

# THE FOURTH DECADE

1963

1973

1983

1993

2003

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2

JANUARY, 1998

## Contents

A SUBJECT FOR THE SECOND TERM: JFK'S CHINA POLICY - AND HIS ASSASSINATION .....	3
By Jerry D. Rose	
ARTFUL DECEPTIONS AND OTHER FALLACIES: A PAGE FROM POSNER.....	8
By James H. Fetzer	
✓ BOOK REVIEWS: BLOODY TREASON AND ASSASSINATION SCIENCE .....	12
by Hal Verb	
THE PITZER FILE .....	17
By Daniel Marvin and Jerry D. Rose	
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .....	25
EDITORIAL: WHO KILLED THAT PRESIDENT? .....	27

A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH  
ON THE  
JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

ISSN 0888-5230

**THE FOURTH DECADE** (formerly **THE THIRD DECADE**) is published bimonthly at State University College Fredonia NY 14063. Editor and publisher: Jerry D. Rose. Subscription rates: \$25 for one year; \$45 for two years; \$65 for three years. Single issues \$5.

**Notice to contributors:** **THE FOURTH DECADE** encourages submission of articles and Letters to the Editor from all interested parties. Articles should be confined to no more than 5,000 words, letters to no more than 1,000 words. Any author wishing copyright of his/her material should arrange that copyright upon submitting that material. All publication is at the discretion of the publisher and is subject to editorial revision.

**Back cover illustration:** Meet Mr. Kinda Sorta Ball. Shown here is an interview by the FBI of John G. Ball, Deputy Medical Examiner for Montgomery County Maryland on his examination of the body of LCDR William B. Pitzer, who died in his office at Bethesda Naval Hospital on October 29, 1966. Of special interest is the totally unprofessional way in which he tried to account for one of the anomalies at the death scene: that the body of Pitzer, supposedly a suicide, was found with his head extended under the lower rung of a stepladder. For more information on investigations of the Pitzer death, see, "The Pitzer File," this issue.

## A SUBJECT FOR THE SECOND TERM: JFK'S CHINA POLICY — AND HIS ASSASSINATION

by  
*Jerry D. Rose\**

Among the seemingly insoluble problems of America's foreign relations inherited by President Kennedy from his predecessors—along with such others as Cuba, Indo-China and the Soviet/American arms race—was the problem of what to do about China. Since 1949, when the Red Chinese finally prevailed in the decades-long civil war and Chiang Kai-shek with the remnants of his Nationalist Chinese following had fled to Formosa, the United States had been in the embarrassing international posture of failing to give diplomatic recognition to the political reality of communist control of the mainland, and supporting the continued representation in the United Nations of the Formosa-based Republic of China rather than the mainland-based Peoples Republic of China. Domestic political realist that he was, Kennedy understood that he could not change the situation which he inherited, at least not during his first term in office. If he doubted this, he had only to observe the outcry in the land when his principal foreign policy advisor in the 1960 campaign, former Governor Chester Bowles of Connecticut, made public statements suggesting the possibility of a "two Chinas" recognition and representation of both the ROC and the PRC. [1] The political fallout was that Bowles was not really viable for a much-anticipated appointment as JFK's Secretary of State, which went instead to China hardliner Dean Rusk, with Bowles having to cool his heels as Rusk's deputy, only to lose that position in a so-called Thanksgiving massacre in 1961: a State Department shake-up in which George Ball was elevated to the no. 2 spot in State and Bowles was kicked upstairs into a meaningless job as JFK's "special representative." [2] Nevertheless, Kennedy held open the possibility of a change in U.S. policy toward communist China, saying as late as a press conference on November 14, 1963 that "if the Red Chinese indicate a desire to live at peace with the United States, with the countries surrounding it, then quite obviously the United States would reappraise its policies. We are

not wedded to a policy of hostility to Red China." [3] In a speech delivered at San Francisco on December 13, 1963, but actually based on administration discussions that pre-dated the President's murder, the Under-Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Roger Hilsman, delivered a cogent statement of the changed attitude toward the Chinese situation that might underlay this new receptivity to change. [4] Whereas Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had based his implacable policy of "containment" on Dulles' statement that the communist control of China was but a "passing and not a perpetual phase," Hilsman proclaimed this assumption "no longer valid." The President himself, in a talk with his confidante Theodore Sorenson, was ruminating on possible changes in China policy (such as a relaxation of trade barriers) but, recognizing the extreme political unpopularity of any such initiatives, told Sorenson that this was a "subject for the second term." [5]

If a re-elected JFK might indeed have undertaken such changes, and if Nationalist China hardliners perceived this as a possibility, then any action to avert the calamity of a second Kennedy term may have been within the realm of consideration of these forces. In suggesting this, I would direct our attention to the heated rhetoric of public discussion after 1949 emanating from the China Lobby of individuals and organizations who blamed the administrations of Roosevelt and Truman and especially their State Departments, for the "loss" of China to the Reds. An adequate review of the history of that lobby would exceed the limits of this article. [6] Suffice it to note that Senator Joseph McCarthy's campaign against communist traitors in the U.S. government and his phantom list of "card-carrying members" of the State Department was originally focused on such villains of the China Lobby as Owen Lattimore, John Stewart Service and the Institute of Pacific Relations, all of whom were involved in doing their duties as public figures and agencies in warning the country of the impending communist triumph, and all of whom were victims of the old practice of killing the messenger when the message is not liked. The concept of such a China Lobby is, of course, a rather generalized label for what was a powerful force in our political life: members of Congress such as Walter Judd, William Knowland (sometimes called the Senator from Formosa), Clare Booth Luce and William Brewster; congressional committees like the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee with successive chairs in Pat McCarran,

---

*Jerry D. Rose*  
*State University College*  
*Fredonia NY 14063*

Thomas Dodd and James Eastland, and general counsels in Robert Morris and Julian Sourwine; such opinion leaders as Fulton Lewis, George Sokolsky, Joseph Alsop and, especially, Henry Robinson Luce of the "Lucepress" empire of Time, Life and Fortune magazines; and of such propaganda organizations as the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Communist China to the United Nations, formed in 1955 and led for most of its life by New York publicist Marvin Leibman. In short, had JFK lived to undertake a second term re-assessment of our China policy, he would have had to deal with huge political forces, which had already labeled his Democratic presidential predecessors as "traitors" and "sell-outs" and who would undoubtedly have been ready to trot out the same epithets for him; except that now, in his second term, he could perhaps begin to act as the statesman whose eye was on the welfare of the republic and its viable future rather than on his chances for reelection.

If the right-wing and anti-communist ideologies of the China Lobby were not reason enough for extreme action to prevent a dreaded "second term" for JFK, the vested corrupt private interests of certain pro-Chiang elements may have helped provide the necessary motivation. As Peter Dale Scott develops the thesis in his book *The War Conspiracy*, elements in the American government, especially in the Central Intelligence Agency, had developed a working relationship with Chiang and his allies in southeast Asia that involved a highly profitable operation (to the Agency and to private entrepreneurs and Chinese political leaders) in which the narcotics traffic from that area was essentially administered by the Agency, working through such CIA proprietaries as Air America, the corporate successor to the American Volunteer group or Flying Tigers organized by Claire Chennault and William Pawley to support the Chinese war effort against the Japanese, when the U.S. was still not officially involved in that conflict. [7] A shift in governmental policy away from support of Nationalist China would have uncertain but no doubt unfavorable consequences for those hoping to protect the profitability of the opium business in Asia.

The picture I have been trying to paint is of a credible scenario of China Lobbyists to be motivated to become involved in any action up to and including presidential assassination, to avert a dreaded JFK second term. The motive is there, I submit, but the more difficult question, which I shall address in the next part of this article,

is whether people and agencies from this part of the political spectrum had the opportunity and the means for involvement in a plot to murder the President. In what follows I shall not attempt to define the specific means-opportunity resources of the China Lobby: how they might have acquired the necessary information about the President's movements, how the President's security may have been compromised, how they were able to carry out the murder and conceal their culpability. Rather, I give myself the benefit of a more relaxed standard of "proof": that there are demonstrable likely "connections" between the China Lobby and those people "on the ground" in Dallas or Dealey Plaza and wherever the plot may have been hatched.

There are many such possible connections that I wish I had time to explore. One would be the China Lobby connections of many of the people involved in the June 1963 operation against Cuba called the Bayo-Pawley mission or operation Red Cross; an anti-Castro provocation operation that may have been the very model for the later assassination. [8] Among the organizers of that caper, William Pawley, Chennault's co-founder of the Flying Tigers, Julian Sourwine, the erstwhile nemesis of reds in the State Department, and Henry Luce of Life magazine who may have been indulging in "paramilitary journalism," would come to mind as worthy of close scrutiny. So too the vastly suspicious "springtime gathering" in April 1963 described by Dick Russell when the Anti-Communist Liaison Committee, the brainchild of preacher Billy Hargis, met in Washington D.C. to hear the anti-Kennedy likes of Edward Hunter, the discoverer of Chinese communist "brainwashing;" General Charles Willoughby, who is so prominently featured in Russell's book; and Anna Chennault, the Flying Tiger's widow and a leading apologist for Nationalist China. [9] Likewise, the strange arrival on the Dallas scene in February of 1964 of the journalist Isaac Don Levine, one of the coldest of the cold warriors, confidante of Whitaker Chambers and the one-time editor of a major journal for the China Lobby called Plain Talk; his coming to Dallas ostensibly to interview Marina Oswald for a book, a book that never eventuated in spite of a \$25,000 advance for same. [10] Finally, in this list of things I am not going to write about, there was that enigmatic memo on November 26, 1963 in which William Sullivan, head of the FBI's domestic intelligence division, forwards a November 23 report from a supposed employee of the U.S. Information Agency, Bernard

Weisman (one s in the name) which details the Chinese Communist connections of many of Oswald's associates. [11] Rather than go into any of these matters, I'll confine my further remarks to the possible China Lobby connections of two Dallas residents: Larrie Schmidt, who is well known to assassination researchers, and Anthony Kubek, who is not so well known. In both instances the strands of connection that lead from the national China Lobby into a local assassination conspiracy lead to or close to the individual whom I still consider the Rosetta Stone of a local conspiracy, retired Army Major General Edwin A. Walker, who shares with John F. Kennedy, John B. Connally and J.D. Tippit the "honor" of supposedly having been shot at by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Schmidt was the Dallas leader of a group styled Conservatism USA or CUSA, a group of ex-soldiers stationed together in Germany when CUSA was first conceived. [12] Schmidt came to Dallas in 1962 and such colleagues as Bernard Weissman and William Burley joined him there in 1963. The strategic specialty of CUSA was to "infiltrate" established conservative groups; Schmidt's brother Bob "infiltrated" Walker by becoming his chauffeur, and the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) was "infiltrated" by CUSA to the extent that Schmidt bragged that the Dallas YAF was actually CUSA being operated under the YAF label. [13] For the focus of this article, the YAF connection of CUSA is interesting indeed. YAF was founded in 1960 at the estate of right wing journalist William Buckley, and the group's public relations were handled by none other than the Secretary of the Committee of One Million, Marvin Liebman, [14] and on YAF's board were such China Lobby figures as Charles Willoughby and Charles Edison, the sometime treasurer of the Committee of One Million. [15] A principal activity of YAF, both in 1960 and in 1963-64 was actively to support Barry Goldwater, for Vice-President in 1960 and for President in 1964. The YAF was actively distributing Goldwater in 64 bumper stickers, among other things. Remember that an eyewitness to events preceding the Dealey Plaza assassination, Lee Bowers, observed cars moving suspiciously around the railroad parking lot, and two of these had Goldwater for President stickers. [16] These observations, combined with the incongruities in the movements of Weissman and Burley during and shortly after the assassination, suggest if they certainly don't prove the involvement of an organization with China Lobby supporters.

Anthony Kubek is the lesser known figure, having been

in 1963 a history professor at the University of Dallas (actually located in Irving) whose President, at least until 1962, had been Robert Morris, who alternated red-hunting duties with Julian Sourwine for the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. Kubek has been described as Morris' "protégé," and certainly his writings and activities were very much in the Morris, and specifically the China Lobby mold. In fact he published in 1963 a book called *How the Far East Was Lost*, which of course blamed State Department traitors in the China Lobby tradition, [17] and was so popular in those quarters that the Committee of One Million reprinted a chapter of the book for its propaganda and fund-raising purposes. Later, when the S.I.S.S. in 1969 persisted in publishing the Amerasia papers that supposedly showed how the Foreign Service in general and John Stewart Service in particular had "lost" China to the reds, it chose Kubek to write a lengthy introduction. [18] In one revealing passage, Kubek cites with approval the questioning before the S.I.S.S. by Julian Sourwine of Otto Otepka, formerly of the Office of Security of the State Department, who was fired in October 1963 for having leaked Department information to S.I.S.S. under Sourwine's guidance. [19] Service having been cleared by a grand jury of culpability in the stealing of government secrets in the Amerasia case, he was re-instated in the State Department, only to have Otepka attempt to block his employment, an attempt over-ruled by Otepka's superiors. In the S.I.S.S. testimony cited by Kubek, Sourwine asks his friend Otepka the "question": "Do you see considerable contrast, Mr. Otepka, between the treatment given Mr. Service, who gave classified documents to Mr. Jaffe and Amerasia, and yourself, who have given information on demand to a committee of the U.S. Senate?" With a set-up like that, Otepka had only to reply "I have compared the two situations." [20]

If there were nothing more to the Kubek story than the fact that a University of Dallas professor was a long-time apologist for the China Lobby, it might be a story of limited interest. However, there is apparently more to the Kubek story than this. In his book, *Deep Politics*, Peter Dale Scott reports that Kubek was associated with General Walker and perhaps even with Oswald. [21] Citing material in Commission Documents 246.22 and 205.646, Scott says that Kubek attended with Walker a meeting of the Student Revolutionary Directorate (DRE) in Dallas which, according to one report, Oswald also attended, perhaps as an observer. If these reports are

accurate, they place both Walker and Kubek in association with what may be the most likely organization involved in the assassination: the Cuban exile group whose "New Orleans delegate" was Carlos Bringuier, with whom Oswald both "fought" and "debated," who was apparently the earliest source of "information" after the assassination about Oswald's "communist connections," who was allied with Edward Scannell Butler of the Information Council on the Americas (INCA) and who engaged along with both Walker and Hargis in a great deal of red-baiting in the aftermath of the assassination. Whether one agrees with the LaFontanes' heavy focus on the DRE as assassination suspects, [22] one can certainly say that Anthony Kubek was in very heavy company if indeed he attended a DRE meeting with General Walker.

Before concluding this article, I should like to focus some comments on an alternative view of the direction of evolution of JFK's China policy, paralleling the same ambiguity displayed in the case of Cuba. While Kennedy was discreetly pursuing a program of detente with Castro, he was apparently pursuing as well a "secret war" designed to topple the Castro regime. Likewise in China. As Kennedy neared the end of his first term, he was talking of a relaxation of hostilities with China. However, according to some aides, he was considering as well the possibility of drastic action against China to prevent her imminent entry into the nuclear arms race, at a time when the United States and the Soviet Union were beginning to negotiate limitations on their nuclear weapons arsenals. Richard Reeves' 1994 biography of the Kennedy administration emphasized this aspect of JFK's China policy [23] and the same scenario has recently been resurrected in Seymour Hersh's gang bash of the Kennedy presidency. [24] Based on some comments of columnist Stewart Alsop and the scholarly writings of Gordon Chang, [25] Reeves indicates the likelihood that, in the summer of 1963, our ambassador to the arms limitations talks with the Soviet Union, Averill Harriman, approached the leaders of that country about the possibility of a joint action against China that would alleviate the fears of both nations about their rivalries with that country. There is no real evidence that I know that the Russians seriously entertained the offer, but the fact may remain that the American President was considering such a possibility. Alsop wrote about discussions of this sort in the September before the assassination, and added some detail on January 1, 1966, when an uni-

dentified Far Eastern "official" of the JFK administration told Alsop of offering to present the President with a plan whereby a "nuclear sterilization" or "tonsillectomy" operation would be launched against two Chinese nuclear power facilities; and JFK thrust his famous right index finger at the official and said "you do that!" In citing Alsop's pre-assassination comment, Reeves describes Alsop as "well-placed" to have inside information about the Kennedy administration. Apparently he was right, because JFK was extremely friendly with Stewart's brother Joseph Alsop, whom he apparently used to "leak" information that he wanted to get into the press; so much so that JFK's aide, Ted Sorenson, once responded to JFK's expressed amazement that no one in the inner circle had talked to the press about the handling of the Cuban missile crisis, to which Sorenson said jokingly, "except for your talk with Joe Alsop." [26]

Not only was Joseph Alsop well-placed with reference to JFK confidences, he was well placed in his connections to the China Lobby. Having actually joined Chennault's Flying Tigers, [27] he ever after rivaled Henry Luce in his admiration and support for Nationalist China. Seemingly, Alsop and his China Lobby colleagues would be supportive of a military "tonsillectomy" in China (as Stewart Alsop seemed to be in his 1966 article), just as the Cuban exiles supported his anti-Castro initiatives. The rub may have come for the China Lobbyists, as it did for the Cuban exiles, when the President ultimately failed to deliver on these enticing possibilities: the JFK "betrayal" of the exiles at the Bay of Pigs is the paradigmatic case.

I have rambled back from cases of people "on the ground" in Dallas like Schmidt and Kubek into the realm of speculation about Kennedy administration policies and the possible responses of people from the China Lobby sector of the political spectrum. When we ever do untangle the web of people and circumstances involved in the JFK assassination, I think we shall need both intensive investigation of particular people and agencies, and macro-analyses of action and reaction of the American presidency and the American people on the public issues of the time.

\*Revision of paper delivered to JFK/Lancer conference, Dallas, Texas, November 20, 1997.

#### Notes

1. Roger Hilsman, To Move a Nation (New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 303.
2. Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 50-53.

3. Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 248.
4. Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 350-352.
5. Theodore C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Konecky & Konecky, 1965), p. 666.
6. Two excellent reviews are: Ross Y. Koen, The New China Lobby In American Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1960) and Stanley D. Bachrack, The Committee Of One Million (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).
7. Peter Dale Scott, The War Conspiracy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972. chapter 8.
8. Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner, Deadly Secrets (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992), pp. 188-194.
9. Dick Russell, The Man Who Knew Too Much (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1992), pp. 327-8.
10. Jerry D. Rose, "Plain Talk About Isaac Don Levine," The Fourth Decade 2#2 January 1995.
11. See back cover of The Fourth Decade, 1#2, January, 1994.
12. Jerry D. Rose, "Nut Country: the Friends of General Walker," The Third Decade 5#5 July 1989, pp. 12-17; Jerry D. Rose, "Nut Country II: Whatever Happened to Elsa Silbernagel," The Third Decade 6#4 May 1990, pp. 1-5.
13. Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 18, pp. 836-63.
14. Arnold Forster and Benjamin H. Epstein, Danger On The Right (New York: Random House, 1964), chapter 15.
15. Forster and Epstein, Danger On The Right, p. 230 (Edison); Russell, The Man Who Knew Too Much, p.327 (Willoughby).
16. Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 24, p. 201.
17. Anthony Kubek, How The Far East Was Lost (Chicago: Regnery, 1963).
18. Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, The Amerasia Papers:A Clue To The Catastrophe Of China (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1970).
19. For Sourwine's role in the development of Otepka as an S.I.S.S. informer, see Edward Gill, The Ordeal of Otto Otepka (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1969).
20. Amerasia Papers, pp. 69,70.
21. Peter Dale Scott, Deep Politics (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 292-3.
22. Ray and Mary LaFontane, Oswald Talked (Gretna LA: Pelican 1996).
23. Richard Reeves, President Kennedy: Profile of Power (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), pp. 547-8.
24. Seymour Hersh, The Dark Side of Camelot (Boston: Little Brown, 1997), pp. 440, 441
25. Gordon H. Chang, "JFK, China and the Bomb," Journal of American History, March 1988; Gordon H. Chang, Friends and Enemies: The United States, China and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 217-252. Stewart Alsop, "The Real Meaning of the Test Ban," Saturday Evening Post, September 29, 1963, p. 20; Stewart Alsop, "Conversation with President Kennedy," Saturday Evening Post, January 1, 1966, p.9.
26. Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 315.
27. Charles R. Bond, Jr., A Flying Tiger's Diary (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), p. 19.

## ARTFUL DECEPTIONS AND OTHER FALLACIES: A PAGE FROM POSNER

by  
James H. Fetzer

There have by now been many published critiques of Gerald Posner's Case Closed. In a book of this length, a Posner defender might protest that there are bound to be some errors, and critics are perhaps hypercritical in pouncing on the inevitable errors. To counter this defense of Posner, I shall in this article focus on a single page of Case Closed (p. 104) and show that Posner committed no fewer than 10 fallacies on this single page.

Fallacy #1: Page 104, lines 1 to 6:

Posner: "The day after his Walker vigil, Monday, March 12, he clipped a coupon from the February issue of American Rifleman and sent a \$21.45 money order to a Chicago-based mail-order house, Klein's Sporting Goods. He ordered, under his alias A. Hidell, an Italian military rifle, a 6.5 mm Mannlicher-Carcano, complete with a four power (4X) scope."

Posner may be unimpressed with the meticulous studies that cast doubt on whether Oswald had anything to do with the Walker shooting, but he should at least admit that evidence is out there. A nice discussion of this issue may be found in Jim Marrs' Crossfire, pp. 255-265, a book which is included in Posner's bibliography but not cited here. Taking for granted something that should be established on independent grounds is the fallacy of begging the question. Moreover, there is serious doubt whether he used the "A. Hidell" alias and actually ordered the weapon, as George Michael Evica We are All Mortal, pp. 1-10, among others, has observed. Posner's also neglects to point out testimony that this rifle's firing pin was worn and rusty, that it was part of a shipment of defective weapons and that such rifles were available "for \$3.00 each in lots of 25", as O'Toole, Assassination Tapes, pp. 27-28, observes. Posner may have wanted to avoid the impression that this was a cheap weapon but, for comparison purposes, the Leyson's New Guns Annual (1961) lists the Savage 99F at \$121.50, the Browning Mauser .30/06 at \$164.50, and the Winchester 70 .300 caliber at \$134.95.

---

James H. Fetzer  
Department of Philosophy  
Duluth Campus University of Minnesota  
Duluth MN 55812-2496

When you cite only evidence favorable to a position, you commit the special pleading fallacy. It was a cheap weapon.

Fallacy #2: page 104, lines 6 to 14:

Posner: "Most critics disparage the Carcano rifle as a poor choice for eventual use in an assassination. Robert Sam Anson says it 'had a reputation for being notoriously inaccurate' and that the Italians had dubbed it 'the humanitarian rifle' since it was never known to hurt anyone. Mark Lane alleges the Carcano is 'universally condemned as inaccurate and slow' and 'the ammunition is old and unreliable'. Besides the fact that Oswald would not have know this, firearms experts say the opposite."

Again two fallacies are committed here. When Posner juxtaposes Anson, Lane and "the Italians", who belittle the weapon, with "firearms experts" who praise it, he implies that those who belittle the weapon are not firearms experts whose opinions should be taken seriously. Initially, therefore, he appears to be calling the critics' hands. While the authors themselves might not be firearms experts, that does not necessarily mean they were relying upon their own personal judgment. In the case of Lane, for example, Posner cites Rush to Judgment, p. 105, where no such discussion occurs. Instead, it may be found in the chapter entitled, "The Rifle Test", which runs from p. 121 to p. 130. The specific sentence occurs on p. 125 and cites Commission testimony. Contrary to Posner's insinuations, Lane cites several firearms experts who describe Mannlicher-Carcanos as "poor military weapons," as "crudely made, poorly designed, dangerous and inaccurate... unhandy, crude, unreliable on repeat shots, has safety design fault", and as having a "terrible action and a coy habit of blowing the firing pin out in the shooter's face" (Rush to Judgment, pp. 122-123). Lane's entire chapter appears to be a thoughtful and well-balanced account of the rifle and the alleged marksman's (woefully limited) ability to use it, which raises questions about Posner's use of this citation. Lane even quotes a letter from the manufacturer of the 6.5 mm cartridge, who explains that this ammunition had not been manufactured since 1944. Posner has not read Lane's account or else is grossly distorting it.

There is no special name for this fallacy other than poor scholarship or (perhaps) deliberate deception. When he suggests that, even if it were a terrible weapon, "Oswald would not have known that", moreover, he



undermines his own position. No one suggests that he read Anson's or Lane's books, but if he deliberately chose a weapon of this kind to commit a crime of this kind, he was not merely a feeble marksman (which we already knew) but actually completely ignorant about weapons of this kind (which makes him less plausible as the alleged assassin). Posner appears to be engaging in self-defeating argument.

Fallacy #3: page 104, lines 14 to 15:

Posner: "When the FBI ran Oswald's gun through a series of rigorous shooting tests, it concluded 'it is a very accurate weapon'".

Lane's chapter provides a nice rebuttal, but Posner has apparently not read it. Other sources provide the strongest confirmation of the absurdity of any claims to accuracy on behalf of this weapon. Indeed, as Summers, Conspiracy, pp. 46-47, observes, "The original Mannlicher-Carcano (alleged to be Oswald's rifle) was an uncooperative piece of evidence, as army experts discovered after the assassination. As a spokesman put it, one of them 'had difficulty in opening the bolt in his first firing exercise....' He added that, as newcomers to the weapon, 'The pressure to open the bolt was so great that he tended to move the rifle off the target...' An assassin using the Mannlicher-Carcano in Dealey Plaza may, of course, have known the quirks of his weapon, but this account suggests the gun was hardly ideal for feats of marksmanship." O'Toole reports the Commission "also heard rifle experts testify that the telescopic sight could be easily knocked out of adjustment and that this would make accurate shooting with the gun unlikely, that shims had to be inserted to elevate and move the sight before the Commission's three marksmen could fire the rifle accurately, and that, even using stationary targets, expert marksmen were unable to equal Oswald's alleged accuracy" (Assassination Tapes, p. 27). No doubt Posner has not read them either. He thus commits a nice example of the fallacy of equivocation: the tests were not done with Oswald's rifle in its original condition, because it was a terrible weapon. When he says "the FBI ran Oswald's gun through a series of rigorous tests", it was a reconstructed weapon that was not available to Oswald, so it is difficult to see how they concluded it was accurate.

Fallacy #4: page 104, lines 15 to 17:

Posner: "It had low kickback compared to other military rifles, which helped in rapid bolt-action firing."

This is an outstanding case of special pleading, where

you cite only evidence favorable to your side and ignore the unfavorable. Kickback is a function of recoil, which is determined by the amount of force directly imparted to your shoulder with a shoulder-supported weapon. That amount of force depends upon the caliber, weight, and charge of the round. A more powerful bullet imparts greater recoil, a less powerful bullet less recoil, for weapons which can chamber both. Less force, in general, produces less velocity, less penetration power, and often less accuracy. (More detailed discussions may be found in Fadala, Rifle Guide, pp. 38-41, for example, and Withers, Precision Handloading, pp. 135-145). The "low kickback" of the Mannlicher-Carcano thus indicates that it is a weapon of low penetrating power and probably of low accuracy. There is a great deal of direct and indirect evidence for these conclusions. Rice's Gun Data Book (1975), p. 89, for example, characterizes a cartridge that is manufactured for the Mannlicher-Carcano as follows:

*6.5 Italian (Carcano). This cartridge, made by Norma in a 156 grain bullet, has the slowest muzzle velocity and weakest striking power of any of the 6.5 mm imports, so it is not as popular as its Japanese, German, or Swedish counterparts.*

As I explained above, the ammunition that Oswald was alleged to have used had not been manufactured by the Western Cartridge Company since 1944, so it is not surprising that a gun data book published in 1975 does not include it. However, since the bullet picked up from a stretcher at Parkland Hospital is alleged to be of the same kind and weighed 158.6 grains, the properties of the Norma and Western cartridges are probably very similar. This inference is supported by the muzzle velocities that are recorded for the Norma bullet:

Cartridge	Wt. Grains	Type	Velocity: Muzzle	100 yds.	200 yds.
Carcano	156	SP	2000	1810	1640

SP means "soft point" as opposed to HP "hollow point", BP "bronze point", etc. (Rice, Gun Data Book, p. 118). The bullets that hit JFK are supposed to have been "copper jacketed". Since John Withers observes that "high velocity is a relative term without exact meaning" (Precision Handloading, p. 135), I looked for evidence indicating that "high velocity" and "medium velocity" had an essentially similar meaning around the time of the assassination. Leyson's New Guns Annual (1961), p. 19, describes a 170 grain, .30/30 bullet which still has a velocity of 1890 fps at 100 yards as a "heavier bullet of slower velocity" than the high velocity bullets

he has discussed, such as the Silver Tip 180 grain bullet with a velocity of 2850 fps at 100 yards. Notice, especially, that this .30/30 bullet is traveling faster than the Carcano bullet at 100 yards, yet is still described as slower than high velocity. This strongly supports the description of the Mannlicher-Carcano as a medium to low velocity weapon in technical terms that have been constant since at least 1961. As for "helping" with its bolt-action firing, see the discussion of Fallacy #3.

Fallacy #5: page 104, lines 17 to 22:

Posner: "With a 4X scope, even an untrained shooter could fire at a target like a marksman. As the FBI firearms expert Robert Frazier said, "It requires no training at all to shoot a weapon with a telescopic sight, and that particular sight needed virtually no adjustment at less than 200 yards, the range of the eventual assassination shots."

Persons who are very good at something commonly underestimate the difficulty of others who are inexperienced or not very good at the same thing. I supervised marksmanship training as a commissioned officer in the Marine Corps while I was stationed at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego from 1964 to 1966, and I can assure you that "firearms expert" Frazier has to know better. Apart from the quality of the weapon and the ammunition, which in the Oswald scenario were far from favorable, the most important elements are a steady position, sight alignment, and trigger squeeze. Without doubt, sight alignment is made vastly easier for experienced shooters and inexperienced shooters alike with a telescopic sight. This, however, is far from saying that "It requires no training at all to shoot a weapon with a telescopic sight", especially at a moving rather than a stationary target. The mastery of marksmanship requires developing a steady body position and a smooth trigger squeeze. If Frazier does not know better, then he is no "firearms expert". This is another case of special pleading, which has several additional facets. One is that the use of a telescopic sight may make it easier to zero in on a target, but it takes more time to zero in. There is a trade off here between time and accuracy that does not appear to have received sufficient attention. Whether Oswald had 6 seconds or 8 seconds to fire three shots makes little difference, because presumably he had to take the time to aim his weapon. With a moving target using a telescopic sight, I doubt that anyone of his rather modest ability could accomplish the feat that is alleged (of firing 3 times and hitting a small target twice in 6 to

8 seconds at ranges around 100 or 200 yards). Another is that the specific telescopic sight that was attached to Oswald's rifle posed severe difficulties for the expert shooters who were called upon to test it. As Lane reports, "the rifle sight was rebuilt and two or three metal 'shims' were fitted to provide a degree of accuracy previously absent. At first, apparently, the telescopic sight was so unrelated to the line of fire and so inexpertly attached that it could not be adjusted. Simmons (who was in charge) was asked if the technicians in the machine shop 'had any difficulties with sighting the weapon in,' he replied, 'Well, they could not sight the weapon in using the telescope' (Rush to Judgment, pp.126-127). And Summers explains that the experts concluded that the iron sights would have worked better under the firing conditions which Oswald allegedly confronted, so they undertook tests without the scope by firing at stationary targets and were still unable to replicate his alleged performance (Conspiracy, p. 46). The point of this fallacy is to convey a false impression.

Fallacy #6: page 104, lines 22 to 24:

Posner: "The Carcano is rated an effective battle weapon, good at killing people, and as accurate as the U.S. Army's M-14 rifle." This is an appeal to popular sentiments. By suggesting that the Mannlicher-Carcano is just as good as the U.S. Army's M-14 (a claim which is difficult to take seriously), we are supposed to infer that it must be a good weapon, because any weapon the U.S. Army uses must be a good weapon-and it's just as good! A wonderful story appears in Bloomgarden's book about the rifle Oswald is alleged to have used by "a veteran of the Fifth Army campaign in Italy who fought alongside the partisans. When they fired their Mannlicher-Carcanos, the sound was much like a firecracker. I couldn't believe they were serious...I thought the bullets would poop out and drop harmlessly, no trajectory...it sounded like the Fourth of July" (quoted from The Gun by Model and Groden, JFK: The Case for Conspiracy, p. 86). At least, it is a wonderful story until you recall that many of the witnesses in Dealey Plaza reported that the first shot sounded more like a firecracker than it did a rifle round and that the bullet that hit him in the back had shallow penetration.

Fallacy #7: page 104, lines 24 to 27:

Posner: "The Carcano's bullets, 6.5 millimeter shells, are 30 to 50 percent heavier than the average bullet of that diameter, and travel with the same velocity, 2,100 feet per second, as the Russian AK-47 assault rifle."

This combines an appeal to popular sentiments with a faulty analogy. The Russian AK-47 is a familiar sounding weapon that is widely believed to be an excellent assault rifle. Thus, if the Mannlicher-Carcano fires projectiles with the same velocity as the AK-47, it must be an excellent weapon, too. That is the appeal to popular sentiments. An assault rifle is designed to put out a large number of rounds in a short space of time, however, and would be a hopeless choice for an assassination from the sixth floor of a warehouse or an office building. Notice that, if the analogy were carried through more exactly—if the Mannlicher-Carcano fires projectiles with the same velocity as the AK-47, it must be an excellent assault rifle—then it falls apart. He might as well contend that various quality weapons have barrels of similar length as the Mannlicher-Carcano (stocks made of material similar to that of the Mannlicher-Carcano, etc.), but they would all be roughly on a par in their argumentative force: plausible but misleading.

Fallacy #8: page 104. pages 27-30:

Posner: "The 6.5 mm bullet, when fired, is like a flying drill," says Art Pence, a competition firearms expert. Some game hunters use the 6.5 mm shell to bring down animals as large as elephants."

This passage combines fallacies of equivocation and appeals to authority with the argumentative strategy known as divide and conquer. Note that the "firearms experts" upon whom Posner relies are Art Pence, who is said to be a "competition firearms expert", and Robert Frazier, the FBI "firearms expert". Competition firearms is a distinct class of weapons from big game weapons which is a distinct class of weapons from handguns and machine guns which is a distinct class of weapons from military rifles (among which the Mannlicher-Carcano is especially obscure). See, for example, Fadala's Rifle Guide, Leyson's New Guns Annual, or Quertermous and Quertermous' Modern Guns and other similar references. Merely because Art Pence may be an expert on competition firearms does not make him an expert on military firearms, especially obscure ones. Moreover, I nowhere find Frazier described except as a "firearms expert", but his area of expertise could be that of handguns and machine guns (with which the FBI is undoubtedly familiar) rather than of military firearms, especially obscure ones.

Thus, the use of the term "firearms expert" might be based upon his knowledge with respect to weapons of one kind and conceal his actual ignorance with respect

to weapons of another kind. That is the fallacy of equivocation. When you appeal to an expert in one field as an authority in another in relation to which he is not expert, however, you also commit a fallacious appeal to authority. In this instance, the equivocation is used to conceal a probably fallacious appeal to authority. The divide and conquer move is actually fascinating. If you cannot defeat an argument, then divide it into parts and defeat its parts. In this case, if you cannot exonerate the Mannlicher-Carcano as a half-way decent weapon, then separate the rifle from its bullets and exonerate the bullets. The actual effects of firing any rifle, of course, results from the interaction of various factors, including the rifle, the ammunition, the shooter and the target, so perhaps you can make a more plausible case for the bullet than you can for the rifle. (That this is doubtful in this case is suggested by the discussion of Fallacy #4. But perhaps it's worth a try, if your other arguments are not doing the job.) The elephant hunting allusion intrigued me, so I was dumbstruck when I discovered the following comments on 6.5 mm ammunition in Fadala's Rifle Guide, pp. 38-39: "The 6.5 mm was the darling of the rich and famous hunters of the early 1900's who carried the Mannlicher carbine all over the world. A few hunted elephants with the little gun. Even Elmer Keith, the big-bore guru, stated in American Rifleman magazine that the 6.5 mm was deadlier than its bore size." This sounds like something Posner could have used, except that the Mannlicher that the rich and famous hunters carried all over the world in the early 1900's was a high-quality rifle produced in the 1890's and not the shoddy Mannlicher-Carcano of World War II. (See Peterson, Encyclopedia of Firearms, pp. 195-196, on the Mannlicher, Quertermous and Quertermous, Modern Guns, p. 202, on the Mannlicher-Carcano.)

Fallacy #9: page 104, lines 30 to 33:

Posner: "The bullets manufactured for Oswald's Carcano were made by Western Cartridge Company and the FBI considered them 'very accurate...(and) very dependable,' never having misfired in dozens of tests."

Special pleading. The only good thing that can be said of them may be that they never misfired in dozens of tests. That might make them dependable, but it cannot make them accurate. See especially Fallacies #2 through #6.

Fallacy 10: PAGE 104, LINES 33 TO 35:

Posner: "The FBI's Frazier concluded the Carcano was a good rifle for the assassination."

This is an example of the big lie. Anyone who has read through the first nine fallacies is unlikely to be taken in by the tenth. Any "firearms expert" who truly believed this would thereby demonstrate his own incompetence.

I would observe that these ten fallacies are all committed in the space of a single page. Of the works I have ever studied, this one appears to have the highest falsehood density quotient (false sentences divided by sentences) of them all.

#### References

- Bloomgarden, Henry S. (1975), The Gun (Grossman Publishers).
- Evica, George M. (1978), We are All Mortal (University of Hartford).
- Fadala, Sam (1993), Rifle Guide (Stoeger Publishing Company).
- Lane, Mark (1966/1992), Rush To Judgment (Thunder's Mouth Press).
- Lyson, Burr (1961), The New Guns Annual (Arco Publishing Company).
- Marrs, Jim (1989), Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy (Carroll & Graf).
- Model, Peter and Robert Groden (1976), JFK: The Case for Conspiracy (Manor Books).
- O'Toole, George (1975), The Assassination Tapes (Penthouse Press, Ltd.).
- Peterson, Harold (1964), Encyclopedia of Firearms (E. P. Dutton).
- Quertermous, Russell and Steven Quertermous (1981), Modern Guns, Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Collector Books).
- Rice, F. Philip (1975), Gun Data Book, (Harper & Row).
- Withers, John (1985), Precision Handloading (Stoeger Publishing Company)..

28

## BOOK REVIEWS: BLOODY TREASON AND ASSASSINATION SCIENCE

by  
Hal Verb

Noel Twyman, Bloody Treason (Laurel Publishing, 1997) and James Fetzer, ed., Assassination Science (Catfeet Press, 1998). These two recent books complement each other in that they provide what the authors claim are "proofs" that major pieces of evidence in the JFK assassination have been either altered, forged or in some way tampered with to lead one to the inevitable conclusion (or so the forgers would hope) that there was no conspiracy and the murder of the president was accomplished by a "lone nut assassin".

The primary pieces of evidence used in both books relate to the Zapruder film (and other films or still photos), the autopsy photos and x-rays and to a considerably lesser degree the infamous backyard photos (allegedly showing Oswald with weapons and newspapers implicating him in the crimes of November 22, 1963). For those interested in knowing more about my views on this latter piece of evidence (the backyard photos), may I refer you to an article due to appear in the British journal, "Dallas '63". There I offer evidence as to why I believe the variant photos are genuine and not faked.

Let me state at the outset that, while I do believe that there was a conspiracy and that, as a corollary of this, my position is that Oswald fired none of the shots that day (including the Tippit murder), it is also my position that the Zapruder film (or other films, etc.) was not altered, that the autopsy photos and x-rays have not been proven to be faked or altered...nor do I hold with Twyman (and others) that there was JFK body alteration.

My review of the two books will incorporate my evidence for not supporting fakery. Because of space limitations, I cannot introduce all this evidence, but I do propose to detail all my findings perhaps in the form of a future article or two and I hope to present these findings either or both the Lancer and COPA conferences in Dallas in November, 1998. As Al Jolson used to say, "You 'ain't heard nothing yet!"

Although it is not my usual practice when reading a book to begin at the end instead of the beginning, I must

*Hal Verb*  
*P.O. Box 421815*  
*San Francisco CA 94142-1815*

say I was taken quite aback when I glanced at Prof. Fetzer's analysis in his "Reconstruction" of the crime. Fetzer has a real howler here (page 371) when he suggests that the Cabell brothers (Mayor Earle Cabell and CIA Officer Charles Cabell) were pitted as "two rich and powerful right-wing politicians against two powerful left-wing politicians."

I have no real quarrel with Fetzer's description of the Cabell brothers as right-wing but his labeling of both President Kennedy and LBJ as "left-wing politicians" is right out of fantasy land if not Camelot! Can Prof. Fetzer summon up for us any other "rich left-wing and powerful politicians" he knows of before we leave off with JFK and LBJ? And if he can do so how come writers like Chomsky and Cockburn have missed out on this-were they asleep while watching the store? None of the political histories I've read have conjured up any such concoction.

I tried to contain myself at reading this but what I was really interested in was not the political realm (where opinions are offered) but the scientific area (where evidence is required). What follows are only some of the areas in Fetzer's and Twyman's "proofs" I disagree with, before I get into the major theme of alteration and forgery.

(1) Fetzer reprints an alleged signed letter (see page 372) dated in 1994 from Evelyn Lincoln who was President Kennedy's secretary. Twyman prints the contents of this same letter (see Twyman, page 831). The letter purports to be a response to a query to her as to her views on the JFK administration and his assassination. Lincoln says it is her "belief" that there was a conspiracy and names "five conspirators" behind the deed. These five are: LBJ, J. Edgar Hoover, the Mafia, the CIA, and the Cubans in Florida. Fetzer offers this in his work with no commentary while Twyman in his rendition notes only a grammatical error.

There are several problematic and disturbing things about this alleged letter that one must come to grips with before accepting it as gospel truth:

(A) Twyman's notation (catching the grammatical error) makes one suspicious about who is typing the letter. Wouldn't JFK's personal secretary be the kind of typist who would not make such an obvious error? This is the kind of error an amateur would make.

(B) The letter is strangely addressed to "Dear Richard" without the usual full address. Why is that? Again, as in (A), one would not expect that kind of performance from

JFK's secretary.

(C) We see Lincoln telling her innermost thoughts to a perfect stranger. Why choose a stranger to reveal secrets about the century's most famous crime? And why didn't she reveal this before 1994 since undoubtedly others must have written to her?

(D) There seems something odd about the fact that Ms. Lincoln did not mention anything about the "five conspirators" in her book which appeared in 1966. Or did it appear in her work and I missed it?

(E) Ms. Lincoln never brought this information forward before either the Warren Commission or the House Select Committee. Perhaps it was fear that prevented her from doing so but this factor of fear doesn't seem to have entered when she wrote to "Richard".

(F) As a final note there is the matter of the signature which can be seen in Fetzer's book. That signature appears to be different from two other signatures I have in my possession. The validity of this signature would require the determination of a handwriting expert before one can reach a conclusion. I must admit, however, that the points I've raised above do not augur well for validity.

(2) Twyman (page 98) reprints the well known Willis #5 photo (equivalent to Zapruder frame #202). However, his caption reads "taken an instant before Kennedy was hit." But Twyman contradicts himself further on in his book when he writes about Rosemary and Phil Willis and the Betzner photo. (See between pages 144 and 145 the color photo of z-188): "Rosemary Willis...was running along Elm Street...When she heard a shot or explosion. She then stopped and looked back toward the Texas School Book Depository. Kennedy is still waving. The sound of the first shot was indicated to be at approximately this point between frames 186 and 202 by the Betzner photo and Willis photo...one taken before (Betzner) and one after the first shot (Willis)."

Thus we have Twyman having the Willis #5 photo being taken before and after he was shot! Obviously an impossibility having nothing to do with alteration in this case.

But then Twyman further complicates his scenario by stating "that a first shot (or shots) or a diversionary explosion occurred somewhere between frames 160 and 188...it seems plausible to assume the first explosive sound occurred nearer to frame 160 than 188. Gerald Posner says the first shot was fired before frame 166."

Imagine that - relying on Gerald Posner for fixing the

timing sequence on the shots fired! Will he next be using the Warren Commission's evidence in support of z-frame and photo alteration? Well, guess what-as we shall soon see-this is precisely what Twyman does in one of the most crucial areas of research: The First Shot Hypothesis. It is my opinion (which I will demonstrate) that, because Twyman does make use of this, he has utterly destroyed his case for alteration. Another writer is invoked by Twyman to argue for a "first shot" which was "probably fired at (Zapruder) frame 152." If the reader is confused by all of this it is no wonder that gossip columnist Liz Smith, in her column of December 23, 1997 reviewing Twyman's book, expressed her thoughts on the whole business by stating: "I am totally confused again." (Of course, it should be noted here that Ms. Smith said her last book on the JFK case was Posner's Case Closed which she "agreed with". I think it safe to say that Smith hardly qualifies as a researcher on the JFK assassination).

(3) Twyman gives Kudoes to Walter Cronkite and says of him: "he studied the JFK assassination perhaps harder and longer than any other network newsperson." Naturally after reading this I wondered what the scorecard showed on those other "newspersons" and, you guessed it, most would have flunked in their "studies". There is no need to dredge up who these persons are as most readers are by now familiar enough with their dismal record.

But assigning this accomplishment to Cronkite doesn't square with the facts. If you'll recall, when CBS did a four part series on the assassination back in 1967 (the transcripts are available), Cronkite headed the series. As our treasured national icon, he came off looking very knowledgeable about what he was saying. But, according to an aide who worked on the series, Cronkite did not see the script until moments before going on the television airwaves. Always a good reader, the image left on the screen was that of a very savvy know-it-all guy. But it was all image and who is there to argue that television news then (and more so now) is anything but a jockeying for image portrayal? That I was not fooled by all of this but apparently Twyman is shows how very effectively this was done.

(4) In Fetzer's book he enlists writer Ron Helper to introduce "evidence" that Gov. Connally was hit at Zapruder frame 315 (under his armpit) and at frame 338 (wrist shot) (page 211). But the evidence on these two alleged shots is so shaky and is no way conclusive. As

an example Helper cites as "evidence" one of Robert Groden's books, "The Killing of a President", wherein he lists shot #6 for the wrist wounding; but Groden's "reconstruction" is so utterly flawed it cannot be used as a guidepost.

(5) We come now to writer Chuck Marler whose work is described in one of the chapters in Fetzer's book. On page 256 he discusses what he sees as "alteration" in the Stemmons freeway sign which appears in many frames of the Zapruder film. According to Marler this alteration was done (by the forgers) "to increase the height" in "order to conceal President Kennedy's reaction when struck by the first bullet".

This concealment makes no sense and cannot be true if one carefully studies the Zapruder film before JFK disappears behind the sign. JFK can be seen reacting to something just immediately after Zapruder frame 189 and this is well before frame 207, when JFK begins to vanish from the scene. Even the House Select Committee caught JFK in this act and let us ignore for the moment whether JFK's reaction is due to a sound or a hit; certainly, the conspirators would have known and presumably would have made every effort to "conceal" this. But apparently they goofed as they were too busy editing other frames and so good were they at this that they were able to fool not only the Warren Commission but the House Select Committee as well! But I must say that in the case of the Warren Commission, which is no defense of its role, they never considered determining which shots struck or missed. They simply left it up to the reader to decide!

(6) The longest chapter in Fetzer's book is by Doctor David Mantik and runs some 82 pages (pages 263 to 344). The thrust of his article deals with his claim that the Zapruder film was altered and his evidence is in the form of vertical editing (frames excision), horizontal editing (changes made within the frames) and composite frames (where one frame is combined with another to appear as a single frame).

To cite all my reservations in this article on the myriad of claims Dr. Mantik makes would probably require at least one more article or perhaps two and possibly even a book to deal adequately with the subject, but for our purposes here I'll cite a few objections.

Let us consider Dr. Mantik's reconstruction of "two head shots" which he elaborately prepares for us on pages 286 and 287. I have no quarrel with the argument for two shots to JFK's head (in fact I've written on

this for an assassination journal years back and am thoroughly familiar with the background for this argument). But what I do take exception to is Dr. Mantik's analysis of this double head shot thesis and where it leads to (in Dr. Mantik's case it leads to film alteration as a consequence of the two shots, whereas in my analysis it leads to the Zapruder film providing its own evidence for such an event). Again, as in my query to Chuck Marler in point (5) above, why would the conspirators allow in this very damaging evidence if they had access to many (if not all) of the films so early after the assassination? Why, indeed?

It is too bad that Dr. Mantik did not include in his reconstruction data on earlier shots including the first one, but Mantik begins his analysis starting out with Zapruder frame 250 and ending at frame 343. Mantik's over-riding concern is to demonstrate how the fatal shot (or shots) were altered not only to conceal the direction from which shots were coming, but also to protect the reputations of those entrusted to guard the president, whether those reputations suffered from terrible neglect or outright deliberateness.

Whatever Mantik's motivation for not providing data before the fatal head shot I cannot say, but I do know that at the Lancer Conference in Dallas in 1996 I confronted him on an error he had made in describing the Zapruder frame at which the first shot occurred. Mantik repeated his error twice in his presentation and after I pointed out the error he publicly stated he had erred and agreed with my analysis.

When one studies Mantik's reconstruction, there is a glaring absence of any discussion of the missed shot and, when we add this to any analysis by him of earlier shots, the theme of film alteration becomes an extremely burdensome load for him to carry. My point here is that it appears that the forgers goofed to such an extent that they left in very embarrassing film events despite what Mantik may have to say about fatal head shot composites.

Possibly Dr. Mantik may believe that the missed shot was fired before z-250, since this is where his starting point is. I would not, however, be at all surprised if Dr. Mantik believed that there was a missed shot occurring prior to z-189, just as others supporting z-film alteration such as Twyman. Nor can we forget that Posner himself has opted for this position.

Unfortunately for proponents of film alteration who believe an early shot missed prior to z-189, they ignore

compelling evidence that this is not when the shot missed. Here I am thinking of witness James Tague in particular; but additional evidence can be found in comparing films with witness testimony such as Phil Willis and Zapruder. Together with a non-existent missing shot analysis and a completely faulty and erroneous first shot evidentiary base, the question of film alteration has little to stand on and in my analysis that z-film hypothesis, like the "magic bullet" theory, should collapse like a house of cards.

(7) On page 368, Fetzer reprints the often told story of the famous "three tramps" arrested long after the assassination. The caption reads "identified by Chauncey Holt as Charles Harrelson (the tallest), Chauncey Holt (wearing a hat) and Richard Montoya (the best dressed)."

Now and then I see this 3-tramp "revelation" appearing much too often in the JFK literature and one would have thought this story would be buried by now but apparently not. While the LaFontaines provided the documents demonstrating who the tramps really are and why they were there (and none are the ones so listed in Fetzer's caption), it should be noted that way back in the late 1970's the Rockefeller Commission had established that these tramps had no association with the JFK assassination. I doubt, however, that we have heard the last on these well known tramps and you can bet you will see the story again in some form or another. Count on it!

(8) Dr. Mantik asks what I would consider a perfectly legitimate question regarding the Secret Service's re-enactment of the assassination with respect to what appears in the Zapruder film: "...why did the re-enactments place a shot where JFK was invisible?" (See Fetzer's book, page 306). The question arose because the possibility existed of alteration of the Stemmons freeway sign (see my point #5 above). In other words, alteration occurred because the sign had been "elevated in order to obscure JFK."

But there is a more compelling reason (and I think the real reason) for this re-enactment. The FBI's own analysis showed that an alleged sniper firing from the sixth floor of the TSBF could not have fired at anytime between frames (Zapruder) 166 to 210 because of tree foliage blockage except for a tiny fraction of a second at z-186. However, even the Warren Commission discounted any shot at this z-186 frame). Thus, the obvious answer (for the Warren Commission) here is that whatever shot struck JFK in the neck had to come after

210 and before or at z-225 and no later. Since the Zapruder film clearly shows JFK in frames up to and including z-207 after which he disappears out of view and emerges at z-225 which clearly shows him reacting to a hit, the reason for the re-enactment necessarily had to include JFK who is obscured by the Stemmons sign as seen in the Zapruder film.

To complicate the matter further, Dr. Mantik refers to a study by Michael Stroschio ("More physical insight into the assassination of President Kennedy", in "Physics and Society". Vol. 25, no.4 October, 1996) reprinted in Fetzer's book on pages 343 and 344 which deals with a study of the motion of Zapruder's camera while filming the JFK assassination. As Stroschio puts it, the study was conducted because "...it is well known that such neuromuscular reactions are involuntary and that the power spectrum for such jerking motions has a peak near a period of about one third of a second."

Stroschio's study is done by showing 6 vertical lines with the angular acceleration indicated for the various frames which begins with Zapruder frame 150 and ends at around frame 334. The second vertical bar shows excessive movement in the 190's section and it is among the graph's boldest signs of movement. This would, again, be evidence for some event occurring in this time period and that is significantly long enough before JFK disappears behind the sign at z-207. Thus the argument that alteration of the Stemmons sign occurs after z-207 makes no reasonable sense for me. If alteration of any kind were to occur, the time to do it would have been before z-207 and clearly this was not done! It is beginning to look as if the forgers and conspirators are having a very bad day on November 22, 1963: not only have they missed twice (if you believe the House Select Committee Report) but they can't even get their act together to alter the film where alteration was necessary!

But let us not be too hard on these "forgers". They were laboring under a time constraint-all of this had to be done on the first day. You might say they operated on the notion of a "Rush to Judgment".

(9) To return to Twyman's book again: note that in point #2 above I called attention to Twyman's use of the Warren Commission's "evidence" to bolster his contention of Zapruder film alteration. To be specific, I refer you to Twyman's statement occurring between pages 144 and 145 (see his commentary on Zapruder frame 188). He writes: "for my purpose, here, I will go along with the Warren Commission. This means that Kennedy was first

hit somewhere between frames 206 and 210."

I do not know if Mr. Twyman had access to Prof. Fetzer's book, "Assassination Science", but as we've already seen in points #2 and #8 above, he is in serious trouble for making this assertion on several grounds. First, is that what the Warren Commission said about the first shot striking JFK (but not necessarily the first shot)? This was not, as Twyman puts it, "somewhere between frames 206 and 210" but rather JFK could have been hit in any frame from 210 to (and including) 225. Twyman's "purpose" is the problem here since as we have shown that the preponderance of evidence strongly points to a shot occurring slightly before Zapruder frame 206. The "purpose", as I see it, is a lot like having a vagrant opinion desperately flying about in space searching for a fact. Neither of the two shall ever meet as long as we inhabitants occupy the same physical universe in which the laws of physics must apply.

(10) This is the last of the points I'll be raising but most assuredly it is not the very last since space constraints limit what I can offer. The point here I will consider is what I shall call "the back of the head argument".

The argument boils down to this: many witnesses are reported as having seen the back of JFK's head completely blown out and these witnesses include not only assassination witnesses but doctors and nurses who attended both Kennedy's arrival at Parkland Hospital (Dallas) and the subsequent autopsy (Washington, D.C.). And, as the argument continues, if so many did report this, why is it that film evidence (including the Zapruder film and the autopsy photographs and x-rays) do not show this? As a follow-up to this argument, proponents of film alteration have suggested that forgers altered evidence to conform to the notion that there was no back of the head blown out.

But is it true that witnesses did state that they viewed the back of the head "completely blown out"? We can consult both Twyman and Fetzer on this question since some of these witnesses are utilized by the authors in their quest to prove forgery. Twyman makes it very clear that the Zapruder film shows no back-of-the-head blow-out stating "...at no frame in the film do we actually see a blow-out of bone and brains from the back of Kennedy's head..." (See page 231).

Yet Twyman's book cites the testimony of four doctors who attended JFK in Dallas (see pages 191 and 192) and we will just briefly record here what they had to say about JFK's head wound:



Dr. Marion T. Jenkins: "...a great laceration of the right side of the head (temporal and occipital)..."

Dr. Charles J. Carrico: "...a large gaping wound, located in the right occipitoparietal area."

Dr. Robert N. McClelland: "...the right posterior portion of the skull had been extremely blasted."

Dr. William Kemp Clark: "...a large gaping wound in the right posterior part..."

And on page 87 Twyman reproduces Secret Service agent Clint Hill's memorandum which appeared in one of the Warren Commission volumes in which he reports on what he had seen in the morgue (at Bethesda). Hill states "I observed another wound on the right rear portion of the skull."

In Fetzer's book, "Assassination Science," Mantik draws on a statement by Secret Service agent Emory Roberts. The statement deals with Mantik's argument about what frame in the Zapruder film "a bloody halo (or explosion) is seen".

Agent Roberts (see Fetzer book page 291): "...I saw what appeared to be a small explosion on the right side of the President's head, saw blood, at which time the President fell further to his left..."

The list above is by no means complete but, as can be noted, reports at the actual scene of the assassination (Dallas), the Parkland Hill Hospital scene (Dallas) and finally the morgue (Washington, D.C.) provide no basis for the conclusion that the back (and not the right side) of JFK's head was "completely blown out" unless all of these witnesses are lying or unreliable.

This concludes my argument for the validity of film and photo evidence as opposed to any claims of forgery or alteration. As I've indicated above, there are many more grounds for opposing the claims of alteration but I offer the above as a refutation. I know that, in spite of what I have presented here, there will be many who will say it happened anyway. But here I am reminded of what the great Russian Cosmologist, Lev Landau, once wrote of his scientific colleagues: "Cosmologists are often in error, but never in doubt!".

☪

## THE PITZER FILE

by

Daniel Marvin and Jerry D. Rose

LCDR William Bruce Pitzer was found dead in his Bethesda Naval Hospital TV Studio on Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 1966. The Navy investigated and ruled it suicide, yet the FBI's investigation of the incident found nothing to support that finding. Why should you be interested in the death some 31 years ago of one Naval officer? Why? Because there is a strong possibility that Pitzer was murdered and that his murder is inextricably linked to a well orchestrated, high-level cover-up of the JFK assassination conspiracy. Follow: In early August, 1965 Marvin was asked to "terminate" Pitzer by an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who described Pitzer as a "traitor" about to give state secrets to the "enemy." [1] He didn't accept that mission-he didn't kill Pitzer. But someone did, another of the same ilk, loving danger, motivated by a twisted sense of patriotic fervor, and trained to kill without question. Perhaps the same CIA agent passed on the order: Pitzer was to be silenced, terminated. He was shot in the head.

We doubt that it was someone from within the CIA that pulled the trigger. They seldom personally do the dirty jobs, the killing, or terrorizing. They bring in the likes of Marvin and nothing is put in writing. We'll likely never know who killed Pitzer, but we'll know where the order came from. Whoever it was who pulled the trigger, if he is alive today-he is in hiding and careful to trust few if any of those with whom he comes in contact. Retired Green Beret Major John Strait, said it right when he said to Marvin, "Dan, I don't like 'em. They (CIA) use us and then throw us away like a used condom."

Since the publication of his earlier article, Marvin has devoted a major part of his life to the attempt to develop all possible information about Pitzer's death. Without going into the many vicissitudes he has encountered (which he intends to recount in his book, The Pitzer

---

Daniel Marvin  
715 Hector St.  
Ithaca NY 14850-2031

Jerry D. Rose  
State University College  
Fredonia NY 14063

File-the Truth about U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander William Bruce Pitzer-Victim of the JFK Assassination Conspiracy Cover-up), suffice it to say that he, like many other researchers, has been stonewalled not only by agencies of the U.S. government but by at least one person within the research community itself. In spite of these problems, Marvin has been able to obtain a thick file of investigative materials on Pitzer's death and, in this article, we want to share with the reader some of the results of perusing this file. Copies of all this research material may be obtained from the editorial office of The Fourth Decade.

This file represents investigations by three agencies: the Montgomery County (Maryland) autopsy of Pitzer on the night of his death; an investigation of the Navy; and another by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The autopsy and the Navy investigation are quite categorical in characterizing the death as a suicide; the FBI investigations raise some fundamental indications to the contrary.

Let us recap briefly the known circumstances of LCDR Pitzer's death. He was employed, as he had been in 1963, at the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda hospital in the television studio of the hospital. On the day of his death, a Saturday, he had gone to his office from his home in Takoma Park, Maryland, as he often did on a Saturday afternoon in order to "clean up his desk." At around 4:30 p.m., his wife called him and received no answer; when she called again and received no answer at 7:30 p.m., she called the Security Office of the hospital. Security officials entered the office and found the body of Pitzer, dressed in civilian clothes, a gun shot wound in his head and his body lying in a pool of blood, his head partly resting beneath the lower rung of an aluminum ladder and with a near by Smith & Wesson .38 caliber revolver. Forensic investigation established that he probably died some 3-5 hours earlier.

Pitzer's death certificate was signed John G. Ball, Deputy Medical Examiner of Montgomery County. [2] According to Ball's 11/15/66 interview by the FBI, [3] he was called to the scene at 8:50 p.m., arriving at 9:15 p.m. and conducted his examination of the head wound at 11:30 p.m.. He also made some remarkable statements to the FBI. For one, he said he observed "muzzle marks around the wound and powder burns," an observation contradicted by later reports. He also attempted to account for the strange location of Pitzer's body with his head under a ladder: "he concluded that Pitzer was

probably sitting in a chair and shot himself in the head with the pistol which was lying near the body and the pistol sort of spun him around and he kind of slid his head under the step-ladder." (See back cover illustration, this issue) Ball's "kind of " and "sort of " language suggests that he was making up a scenario in which not even he could believe. Pitzer's autopsy, completed at 8 a.m. the next day, refers to an "area of charring of the skin," surrounding the wound, but says specifically that "no powder burns surrounding the area are noted." [4]

Predictably, Pitzer's death on Bethesda property created an immediate and sustained investigative interest by the Navy. Captain James H. Stover, Commander of the Bethesda Naval Medical Center, among others, went to the scene of Pitzer's death and identified his remains. [5] The following Tuesday, November 2, Stover appointed a two-man Board of Investigation to study the death: Commander J. W. Guinn and Lt. Cmdr. Thomas G. Ferris, [6] although Guinn had viewed Pitzer's remains prior to his Arlington Cemetery burial, and identified them as those of Pitzer "based on years of association" with him. [7] The Board was directed to coordinate—even subordinate—its efforts to those of the Naval Investigation Service (NIS), a representative of which also arrived at the Pitzer death scene at 9:05 p.m. [8] The Board duly accepted an NIS request that it conduct no interviews until NIS investigation was completed. In its eventual report (reprinted in full here, except for the enclosures) on February 13, 1967, the Board admits that all investigative data came by way of its contacts with NIS, the Board being furnished a "pending report" of NIS on January 9, 1967. [9] Naturally we should have this report for examination. Although the Board says "no independent data developed by this Board is in conflict with the findings reported by NIS," this seems to be bureaucratic double-talk, since the Board apparently developed no "independent" data. At any rate, "it is the opinion of this Board of Investigation that LCDR William B. Pitzer death occurred from a self-inflicted gunshot wound."

A key element in the Navy's conclusion that Pitzer committed suicide was the supposed effect on him of an affair with another woman. As early as November 3, NIS had learned of this affair and was interviewing the woman in Pensacola, Florida. [10] It seems that, beginning in October, 1965 and extending to the week before his death, this woman met Pitzer on recurring business trips to Pensacola and Atlanta, where they stayed



U. S. NAVAL MEDICAL SCHOOL  
 NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER  
 BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

In reply refer to  
 NC43-34-MBD  
 5830  
 13 FEBRUARY 1967

FROM: BOARD OF INVESTIGATION  
 TO: COMMANDING OFFICER, NAVAL MEDICAL SCHOOL, NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER, BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

SUBJ: INFORMAL BOARD OF INVESTIGATION TO INQUIRE INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WILLIAM BRUCE PITZER, MSC USN, 416681/2301 ON 29 OCTOBER 1966

ENCL: (1) APPOINTING ORDER NC43-3-RCR 5830 SER: 445 DTD 3 NOV 1966  
 (2) COPY OF STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE DUTY OFFICER, NNMC  
 (3) COPY OF SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEW WITH MRS. JOYCE B. PITZER  
 (4) PHOTOGRAPH OF REMAINS  
 (5) STATEMENT OF R.L. BRAY, SUPERVISORY GUARD, NNMC  
 (6) AUTOPSY PROTOCOL (SF 503) OF 0800, 30 OCTOBER 1966; COPY OF  
 (7) COPY OF CERTIFICATE OF DEATH (NAV MED FORM N)  
 (8) COPY OF MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S CERTIFICATE OF DEATH  
 (9) COPY OF SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEW WITH  
 (10) COPY OF PSYCHIATRIST'S MEMORANDUM  
 (11) COPY OF LETTER FROM LCDR PITZER TO

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION WAS APPOINTED, THE BOARD WAS ADVISED THAT ASSISTANCE BY THE NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE OFFICE HAD BEEN REQUESTED BY THE NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER TO DETERMINE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF LCDR PITZER. MR. PITZER HAD BEEN GRANTED A FINAL TOP SECRET CLEARANCE AND THE SERVICES OF NIS WERE INDICATED TO PROTECT THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE EVENT THE INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED POSSIBLE COMPROMISE. THE BOARD WAS ADVISED ALSO THAT, THROUGH NIS, ASSISTANCE BY THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN REQUESTED TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINGENCY OF HOMICIDE. IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE INSTRUCTION CONTAINED IN SECTION 0213, MANUAL OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL, THE BOARD CONTACTED THE LOCAL FIELD REPRESENTATIVE OF NIS. THE NIS REPRESENTATIVE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY WITHHOLD CONSENT FOR THE BOARD TO CONDUCT AN INDIVIDUAL INVESTIGATION, BUT REQUESTED THAT THE BOARD INTERVIEW NO WITNESSES UNTIL THE NIS INVESTIGATION WAS COMPLETE, AND STATED THAT ALL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE HAD BEEN COLLECTED

NC43-34-MBD  
5830  
13 FEBRUARY 1967

SUBJ: INFORMAL BOARD OF INVESTIGATION TO INQUIRE INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WILLIAM BRUCE PITZER, MSC USN, 416681/2301 ON 29 OCTOBER 1966

AND WAS RETAINED BY NIS. ON 15 NOVEMBER 1966, THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION SUBMITTED A PRELIMINARY REPORT SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVISING THE CONVENING AUTHORITY OF DELAY IN SUBMITTING ITS REPORT WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM AWAITING COMPLETION OF THE NIS INVESTIGATION. THROUGHOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE NIS INVESTIGATION THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION MAINTAINED FREQUENT CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE. INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY NIS WAS ORALLY REPORTED TO THIS BOARD, AND ON 9 JANUARY 1967, THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION OBTAINED A COPY OF THE PENDING REPORT SUBMITTED BY NIS. INVESTIGATION DATA CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT WAS DEVELOPED BY THE NIS AND HAS BEEN OBTAINED BY THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION THROUGH REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE NIS REPRESENTATIVES AND BY A REVIEW OF THE PENDING REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE NIS. ON 9 FEBRUARY 1967, NIS, WASHINGTON, D.C. AUTHORIZED THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION TO REPRODUCE CERTAIN ENCLOSURES TO THIS REPORT WHICH ARE INCLUDED HEREIN AS ENCLOSURES (2), (3), (9), (10), AND (11). NO INDEPENDENT DATA DEVELOPED BY THIS BOARD IS IN CONFLICT WITH THE FINDINGS REPORTED BY NIS.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT

1. THAT AT APPROXIMATELY 1950 ON 29 OCTOBER 1966, A BODY WAS DISCOVERED IN THE TELEVISION STUDIO, NAVAL MEDICAL SCHOOL, BUILDING 144, NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER, BETHESDA, MARYLAND, BY ENS J. M. QUARLES, MSC USNR, AND NNMIC SECURITY PATROL OFFICER, THOMAS E. BLUE (ENCLOSURE (2)).
2. THAT SPECIAL AGENT \_\_\_\_\_, NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE, ARRIVED ON THE SCENE AT 2105, IN RESPONSE TO A TELEPHONE REQUEST FROM THE CHIEF OF THE DAY, NNMIC, HMC J. E. OSTRANDER.
3. THAT THE BODY WAS TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AT THE SCENE BY CAPT J. H. STOVER, MC USN, AND CDR JAMES G. HARMELING, MC USN, AS BEING THE REMAINS OF LCDR WILLIAM B. PITZER, MSC USN, 416681/2301. THAT ON 2 NOVEMBER 1966, CDR J. W. GUINN, MSC USN, VIEWED THE REMAINS PRIOR TO INTERMENT. BASED ON YEARS OF ASSOCIATION HE IDENTIFIED THE REMAINS OF LCDR WILLIAM BRUCE PITZER, MSC USN.
4. THAT SHORTLY BEFORE THE BODY WAS FOUND, MRS. PITZER HAD CONTACTED THIS COMMAND, STATING THAT SHE WAS CONCERNED BECAUSE HER

NC43-34-MBD  
5830  
13 FEBRUARY 1967

SUBJ: INFORMAL BOARD OF INVESTIGATION TO INQUIRE INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WILLIAM BRUCE PITZER, MSC USN, 416681/2301 ON 29 OCTOBER 1966

HUSBAND WAS OVERDUE AT HOME. SINCE HIS PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE WAS ON THE PARKING LOT, THE SECURITY PERSONNEL ON DUTY ENTERED THE TV STUDIO IN FURTHERANCE OF THEIR EFFORTS TO LOCATE LCDR PITZER (ENCLOSURE (3)).

5. THAT LCDR ROBERT W. STEYN, MC USN, EXAMINED THE REMAINS AT 2010, ONLY AS NECESSARY TO PRONOUNCE DEATH.

6. THAT A S & W .38 CALIBER REVOLVER CONTAINING ONE SPENT CARTRIDGE, ONE LIVE ROUND, AND ONE LIVE BLANK ROUND WAS FOUND ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE BODY.

7. THAT A PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN OF THE REMAINS AND THE SURROUNDING AREA AS THEY APPEARED SHORTLY AFTER THE NIS INVESTIGATION WAS INSTITUTED (ENCLOSURE (4)).

8. THAT THE REVOLVER HAD BEEN DRAWN FROM THE NNMC SECURITY OFFICER TO BE USED AS A TRAINING AID BY LCDR PITZER, BUT THAT ONLY BLANK AMMUNITION HAD BEEN SUPPLIED WITH IT (ENCLOSURE (5)).

9. THAT AN AUTOPSY WAS PERFORMED ON 30 OCTOBER 1966, AT THE NAVAL HOSPITAL, BETHESDA, MARYLAND, WHICH DISCLOSED THE CAUSE OF DEATH TO BE A GUNSHOT WOUND IN THE HEAD (ENCLOSURE (6) AND (7)).

10. THAT JOHN G. BALL, M.D., MONTGOMERY COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER, EXAMINED LCDR PITZER'S REMAINS AT ABOUT 2330, 29 OCTOBER 1966, AND THAT ON 2 NOVEMBER 1966, DOCTOR BALL ADVISED NIS AGENTS IT WAS HIS PROFESSIONAL OPINION THAT THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS SUICIDE BY GUNSHOT, THE BRAIN HAVING BEEN LACERATED BY A BULLET (ENCLOSURE (8)).

11. THAT ALTHOUGH A THOROUGH SEARCH OF LCDR PITZER'S PERSON, HIS OFFICE, INCLUDING A PERSONAL BRIEFCASE, AND HIS AUTOMOBILE FAILED TO REVEAL A SUICIDE NOTE, NEITHER WAS ANY EVIDENCE ADDUCED TO SUPPORT THE IDEA OF HOMICIDE.

12. THAT LCDR PITZER WAS EXPERIENCING PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES FROM OVERWORK; THAT HE HAD BEEN DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS INVOLVING HIS YOUNGER SON; AND THAT HE WAS EXPERIENCING MARITAL DIFFICULTY AND WAS INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH ANOTHER WOMAN (ENCLOSURE (9), (10), AND (11)).

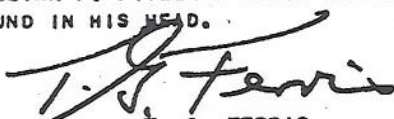
NC43-34-MBD  
5830  
13 FEBRUARY 1967

SUBJ: INFORMAL BOARD OF INVESTIGATION TO INQUIRE INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WILLIAM BRUCE PITZER, MSC USN, 416681/2301 ON 29 OCTOBER 1966

#### OPINIONS

1. INVESTIGATION OF THIS INCIDENT REVEALED NO DIRECT REASON FOR SUICIDE AND NO APPARENT TENDENCY TOWARD SUICIDE, BUT THE INFORMATION DEVELOPED DURING THE INQUIRY PERHAPS JUSTIFIES AN INFERENCE THAT THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING LCDR PITZER WERE MORE THAN HE WAS ABLE TO TOLERATE.

2. IT IS THE OPINION OF THIS BOARD OF INVESTIGATION THAT LCDR WILLIAM P. PITZER'S DEATH OCCURRED FROM A SELF-INFLICTED GUNSHOT WOUND IN HIS HEAD.

  
T. G. FERRIS  
LCDR MSC USNR

  
J. W. GUINN  
CDR MSC USN

in motel rooms and Pitzer spoke of his various dissatisfactions with his married life. After he last left her in Pensacola on October 22, the woman wrote him a "casual note" at his business address and then, on October 28, a somewhat complaining letter noting that she had not heard from him: "am I that easy to forget?" Then, on the fateful afternoon of Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> at 2:45 p.m., Pitzer calls the woman from his office, is unable to reach her, and then pens a note acknowledging the "casual note", asking her not to write again but to wait to hear from him, but projecting a meeting with her in January, then closing with the provocative phrase, "until you hear from me or of me, I am always, Bill." This was enough to convince the woman that Pitzer was thus anticipating his suicide (he left no suicide note). The Navy seemingly agreed, the Board of Investigation citing as a possible factor that Pitzer was "experiencing marital difficulty and was intimately associated with another woman." [11]

Although the Navy investigators were quite sure that Pitzer's death was a suicide, Marvin has been able to obtain through FOIA 140 pages of FBI investigative material on the Pitzer death; [12] and this material sup-

ports a far different scenario of Pitzer's death. The FBI was initially brought into the case through a request from NIS for Bureau investigation "to provide for the contingency of homicide." [13] There are two basic kinds of material in this file: a) interviews with witnesses aimed at showing Pitzer's mental condition at the time of his death in an attempt to establish the plausibility of his committing suicide; and b) laboratory examinations of ballistics and finger print evidence from the scene. Most of this investigation was handled by the Baltimore office of the FBI.

On October 30, the Baltimore office contacted LCDR H. B. Lowsma, who had participated in the autopsy, and got his "preliminary opinion" that Pitzer died from a gun shot wound to the head, although he noted that the "gun not resting against head when shot fired and he could not estimate the distance away." [14] On the following Monday, November 1, the NIS forwarded to the FBI laboratory numerous pieces of physical evidence, including the weapon, one spent, three blank and one live cartridge; fourteen latent fingerprints lifted from chairs and beer cans at the scene; and a paraffin cast of the deceased's right hand. [15] We shall return shortly

to the startling results of the FBI laboratory's examinations.

As laboratory tests were proceeding, the Baltimore office conducted interviews of many witnesses who hopefully could shed light on Pitzer's motive for his presumed suicide. Many of these documents, as Marvin received them under his FOIA request to the FBI, were heavily redacted, but the unredacted portions tell us at least that part of the Pitzer "story" that the Bureau may have wanted to be told. In an early (October 30) interview with Pitzer's widow, Joyce Pitzer, which was a joint interview by the FBI and NIS, [16] Mrs. Pitzer reflected her disbelief that it would have been within Pitzer's nature to take his own life, an act which would be "completely opposed to subject's philosophy" and especially such an act in a Navy office because of his "sincere love for and loyalty to the U.S. Navy." Nor did she believe there were any severe problems in Pitzer's life that might have precipitated the act, citing only some "normal" problems with a teenage son and a mild case of prostate problems. She did cite one unusual recent behavior for him when, after attending the funerals of two of his Navy friends, he said "that's two this week. I wonder who the next will be," and had surprised her by expressing a wish for a military funeral. As we saw in the case of investigation of Pitzer's "affair," this was not the only Pitzer statement that may have anticipated his death—whether by suicide or otherwise.

The Bureau interviewed numerous people who had observed Pitzer in the hours and days immediately before his death. The picture painted by many of these persons is of a Pitzer who was "disturbed" but certainly not despondent to the point that a suicide was anticipated. Perhaps the most telling observation was that of a secretary in Pitzer's office who said that Pitzer "seemed to have something upsetting him for about a year," and described the "glum mood" in which he had entered the office in recent weeks. [17] Another colleague described Pitzer as being frequently "on edge" and "irascible" as Pitzer had been under "considerable stress." [18] Finally, an enlisted man in his office reported what he thought was unusual behavior during the week of his death, the enlisted man offering to return the Navy pistol which Pitzer had checked out (with blank ammunition) for training purposes. Pitzer said he would return it himself, an "out of character" act, since he always had enlisted men to do such "errands" for him. [19]

On the other hand, of the numerous people who observed Pitzer's behavior on the day of his death, only one witness reported anything unusual about his demeanor that day. If Pitzer was contemplating his death at that time, he was certainly behaving in a remarkably normal manner.

Both Mrs. Pitzer and a neighbor, Mrs. Estel, describe his involvement in an episode concerning a haircut for his teenage son Robert. [20] On the morning of October 29, Mrs. Estel came over to the Pitzer home as Robert was in the driveway washing the family car. She requested that Robert go with her to the golf course, at which point Pitzer took over the car washing and Robert went with Mrs. Estel to the golf course. Apparently a haircut for Robert was a family issue, since he was told to get one before returning home. When Pitzer left in the car around noon, for various errands including a haircut for himself, Mrs. Pitzer asked him to stop by the golf course and remind Robert to get his haircut. He did this and, according to Mrs. Estel, he stopped and spoke to Robert and the boy asked his father the time—which was 2:55 p.m.—interestingly enough, a few minutes after Pitzer's supposed call to his lover in Pensacola. Subsequently, after some resistance from Robert, Mrs. Estel delivered Robert to a location near Bethesda hospital at around 4:30; and he returned very shortly with his haircut and, because she was apparently asked the obvious question, she doubted that he would have had time to get the haircut and visit his father, at an hour very close to the estimated time of his death.

Several other witnesses saw Pitzer that afternoon, as he did things that seemingly he did normally on a Saturday afternoon. Three of these saw him at the Navy Exchange between 2 and 4 p.m. One of these, an employee of the Exchange, saw Pitzer "between 2 and 2:30 p.m.," and Pitzer asked her about her son; she saw Pitzer again (his location is redacted from the report) and waved to him "between 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m." [21] Pitzer "seemed very cheerful on the occasions that she saw him." A male employee of the Exchange made a similar observation, exchanging "hellos" with Pitzer at 3:30 p.m. [22] A seeming exception is another woman who saw Pitzer in the Exchange at about 3:50 purchasing cigarettes. [23] She said "Pitzer looked like a wild man," a characterization duly repeated in one FBI synopsis of the case. [24] Actually, this considerably inflates the import of the woman's observation. Her "wild man"

characterization refers to Pitzer's sloppy appearance (his casual clothing, his "messed up" hair), about which she "kidded" him, and not at all to his general demeanor: "in her brief conversation with Pitzer, there did not appear to be anything unusual with his attitude." The last observation was essentially that made by all observers of Pitzer in the hours immediately before his death.

We come finally to the most compelling evidence that Pitzer's death was not, in fact, a suicide. This concerns the various items of physical evidence in the case, including the post-mortem condition of the body. We have already remarked on the lack of powder burns on Pitzer's head, an unlikely result if Pitzer had held the pistol against his head, as one would ordinarily expect in a suicide. Other results of forensic tests at the FBI laboratory were no more encouraging to the suicide scenario. Given the trajectory of the fatal bullet—from the right to the left side of the head—Pitzer would have necessarily held the pistol in his right hand if he had fired it. At the time of the autopsy, a paraffin cast of Pitzer's right hand was prepared and this was submitted by the NIS to the FBI laboratory on November 1, 1966 with a request to "determine if this hand had held a gun that had been fired." [25] The shocking results came back on December 14, 1966: "examination of Q14, paraffin cast, reflected no substance characteristic of, or which could be associated with, gunpowder or gunpowder residue." [26] (Suicide) case closed?

A less conclusive but still important additional finding came from the FBI laboratory, involving finger prints in this instance. Also submitted to the laboratory on November 1 were "fourteen latent prints lifted from two chairs and three beer cans at the scene," and these were submitted along with Pitzer finger and palm prints with the question: "are these latent prints identical to deceased?" [27] On November 22, 1966 came back the response: "the latent prints are not identical with the finger and palm prints of victim Pitzer." [28] So whose prints were they, an intruder/murderer perhaps? On January 12, 1967 NIS submitted to the laboratory the finger print cards for eight persons; while their names are redacted, they were presumably people who had regular access to the location of the death scene, and may have left their prints there in an "innocent" context. [29] On January 25, the FBI reported back to NIS that "the latent prints in this case are not identical with any of the submitted inked fingerprints." [30] So there the record seems to rest: that none of these fingerprints

"lifted" from the scene were those of Pitzer or any other person who "should" have been there.

In this article, we believe we have shown that there is a high probability that William Bruce Pitzer died at the hand of "person or persons unknown." Given Pitzer's probable involvement with some aspect of the JFK autopsy, the determination of the identity of those persons—and even more that of those who ordered his murder—should be an item of the highest priority in the research community. As a first step, we should pursue through the Assassination Records Review Board the report(s) of the Naval Investigative Service Office on Pitzer's death; and unredacted versions of the highly redacted documents received by Marvin under his FOIA request.

copyright 1998 Daniel Marvin

#### Notes

1. Daniel Marvin, "Bits and Pieces: A Green Beret on the Periphery of the Assassination," The Fourth Decade 2#4 May, 1995, pp. 14-18.
2. Medical Examiner's Certificate of Death for William Bruce Pitzer, Montgomery County, MD by John G. Ball, Deputy Medical Examiner, Serial #14438, October 30, 1966.
3. FBI interview 11/15/66 at Bethesda MD, File #BA 70-3287.
4. Autopsy Protocol, Autopsy #466-273 for William B. Pitzer, conducted 0800 hrs. 30 October 1966, p. 2.
5. U. S. Naval Medical School, National Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland NC 43-34-MBD 5830 from Board of Investigation to Commanding Officer, 13 February 1967, Report, p. 2. Here after cited as Board Report.
6. U. S. Naval Medical School, National Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland NC 43-3-rer-5830 from J. H. Stover, Commanding Officer to Commander John W. Guinn, 3 November 1966, appointment of Board of Investigation.
7. Board Report, p.2.
8. Board Report. p.2.
9. Board Report, p.2.
10. Enclosure 9 to Board Report. See also FBI interview by the Jacksonville office on January 13, 1967, File #70-1252.
11. Board Report, p.3.
12. Federal Bureau of Investigation FOIPA No. 405,7861 HQ-1182292, received August 2, 1997.
13. Board Report, p.1.



14. FBI Baltimore to Director, 10-30-66 File 70-14229.
15. Naval Investigative Service Office Washington to Director, FBI, 20-BE/DEA/js, 1 November 1966, forwarding items for laboratory examination. Here after cited as: laboratory reference.
16. Enclosure #3 to Board Report, NIS/FBI joint interview with Joyce B. Pitzer, 30 October 1966.
17. FBI interview 11/1/66 at Bethesda MD, File #70-3287.
18. FBI interview 10/31/66 at Bethesda MD, File #70-3287.
19. FBI interview 10/31/66 at Bethesda MD, File #BA 70-3287.
20. Enclosure #3 to Board Report (Joyce Pitzer); FBI interview 10/30/66 at Bethesda MD, File #70-3787.
21. FBI interview 11/1/66 at Bethesda MD, File #70-3287.
22. FBI interview 11/1/66 at Bethesda MD, File #70-3287.
23. FBI interview 10/31/66 at Bethesda MD, File #70-3287.
24. FBI to Naval Investigative Service Office, 1/31/67 BA 70-3287; Bureau File #70-44229.
25. Laboratory reference.
26. FBI to Naval Investigative Service Office, 12/14/66, 20 BE/DEA/js ser. 1956, p.1.
27. Laboratory reference.
28. FBI to Naval Investigative Service Office, 11/22/66, LC #73063, p.2.
29. Naval Investigative Service Office to FBI, 1/12/67, FBI #70-44 229.
30. FBI to Naval Investigative Service Office, 1/25/67, FBI #70-4229-7.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor: Two recent articles ("The Dealey Plaza Ambush: Appearance and Reality" by Carleton Sterling, November, 1997 and "From Houston Street to the Overpass" by M. A. Moyer and R.F. Gallagher, July 1997) both make reference to three spent cartridges or hulls having been located near the sixth-floor window of the TSBD, which led the Warren Commission to conclude that three shots were fired from the Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5 rifle by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Most of the books I have checked do not question whether this was actually the case. In fact, Anthony Summers states in his 1980 book CONSPIRACY (a considerably revised version will soon be available, entitled NOT IN YOUR LIFETIME) That "Nobody disputes the fact that three used cartridge cases were found near the famous sixth-floor window..." Josiah Thompson in SIX SECONDS IN DALLAS likewise states: "Three 6.5 Millimeter cartridge cases were found on the sixth floor of the Depository..." Similar statements have been made by Weisberg (WHITEWASH), Anson (THEY'VE KILLED THE PRESIDENT), Meagher (ACCESSORIES AFTER THE FACT), Blakey & Billings (FATAL HOUR, Hurt (REASONABLE DOUBT), Lane (RUSH TO JUDGMENT), Groden & Livingstone (HIGH TREASON), Posner (CASE CLOSED), and by the HSCA (THE FINAL ASSASSINATIONS REPORT).

Jim Marrs (CROSSFIRE) raises the question as to whether, in fact, three empty shells were found, which were actually picked up by Captain Fritz after assistant Sheriff Mooney located them, prior to being photographed (one photo shows two shells, while the other shows three.) Marrs states on p. 438 that "although the Warren Commission published a copy of the Dallas police evidence sheet showing three shell cases were taken from the Depository, in later years a copy of that same evidence sheet was found in the Texas Department of Public Safety files which showed only two cases were found. This is supported by the FBI receipt for assassination evidence from the Dallas police that indicates only two shell cases arrived in Washington just after the assassination. Reportedly Fritz held on to one of the cases for several days before forwarding it to the FBI." (This breach of evidence is dealt with in Walt Brown's book "THE PEOPLE V. LEE HARVEY OSWALD," including the fact that only two hulls were initialed, with the third hull having a dent on its lip).

I haven't as yet been able to locate any specific reference to Commission Exhibit 2003- the Dallas Police Property Clerk's Invoice or Receipt-dated November 26, 1963, listing all items turned over from the crime scene (as well as Oswald's belongings from various sources). In addition to the absence of a rifle clip, it is intriguing to note that only two spent 6.5 hulls are listed, not three, with a notation "found under window" in brackets. Since there is a small check mark next to each number listed in the "quantity" column, presumably no mistakes were made.

Even though Fritz decided to keep the third shell in his possession until it was requested by the FBI, I would assume that it would first be listed by the property clerk as part of the crime scene inventory, unless Fritz conveniently forgot to turn it over. If the Dallas Police did cooperate in the cover-up related to the assassination of President Kennedy, including the shooting of Oswald, Captain Fritz is, in my opinion, a major suspect.

—Peter R. Whitmey, A149-1909 Salton Rd.  
Abbotsford, BC V2S 5B6

**To the editor:** I am writing in response to John Delane Williams' review of NIGHTMARE IN DALLAS in the September, 1997 issue of THE FOURTH DECADE. I'm disappointed that he chose not to respond directly to my last letter to the editor (July, 1997)—even though he (incorrectly) quotes my words from it—and instead makes a snide comment about my work as a researcher. I find it puzzling that Williams would neglect to respond to the questions and observations I posed in that letter in regards to Beverly Oliver, whose autobiography is the subject of his latest review.

It may surprise Williams to know that it is possible to carefully research something, only to come to an incorrect conclusion—or to later change your mind upon receiving new information. I admit to a weakness for speculation in my published articles, although certainly to a lesser extent than many other writers. For example, Williams himself writes that "(Larry) Ronco may have stolen the prototype camera" without any evidence to support this view. Despite any failing I may have as a researcher, at least I have the integrity to retract and/or amend my views, which is unfortunately something few other published researchers ever do. One can only hope that Williams will do likewise if and when he learns that Ron Lewis and Beverly Oliver are not reliable sources.

I am not Jack Lawrence's spokesman, nor do I automatically believe everything he tells me. I am always anxious to receive new information on the subject, and I agree wholeheartedly that the last word on Lawrence is not Lawrence's prerogative. So I have to ask why so many researchers feel it necessary to defend and even champion Beverly Oliver (see the Ian Griggs piece in the November, 1996 issue for a good example)—and why they, indeed, give Beverly Oliver the last word on Beverly Oliver. Williams goes even further. He fashions flimsy explanations to explain away problems with Oliver's stories: "one interpretation of this conflicting information (regarding Ruby's whereabouts) is that an attempt to establish an alibi was being made for Ruby." Another interpretation is that Beverly Oliver's account of events is simply not true.

Oliver offers no evidence for her claims, contradicts herself, constantly amends and embellishes her stories, is caught in factual errors, and profits from the assassination. How can any objective person choose to believe her? According to her: she went on trips with Jack Ruby. She dated an assassin-for-hire. She met David Ferrie, Guy Banister, Dean Andrews, Roscoe White, Jack Lawrence and "Lee Oswald of the CIA" in the Carousel Club. She witnessed and filmed the President's assassination (with an experimental camera, of course). She married a gangster, with whom she met privately with Richard Nixon. And, by the way, she admits to being an accessory after the fact to multiple murders! Apparently, she even thinks it possible that Jack Ruby may still be alive under the name of Thomas Kennedy in Chicago—a former undercover operative for President Roosevelt! And we wonder why so many people refuse to take assassination research seriously. According to Peter Dale Scott, "the problem of how to handle the 'Babushka Lady,' and some of her wilder claims, bedeviled the first months of the (HSCA)...and helped precipitate the crisis of confidence which almost wrecked the committee..."

Why do so many assassination researchers believe Beverly Oliver? I think it's because what she says—no matter how wild it is—is "conspiracy." And I find this sad.

— Sheldon Inkol, 54 Raglan Ave., Apt. 14  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6C 2L1

☪

## EDITORIAL: WHO KILLED THAT PRESIDENT?

During the just-past holiday season I, having the right shape and a decent ho-ho, played Santa Claus to a number of groups and individuals. In the course of one visit, to a family with a six-year-old girl named Susan, I had a profound realization for a JFK researcher. Handing Susan her present, I called her name and she asked, reasonably enough, "How did you know my name?" Recalling the situation years earlier when my own daughter blew my Santa cover by observing, "you're wearing my Daddy's shoes," I continued my impersonation scenario by saying "Santa knows everything." The girl's immediate response, "Who killed that President?" With my droll little mouth drawn up in astonishment, I said, "Do you mean President Kennedy?" and she said, "Yes, who killed President Kennedy?" Out of the mouths of babes, indeed! Some of my friends with mystical inclinations suspected the girl's clairvoyance in "just happening" to ask her question to a Santa Claus impersonator who might, in fact, know a thing or two about that subject. (Actually, I think I muttered the same non-committal response I typically do when adults ask me that question.) To me, though, the significance of Susan's question is more than a matter of clairvoyance vs. coincidence. It brought forcefully home to me that, while some of us older timers grow weary with the search for the answer to a question that has eluded us for thirty-four years, it is an ever green question for younger people who are grappling to make sense out of the world that they inherited from their elders. It reminded me, too, of the burden of responsibility for those of us who are still trying to research the JFK assassination: to make as thorough and accurate a record of what can be known on that subject as we possibly can, so that those in the next generation with the Susan-spirit can at least stand on the shoulders of our work.

•

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 11/15/66

b7C

[redacted] Montgomery County, Maryland, furnished the following information to [redacted] Naval Investigative Service Office, Bethesda, Maryland:

He files a death certificate in Montgomery County, Maryland for Lieutenant Commander WILLIAM B. FITZGERALD in which he listed the cause of death as suicide. It was his opinion that death was caused by self-inflicted gun shot wound because when he examined the body on the night of November 29, 1966 in the TV Studio at the National Naval Medical Center, he observed powder burns on the head. From his observations of the situation in the room at the time he first observed it, and after having been advised that things were in the same condition as when the body was found, he concluded that FITZGERALD was probably sitting in a chair and shot himself in the head with the pistol which was lying near the body and pistol sort of spun him around and he kind of slid his head under the step-ladder. From his examination of the body at that time, he placed the time of death at about 4:00 p.m. This was based on only his examination of the body, but the fact that he was advised that the victim's wife had attempted to call him at 4:30 p.m. at that location and had received no answer.

When he observed the wound in the head on the night of November 29, 1966, he observed muzzle marks around the wound and powder burns.

On the night of November 29, 1966, he received a call at approximately 8:50 p.m. concerning the death of Lieutenant Commander WILLIAM B. FITZGERALD and he arrived at the TV Studio at the National Naval Medical Center at 9:15 p.m. and it was approximately 11:30 p.m. when he conducted his examination of the wound in the head.

b7C

On 11/2/66 at Bethesda, Maryland File # DA 70-3287  
by SA [redacted] cp Date dictated 11/9/66

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.