

87 Ned Scott, Jr., "The Myth of the Grassy Knoll Gunman". The Third Decade, 8#5, July 1992, pp. 20-24. For a different perspective see Robert C. Dean, "Letter to the Editor", The Third Decade, 9#1, November 1992, pp. 36-42.

SKULLDUGGERY IN DALLAS

by
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More than fifty ear-witnesses perceived the sound of the first shot as being a "firecracker" or something other than the sharp crack of a rifle. Dallas police chief Jesse Curry drove the lead car in the motorcade. He heard "A sharp report as a firecracker or as it was the report of this rifle".¹ Secret Service Agent Winston G. Lawson sat beside him in the front seat. In a deposition Mr. Lawson spoke of his recollection of the first shot. "I heard this very loud report which at first flashing through my mind did not say rifle shot. It sounded louder and more of a bang. My first impression was a firecracker or bomb or something like that."² Secret Service Agent William Greer drove the Presidential limousine; he commented, "... I heard what I thought was the backfire of a motorcycle behind the President's automobile."³ Agent Roy Kellerman sat beside him. Kellerman reported, "...and there is a report like a firecracker, pop."⁴

Presidential aide Kenneth O'Donnell rode in a jump seat in the Secret Service car following the President's car. He testified before the Warren Commission thusly: "And then the shots occurred---which at that time, I did not know as shots. My first impression was it was a firecracker."⁵ Beside him was aide David Powers who submitted an affidavit as to his impression. "Shortly thereafter the first shot went off and it sounded to me as a firecracker."⁶ Secret Service agents Clinton Hill, George Hickey, Glen Bennett, John Ready, and Paul Landis who rode in this car mentioned their recollections of the first shot as sounding like a firecracker.⁷

Special Agent Rufus Youngblood who was in Vice-President Johnson's car testified before the WC. "But in my mind, I think I identified the last two positively as shots, whereas the first one I thought was just an explosive noise, and I didn't know whether it was a firecracker or a shot. It seems, as I try to think over it, there was more of a crack sound to the last two shots."⁸ Presidential aide Clifton C. Carter stated, "... when I heard a noise which sounded like a firecracker."⁹ Special Agent Jerry Kivett was explicit, "It sounded more like an extremely large firecracker, in that it did not seem to have the sharp report of a rifle."¹⁰

Farther back in the motorcade in the press car reserved for the wire services, Merriman Smith of UPI wrote of his impression of the event. "Suddenly we heard three loud; almost painfully loud cracks. The first sounded as if it might have been a large firecracker. But the second and third blasts were unmistakable. Gunfire."¹¹

There were many more ear-witnesses who gave similar statements that their first impression of the first shot as sounding like a "FIRECRACKER". Consider that if these impressions are correct, that the first shot could have been a "SHORT" round lacking the power of a fully loaded round.

Special Agents Francis X. O'Neill, Jr. and James W. Sibert of the FBI observed the autopsy on behalf of the FBI. In their report to FBI headquarters¹², the wound in the back was described as follows.

"During the latter stages of this autopsy, Dr. HUMES located an opening which appeared to be a bullet hole which was below the shoulders and two inches to the right of the middle line of the spinal column. This opening was probed by Dr. Humes with the finger, at which time it was determined that the trajectory of the missile entering at this point had entered at a downward position of 45 to 60 degrees. Further probing determined that the distance travelled by this missile was a short distance inasmuch as the end of the opening could be felt with the

finger."

The slightly twisted shape of CE 399 appears to be consistent with that of a bullet which impacted at a relatively slow speed and embedded itself in flesh.

Immediately after the death of the President at Parkland Hospital, the Secret Service asked that the room be cleared. At the time of the last rites and the short prayer which followed, only four doctors, Mrs. Kennedy, and the priest were present; and soon, they also left the room. Two nurses and an orderly then entered to prepare the body and clean the area. The nurses were Margaret M. Henchcliffe¹³, and Diana Hamilton Bowron¹⁴. The orderly was David Sanders¹⁵. Secret Service Special Agents Andrew Berger¹⁶ and Richard Johnson¹⁷ were stationed outside the President's room to guard against intruders. Nurse Henchcliffe stated, "Well, after the last rites were said, we then undressed him and cleaned him up and wrapped him up in sheets until the coffin was brought."¹⁸ The casket arrived about 1:40 p.m. The nurses left Trauma Room 1 shortly after the President had been placed into the casket. Their actions and observations during the thirty-odd minutes they had control of the body have not been adequately examined. The importance of their observations has been overlooked.

Consider if the magic bullet (CE 399) was a "short" round, and the wound in the back bottomed out. It is likely that CE 399 was embedded in the President's back when the nurses took possession of the corpse. The President had lain supine on the stretcher from the time he was removed from the limo until he died. No one has questioned the nurses about the condition of this wound except possibly the FBI. Both nurses stated in their depositions taken by Arlen Specter that they had previously been questioned by the FBI. Specter asked no questions about the wound in the back. This writer's FOIA request for copies of the FBI interrogations of these nurses elicited the response that "Based upon a search of the central indices at FBI headquarters, we could not locate any interviews of these individuals in the files pertaining to the assassination of President Kennedy." The FBI interviewed some two dozen medical personnel at Parkland Hospital. These FBI interviews are still secret. Dr. Kemp Clark was one of those and he related the thrust of FBI questioning. "This agent asked me if I had recovered any missiles or fragments of missiles from the President's body. I said I did not, and he asked me if I knew anyone in Parkland Hospital who had recovered such evidence and I assured him that I did not."¹⁹ The most plausible explanation of CE 399 having been found on a stretcher is that it was extracted from the President's back and later disposed of there.

The report of FBI agents Sibert and O'Neill mentions a strange event. "Also during the latter stages of the autopsy, a piece of the skull measuring 10 x 6.5 centimeters was brought to Dr. HUMES who was instructed that this had been removed from the President's skull." Another section of the FBI report relates that "Following the removal of the wrapping, it was ascertained that the President's clothing had been removed and it was apparent that a tracheotomy had been performed, as well as surgery of the head area, namely, in the top of the skull." A communication²⁰ from the Baltimore Field Office to FBI Headquarters on November 23, 1963 included the following paragraph: "A piece of skull measuring 10 by 6.5 centimeters had been flown in to Bethesda from Dallas hospital and this disclosed minute metal fragments where bullet emerged from skull." These FBI documents indicate a piece of skull was removed from the President's head at Parkland Hospital. If this is correct, it had to have been removed during the period when nurses Henchcliffe and Bowron had control of the body. The FBI was unable to identify the courier who carried the piece of skull between hospitals when asked in a FOIA request. The piece of skull did not accompany the body in the casket but was hand-carried separately. From whom did the courier obtain the piece of skull and acquire the knowledge that it had been removed? If the courier had been someone other than an FBI agent he would have been named in the Sibert-O'Neill report. The 10 by 6.5 dimensions do not match those of any of the three pictures of skull found in the Presidential limousine, as the HSCA would have us believe. There is a material difference in the

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dimensions of the head wound as viewed by the Dallas doctors and the autopsy doctors, as the wound unwrapped in Bethesda was some four times larger.

Dr. Malcolm Perry made a tracheotomy incision through an entrance wound in the throat. David Lifton talked with Dr. Perry when he was researching his book Best Evidence.²¹ He asked the dimensions of the incision and Perry estimated two to three centimeters initially, but under later questioning said it could have four centimeters but that you didn't need one that long. This wound was measured in Bethesda at 6.5 centimeters and X-rays indicated that whatever made the entrance wound initially was missing. The article by Joanne Braun, "Some Evidence to back up Tom Wilson",²² quoted the following from Dr. John K. Lattimer's book, Kennedy and Lincoln.

"Actually, the chief anesthesiologist, Dr. M. T. Jenkins, was aware that there was a hole in the back of the President's neck because in the process of positioning and stabilizing Kennedy's head and pushing up his neck to straighten the airway for easier passage of the oxygen he was pumping in, his spread fingers felt the small hole on the back of the neck." Again in a letter to the Editor of Time magazine he said that "the anesthetist, Dr. Marion Jenkins, at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, had found the bullet hole in the back of John F. Kennedy's neck..."

Nurses Henchcliffe and Bowron were a link in the "chain of possession" of the President's body. They should have been closely questioned about whether they detected the hole in the back of the President's neck and whether the size of the wound in the front of the neck was increased during the cleaning process.

A major flaw of the autopsy was the failure of the doctors to closely examine the exterior of the body prior to starting the cutting process. After pictures and X-rays, they started with the head wound. When they reflected the scalp backward to the nape of the neck, it could have obscured the exit wound in the back of the neck. They also failed to detect the entrance wound in the front of the neck. It was later in the evening before they observed the wound in the President's back.

On March 9, 1964, Assistant Special Agent In Charge Roy Kellerman testified before the Warren Commission. Assistant Counsel Arlen Specter directed questioning for the WC. In response to a question relating to the wounds he had observed in the President's body, Kellerman²³ described an entrance wound the size of the tip of his little finger in the bottom of the hairline immediately to the right of the right ear. Texas Highway Patrolman Hurchel Jacks observed as the President was removed from the limo, "Before the President's body was covered it appeared that the bullet had struck him above the right ear or near the temple".²⁴ An entrance wound in the right temple area would be compatible with a bullet fired from the grassy knoll. When Specter presided over the questioning of the autopsy doctor James²⁵ Humes on March 16, he did not ask for any information on this wound in the temple.²⁶ When Specter deposed Margaret Henchcliffe on March 21²⁶ and Diana Bowron on March 24²⁷ he again failed to ask about their impressions of this wound. Consider that these nurses had the best opportunity to carefully examine all of the President's wounds while they were cleaning them of the blood and gore present at death. Their corroboration of Kellerman's observation of the wound in the right temple area would strengthen the grassy knoll scenario.

The implications of the skullduggery in Dallas are tremendous. If CE 399 was actually embedded in the President's back, the "Single Bullet Theory" concocted by Arlen Specter and subscribed to by the Warren Commission and the HSCA would be exposed for the fraud it is. If the FBI learned through its interviews that CE 399 was embedded in the President's back and withheld this information from WC and HSCA, the criminal cover-up by the FBI would be exposed. The FBI had to know the "chain of possession" of the piece of skull it conveyed from Parkland Hospital to Bethesda, such as from whom it was acquired and the circumstances of its removal. The FBI has never reported on this to the public.

Several researchers have postulated the diversion of the body and alteration of wounds in furtherance of a conspiracy. It would have been exceedingly risky to abscond

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with the body before they knew what alterations were needed to produce a "one-gunman, schoolbook-depository effect" after several gunmen had fired. It is quite possible that the alteration of wounds was a result of rampant souvenir hunting and skullduggery in Dallas.

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Notes

1. Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 4, p. 160. References to this source cited hereafter in format: 4H160.
2. 4H352.
3. 18H723.
4. 2H73.
5. 7H447.
6. 7H473.
7. 18H750-762.
8. 2H150.
9. 7H474.
10. 18H778.
11. 4H160.
12. Commission Document 7.
13. 6H139-143, 21H239-40.
14. 21H203-4.
15. 21H224.
16. 18H795.
17. 18H798.
18. 6H141.
19. 6H27.
20. Commission Document 5.
21. David Lifton, Best Evidence (New York: Macmillan, 1980), p. 238.
22. The Third Decade 3#5 July 1992, p. 30.
23. 2H81.
24. 18H801.
25. 2H347-376.
26. 6H139-143.
27. 6H134-139.

THE ALLEGATIONS OF CECIL SMALL by Peter Whitmey*

In the latter part of February, 1992, I received a letter postmarked "New Orleans, La.", which had been mailed to me on February 14, with no return address. Inside I discovered an undated newspaper article entitled "Man said he had chance encounter with Oswald," with a note above the headline indicating that it was from the Charlotte Observer in North Carolina (I later learned that the article was from the Jan. 5, 1992 issue.) The handwriting on both the envelope and above the article appears to be that of a woman, but no letter or note was enclosed indicating who, in fact, had sent the article to me.

The news report was attributed to the Associated Press and was an edited version of a more detailed report published the day before in the Winston-Salem Journal, written by Charlie Peek of the paper's "Northwest Bureau".² Its headline read: "DYING WORDS: Oswald Was Innocent, N.C. Man Says." According to Peek's account, based on interviews with Mrs. Cecil Small and her niece, Betty Donoghue, the late Mr. Small had claimed for