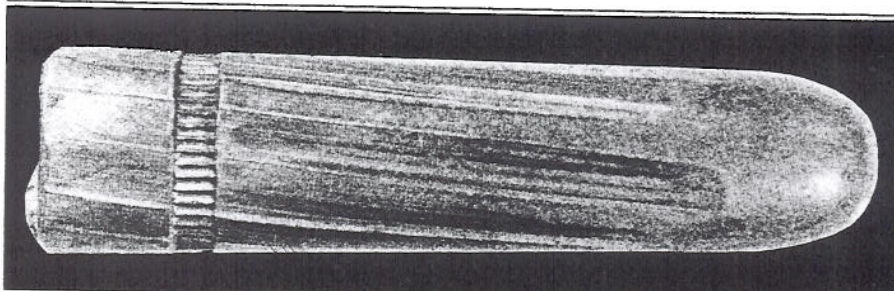


The Separate Connally Shot

by Vincent J. Salandria

(Second of Two Articles)



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."¹

"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

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We regret that, by an inadvertence, Mr. Salandria's first name was introduced erroneously in our last issue. —Ed.

¹ Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, p. 111. United States Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1965. References to this Report are designated by "W" followed by a page number.

² Salandria, Vincent J. *The Impossible Tasks of One Assassination Bullet*, March, 1966.

"three shots were fired." Since a motion picture camera operating on the assassination scene precisely fixed the time period of the assassination (W-117), and the alleged assassination weapon had a minimum firing time of 2.3 seconds, the Commission was irrevocably married 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 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-and-three-shots theory of the assassination.

Our previous article in *The Minority of One*² 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, from a hit which, according to the Commission, struck him from behind while he sat erect. This bullet crossed from the extreme right of the Governor's back leftward and deposited a fragment in his left femur. Newton's third law of motion would have naturally dictated the Governor's fall or reaction leftward and not rightward from a bullet coursing left to right.

In the same article we showed how the Commission required us to believe that the Governor was able to turn right, after being hit on the right of his back, and to execute this right turn against the force of the bullet's impact. Further, although

the Governor's right wrist 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 came from the same missile, 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.

Connally Recalls a Separate Hit

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 President in the corner of my eye, and I was interested because once I heard the shot in my own mind I identified it as a rifle shot, and I immediately—the only thought that crossed my mind was that this is an assassination attempt. "So I looked, failing to see him, I was turning to look back over my left shoulder

into the back seat, but I never got that far in my turn. I got about in the position I am in now, facing, looking a little bit to the left of center, and then I felt like someone had hit me in the back.

"... Mrs. Connally pulled me over to her lap. I reclined with my head in her lap, conscious all the time, and with my eyes open; and I heard the shot very clearly. I heard it hit him..." (IV H 132-133)

"... after 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 first bullet..."

Mrs. Connally stated that she had the time to turn, after a shot had been fired, but previous to the moment when her husband was hit:

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

"I turned over my right shoulder and looked back, and saw the President as he had both hands at his neck.

"... Then very soon there was the second shot that hit John." (IV H 147)

Governor and Mrs. Connally's testimony totally supports the claim of a separate hit of the Governor. To Governor Connally, the Commission's view 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 in the January, 1965, *Liberation* relied heavily on the FBI Agent Frazier's analysis of the damage to the President's clothing. The President's clothing revealed his incompatibility with the final Commission version of his wounds. In brief, the hole in the back of the President's shirt, 5% below the top of the collar (W-92) was too low to have allowed a bullet traveling downward at 18° (W-103) without hitting bone to emerge from the necktie knot. (W-91) Therefore, the demonstrative evidence provided by the President's shirt was of crucial value in disproving the connection alleged by the Commission between 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 probative information for determining the course of the missile through Connally and its shape. Unfortunately, the demonstrative evidence of the Governor's clothing was not in Frazier's hands for safe keeping. Governor Connally explained what happened to his clothing:

³ *Hearings Before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy*, Vol. IV, p. 128. United States Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1964. References to the Hearing Notes and the Commission Exhibits are designated by the volume number, and "H" followed by a page number.

"They, the Archives of the State of Texas, asked for the clothing, and I have given the clothing to them. That is where they were sent from, I believe, here, to this Commission." (IV H 142)

Apparently, the Archives of the State of Texas considered cleanliness closer to godliness than veracious history, for the way in which they dealt with the clothing of Governor Connally constitutes the equivalent of wiping the fingerprints from a murder weapon:

"Mr. Frazier. On the hole on the back of the coat although it had the general appearance and could have been a bullet hole, possibly because of the cleaning and pressing of the garment. I cannot state that it actually is a bullet hole nor the direction of the path of the bullet, if it were a bullet hole." (V H 63)

Mr. Frazier had no more success with the shirt. It seems that the search for clues as to bullet direction and shape was not helped by the compulsion for dry cleaning and pressing the evidence:

"This also did not indicate direction from the condition of the fibers, possibly due to cleaning and pressing of the garment." (V H 64)

"... 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 determine 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 65)

The person or persons who ordered the laundering of Governor Connally's clothing knew or had reason to know that vital evidence was being destroyed. The Commission, however, showed no disturbance over this flagrant obliteration of vital historical evidence by agents of the State of Texas:

"Representative Boggs. Governor, I would like to say that we have had fine 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 44)

We much regret that this form of "cooperation" was not vigorously 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 22, 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."

Fortunately, the laundering failed to wash out all the evidence from the Governor's shirt. The FBI was able to salvage something of value. The picture of Governor Connally's shirt, Commission Exhibit 686, (XVIII H 343) indeed seems to indicate a pattern of three separate holes or a large irregularly shaped hole, in the right-chest area. Frazier describes the damage to the front of the shirt:

"... a very irregular tear more or less in the form of an 'H' of the letter 'H.' This tear was approximately 1 inch in width, which caused a very irregularly shaped and enlarged hole in the front of the shirt. The hole is located 5 inches from the right-side seam, and 9 inches below the top of the right sleeve." (V H 64)

This pattern is not compatible with a regular missile emerging from the front of the shirt. This account is consistent with damage in 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 "... a very rough hole..." (V H 64) which is characteristic of an irregular missile striking the sleeve. 399 was not an irregular missile. In support of this view, Frazier states: "The elongation could also have been the result of a mutilated bullet having struck the garment..." (V H 64) 399 cannot be so described. The hole in the shirt cuff was also: "... ragged in contour, irregularly shaped." (V H 64-65) 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 "... fold 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 64-65) Explaining the incompatibility of the holes in the President's clothing with the autopsy report findings, Commander Humes offered the explanation that upon saluting the crowd, the President was forced to: "accentuate the elevation of the coat and shirt with respect to the back" (II H 566), although raising his right hand no further than his forehead. Our ready-made, fifty dollar suits and three dollar shirts never seem to behave that way; neither should coats and shirts fitted to the forms of a President and a Governor.

What is not washed away in the Connally clothing evidence seems to indicate that Governor Connally was struck by a missile which was irregular when it left his chest and irregular when it entered his wrist. Therefore the clothing of Governor Connally supports the innocence of 399 in the wounding of Governor Connally. 399 is a regular missile.

The Impossible Changes in a Missile

A joint hit concept employing C.E. 399 as a regular missile coursing through both a President and the Governor envisions no drastic changes in the missile. The missile which struck the Governor apparently underwent a drastic change in coursing through the Governor and smashing his fifth rib and right wrist. The Connally chest wounds seem to have been inflicted by a missile which entered his back as a regular missile, 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 longest diameter, in the right posterior shoulder . . .

" . . . the wound of exit was below and slightly medial to the nipple on the anterior right chest. It was a round, ragged wound approximately 5 cm. in diameter." (VI H 85)

A joint-hit concept involving C.E. 399 coursing 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

and exit on the wrist and the entry into the thigh which you described?

"Dr. Gregory. I suspect it's possible, but I would say it would have to be a remarkably powerful missile to have done so." (VI H 103)

A "low velocity" rifle cannot fire "a remarkably powerful missile." While a finding of a bullet striking only Connally would have substantially reduced the velocity problem, so would a similar conclusion have relieved Dr. Olivier of some of his wound-ballistics reconstruction problems. His tests, as performed, accurately conformed to a view of the assassination which reflected separate shots striking the President and the Governor. The problem of the test bullet C.E. 853 would not have been so

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:

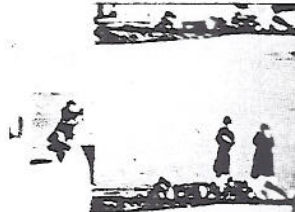
Frame 288: The Governor is still around to his right, facing the President.

Frame 289: The Governor begins turning around to his left, but is still facing in the direction of the President.

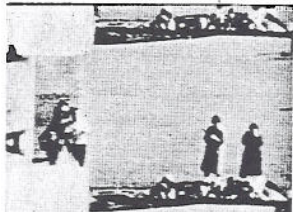
Frame 290: The Governor is making his turn to the left.

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

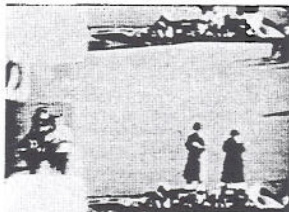
Frame 292: His mouth is open. He seems to grimace in apparent pain. A hand seems



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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 as the missile which wounded the Governor.

According to Frazier, the alleged murder weapon, the Carcano, was a "low velocity" rifle. (III H 414) Any rifle capable of putting a bullet through both President Kennedy and Governor Connally, according to Dr. Gregory, would have had to have been "remarkably powerful." Here is the relevant testimony on the velocity problem:

"Mr. Specter. Well, wouldn't you think it possible, bearing in mind that my last question only went as to whether the same bullet could have gone through President Kennedy and inflicted the wound on Governor Connally's chest, would you think it possible that the same missile could have gone through President Kennedy in the way I described and have inflicted all three of the wounds, that is, the entry and exit on the chest, the entry

acute. Though the 853 test bullet passed only through the governmental-test equivalent of the Governor's tissue 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 80) The Commission showed us 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 implication of more than three bullets, which logically flowed from this alternative conception 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 reacting to a hit in frames 292 to 299.

to be thrown upward. He is still facing northeast.

Frame 298: His mouth is still open wide. He is now facing more towards the north.

Frame 294: His face seems contorted in pain. His mouth is still open. He is falling back and seems to be reacting to a hit. He is still facing north.

Frame 295: He is falling backwards; his face is still contorted. He remains facing north.

Frame 296: He is falling backwards, continuing to face north.

Frame 297: Connally's face is most clear. Excruciating pain seems to be registered in it.

Frame 298: He continues to fall.

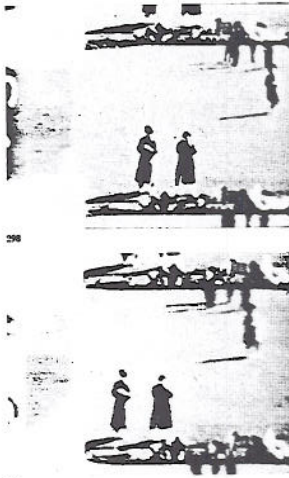
Frame 299: Connally is clearer. His face is still pained. He continues to fall backwards into Mrs. Connally's lap.

The Zapruder reproductions in the Commission volumes are tiny and therefore most of the details which we observed at the Archives will not be clearly observable to the reader. The projections which we viewed were on the order of 12 square feet. The

smaller versions which appear in the published exhibits (excepting frames 208, 209 and 211), show clearly the Governor's turn and his falling back, but do not show his expressions.

We do not present our 292 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—so crucial to the Warren Commission finding of a sole assassin—is overwhelmingly disproven by the Warren Commission's own evidence.

Our 292 hit hypothesis, we think, deserves serious investigation. This theory, unlike the Warren Commission's invention, com-



ports with the evidence. If this hypothesis is ultimately proven, it will constitute further conclusive proof that there was more than one assassin 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. 18.3 Zapruder frames translate into a second of time. Therefore, 21 Zapruder frames constitute 1.15 seconds. This 1.15 second time period bisects precisely that which the Commission established as the 2.3 minimum for firing the Carcano twice. Therefore, a hit of the Governor during Zapruder frame 292 would have to be the work of a gunman separate from the one who shot President Kennedy in the head. This 1.15 second time span of the Connally wounding and the President's head hit would also conform to the Commission's finding that: "Most witnesses recalled that the second and third shots were bunched together." (W-115)

⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, p. 1, November 26, Wichita, Kansas.
⁵ *The New York Times*, December 18, 1963, p. 27.

The FBI Dissents

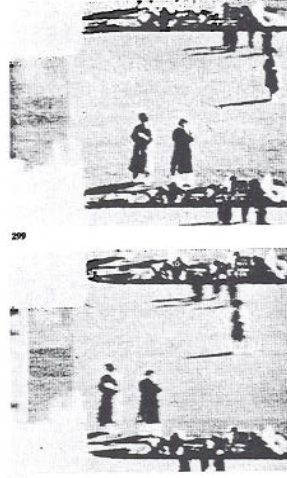
We now return to the 399 weaving-hit theory. Since the FBI was the primary source of the relevant evidence, let us examine its findings.

As early as November 26, 1963, we were advised by an Associated Press report dated in 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."⁴

Perhaps on the basis of this FBI report another Associated Press article was released and dated in 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 finding reported tonight. "The second bullet to hit Mr. Kennedy —after another had struck Gov. John B. Connally of Texas..."⁵

Was the "source familiar with the autopsy finding" the FBI? Nothing in the present autopsy proves that a separate bullet did not hit the Governor. Could this be the reason for the burning 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 A63-272 and have officially transmitted all other papers related to this report to higher authority." (XVII H 38)

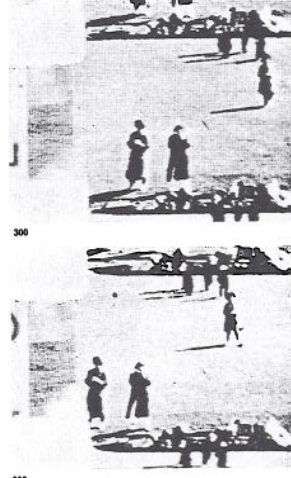
Could the original autopsy findings have conformed to what Special Agent Roy H. Kellerman testified to with respect to his experience at Bethesda during the autopsy studies:

"There were three gentlemen who were performing this autopsy. A Colonel Finck—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 lanes for an outlet of this entry in this man's shoulder.'" (I H 93)

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 23, 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 653 of City Hall. He cautioned the

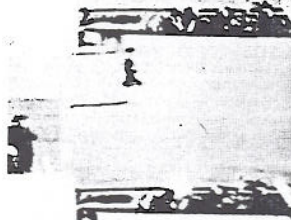


members of the Bar who came to hear and question him: "The people are going to have to rely on the conclusions (that have been drawn) and the stature of the men on the Commission." We chose then, and choose now, to ignore his fallacious interpretation of the proper relationship of government to the individual in a free society. But we did not ignore another statement made by him on this occasion.

Mr. Specter was asked during the questioning period whether the Commission had disagreed in any significant respect with the FBI report on the assassination. Mr. Specter replied that the FBI report concluded Governor Connally's hit was a separate one. Then he proceeded to take a large share of the credit for the double-hit theory. Since that time, I have endeavored to meet with Mr. Arlen Specter, now District Attorney of Philadelphia. I wished to assure myself that I heard correctly what he had said. He has chosen to ignore our requests to meet with him.

Under the circumstances, I saw a need for alternative means to verify from primary sources a possible basic disagreement between

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 to us that the work was of fine quality. So much so, that we saw fit, in the interests of historical justice, to dedicate an article in part to Mr. Frazier.⁶ 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 construe its task as compelling the American people to "rely on the conclusions and the stature of the men on the Commission." For, after having identified myself as a critic of the Warren Commission Report,



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I 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 26, 1966 access to the four-volume work entitled *Investigation of Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963*, which work bears the name of John Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In Volume 1, page 18 of the FBI report our 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 60 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 23)"

Exhibit 23 is labeled "BULLET FROM STRETCHER," and this bullet is none other than Commission Exhibit 399.

Implications of the FBI Finding

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

⁶ Salandria, Vincent J., "A Philadelphia Lawyer Analyzes the President's Back and Neck Wounds," *Liberation*, March 1962.

⁷ *Liberation*, March, 1965.

1. C.E. 399, since it did not pass through the President, could not have also struck Governor Connally.

2. C.E. 399 did not exit from the President's front—which supports the proposition, that President Kennedy's neck wound was a separate hit fired by an assassin stationed in front of the President.

3. 399 could not have struck Governor Connally, hence that a separate bullet had to do so, since the government'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-586)

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



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ing of Governor Connally, (W-108) this head hit requires a minimum of four bullets in the assassination picture.

5. The wounding of James T. Tague while standing between Main and Commerce Streets (W-116), when combined with sundry other evidence of missed bullets, compelled the Commission to conclude: "... one shot probably missed the Presidential limousine and its occupants." (W-117) Therefore, a minimum of one more bullet or a minimum total of five bullets now emerge in the assassination.

6. Commission Exhibits 385 and 386 (XVI H 977)—drawings which I indicated in a previous article⁷ contradict the back wounds of the President as depicted on the autopsy face sheet, Exhibit 397. (XVII H 45)—are fabrications, for they show a channel of exit which apparently did not exist 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.

7. Arlen Specter's failure to question the FBI firearms 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 comported with all the evidence.

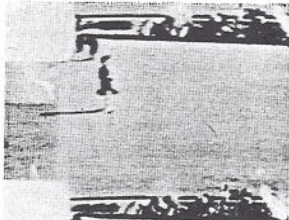
8. The Commission conclusion that C.E. 399 came from the stretcher of Governor Connally was unwarranted.

9. The 45 to 60 degree angle downward course of the bullet through the President's back would indicate that the first assassination bullet to strike the Presidential limousine did so when the car was considerably closer to the Texas School Book Depository

Building than the Commission contends. The possible source of this bullet from other than the southeast window of the Texas School Book Depository Building must be considered. A southwest window could account for a steeper angle.

10. Since the FBI must have at least partly based 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-543), 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 critics of the Warren Report is the FBI.



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We again submit that there was a conspiracy of at least two and possibly more men to kill President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Without fear of being gainsaid, we maintain that this conspiracy is now proven. Beginnings have been made in determining how President Kennedy was killed.

We call upon the United States Government to release to the National Archives, for purposes of examination by interested persons, the following essential evidence which has not been produced to date:

1. The wound-ballistics test bullets—all of them.
2. Zapruder frames 208, 209 and 211.
3. X-rays and photographs taken at the autopsy of President Kennedy.
4. Stills of the Hugh William Betzner, Jr., Mary Muchmore, Orville O. Nix films.
5. All FBI data dealing with the shooting on the assassination site.

None of the above can be rationally included in the category of "national security and intelligence" material, unless our society is much less free and much more closed than it is supposed to be. If such is the case, we must redouble our demands that the evidence be released for examination at the rightful repository, the National Archives.

The Warren Commission is not the country; the people are.