

The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public., Ed., Bradley S. Greenberg & Edwin B. Parker. Stanford U. Press, 1965.

The Press and the Assassination, by William L. Rivers

pp.58-9

It is a curious fact that the most involved of the conspiracy theories sprang from those who are usually the sniffiest about press reports, the academicians. Some of them know that the press goes to the authorities for quotations on matters of moment. Deep down, they are likely to suspect authority more than they suspect the press. Thus it was that a political scientist and a historian, Jack Minnis and Staughton Lynd, wrote "Seeds of Doubt," which appeared in The New Republic.

"Seeds of Doubt" was by far the most remarkable article to appear during the assassination period. Without ever actually saying that ~~someone~~ someone was suppressing information and rearranging evidence, Minnis and Lynd seemed to be saying nothing else. Their article was a catalogue of conflicting press reports from the time of the first news up to mid-December, and broadly hinted that the authorities were making changes as they went along in order to bring inconvenient facts into line with indisputable evidence. The tone was typified by the section dealing with the speed of the President's car:

All early accounts of the assassination put the speed of the President's limousine at about 25 miles per hour, but now it has slowed to 15 miles per hour (Life, November 29), "no more than half the 25 miles per hour first estimated by authorities" (Newsweek, December 9), and 12 miles per hour (U.S. News & World Report, December 9). The latter magazine comments: "If President Kennedy's car had been moving even 20 miles per hour, the experts say, it might have made the lead time too difficult a problem for the sniper."

Assessing the Minnis-Lynd article and an accompanying sidebar that speculated about the throat wound and the whereabouts of Jack Ruby at the time of the assassination, one horrified reader commented, "What can it all mean, except the insinuation that Oswald and Ruby were connected and that Oswald's death was part of a mysterious conspiracy in which both were engaged and which the authorities are trying to hush up?"

As it turned out, the structure of the Minnis-Lynd thesis came crashing down only a few days after the article appeared. The President's throat wound, it was finally determined, had not been caused by the entry of a bullet but by the exit of a ~~far~~ fragment. ...