

almost the precise moment Tilson says he spotted the fleeing man, reveals no car, black or otherwise, in the location Tilson pinpointed.<sup>177</sup> Dallas police radio logs for the day do not show any alert for such a car as Tilson described, nor is there any record that he gave a license number or made any such call to the homicide detectives. Finally, Tilson himself acknowledges that his daughter, his only witness, no longer confirms his story.<sup>178</sup> He claims to have lost the paper on which his daughter, who was eighteen years old at the time, had supposedly written the car's license, and she "doesn't recall" writing down the number.<sup>179</sup>

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Some early eyewitness evidence used to support a conspiracy has been quietly abandoned by the critics and is now discredited. On the day of the assassination, a man near the presidential motorcade opened and closed a black umbrella as the shots rang out. Some, such as Robert Cutler, the publisher of the *Grassy Knoll Gazette*, said the umbrella contained a poisoned flechette (a small dart) that shot into the President's throat and neutralized him so a team of five assassins could finish the job.<sup>180</sup> Jim Marrs and Oliver Stone believe the "umbrella man" gave a signal to the team of assassins waiting in ambush. However, the House Select Committee located the umbrella man in 1978, after publishing a drawing made from photographs taken that day and asking for public assistance in finding him. Louie Witt did not even know he was the subject of such controversy, still had the same umbrella, and explained he had gone to Dealey to heckle the President with it.<sup>181</sup>

Photographs taken at Dealey Plaza also showed a man standing next to Witt, and soon there were those who said he appeared to be Cuban and that he seemed to occasionally speak into a walkie-talkie. Witt himself said the man was black, and he never had anything that could be remotely confused with a walkie-talkie. Across the street from Witt was a stocky woman in a long coat and with a scarf tied around her head. Dubbed by conspiracy buffs as the "babushka lady," she can be seen in other photos taking her own home movie of the motorcade. But she was never identified after the assassination. In 1970, a Texan, Beverly Oliver, stepped forward and said she was the babushka lady and that her film had been confiscated on the day of the assassination

by either the Secret Service or Beverly Oliver was even in Dallas on two occasions. She claimed to have been in Dallas in 1963, and later said she had seen Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald at the Carousel Club, the executive manager of the Carousel Club. The House Select Committee executive session on the assassination on November 10, 1978, Jim Marrs devoted several hours to accepting her claim of

Finally, there is no evidence that Press photographer just as JFK and Governor John Connally. Two of the Secret Service members were around and are looking away from the Depository. Even Margie Hebe on the sixth floor ground floor watching when the original evidence was an important issue. testifying before the House Select Committee himself as the man they were on the Dealey Plaza the same photograph man, Mrs. Donald I. tation, identified the implausibility that House Select Committee photo study and co-Lovelady. But such the man in the door

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# 'Umbrella man' identified?

*Dallas News 11/28/78*  
Panel plans to question Dallasite during JFK probe

By EARL GOLZ  
©The Dallas Morning News, 1978

A man identified as the so-called "umbrella man," whom the House Assassinations Committee wants to question and the subject of speculation by assassination researchers for 15 years, was located and interviewed by The News this week.

A former co-worker of L. Steven Witt identified him as the person who was photographed opening and closing an umbrella in Dealey Plaza about the time President John Kennedy was assassinated at 12:30 p.m. Nov. 22, 1963.

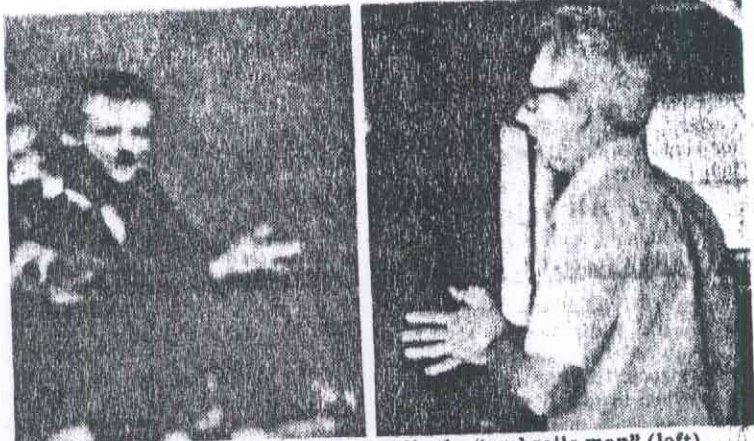
A House Assassinations Committee spokesman said Friday that investigators are planning to question Witt, who told The News earlier this week he had never been interviewed by any governmental agents in connection with the assassination. Witt said he would not object to talking to committee investigators.

A PHOTOGRAPH of the umbrella man, sitting on a curb in Dealey Plaza seconds after the assassination, was distributed by the committee July 30 with four other photographs and drawings of persons wanted for questioning.

Witt, interviewed by The News at his job in the warehouse of a filing equipment company near Simmons Freeway, neither would confirm nor deny he was the umbrella man. He said he could not remember exactly where he was in downtown Dallas when the president was shot but thought he probably would have been on his lunch hour.

Assassination researchers have speculated the umbrella opening and closing — on the sidewalk adjacent to the president's limousine when the shooting started — could have been a signal.

WITT'S FORMER fellow employee, however, said he is fairly certain that Witt was only protesting the Kennedy family's history in foreign policy matters. The former co-worker, now an insurance executive, agreed to talk about Witt on the condition he remain anonymous.



L. Steven Witt (right) . . . reportedly the "umbrella man" (left).

He said Witt told him the umbrella was a symbol of "protest" and was connected somehow with Joseph Kennedy, the father of the president, and the senior Kennedy's appeasement policies toward Nazi Germany in the late 1930s.

When Witt returned to his office four blocks from Dealey Plaza after witnessing the assassination from only a few feet away, he was "visibly shaken," the former co-worker said.

JOSEPH KENNEDY and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain were criticized for not taking a tougher line against the Nazis. Kennedy was the U.S. ambassador to England during the same years Chamberlain was prime minister, from 1937 to 1940.

Chamberlain's opposition party in Britain protested his appeasement toward Nazi Germany by using an umbrella as a symbol because Chamberlain constantly was seen with an umbrella during public appearances.

In 1963, President Kennedy was the target of similar criticism in the United States for alleged appeasement of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

At the time of the assassination, Witt was employed in the stock department of the now defunct Rio Grande

National Life Insurance Co., at Elm and Field streets.

ACCUSED ASSASSIN Lee Harvey Oswald walked from the Texas School Book Depository Building after the assassination and boarded a bus at Elm and Field, the Warren Commission has reported. As it headed back toward Dealey Plaza, the bus reportedly became bogged down in heavy traffic, the committee report said, and Oswald got out after two blocks.

In the photograph distributed by the House Assassinations Committee, the umbrella man can be seen sitting on a sidewalk curb next to a dark-skinned man seconds after the assassination. The second man, still unidentified, thrust his right arm straight up and waved it after the first shot hit the president, photographs and film indicate.

THE UMBRELLA MAN was joined on the curb by the second man after closing his umbrella immediately after the shots. Both appear to be conversing calmly as people around them fall to the ground for cover.

After sitting a few seconds together, the umbrella man stood and walked east toward Houston street. The other man goes west toward the triple underpass.

August 28, 1993

To: JFK research community  
From: Gary Mack  
Re: Case Closed/Gerald Posner

I had high hopes for Gerald Posner and his quest to right the many wrongs "researchers" have done to the Kennedy case, but he winds up guilty of some of the same charges he levels at the buffs.

The U.S. News & World Report articles contain some of the same misstatements of fact and abbreviations of history that plague researchers today. Carolyn Arnold is quoted out of context and Gordon Arnold is trashed when evidence not included in "The Men Who Killed Kennedy" is purposely ignored.

Posner seems to think official reports are always correct and witnesses are wrong when their story is contrary to the lone assassin theory. His magic bullet trajectory theory fails completely because he has "overlooked" the trajectory conclusions of the entire medical panel of the House Assassinations Committee: if JFK was sitting upright when shot, then the trajectory is slightly upward, but if he was bent over, the trajectory would have been slightly downward. (HSCA Vol. 7, pg. 100) Posner apparently believes Kennedy was bent over before getting hit.

Re-indexing the Warren Report doesn't impress me; when you shuffle a deck of cards you still get 52 of them. He's a beginner with high hopes and low comprehension, who has given history a sham of a book.

In the following article my corrections and comments cover most, but not all of the problems in the U.S. News & World Report adaptation of "Case Closed."

72. The photo is a frame blowup from a film seen publicly since August 1963.

74. The returned wedding ring could just have easily signaled the end of the Oswald's marriage, rather than a hint of the tragedy to come.

Frazier repeatedly estimated the length of the package at a little over two feet; the FBI measured the space the package took up on the seat and got 26 inches (the rifle was roughly 36 inches when taken apart). This is much shorter than Gerald Posner's

description.

Oswald carried the package under his arm pit and cupped in his hand . . . try that with a yardstick and you'll find it can't be done. There is reason to doubt that the package did contain the rifle.

76. The sniper's nest had two sides, not three.

77. Oswald claimed only that he saw Jarman walk by, not that he was having lunch with him.

Arnold's interview with Summers in 1978 was the first time she had been asked for her story. In the second FBI statement she said "I did not see Lee Harvey Oswald at the time President Kennedy was shot," which has nothing to do with seeing Oswald in the lunch room several minutes earlier. She presumably signed the document because she was asked; Harold Weisberg says she made a am to pm (time of day) correction, but made no additions. Apparently, the FBI did not consider her sighting of Oswald important and she didn't add it to her statement. The other women support her original story of being out in the street by 12:25; nothing in their statements conflicts with Arnold's story to Summers. No workers claimed to be in the lunch room at the time Arnold believes she and Oswald were there. The man Oswald met leaving the Texas School Book Depository was Pierce Allman, a crew cut reporter who did enter the TSBD to telephone a report to WFAA radio.

79. The drawing omits the two thick pipes running up and down next to the left edge of the window and which would have interfered with the gunman's position with the boxes placed as indicated.

Oswald left Robert Stovall's employ in April 1963 . . . how could Stovall possibly be in a plot of any kind 7 months prior to the assassination?

80. Clint Hill did not push Jackie into the car - he barely touched her (Posner left out Jackie reaching, and getting, the piece of skull from the back of JFK's head) and Posner also omitted Hill's observation of a huge hole in the right rear of the head, something that does not appear in the autopsy "evidence."

Only two saw the shooter, others saw the gun. Brennan was sitting on the wall and in recreating the scene for The Warren Commission, sat in the wrong place. He did not turn his head and look up until after Z-207.

The bus in the photo is the second of three and was half way between the middle and the end of the motorcade. A color home movie, about 30 seconds after the photo shows Hill running up the

steps as she claimed.

82. The Mercer incident occurred west of Dealey Plaza near Stemmons; she never claimed to have seen a rifle, just a case that could have held one.

The HSCA did not refuse to play the radio tapes for McLain . . . they never offered and he did not ask. The motorcycle photo was identified as McLain by McLain and was taken more than 20 seconds after the assassination, confirming he did not race off immediately, as the radio tapes already revealed. There were no sirens for two minutes because McLain either didn't turn his on or took two minutes to catch up to the other motorcycles, or that a second open microphone, as the scientists originally speculated, picked up the approaching motorcade. There were few crowd sounds because McLain was 150 feet or more behind the President, and at that location, bystanders had already stopped clapping and cheering. The evidence implying the sound impulses occurred about one minute after the assassination can also prove that the recordings are copies, not originals, containing artifacts that fooled the National Academy of Science experts.

83. Speculation that the assassin "hurried diagonally" across the sixth floor is disproved by films and photographs showing the floor littered with boxes and other obstacles, thus slowing down his exit. He could also have entered the second floor lunchroom from another direction, which is consistent with not being the assassin.

If Oswald looked "like a maniac" with a face "so distorted" on the bus, how could he have, presumably, looked normal to Marrion Baker and Roy Truly a few minutes earlier? The bus had stopped when the driver learned of the assassination, so Oswald could have assumed the traffic would be stuck for a long time; besides, the taxi would be quicker and more direct. Perhaps he wore a jacket for the cold front that was forecast for that afternoon (which did arrive, dropping the temperature to 49 degrees by 6pm). No witness saw Oswald running, and the landlady at Oswald's rooming house saw him standing, apparently waiting, at the bus stop where the buses went into town, not away from the scene.

"Live" ammunition is the only kind that can be fired. A photo and a film do show a person and human movement at, or very near, where Gordon Arnold claimed to have been. No known photographic evidence shows that area at any other time until after the shooting ended and Arnold was on the ground, hidden from view by the concrete wall. Posner knew about this evidence, yet declined to either view or discuss it with me.

Ed Hoffman's story became known to researchers in December 1985, long after he had contacted the Dallas FBI and Senator Ted Kennedy. A more logical conclusion to the 1967 FBI report is that agents misunderstood Hoffman's story, not that he had changed it. Earle Brown was stationed on a railroad overpass above Stemmons, not on Stemmons, where traffic was being held so people could park along the sides and see JFK. Photographs and films show people spread out along Stemmons beginning about where Hoffman was. The films and photos show that the testimony of a train blocking Hoffman's view are in error. The first view of the train appears in the Mark Bell film a couple of minutes after Hoffman's observation could have occurred.

86. Penn Jones located the Umbrella Man, not the HSCA, after it published a blowup from a Life magazine photo shot in Dealey Plaza. The umbrella Witt showed the HSCA had a different number of "ribs" than the one in the Zapruder film. His testimony about his actions during and after the shooting is completely disproved by films and photos. And why would anyone expect JFK to relate an up and down motion of an umbrella to appeasement?

Ammunition does create some smoke, as evidenced by the video tape of the test shots fired in Dealey Plaza in 1978 from the TSBD and the grassy knoll. Oil in the barrel of a freshly cleaned rifle can add more smoke, and the angle of sunlight into the smoke and exhaust gases can make the smoke seem more dense. Wind gusts of 20 mph are meaningless in between gusts, and the area of interest had trees and a fence to block much of the wind. The steam pipe ran northeast, away from the knoll, not along the fence. And three frames of NBC News' film shows the same "smoke" in the same area as the witnesses said.

Oswald was shorter, lighter, and much younger than the suspect description, and Tippit first saw him from behind, so one wonders why Oswald was stopped. Several witnesses reported significantly different descriptions of the suspect, and at least two have reported seeing two men involved in the Tippit shooting.

Julia Postal never saw Oswald and never claimed to have seen him. She called police because J. Brewer told her to.

87. Posner is the one playing the numbers game, for over 50 witnesses located at least one shot from an area other than the TSBD (virtually all of their descriptions indicate on, or near, the grassy knoll). For the first few minutes, that was the area most law enforcement officers searched. Posner ignored the numbers of witnesses who pinpointed "other locations" which, when combined with the grassy knoll witnesses, results in 29% indicating other

than the TSBD. The simple fact is a significant number of people believed at least one shot came from JFK's right front.

88. The Warren Commission timing of 4.5 seconds was based on Oswald's rifle, while the HSCA timing of 3.3 seconds came from a different rifle . . . here Posner compares apples and oranges. The third shot is not the easiest to pinpoint - the head shot is.

91. The "jet effect" does not address the issue of the second gunman who may have missed his target, or hit his target during the initial movement of the President's body. The 1964 FBI reconstruction shows JFK's back blocked from view by the tree beginning at Z-161. Posner's trajectory appears based on Oswald knowingly firing through the branches of the live oak tree between the sixth floor window and the limousine.

92. When adjusted for accurate tape speed, as the HSCA chart mentioned, the acoustics evidence showed Z-160/161 to be the first shot, quite a coincidence if the acoustics work was wrong. There is reason to believe the fragments subjected to neutron activation analysis have no chain of possession and would be useless in court - the fragments still in the late Governor Connally would be very useful.

94. Frame 210 was the Warren Commission's earliest time for a shot, so JFK researchers properly used it as a starting point. The bullet velocities used by Posner, and lacking source information, are lower than the figures used by the Warren Commission or by the HSCA. Connally's doctor, Robert Shaw, told the media while the "magic" bullet was on its way to Washington, that the bullet was still in Connally's thigh (see WFAA-TV videotape).

The diagram shows a downward trajectory through JFK into Connally, but the HSCA, based on the medical panel studies of the original photos and x-rays of the body, concluded the trajectory had to be slightly upward when Kennedy was sitting in an upright position. When JFK bent over, the trajectory became slightly downward (based on the back wound being slightly below the neck wound). Posner's theory depends on JFK bending over prior to being shot, a most unlikely scenario.

95. Dr. John Lattimer was not, is not, and has never claimed to be a ballistics expert. He is a urologist who has applied his medical knowledge to the JFK case.

98. The photo of Ruby shooting Oswald was taken by Jack Beers, not

Bob Jackson.