

Excerpt from 11/27/67 letter from W.C.Thompson, retired engineer:

"...His Physics calculations of the mass of President Kennedy's head moving forward with an acceleration of 69.6 f/s/s over an elapsed time of 56 mills seconds - stopping dead in nothing flat-not even (.001milliseconds, and reversing its motion to an acceleration of 100.3 f/s/s in .056 seconds (note extreme accuracy of measurements by the decimals in 69.6 and 100.3) If he had kept his watercooled slide rule working he would have found that it would have needed a ft/lb not even possessed by a 20mm cannon shell to achieve this..."

Excerpt from letter to Editor, Saturday Evening Post, by E.J.Bunker, 1804 Thornbury Road, Baltimore, Md., 11/27/67:

"The acceptance of the amounts of movements obtained by the measurements as being accurate and of the author's algebra as being correct, does not validate the acceleration figures 69.6 and 100.3. In fact the possibility that these values are as precise as implied by the text is very remote indeed. That they are even approximately correct would be the result of mere chance. Whether or not the "complicated mathematical equations' mentioned...apply to the acceleration ~~equations~~ calculations per se, is not indicated. In any case, only three factors are involved in this phase of the problem. They may be expressed in the formula $s = \frac{1}{2}at^2$, where S is the distance in feet over which uniform acceleration took place, a is the acceleration in feet per second and t is the time in seconds during which the acceleration takes place. With s and t known it is of course simple arithmetic to find the value of a. However, there is only a fantastically remote chance ~~of~~ that the impact occurred and the President's head began to accelerate uniformly precisely at the beginning of 2 1/18th of a second interval and that the full force of the impact of the bullet and the movement continued until at least the end of that interval. It is obviously impossible to determine from the data available in what part of such an interval the impact occurred, how long the force of the impact lasted or how much the head moved during the time the force was exerted. It is thus further obvious that his calculated acceleration figures are completely unreliable. If they were accurate, of what value would such figures be, anyway, other than to give the impression of investigative ability, which in this case does not seem to be justified."

Additional question: could a camera whose shutter works at approximately 1/30 second capture a distinct image at Thompson's speed or would there be but a blur? The frames here are clear.

1804 Thornbury Road
Baltimore, Md. 21209
Nov. 27, 1967

Mr. William A. Emerson, Jr., Editor
The Saturday Evening Post
641 Lexington Ave.
New York N.Y. 10022

*Mr. Weiskopf, I thought
you might be interested
in this anyway please
see page 5*
Emerson

Dear Sir:

The article "The Cross-fire That Killed President Kennedy" in the Dec. 2 issue of the Post, will undoubtedly have a great appeal to many people, especially those who have not read certain books and articles on the subject, (books that were written after exhaustive research and study and with careful regard for the facts), or those who do not read the Post article carefully and thoughtfully. I find parts of it interesting and thought provoking, but I also find much about it that calls for criticism (such as over-emphasis on "new" findings, failure to adequately check and evaluate testimony, unwarranted implications as to how the author has used technical methods and skills, and unwarranted -often misleading- speculations presented as though they were facts), as I have tried to state factually in the following comments.

(References are to pages and to paragraphs numbered separately for each page.)

27 - Notation under picture. These statements are given as factual, and so they may be, but nowhere in the text is there proof of their accuracy and thus they must be considered as speculation.

27 - 1. This is a nice build-up but is it actually true? How does one explain "a heavy covering of warehouse dust" on cartons that have just recently (or so it appears) been shifted, piled or scattered about?

27 - 2 (portion on page 26). Whence the source of this "climbing", "making his way" and "roofs were empty" information?

28 - 3. "Unwitting entrances", What! Didn't these people know what they were doing or where they were going? Were they under some sort of spell?

28 - 4. Altho not so stated, it seems necessary to assume that Arnold Rowland who claims to have seen this young man wearing "a very light-colored shirt - - - open at the collar" also claims to have seen that he was cradling a rifle. If the information did not come from him, what was the source? In any event, it seems very strange indeed that Rowland would have been so derelict as not to report his observations to proper authorities immediately, especially in view of the fact that his testimony implies a recognition of something highly improper about the man and his rifle.

28 - 6. Edwards and Fischer would seem to be open to even more severe criticism than Rowland, since there were two of them and "there was something about this man - - -". The statement: "The man seemed to be looking in the general direction of the knoll - - -" indicates that they could not see him very clearly. They were able however, or so we are led to believe, to see him clearly enough that "he appeared uncomfortable" and "he didn't look like he was watching for the parade." (That is keen observing)

28 - 7. This is good "copy", for a novel, that is.

28 - 8, 9, 10 and 12. Whence the information about the actions of the gunmen?
Is the author justified in creating these vivid impressions based on speculation and made to seem more plausible by being mixed in with known facts?

The statement: "the essential outline of the assassination is now apparent - - -" implies, and falsy so, that only "now" have the "findings of the Warren Commission" been shown to be wrong. Why the "now"? This has been accepted as fact, backed up by much better data than presented in this article, and published months before the author even started "his intensive research". He indirectly admits as much in paragraph 3, page 28.

29 - 1. Why the "scenario sketched above"? And why is it all written as though it were "hard fact"? It seems obvious that much of it is speculation, but how much of it is educated speculation?

29 - 3. Certain details, such as the pictures recently published for the first time and some of the statements of witnesses and others, have indeed strengthened conclusions that have been well established for many months in the minds of others. The statement: "In essence, the analysis of the assassination is not a critique of the Warren Report -" may serve as a nice disarming statement, but why the pussyfooting? The article is certainly and emphatically critical of the Report, as well it should be.

29 - The Author. It is too bad that he was unable to "find" the "Whitewash" books by Harold Weisberg because if he had then carefully he most certainly would not have given such credence to the testimony of various persons cited elsewhere in these comments. The statement that he "studied every foot of Dealey Plaza" may be indicative of great thoroughness, but just what value would be obtained by such a study in such a location, two and a half years after the event, is neither apparent as a possibility nor indicated by any results listed in the article.

28 and 29 - Pictures. One item of speculation is that the "fourth" shot came from the vicinity of the "4" page 27. The pictures on page 29 show many people running towards what they apparently think is the source of the shot(s). If I read the two pictures correctly, there are two distinct groups of runners. One group, headed by Officer Hargis, is running towards the overpass and Hargis is pointed out as having nearly reached the top of the abutment of the overpass. Mrs. Hill is shown in both pictures. In the left one she is apparently standing still, and in the right one she has crossed the street, mounted the steps and seems to be leading the other group of runners, but not in the direction of the overpass. These and other details indicate that there were two entirely different ideas as to the source(s) of the shot(s). This is very significant because on the basis of the picture on page 27, the overpass was more than twice as far from the President's car as the point or area indicated by the "4", and is in a direction that is possibly 45 degrees from "4". The movements of the groups, especially the quicker get-away of the group that headed for the overpass with a police officer in the lead, suggests that of the two locations the overpass was the more likely source of the shot (if there was only one). However, in the article the author does not consider or even mention this possibility. This attitude on his part seems to match very closely the one he describes in paragraph 11 on page 55: "But the Commission, in its

haste, its uncritical evaluation of the facts, and its predisposition to prove Lee Harvey Oswald the lone assassin, overlooked much of it." Considering this lopsided treatment of ~~the~~ phase of the subject, how much confidence is one justified in placing in the article as a whole?

31 - 4. (Second sentence) Is that a true statement? How did any question arise about the transit of a bullet before the autopsy started?

31 - 6 to 18. Regardless of any recent statements ^{significantly new} these paragraphs may contain, I am unable to detect anything about his conclusion(s). The basis conclusion was reached and published something like two years ago, a conclusion that the report(s) of the autopsy provided no satisfactory explanations of the wounds and how they were caused. The author makes no mention of the (still existing?) secrecy about the records of the autopsy - pictures, X-rays, notes, etc. - how original preliminary draft notes were destroyed by Dr. Humes and the destruction of these notes by burning, certified to by Dr. Humes. Is the author justified in implying that he really has the full and correct story about the wounds?

46 - 1 to 30. Some of the details on this page may be new but any really significant and new facts elude the eyes of ~~the~~ writer.

50 - 6 & 7. That the projectile and the wound were atypical is of course true in the non-usage sense that there have never been and never will be absolutely exact duplicates of either, but in what way they were significantly atypical seems to be left up entirely to the imagination of the reader

50 - 20 to 23. Comments on these paragraphs ^{are} ~~is~~ precluded because of non-familiarity with the techniques involved.

50 - 24 The acceptance of the amounts of movements obtained by the measurements as being accurate and of the author's algebra as being correct, does not validate the acceleration figures 69.6 and 100.3. In fact the possibility that these values are as precise as implied by the text is very remote indeed. That they are even approximately correct would be the result of mere chance. Whether or not the "complicated mathematical equations" mentioned in paragraph 32 apply to the acceleration calculations per se, is not indicated. In any case, only three factors are involved in this phase of the problem. They may be expressed in the formula $S = \frac{1}{2}at^2$, where S is the distance in feet over which uniform acceleration takes place, a is the acceleration in feet per second per second and t is the time in seconds during which acceleration takes place. With S and t known it is of course simple arithmetic to find the value of a. However, there is only a fantastically remote chance that the impact occurred and the President's head began to accelerate uniformly precisely at the beginning of a 1/18th. of a second interval and that the full force of the impact of the bullet and the movement continued until at least the end of that interval. It is obviously impossible to determine from the data available, in what part of such an interval the impact occurred, how long the force of the impact lasted or how much the head moved during the time the force was exerted. It is thus further obvious that his calculated acceleration figures are completely unreliable. If they were accurate, of what value would such figures be, anyway, other than to give an impression of investigative ability, which in this case does not seem to be justified.

51 - 6, 7, 8 & 9. The author has difficulty in understanding how a shot from the rear [perhaps from the right rear - TRM] "could drive a piece of occipital bone to the left of the vehicle's path" but he seems to encounter no mental strain understanding how a shot from the front could so shatter the "posterior portion of the skull" that a large piece of the parietal bone was caused to "protrude up through the scalp". This would mean that it was propelled with great force upward also in a direction with a component directly opposite to the direction of the projectile. What happened to the "physical principle or law of nature" mentioned in paragraph 29 page 50? Does "intensive research" involve fitting a crime to a theory in defiance of physical principles and laws of nature, or of applying these principles and laws to one case and immediately applying just their opposite to another? How does the author's bullet-from-the-front conclusion fit the statements in paragraphs 11 and 12, page 51, with which the author seems to agree, or does he?

54 - 3 & 4. If in 1966 the author had collected all that he could have found on the event, had carefully read and evaluated same (e.g. the nine references to Brennan, in "Whitowah"); it seems unbelievable that Brennan's statements would have been used as reliable testimony. (This is only one one of many such cases.) Such use raises serious doubts as to the thoroughness and reliability of the author's findings.

54 - 10 & 11. These statements (in part a repetition of a preceding paragraph) are apparently given as "hard facts", but how did Rowland actually know that he was looking at (or later, that he had been looking at) the real gunman? Of course we should not expect too close adherence to fact from a person whose description places a "gunman" in an extreme southwest window but who, according to a photograph, is in an extreme southeast window, thirteen windows away.

54 - 16 & 17. The questionableness of various preceding descriptions fades into insignificance when the statements in these paragraphs are considered. "This man had the window open and was standing up, leaning out the window with both hands extended outside the window ledge. In his hands this man was holding a rifle with the barrel pointed downward, and the muzzles looking south on Houston Street". If anything more, concerning the reliability of Carolyn Walther as a witness, or of the good judgement of the author in using her testimony, needs to be said, what would it be? As she seems to have been the only person to have seen this strange performance - an assassin getting ready to do his foul deed - were all other persons in the vicinity struck blind by some occult power of this "gunman"? If not, what other explanation?

55 - 12. "The purpose of this study was to perform a task of archaeology, to lay bare a whole level of contradictory evidence (much of it never published) that lay buried beneath the facile conclusions of the Warren Report." What about a little ("educated") speculation to the effect that at least the truth is out, that this article - its preparation and release - was delayed for a period of from two and a half to three and a half years so that the "laying bare" and the relating of a few (just a few) of the uncountable number of items of fact and fancy, of truth and falsehood connected with the assassination, could, by acquiring the antiquity of three years, qualify for the glamor of inclusion in the category of "archaeology", - Josiah Thompson brand, that is.

Since much of the evidence was "never published" it seems necessary to infer that some of it had been published, but by what superhuman agency, that could do so while the evidence "lay buried", that is before it was laid "bare" by archaeologist Thompson?

It further appears that the great mass of material painstakingly searched out, correlated, evaluated and published by one Harold Weisberg, was not buried long enough to qualify as archaeological material and therefore was not considered worthy of any recognition whatsoever. (but it is vigorous, firm and FRISKY!)

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Interesting and informative as the article may be in some respects, it does not, in this writer's opinion, provide any new information or clues that might be of value in apprehending the killer(s), or those persons, if such there be, who were behind the killing(s), or (and to my mind this is most important of all) the person(s) whose heavy hands seem to be resting on the shoulders of many people in high places and in low, with the admonition: "Do this (or don't do that) or ELSE". If the last is true those hands must indeed be very heavy.

Yours truly,

E. J. Duncker

New Address: Rt 7, Frederick, Md. 21701:::301/473-8186

11/30/67

Dear Mr. Bunker,

Thank you very much for your fine letter to the editor of the Post. I sent one earlier, to the editor who had been their expert and who I had salvaged when they were in distress on last year's autopsy story. In May 1965, the appropriate editor of the Post had decided to serialize WHITEWASH, then unpublished, and got me an agent so he'd have some one to deal with. On a higher level the decision was changed. Shortly thereafter, this editor left (the events are likely unrelated). So, there are and still are people on the Post familiar enough with my work.

You come close to specifying what I am confident I detect in the so-called scholarly approach: a formula to get the government off the hook while seeming to criticize it. If you boil it down, Thompson is in basic agreement with all the official conclusions—even conspiracy. He says there were three assassins-independent ones, it would seem. One, Oswald, was in that window and did fire the shot that was fatal by 1/18 second (give or take as per your fascinating observation). That these other knooks just happened to get the same idea and decided to implement it at the same time and place is mere coincidence, for Thompson tells us they were not conspirators! There were accomplices, but there was no conspiracy.

In his public appearances (I heard one long one on Jack McKinsey's show) he disassociates himself from the "critics", who he criticizes (as their friend, naturally). His pretendedly careful work is perhaps the most inaccurate and his judgement, as you point out, is dubious and of questionable integrity. His books is of such a character that, when Wesley Liebeler got out from underneath his private, professorial rock long enough to face me briefly, he said my writing was, to him, "painful" (quite an unintended compliment) but he liked Thompson's: Liebeler is no fool. He recognized that Thompson has come up with a major ploy, to salvage them all. Now the government, since everyone believes it anyway, can concede meaningless error (the extra two assassins who were not necessary in Thompson's scheme anyway), the scholar for correcting it, and tell us all to forget it and get back to paying extra taxes.

Excuse the haste. And many thanks for writing that excellent letter and for the kind things you said. If you get an answer, I'd appreciate a copy. I've not had any yet. By the way, Gies, T's publisher, in rejecting WHITE WASH in 1965, then assured me this was a subject he'd never handle—that was the only reason for turning my book down.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg