shot was a much better shot than Oswald."

The commission said three shots were fired. It concluded that none hit Kennedy and Connally, a later shot inflicted the major brain damage on Kennedy and one shot missed. The commission was unable to conclude which of the three shots missed.

Life magazine, in calling for a new investigation, quoted Connally as saying after a recent review of amateur films of the events: "There is my absolute knowledge ... that one bullet caused the President's first wound, and that an entirely separate shot struck me. It's a certainty. I'll never change my mind."

Kilduff's Position

Kilduff said he agrees with Connally. But Kilduff added in a taped television-radio interview with Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.:

"I have adsolutely no doubt ... that Lee Harvey Oswald committed the act on his own and that there was no conspiracy involved, as has been insinuated in many books, and is a belief which is actually widespread in Europe."

Kilduff also said he had been told by a former Connally staff member that "parts of the bullet (said to have hit Kennedy and Connally) are still in Gov. Connally's leg."

"So therefore it would not be possible, as the Warren Commission states, that the bullet came out as clean as it did."

(Knowledgable sources indicated to The Star last night that Connally has a scar on his thigh which contains a tiny shred of metal from the bullet.)

Life quoted Connally as saying, "The doctors tell me there's still a little metal left in me."

Russell's Stand

Russell said in an interview with the Atlanta Journal that he agreed with Connally in rejecting the one-bullet theory.

But he said he doesn't join the ranks of the critics of the commission.

"You can raise questions—yes. The test is, can you answer them?"

Russell did not want to serve on the commission and said he objected privately to Chief Justice Earl Warren of the Supreme Court serving as chairman.

"I'm the only man that bucked the report," he told the Journal.

"I told them, 'I'm not going to sign it as long as it's this way.'"

Russell's adamancy apparently resulted in significant alterations of key findings in the final report. The senator said he prepared dissents to three points.

Says Warren Rewrote

Russell objected to the original wording that stated categorically there had been no conspiracy involved in the assassination. He insisted the report should go no further than a finding that Oswald fired the shots that killed Kennedy and wounded Connally.

"Warren was determined he was going to have a unanimous report," Russell said. "I said it wouldn't be any trouble just to put a little asterisk up here (in the text) and then down at the bottom of the page saying, 'Sen. Russell dissents to this finding as follows.'

"But Warren wouldn't hear of it. He finally took that part and rewrote it himself."

The final compromise on this point said the commission found no evidence that Oswald or Jack Ruby, who killed Oswald, "was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign."

Russia, Cuba Questions

Russell, himself a lawyer and longtime chairman of the Senate's Central Intelligence Agency watchdog committee, said he was concerned about two other points:

1. He did not feel assured that the Soviet Union had provided all the information available on Oswald's 1959-62 stay in Russia.

2. He was not satisfied that all facts were brought out about Oswald's Cuba-related activities—Oswald had dealings with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and had told consular officials in Mexico City about eight weeks before the assassination that he

wanted permission to visit Cuba en route to Russia.

In Oxford, Miss., Schlesinger said doubts raised in the assassination warrant reopening the matter.

In an interview at the University of Mississippi before making a speech, he said that it "appears to me substantial facts and doubts do exist which would warrant a very intensive inquiry." He suggested a commission established by Congress as the best means.

Schlesinger added he had found his grief too great to read the Report of the Warren Commission.

The Magazines

While Life magazine, like Schlesinger, came out for a new investigation, a sister publication, Time magazine, argued that "there seems little valid excuse" for a new probe.

Time said a new inquiry would not end such doubts.

"The discussion and the doubts are not likely to abate, for nearly every significant incident of that tragic day is fraught with controversy and coincidence . . ."

Many other magazines, including Esquire and Ramparts, recently published material skeptical of the Warren Report's findings.

Testimony Diluted, Witness Says

In Dallas yesterday, a witness to the assassination repeated his contention that a shot was fired from behind a fence near the motorcade—in addition to shots fired from Oswald's position in the Texas School Book Depository building.

S. M. Holland, signal supervisor for the Dallas Union Terminal Railroad, said that one and possibly two shots were fired at the motorcade from behind a wooden fence some 150 feet from where he was standing.

"Four or five of us saw it, the smoke," Holland said. "One of my employes even saw the muzzle flash."

Holland's testimony on the matter is in Volume 6 of the Warren Commission hearings.

"The way the Warren Commission published my testimony, it was kind of watered down some. It made it seem that I wasn't really sure whether I'd heard a shot from the fence.

"But I own too many guns myself, and I've done too much hunting. I know a rifle shot when I hear one," he said.

Bullets fired from the depository would have struck the motorcade from behind, whereas shots fired from the fence would have come from the front. Shots from both places would have put the motorcade in a crossfire, and meant that more than one assassin was involved.

Holland said that to his knowledge none of the other railroad employes with him that day have been interviewed by the commission.

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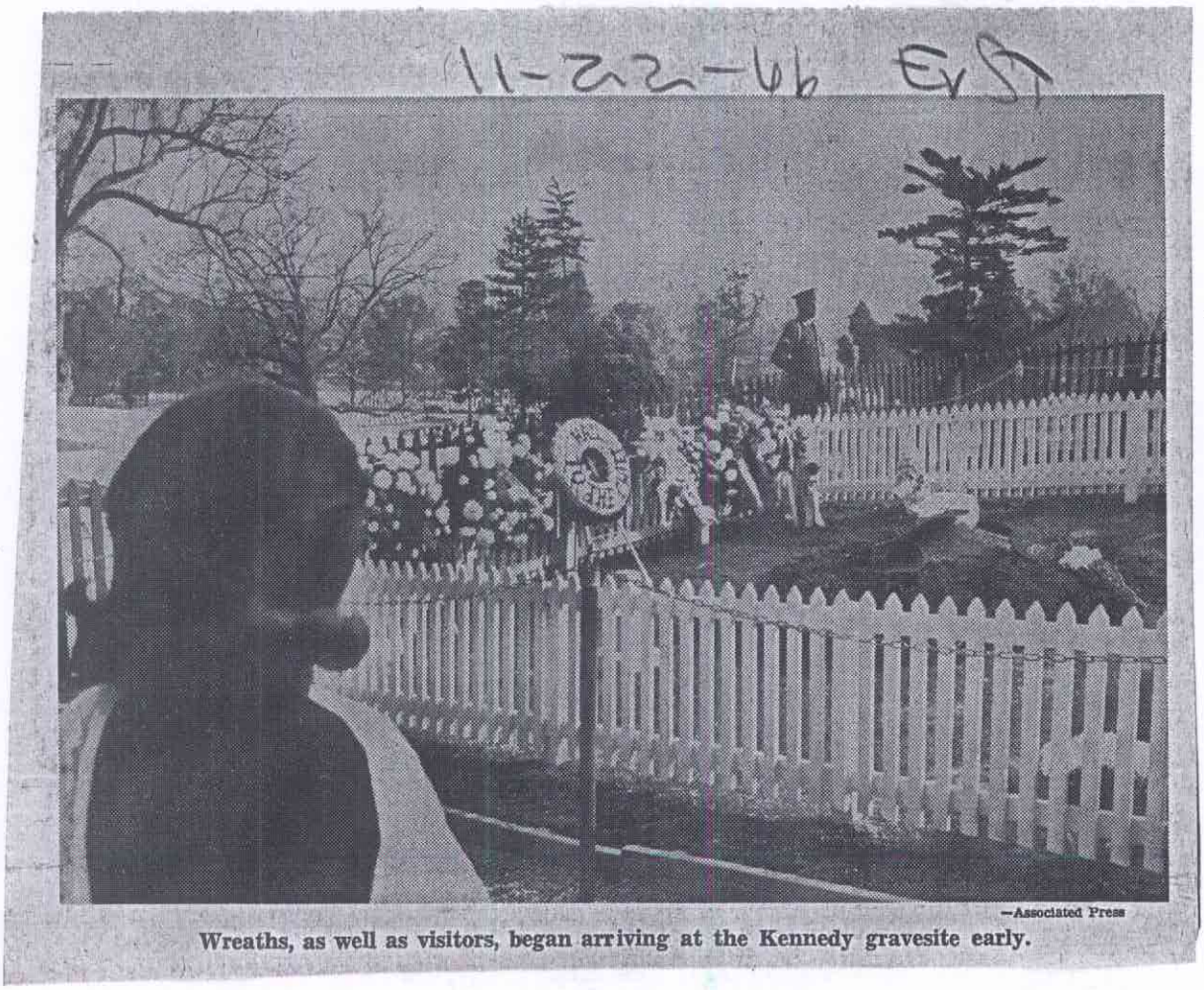

—Associated Press

Wreaths, as well as visitors, began arriving at the Kennedy gravesite early.