

THE ASSASSINATION

Shadow on a Grassy Knoll

The most trampled patch of greenery in America may well be the small knob above Elm Street in Dallas, close to the Texas School Book Depository. The grassy knoll owes its notoriety to conspiracy-peddling critics of the Warren Commission who contend that an unidentified sniper on the knoll fired on John F. Kennedy. Last week new evidence appeared to support the Warren Commission's conclusions that no bullets came from the knoll; that the two shots which killed Kennedy and wounded Governor John Connally were triggered by Lee Harvey Oswald from the book depository building.

Motion-picture film shot by Orville Nix, one of the three known amateur photographers who recorded the assassination, had made it appear to some eyes that a rifleman lay on a raised object atop the knoll. United Press International bought the film from Nix and persuaded Massachusetts' Itek Corporation, which specializes in sophisticated photographic equipment and photographic-analysis processes, to find out what Nix's camera really captured. Employing advanced methods that were not available to the Warren Commission, Itek concluded in a 55-page report that 1) no one could be discerned on the suspect area of the knoll, 2) the purported figure of a rifleman was actually a tree's shadow, 3) the raised object was probably a vehicle in a parking lot behind the knoll, and 4) because of abutments and other obstructions, it would have been virtually impossible to sharpshoot from the vehicle's position on the knoll. "Exhaustive studies" said Itek, "failed to turn up any new evidence."