



BEHIND THE PICKET FENCE

As told by eyewitness Virgil "Ed" Hoffman

Virgil "Ed" Hofmann, 54, of Grand Prairie, Texas, said he left work at Texas Instruments shortly before noon on Nov. 22, 1963, on his way to the dentist. Hoffman parked his car along Stemmons Freeway, hoping to get a glance at the motorcade as it proceeded underneath the highway. Hoffman had a bird's-eye view of the area behind the grassy knoll. Here is his account.

"I saw a man standing by the fence and the rifle was on the ground. He picked it up and aimed toward his target. I was just casually looking around when the man aimed his weapon. I was wondering what he was doing.

"After a few moments, I thought he had lit a cigarette. I saw smoke from the rifle. The man turned and ran along the fence holding the rifle as he was running. I had thought that it had looked like a gun. He had a black hat on and a blue jacket. His jacket was open and I could see the rifle. He then tossed the rifle over the railing. There was a man standing there ready to catch the rifle as he threw it.

"After the man threw the rifle, he then turned around and walked casually away as if nothing was wrong. I didn't see his face, but he was a white man probably in his forties.

"After the second man caught the rifle, he disassembled it, placed it in a gun case and ran along the railroad tracks where he was concealed by train cars. He was wearing a white shirt with stripes, like a train conductor's shirt.

(Above) Ed points to where he saw the man with the rifle run behind the fence.

"I looked down at the cars passing under the bridge. When I saw that the president had been shot, I was very confused and very shocked. I turned around and didn't quite know what to do. I saw a policeman and ran over to him. I couldn't talk I couldn't communicate with him. I thought he was going to shoot me. I was so scared that I just ran away.

"When I heard that Lee Harvey Oswald had been arrested, I was relieved. I thought he was the man I had seen behind the fence.

"Later, as my wife and I watched television, the newscast showed the Texas School Book Depository. I told my wife that something was wrong since I had seen the man behind the fence. I was very upset because I had seen the man with my own two eyes!"

Hoffman, who has been unable to hear or speak since birth, said he had a hard time communicating his story with officials. Hoffman's story was relayed to the FBI in 1967 and 1977, and to the House Select Committee in Assassinations in 1979, but to no avail. The FBI stated that "since the Warren Commission found no evidence of a man shooting the president from behind the grassy knoll, then the Dallas office is no longer conducting an investigation into his testimony."

Mr. Hoffman is a frequent and welcomed visitor the Center.

FORGOTTEN WITNESSES

by Mark A. Oakes

Concerning the JFK assassination, one testimony I was always concerned about was the testimony of Dallas Patrolman J. W. Foster. He told the Warren Commission that "He worked his way over to the south side of Elm Street to see if any shots had hit."

"Were you successful?", asked W.C. Lawyer Warren Ball. "Yes", replied Foster, "I saw where they caught the corner of the manhole cover, and went into the turf." Also in support of this are several newspapers pictures and photographs showing Detective Buddy Walthers and an unidentified FBI man picking up something from the grass. Two other bystanders, Mr. and Mrs. Hartman saw a bullet furrow close to where Jean Hill was standing (confirmed by a policeman) and reported this to the FBI.

Refer to Commission Document 1518, Pgs 2, 41-46. The FBI told the Hartmans that the mark in the grass was caused by a bone fragment! The Hartmans also told the FBI that the furrow lined up with the North Side of ELM Street.

The FBI changed their testimony, saying, "The Hartmans said that the mark in the grass lined up with the School Book Depository!" I interviewed these people on video, and they both have documentation to back up their stories.

According to the Hartmans, I was the first researcher to get a video taped with them. J.W. Foster told me the same thing although he has been mentioned in several books, and the Hartmans only in *COVER-UP* (Gary Shaw/Larry Harris) and *Crossfire* (Jim Marrs). Per my request, the Hartmans went to the A.S.K. conference in November of '91. The bottom line is that James Tauge's wound accounted for three shots. These witnesses confirm additional shots.

DEALEY PLAZA

The Warren Commission took 178 statements from witnesses in Dealey Plaza:

- * 49 believed shots came from behind
- * 78 had "no opinion"
- * 30 came up with answers that didn't fit in with any evidence
- * 20 believed that shots were fired from the Grassy knoll
- * 61 believed that some gunfire came from in front of the motorcade
- * Sixteen people in or near the S. Book D. said shots came from the knoll