

Pictures of the Pain

"...Governor Connally whose coat button was open turned in such a way to extend his right hand out towards the President...and as he turned he exposed his entire shirt front and chest because his coat was unbuttoned...at that moment a shot very clearly hit that part of the Governor. He was wounded once with a chest shot, this we now know..." (page 87).

"The Governor's coat was open. He, he reached back in this fashion (Rather apparently illustrates the action), back as if to, to offer aid or ask the President something. At that moment, a shot clearly hit the Governor, in the front, and he fell back in his seat." (page 89).

Notice that he said that a shot hit Connally in the front. So Connally must have been turned around for Rather to think that a shot hitting him in the front could have come from the Depository. Also, Rather was saying that he saw the wound, saw it appear on the Governor's chest. No wound is readily visible on Connally in the Z235-Z240 sequence. Everything that is put forward as a reason to think a shot hit him there is based on interpreting his apparent reactions.

The unpublished manuscript *Murder from Within*, by Fred Newcomb and Perry Adams, is the first work to propose that Zapruder frames 285-290 could have once shown Connally being hit. They suggested that the image area was reduced in this part of the film to hide the area below Connally's head.⁶

Newcomb and Adams' manuscript was completed in 1974. They cited the Rather broadcast descriptions and gave their date as November 23rd. Trask cites an article by Gary Mack in *The Continuing Inquiry*, which in turn cites a transcript obtained by Richard E. Sprague, presumably from CBS. Trask is of the opinion that the broadcasts were made on Monday, November 25th.

Many authors have pointed out that Rather described the President as being driven forward when hit in the head. *Murder from Within* is apparently unique in drawing attention to Rather's description of the shot that hit Governor Connally.

FBI Visual Aids and CD 298

On January 20, 1964, the FBI turned over to the Warren Commission a collection of visual aids, including a Dealey Plaza scale model. The aids were accompanied by an explanatory volume which became Commission Document 298. The document is partly in narrative form and partly in question and answer form, including a section dealing with distances, angles, and time intervals between shots.

The scenario was, of course, three shots from the Texas School Book Depository window, with no misses since this was before the adoption of the single-bullet theory. The window-to-target distances are given as 167 feet, 262 feet, and 307 feet for shots 1, 2 and 3 respectively.⁷ Harold Weisberg published an excerpt from this FBI report:

(Whitewash II, p. 37) *What was the aiming pattern of the assassin's target? The target was moving away in a relatively straight direction. Shot one was fired from a gun probably braced for a steady shot sighted-in on a predetermined point on the parkway just clear of tree foliage. Linear measurements made on the scale model indicate that shots two and three were fired at a target slowly moving away in a direction slightly downward and to the right of the point where shot one struck the President.*

A. SHOT ONE hit the target from a distance of 167 feet, measured downward along a 23-degree angle from the horizontal.

B. SHOT TWO hit the target from a distance of 262 feet, measured downward along an 18-degree angle from the horizontal. The target moved forward 96 feet in 4.4 seconds at 15 mph (22fps) or 5.5 seconds at 12 mph (17.6fps). Line of sight change from shot one: 5 degrees upward, 4 degrees to the right.

C. SHOT THREE hit the target from a distance of 307 feet, measured downward along a 15-degree angle from the horizontal. The target moved forward 45 feet in 2.0 seconds at 15 mph (22fps) or 2.5 seconds at 12 mph (17.6fps). Line of sight change from shot two: 3 degrees upward, 1.5 degrees to the right.

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A distance of 167 feet corresponds to approximately Z frame 207 if, as with the Secret Service figures, it means the distance to a point directly under the rear bumper of the car. A distance of 262 feet corresponds to the location of the limousine around frame Z313, and a distance of 307 feet corresponds to approximately frame Z370.

The document estimates the time intervals between shots as 4.4 to 5.5 seconds between shots #1 and #2 (limousine moved 96 feet), and 2.0 to 2.5 seconds between shots #2 and #3 (limousine moved 45 feet). These time intervals are based, apparently, on the insistence of many Secret Service agents that the limousine moved at a speed of 12 to 15 mph throughout the shooting.

The document gives precise distances from the pedestal on which Zapruder stood to the locations of the limousine at shots 1, 2, and 3.⁸ Pictures of the Dealey Plaza model show miniature cars representing the limousine at these three locations. The car representing shot #3 is across from the steps leading down from the pergola, and the car representing shot #2 is in about the location that we commonly associate with the fatal shot to Kennedy's head.

One must ask how the FBI could incorporate such data in a visual exhibit intended to "assist eyewitnesses in clearly demonstrating their recollections at the time of the shootings."⁹

Were shots combined in this scenario? Did "shot #2" really stand for two nearly simultaneous shots hitting Connally and Kennedy, so that it would at least approximate the witnesses' actual recollections? Did the FBI then make up a shot 45 feet further down the street, or was Kennedy really hit there?

Note that this scenario puts the second and third shots closer together than the first and second. The Warren Report concedes that most witnesses who reported a specific grouping of shots put the last two close together (the implication there is that one of these was the missed shot), and the description by Dan Rather also gives the impression that the third shot followed very close upon the second, according to the film as he saw it.

I would suggest that the original "timing problem" faced by the authorities concerned the last two shots, and had nothing to do with the "magic bullet".

The research community should give some thought to the phenomenon of incompetent or purposely ineffective use of evidence. Bits of Warren Commission minutia have been turned into magnets for criticism. Significant pieces of evidence are used in the literature to make one minor point, like a rebuttal to the single-bullet theory, and afterward that evidence is discarded.

This happened to CE 585, which was reproduced in Harold Weisberg's *Whitewash II*, with the comment that the three X marks stood for three shots hitting the limousine, contrary to the single-bullet theory. There was no comment about the actual location of the marks for the second and third shots.¹⁰

Weisberg also printed two photographs from the Commission's files, showing a reenactment in progress, and taken from the pedestal where Zapruder stood. Weisberg took these to be photos that were once part of CE 875, but that had been suppressed. (They may be that, or they may depict an earlier reenactment.) The photos show three traffic cones representing, apparently, the location of the limousine as three shots hit it. *Again, the only comment is that three hits is a contradiction to the single-bullet theory!!* Two of the cones were placed further down the street than where the limousine is shown in Zapruder frame 313. The author either did not notice this or chose to remain silent about it.

The section of CD 298 that gives the distances is also quoted on page 37 of *Whitewash II* with no comment about the gross conflict between these figures and what is now seen in the films.

How could this information have been in the official files for so long, and available in a much-read book, without anyone grasping its meaning? Or did some people properly interpret this material, but we never heard from them?

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Notes:

1. Warren Commission Document 5, p. 117.
2. Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*, April 14, 1978.
3. Interview with Robert West, January 11, 1995.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Richard Trask, *Pictures of the Pain*, Yeoman Press, 1993.
6. Fred Newcomb and Perry Adams, *Murder from Within*, copyright 1974, p. 120.