The Separate Connally Shot

(Second of Two Articles)

by Vincent J. Salandria

Our purpose in this article is to establish finally and objectively that President Kennedy and Governor Connally were wounded by separate bullets. Once this is accomplished, the lone assassin theory will be eliminated for all those who require the rooting of historical belief in solid evidence.

A weaving hit of the President and the Governor was a crucial finding of the Warren Commission. We will briefly review the Commission's conclusions about the assassination shots:

"... one shot passed through the President's neck and then most probably passed through the Governor's body." (W.117)

"Two bullets probably caused all the wounds suffered by President Kennedy and Governor Connally." (W.117)

"... one shot probably missed the car and its occupants." (W.111)

"... three shots were fired." (W.111)

When we prove that a shot was not passed through the President and the Governor, the Commission's work will be undone. For the Commission concluded that

"Three shots were fired." Since a motion picture camera operating in the assassination scene presently fixed the time period of the assassination (W.117), and the alleged assassination weapon had a minimum firing time of 2.8 seconds, the Commission was fervently excited to a theory of no more than three shots. (W.97) To break this connection between a weaving hit of the President and the Governor it is to add a minimum of one shot and one additional gunman to the assassination. We know that the Warren Commission concluded that the shots which killed the President and wounded the Governor were fired by one man. (W.19) By necessary inference, the disproving of the double-hit concept will destroy the Commission's one-man-first-shot theory of the assassination.

Our previous article in The Minority of One pointed out some of the Commission's insurmountable problems in its effort to build a structure—without the benefit of evidence—to support the claim of a double hit of the President and the Governor. Governor Connally recoiled to the right, after being hit on the left side of his back, and to the Governor's right side was shattered by a bullet, it was not in alignment to be struck at the time of the alleged wounding of the Governor, by a bullet following the course described by the Commission. An additional problem confronted the Commission. This bullet, Commission Exhibit 399, according to the Commission, weighed in combination with its alleged fragments more than the weight of the heaviest test bullet. In concluding that 399 and the fragments all come from the same bullet, the Commission violated the physical law of conservation of mass.

Our task at this juncture is to determine whether there is still other evidence in support of a separate hit of Governor Connally.

Governor Connally recalled being hit after he turned right and then left again:

"... we turned on Elm Street.

"... we had just made the turn, well, when I heard what I thought was a shot. I heard this noise which I immediately thought was a shot. I heard this noise which I immediately took to be a rifle shot. I instinctively turned to my right because the sound appeared to come from over my right shoulder, so I turned to look back over my right shoulder, and I saw nothing unusual except just people in the crowd, but I did not catch the shot in my own mind I identified it as a rifle shot, and I immediately—"
From the Connally clothing we would expect in President Kennedy's back and the hole below the top of the collar (W-92) probative information for determining the ID evidence provided by the President's shirt was bone relied heavily on the FBI Agent Frazier's in his neck. Needless to say, a careful analy-

error Connally explained what happened to his clothing. The President's clothing revealed his first wounds were inflicted and after previous to the moment when her husband was hit:

... I heard that shot, I had the time to turn to my right, and to start to my left before I felt anything.

"It is not conceivable to me that I could have been hit by the rim bullet." Mrs. Connally stated that she had turned to the left when a shot had been fired, but previous to the moment when her husband was hit:

"... I heard a noise, and not being an expert listener, I was not aware that it was a rifle.

I turned over my right shoulder and looked back, and saw the President in his had hands at his sides.

... Thus very soon there was the second shot that his Jocks." (V. H 117)

Governor and Mrs. Connally's testimony twice supports the claim of a separate hit of the Governor. To Governor Connally, the Commission's view was that he was hit by the first bullet to strike the President, "is not conceivable." Mrs. Connally remembers that her husband was hit after the President's first wounds were inflicted and after she turned over her right shoulder, and by a second shot. There is no hint of support for the 399 joint-hit idea in the Connally testimony.

Evidence Is Washed Away

Our initial article on the Warren Commission, January 24, 1964, elaborated heavily on the FBI Agent Frazier's analysis of the damage to the President's clothing. The President's clothing revealed his incompatible with the final Commission's version of his wounds. (In brief, the hole in the back of the President's shirt, 5½ by 3½ inches in size (H-205), was too low to have allowed a bullet traveling downward at 18° (W-105) without hitting bone to emerge from the necktie knot (W-60). Therefore, the demonstrative evidence provided by the President's skin was of crucial value in dispelling the conjecture alleged by the Commission concerning the hole in President Kennedy's back and the hole in his neck. Needless to say, a careful analysis of the Connally clothing is of essence. From the Connally clothing we would expect positive information for determining the course of the missile through Connally and his clothing. The demonstrative and conclusive evidence of the Governor's clothing was not in Frazier's hands for safe keeping. Connally's testimony explained what happened to his clothing:

"... when the Archives of the State of Texas asked for the clothing, and I have given the clothing to the Commission." (IV H 117)

"... the hole was in such a condition, as I said through both layers of the cuff, and the hole was in such a condition, possibly due to the washing of the material, that I could not describe what actually caused it or if it had been caused by a bullet, the direction of the path of the bullet with reference to entrance and exit." (V H 54)

The person or persons who ordered the Governor Connally's clothing knew or had reason to know that visual evidence was being destroyed. The Commission, however, showed no discipline on degrading the vital identification of vital evidence by agents of the State of Texas:

"Representative Boggs, Governor, I would like to say that we have had this cooperation from all of your Texas officials from the attorney general of the State, and from his people, and others who have worked with the Commission." (IV H 54)

We much regret this form of cooperation was not uniformly discouraged or condemned by the Commission. On the day of the assassination, newspaper releases alerted the public to the importance of the Governor's clothing. A United Press International release appearing on the front page of The Lowell Sun (Lowell, Mass.), November 27, 1963, stated:

"It was impossible to tell at once where Kennedy was hit, but bullet wounds in Connally's chest were plainly visible indicating the gunfire might possibly have come from an automatic weapon."

Unfortunately, the laundering failed to wash out all the evidence from the Governor's shirt. The FBI was able to salvage something from his clothing:

"Evidence was being destroyed. The Commission, however, showed no discipline on the incompatibility of the hole in the shirt. This pattern is not compatible with a regular missile emerging from the front of the shirt. The hole is located 1 inch from the right side seam, and 9 inches below the top of the right sleeve." (IV H 64)

This pattern is not compatible with a regular missile emerging from the front of the shirt. The account is consistent with damage to the front of the garment resulting from fragments, or with an irregular missile, passing out the front of the shirt.

Further, Mr. Frazier stated that the top portion of the right sleeve of the Connally jacket contained "... the very rough hole." (V H 64) which is characteristic of an irregular missile striking the shirt. Fire was not an irregular missile. In support of this view, Frazier states: "The clavicle could also have been the result of a mulitluted bullet having struck the garment..." (V H 64). 590 cannot be so described. The hole in the shirt cuff was also: "... ragged in contour, irregularly shaped." (V H 64).

This, too, was not consistent with 399.

The only way Frazier could explain 399 having done this damage in the Connally coat and shirt was to discuss the possibility of a "... hole in the garment at the time of the object or bullet struck," or that "... the shirt had been wrinkled at the time it passed through." (V H 6455) explaining the incompatibility of the holes in the President's clothing with the autopsy report findings. Commander Humes offered the explanation that upon searching the President was forced: "... evacuate the elevation of the bullet, 0.115, with respect to the back." (II H 3460), although raising his right hand no further than his forehead. One reader-made fifty dollar note and three dollar shirts never seem to behave that way: neither should coats and shirts found to the forms of a President and a Governor.

What is not washed away in the Connally clothing evidence exists to indicate that Governor Connally's clothing was repaired before the President was forced to evacuate the elevation of the bullet, 0.115, with respect to the back. (II H 3460), although raising his right hand no further than his forehead. One reader-made fifty dollar note and three dollar shirts never seem to behave that way: neither should coats and shirts found to the forms of a President and a Governor.

The Impossible Changes in a Missile

A joint bit concept employing C.E. 399 as a regular missile entering through both the President and the Governor versions no drastic change in the missile. The missile which struck the Governor apparently underwent a drastic change in coming through the Governor and smashing his fifth rib and right wrist. The missile then entered the Governor's right arm to have been inflicted by a missile which could not hit the President's back, and then emerged from his chest as a mutilated bullet or as fragments.

Dr. Shaw addressed himself to the problem of the changing nature of the Connally missile:

"... when Governor Connally was examined, it was found that there was a small wound of entrance, roughly elliptical in shape,
and approximately a cm. and a half in its longer diameter, in the right posterior shoulder ... the wound of exit was below and slightly medial to the nipple on the antero-right chest. It was a round, ragged wound approximately 5 cm. in diameter. (V H 8)

A joint-hit concept involving C.E. 399 moving through both the President and the Governor allows for no drastic changes in a missile from regular to irregular in the entering and leaving of Connally's torso. A dramatic change in the missile which struck Governor Connally seems to have occurred rendering the missile that was regular on entry into Connally's back, irregular at some point prior to its exit from the anterior chest of the Governor. This transformation from a regular to an irregular missile, from entry and exit posterior to anterior chest of Connally, when combined with the ragged entries in the right wrist of the Governor, seems to rule out the regularly shaped C.E. 399 at the missile which wounded the Governor.

According to Frazier, the alleged murder weapon, the Carcano, was a "low velocity" rifle. (.111 H 414) Any rifle capable to Dr. Gregory, would have had to have been "remarkably powerful." While a finding of a bullet striking only Connally would have substantially reduced the velocity problem, as would a similar conclusion have relieved Dr. Olivier of some of his wound ballistics reconstruction problems. His test as performed, accurately confirmed to a view of the examination which reflected separate shots striking the President and the Governor. The problem of the test bullet C.E. 853 would not have been so acute. Though the 853 test bullet passed only through the governmental-test equivalent of the Governor's dense and bone. Dr. Olivier was compelled to admit: "The bullet has been quite flattened ... . The bullet recovered on the stretcher had not been flattened as much ... " (V H 10) The Commission showed it only one test bullet. Where are the others? What is their condition? The Commission, by arriving at a finding of a separate hit of the Governor would have gone far towards solving the velocity problem. But the Commission failed to provide this opening for its experts. The implications of more than three bullets, which logically flowed from this alternative concept of the assassination was not acceptable to the Commission.

**Between Two Hits**

The evidence disproves the 399 weaving hit theory. What then did happen in the Connally hit? A four-hour intensive analysis of the Zapruder films at the United States National Archives in Washington D.C. produced a possible answer. In the Zapruder films there is some evidence of the Governor turning to a hit in frames 292 to 293. Connally, in these frames, seems to be indicating a reaction to a bullet strike.

A verbal description of our observations on the applicable Zapruder frames is presented:

Frame 268: The Governor begins turning around to his left, but is still facing the direction of the President.

Frame 269: The Governor begins running around to his left, but is still facing to the left.

Frame 291: The Governor definitely slits. He is now facing the graying knoll in a northeasterly direction.

Frame 292: His meat is open. He seems to grimace in apparent pain. A hand seems
smaller versions which appear in the published exhibits (excluding frames 298, 299 and 211), show clearly the Governor's turn and his falling back, but do not show his expressions.

We do not present our 299 hypothesis as conclusively proven. More work has to be done on the question of exactly when and how Governor Connally was wounded. But, we do contend that the evidence against the joint-hit theory—crucial to the Warren Commission finding of a sole assassin—is overwhelmingly disproven by the Warren Commission's own evidence.

Our 299 hypothesis, we think, deserves serious investigation. This theory, unlike the Warren Commission's invention, cannot be dismissed merely with the words, "there is no reason to believe this hypothesis to be true". The 299 hypothesis is strongly supported by the evidence. Since the Warren Commission was unable to disprove the hypothesis, it was forced to admit that it could not be disproven.

The 299 hypothesis is supported by the evidence. If this hypothesis is ultimately proven, it will constitute further conclusive proof that there was more than one maniac firing at the motorcade. A hit on Governor Connally during 292 is separated by 21 frames from the 313 strike on the President's head. 153 Zapruder frames translate into a second of time. Therefore, 21 Zapruder frames constitute 0.13 seconds. This 0.13 second time period between the President's head hit and Governor Connally's head hit would also conform to the Commission's finding that: "Most witnesses recalled the second and third shots were bunched together." (W-115)

The FBI Disavows

We now return to the 399 weaving-hit theory. Since the FBI was the primary source of the relevant evidence, let us examine its findings.

As early as November 26, 1963, we were advised by an Associated Press report datelined Washington, D.C.:

"The FBI is preparing a detailed report of the assassination of President Kennedy and all the details will be made public, the White House announced Monday night."

Perhaps on the basis of this FBI report, another Associated Press article was released and datelined Washington, D.C.:

"Dec. 17. (AP) The first shot fired by President Kennedy's assassin struck Mr. Kennedy in the back and did not hit any vital organ, a reliable source familiar with the autopsy findings reported tonight. The second bullet to hit Mr. Kennedy—afer another shot struck Gov. John B. Connally of Texas..."

Was the "source familiar with the autopsy findings" the FBI? Nothing in the present study proves that a separate bullet did not hit the Governor. Could this be the reason for the banning of the original autopsy notes by James J. Humes? "I. James J. Humes, certify that I have destroyed by burning certain preliminary draft notes relating to Naval Medical School Autopsy Report 600-577 and have officially transmitted all other papers re-ferred to this report to higher authority." (XVII of 399)

Could the original autopsy findings have conformed to what Special Agent Roy H. Kellerman testified to with respect to his experience at Bethesda during the autopsy studies:

"There were three gentlemen who were performing this autopsy. A Colonel Fisch—during the examination of the President, from the hole that was in his shoulder, and with a probe, he is probing inside the shoulder with his instrument and I said, 'Colonel, where did it go?' He said, 'There are no laces for an outlet in this man's shoulder.'" (W-115)

If this bullet which had struck the President in the back had not exited, then 399 could not have also inflicted any wounds on the Governor.

On October 28, 1964 we got our first suggestion that the FBI report on the assassination had concluded that there was no double hit of the President and the Governor by 399. Arlen Specter, Assistant Counsel for the Commission, on that date addressed the Philadelphia Bar Association in Room 409 City Hall. He mentioned the
the FBI and the Warren Commission. Our review of the FBI laboratory findings of firearms expert Robert A. Frazier concerning the back wounds of the President indicated so that the work was of first quality. So much so, that we saw it. In the interest of historical justice, to dedicate an article in part to Mr. Frazier. With the purpose of checking out the possible divergence of findings between the FBI and the Warren Commission. I applied to the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C., for permission to inspect the FBI report. The Archives staff apparently does not consider its task as compelling the American people to "refly on the conditions and the manner of the turn on the Commission," for, after having identified myself as a critic of the Warren Commission Report.

It was afforded the courtesy and helpfulness of devoted public servants of the National Archives who performed their job well as trustees of public information. In short, I was permitted on February 25, 1966 across the four-volume work enabled investigation of an assassination of President Kennedy, November 22, 1963, which work bears the name of John Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In Volume I, page 10 of the FBI report one quest for the answer to the historical riddle came to a successful conclusion:

"Immediately after President Kennedy and Governor Connally were admitted to Parkland Memorial Hospital, a bullet was found on one of the stretchers. Medical examination of the President's body revealed that one of the bullets had entered just below his shoulder to the right of the spinal column at an angle of 45 to 50 degrees downward, that there was no point of exit, and that the bullet was not in the body. An examination of this bullet by the FBI Laboratory determined that it had been fired from the rifle owned by Oswald. (Exhibit 28)"

Exhibit 28 is labeled "BULLET FROM STRETCHER", and this bullet is none other than Commission Exhibit 299.

Implications of the FBI Finding

1. If the FBI finding is correct—and all the evidence seems to bear out the FBI and to negate any possibility of the Commission's findings of a double hit—then some crucial implications naturally flow therefrom:

2. C.E. 299 did not exit from the President's back—which supports the proposition that President Kennedy's back wound was a separate hit fired by an assailant stationed in front of the President.

3. C.E. 299 could not have struck Governor Connally, hence that a separate bullet had to do so, since the governor's Dr. Alfred G. Olivier demonstrated that the last shot striking the President in the head could not have caused all of Governor Connally's wounds. (V H 90) The Commission agreed with Dr. Olivier. (W-409)

4. Since the President's head hit was a separate shot which followed the wounded

5. All FBI data dealing with the shooting of the President and Governor Connally were admitted to Parkland Memorial Hospital, a bullet was found on one of the stretchers. Medical examination of the President's body revealed that one of the bullets had entered just below his shoulder to the right of the spinal column at an angle of 45 to 50 degrees downward, that there was no point of exit, and that the bullet was not in the body. An examination of this bullet by the FBI Laboratory determined that it had been fired from the rifle owned by Oswald. (Exhibit 28)

6. Commission Exhibits 385 and 386 (XVII H 777) drawings which I indicated in a previous article contradict the back wounds of the President as depicted on the autopsy face sheet. Exhibit 297, (XVII H 49) are also laboratories, for they show a channel of exit which apparently did not exit for President Kennedy's back wound. Now the withholding of the X-rays and photographs taken at the autopsy of President Kennedy, on which the FBI must have relied for reaching its no-exit conclusion, takes on an ever-more ominous significance. While Specter's failure to question the FBI finding expert, Robert A. Frazier, on the FBI finding of no exit for the back wound seems to demonstrate on Mr. Specter's part a compelling desire not to clutter the hearing record with the FBI finding which purportedly negates all the evidence.

7. The Commission finding that C.E. 299 could have caused the linen, yet the Commission says that C.E. 299 did not exit from the President's back—which supports the proposition that President Kennedy's back wound was a separate hit fired by an assailant stationed in front of the President.

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10. Since the FBI must have at least part in its finding of no exit from the President's back wound on the original autopsy report, and since the present autopsy report describes a missile as exiting from "the anterior surface of the neck" (W-409), the burning of "preliminary draft notes relating to the Naval Medical School Autopsy Report" may be a euphemism for an original autopsy report which was burned.

11. Among the most devastating criticisms of the Warren Report is the FBI Report.