EDITORIAL and OPINION PAGE

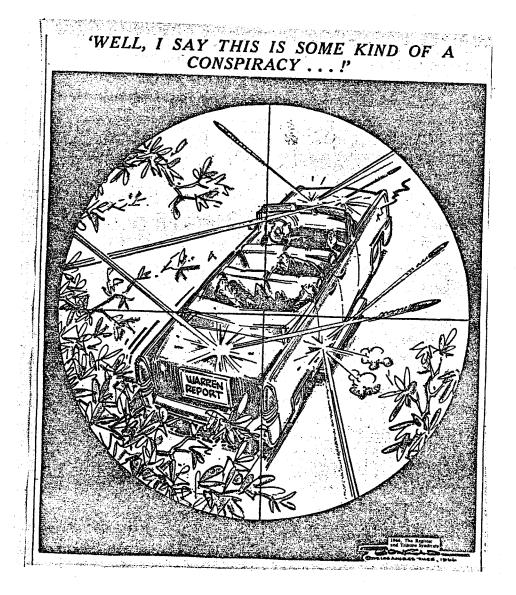
Questioning the Warren Report

QUITE CANDIDLY, we hardly knew how to react when we were first confronted with Gary Schoener's critical analysis of the Warren Report. We're still not sure.

Schoener, who is working for a PhD in clinical psychology at the University of Minnesota, has invested an impressive amount of time and energy in what is really too serious a thing to be called a hobby. He has, for example, in the past two and a half years read and reread the Warren Report and its companion 26 volumes of testimony and hearings. He has traveled around the country, talking with other Report critics, professional and amateur, has read their books and sought out Warren Commission documents now available in the National Archives.

So what of the result? Each reader will of course have to make his own judgment. We find ourselves provoked to wonder about some of the Commission's conduct, but not yet convinced that its final conclusion was wrong. We find Schoener's propositions plausible but not irresistibly persuasive.

Nevertheless, we are far from certain that all of the necessary questions about John F. Kennedy's assassination have been answered. And until greater certainty is possible, the questions raised by honest critics such as Schoener cannot be arbitrarily sloughed off.



In Ninety Crucial Minutes.

First of five articles

By GARY RICHARD SCHOENER Special to the Star editorial/opinion page

At 12:30 on Nov. 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated while riding in a motorcade through downtown Dallas. Gov. John Connally of Texas, riding in the same car as the President, was wounded.

Cal Nov. 24, 1953, Jack Ruby, Dallas nightclub owner, killed Lee Harvey Oswald before a nationwide TV audience. Since there are no provisions for trying the deceased under the American judicial system, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a commission of distinguished Americans to study the assassination and ascertain the truth.

On Sept. 27, 1964, the Warren Commission Report was published. Its major conclusion was that a lone assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, fired all of the shots from the southeast corner window of the 6th floor of the Texas School Book Depository building. The many critics of the report agree on only two things: that the evidence indicates that there was more than one assassin and that the case should be reopened.

Thus far neither side has given a complete account of the events of that black Frishday. It is perhaps now time to submit the available evidence to the public for its consideration. With this in mind I will attempt to reconstruct the assassination beginning with the hour and one-half preceding the arrival of the motorcade to the scene of the assassination.

About an hour and a quarter preceding the arrival of the motorcade to the site of the assassination, a curious incident took place in the area just west of the Depository Building near the railroad overpass (see map). Miss Julia Ann Mercer, who was driving west on Elm St. towards the railroad overpass, was forced to come to a full stop behind a green Ford pick-up truck which was illegally parked, blocking one lane of traffic.

There were two men in the truck. She watched as one man stayed in the truck while the other "reached over the tallgate and took out from the truck what appeared to be a gun case." She was able to describe the "guncase" and estimated its length to have been about 3½ to 4 feet.

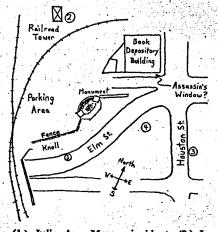
According to Miss Mercer, the man carried the "gun case" away from the truck and went "across the grass and up the grassy hill which forms part of the overpass (see map)." A short time later the area into which the "guncase" was carried was due to be suspected by those present as the source of the shots which killed John F. Kennedy.

On the day of the assassination the parking lot area behind the grassy knoll (map) was restricted to police vehicles. About an hour preceding the arrival of the motorcade, Mrs. Jean Hill noticed an automobile circling

this area.

"The windows of the vehicle were covered with cardboard and the name 'Hones' Joe's Pawn Shop' was painted on the side of the car," indicating that it wasn't an official vehicle.

Mrs. Hill pointed it out to a nearby police officer, but he told her that the driver had permission to drive in that area. One wonders what sort of business a pawnshop has in a railroad yard. No explanation was ever requested of the Dallas police for this unusual incident in what was then a potential ambush spot.



(1.) Julia Ann Mercer incident. (2.) Lee Bowers Jr. (3.) Arnold Rowland. (4.) Carolyn Walther.

On the morning of the assassination Lee Bowers Jr. was stationed at his customary post in a railroad switch tower located within 50 yards of the Depository building (map). Since traffic into the parking lot behind the grassy knoll had been cut off since 10 a.m., any activity in that area could be observed.

According to Bowers, at about 12:10 a car passed in front of the Depository and circled the area in front of and to the west of his tower as if "searching for a way out" or "checking the area."

The car was a 1959 blue and white Oldsmobile station wagon with an out-of-state license and a Goldwater bumper sticker, indicating that it was not a police vehicle and should not have been in the area.

At about 12:20 Bowers saw a 1957 black Ford which cruised around the same area for about 3 or 4 minutes and probed a little further into the area than the first car. The man driving was steering with one hand and "holding something up to his mouth with

the other hand."

Bowers thought that the thing in his hand was a telephone, microphone, or something which gave that appearance.

About eight minutes before the assassination Bowers observed a white Chevrolet Impala cruise into the parking lot. "It was muddy up to the windows" and bore an out-of-state license similar to the first car he had observed. The last Bowers saw of him, "he was pausing just about in—just above the assassination site." Bowers could not see whether the car left the area prior to the shooting.

Finally, Bowers testified that just before the shots were fired he noticed two men standing near the fence which separates the parking lot and grassy knoll. His description of the two men is quite similar to the description of the two men Julia Ann Merce observed with the "gun case" sometime

At about 12:15 Arnold Rowland and his wife arrived at a spot down the street from the Depository building to wait for the motorcade which was due to arrive in about 15 minutes. He has excellent vision. Just after his arrival, Rowland happened to look up at the Depository and noticed a Negro male leaning out of the window on the southeast corner of the building on the 6th floor. Rowland was able to give a detailed description of the man.

This window is the one from which a lone assassin allegedly fired a rifle six minutes later!

If such was the case, then this man should certainly be a prime suspect as an accomplice.

There is no evidence that the commis-

sion ever even attempted to locate the man Rowland saw in the window.

Rowland noticed a second man in a sixth floor window, but this time one at the southwest end of the building. This man was standing a few feet back from the window and was holding what Rowland described as a high powered rifle with a telescopic sight.

Rowland gave a fairly complete description of the man and his clothing. He assumed that the man with the gun was a Secret Service man who was there to help protect the President, and so told only his wife about him. They both looked up at the building many times before the arrival of the motorcade but never again caught sight of him.

A minute before the arrival of the motorcade Mrs. Carolyn E. Walther happened to glance up at the Depository building and noticed two men in the southeast corner window of one of the upper floors. One was holding a weapon which "had a short barrel and seemed large around the stock or end."

She thought that it might have been a machine gun.

In the same window was a second man who was wearing a brown suit coat and holding a rifle. Almost immediately after she noticed these two men, someone in the crowd said "Here they come," and she turned to watch the motorcade round the corner.

The last she saw of the men they were looking down Houston, also awaiting the arrival of the motorcade...

Tomorrow: The shots.