

Notes

1. Carol Hewitt, Steve Jones and Barbara LaMonica, "The Paines," The Fourth Decade 3 #4 (May 1996): 25-29; "The Paines Unveiled," Probe 3 #4 (May-June 1996): 14-16; "Ruth Paine in Nicaragua," Probe 3 #5 (July-August 1996): 8-11.
2. Ruth Paine testimony before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury, April 18, 1968: 56-59.
3. FBI 105-1261128-7, 12/12/63; also CIA memo dated 7/30/71 claims Hoke a CIA employee since 1961.
4. Ruth Paine testimony before the Orleans Parish Grand Jury, April 18, 1968: 58-59.
5. FBI 105-1716-18, 2/28/57.
6. FBI 105-1716-18, 2/28/57, letter from William Avery Hyde to Jerry Voorhis dated February 23, 1957.
7. Information concerning ICA from Rita Rhodes, "The Role of Ideology and Organization in the ICA's Survival between 1910 and 1950," Review of International Cooperation 89 #2 (1996); also J.M. Rana, "ICA Membership from Developing Countries" from ICA website: <http://www.coop.org/en/index.html>.
8. Agency for International Development, "United States Economic Assistance to South Vietnam 1954-1975, Terminal Report," (Pn-AAx-017, ISN 49942). This 3 volume report is very revealing about the extent of military aid that was funneled through AID, and also the amount of police and military training which was conducted through the auspices of AID educational centers in Vietnam, and it can be ordered through the Development Information Services Clearinghouse, 1611 N. Kent Street, Suite 200, Arlington, VA 22209-2111.
9. FBI 105-1716-18, 2/28/57.
10. FBI 105-1716-18, 2/28/57, part of CIA background check of Hyde.
11. Agency for International Development, Reference #csd-267 527-15-260-058, "End of Tour Report" by William A. Hyde.
12. State Department Employee Directory 1967 obtained at AID Library, Washington, D.C.
13. Warren Commissions Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 8 pp. 456-457; references to this source cited hereafter in format: 8H456-457.
14. 9H201-202.
15. Philip Agee, Inside the Company CIA Diary (New York: Bantam Books, 1976): 55-56. This is still one of the most informative works on the CIA's use of

technicians, businessmen and retired people in agencies such as the ICA.

16. HSCA Vol. XII: 60-61.
17. 9H213-215. In 1961 De Mohrenschildt and his wife Jeanne embarked on a "walking tour" from Mexico to Panama, ostensibly to follow the old mining trails of the Spanish Conquistadors. Although this route took them past some of the staging bases for the Bay of Pigs invasion, De Mohrenschildt claimed to have no knowledge of the operation.
18. 9H177-178.
19. 9H178-179.
20. FBI 105-1716-18, 2/28/57.

MUTUAL CONTEMPT: A REVIEW

by
Ken Thompson

Jeff Shesol, Mutual Contempt: Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy and the Feud That Defined a Decade (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.) (Editor's note: this book is listed in Books in Print under the alternate title: Nemesis.) Some book titles announce, even scream, the author's position on the JFK assassination. Not so with Mutual Contempt. Neither the title nor the Table of Contents points to any particular inclination or bias. That's why this book appealed to me. Yet at 591 pages the book presumably would cover the assassination to some extent, and indeed it does.

Jeff Shesol, the author, has history degrees from Brown and Oxford Universities and he is a Rhodes Scholar. This is his first major book; it is well written and documented. Voluminous files, diaries, logs, papers and oral histories from the Lyndon B. Johnson Library and the John F. Kennedy Library, as well as personal interviews and over 100 books, comprise the source material.

Since Mutual Contempt is about the personal conflict and tension that existed between Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy rather than about specific events, the JFK assassination, like other topics such as civil rights and Vietnam, is relevant only as input to this basic

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conflict theme. As a result, I did not learn any new details about the assassination, but I did learn some things about Johnson, which in turn has altered somewhat my view of the assassination. In the book the two men are examined in roughly equal proportion, but for this review I will touch only on Johnson's behavior during 1963-64.

Suspicion has persisted for over thirty years that Johnson was a power-hungry egotist who for various reasons plotted JFK's murder. Several examples of Johnson's behavior as described in Shesol's book do not support this view.

First, on November 12, 1963, Bobby Kennedy headed a JFK re-election strategy meeting of close aides; Johnson was not invited. This and other perceived snubs led the press to speculate, and Johnson to fear, that he would be dropped from the 1964 Democratic ticket. The perception was false, as Shesol explains. But Johnson at the time believed it to be true and expressed his anger to friends, who described him as deeply hurt and wounded.

Given Johnson's reaction to the November 12 meeting, I ask you to consider the following. Three days earlier, on November 9, Joseph Milteer made his famous prediction that JFK would be killed from an office building with a high-powered rifle. If Johnson had known ahead of time that an assassination plot was "in the works," to use Milteer's words, why would he have cared if a Kennedy re-election meeting excluded him? A culpable Johnson would have known that such a meeting would soon be rendered irrelevant.

Another example is also revealing. Shortly after JFK was pronounced dead on November 22, Johnson put in a call to the Attorney General to ask for a legal opinion. Does the V.P. need to be officially sworn-in when the President dies, and by whom? Or, does the V.P. automatically become President upon the death of his predecessor? Johnson wasn't sure, and he wanted to do what was proper.

I contend that this behavior shows surprise and lack of preparation. If Johnson had foreknowledge of an assassination attempt, he would certainly have known the protocol of presidential succession, and would therefore have not needed to make an awkward phone call, seeking advice from a man he so disliked.

Shesol's book also describes a March 2, 1964 phone

call that John Connally made to Johnson. While trading rumors about the assassination, Connally passed along to Johnson a secret report stating that Castro had sent several separate teams of assassins to kill JFK. One or two teams had been intercepted in New York and grilled by the FBI. But another team, consisting of Oswald and three accomplices, had evaded the trap and made it to Dallas.

Johnson was so reluctant to dismiss the Connally story that he badgered the FBI to investigate. On March 17, 1964, presidential assistant Marvin Watson told Cartha DeLoach, the FBI's White House liaison, that Johnson personally wanted the FBI to research this matter and then report back to Watson in blind memorandum form.

Again, Johnson's behavior spells innocence, in my opinion. By March 1964, the Warren Commission had long since focussed on Oswald as the lone assassin; the cover-up was proceeding nicely. A culpable Johnson surely would not rock the lone-gunman boat by forcing investigation into a rumor that might lead to panic among lower operatives in the conspiracy; people in self defense might point the finger at ruthless Lyndon, the mastermind behind the plot. No, upon hearing Connally's story, a guilty Johnson would have done nothing to promote its investigation.

"Just get me elected; I'll give you your damn war!" shouts the LBJ character in Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*. But Shesol's book convinces me that by 1963 Johnson didn't really want to be President. Three years as nominal V.P., with little to do except watch Bobby Kennedy arrogate power to himself, had left Johnson depressed and insecure. His political ambition, so obvious in the past, had withered.

Many times he voiced distaste of his job, and a desire for change. A few months before the assassination Johnson told Orville Freeman, Kennedy's Secretary of Agriculture, that he was seriously considering a change in career, perhaps a college presidency. A month after the assassination, Johnson told Pierre Salinger that he really didn't want the job. So soon after November 22, Salinger was inclined to write off Johnson's misgivings. But months later, after hearing Johnson say at least fifteen times how much he hated the White House and how much he'd rather be down on the ranch, Salinger finally came to believe it.

In retrospect, Johnson appears to have been miserable. In August, 1964, just prior to the Democratic convention, he drafted an announcement of his intention to retire: "I shall carry forward with your help until the new president is sworn in next January, and then I will go back home as I've wanted to since the day I took this job." (p. 217) The speech was never given, and his retirement was postponed four years, but only because Lady Bird persuaded him that to quit then, in 1964, would not be prudent.

Finally, the Texas trip was not Johnson's idea at all; it was JFK's. President Kennedy insisted upon a fundraising trip to Texas. While Connally reluctantly acquiesced, Johnson was downright resentful, having learned of the trip secondhand. Shut out of the plans concerning his own turf, Johnson was livid. He also considered the trip an embarrassment to himself, as well as to Kennedy and Connally in particular and the state of Texas in general. He told friends: "I didn't force [JFK] to come to Texas. Hell, he wanted to come out there himself!" (p. 138)

If Johnson was innocent of any intent to have JFK assassinated, as the book implies, what does the author say about Johnson's possible role in a post-assassination cover-up? The short answer is—nothing. *Mutual Contempt* does not explore the Warren Commission controversy, presumably because that issue was not a flashpoint between Johnson and Bobby Kennedy. The possibility remains that Johnson purposely steered the Commission to a lone-gunner conclusion, maybe to quiet fears of another World War, or for other reasons. On the other hand, once the Commission's work began, Johnson may have removed himself and then later, despite his own doubts, accepted the Commission's conclusions, since the members were men whom he had appointed.

That there was more to the JFK assassination than Oswald is blatantly obvious to me, given the backward headsnap so visible in the Zapruder film, the killing of Oswald, and other known facts. That there was a post-assassination cover-up is equally obvious. But to the question—did Lyndon Johnson plan, direct, encourage, tacitly approve or otherwise know about an assassination attempt on the life of John Kennedy?—this book leads me to conclude that the answer is no, he did not.

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PASSPORTS

by
R.F. Gallagher

In June Oswald applied at the New Orleans passport office and received his passport the following day. This promptness was odd, considering that Oswald's peculiar international travel habits—defection to an enemy country—might have been expected to cause his application to be considered with extra scrutiny. Among the countries Oswald listed to which he hoped to travel were France, England, Finland and the Soviet Union—the very route he followed in the 1959 defection.

On the day that Oswald was in the passport office, one of the most rabid anti-Castro Cuban exiles also was there. Orest Pena, the owner of the Habana Bar in New Orleans, appeared to apply for a passport. [1]

As for the issue of the passport in 24 hours the Commission explains that Oswald was one of 25 applicants, all of whom received the same fast service. [2]

When Pena was interviewed by the Warren Commission, he was asked:

Mr. Liebler. Did you see Lee Harvey Oswald at the passport office on the day you applied for this passport?

Mr. Pena. I don't believe he was there.

Mr. Liebler. He applied for a passport on the same day.

Mr. Pena. He applied for a passport on the same day?

Mr. Liebler. Yes.

Mr. Pena. I don't remember seeing him there. [3]

Could it be that Mr. Pena was not in the passport office that day?

In volume 18, on page 324 of the Warren Report, we find Commission Exhibit 952 (shown here), which is a State Department reply to the New Orleans passport office listing the names of the 25 applicants and then their birth dates. In the upper right hand corner we find "All OK" and the initials RA. This is a fax copy of the applicants' names that was sent to the State Department

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DO 37
OW 561 alloc
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OW 561-6-24-63 ATTINE

- 1 DENNIS JOEL BYRD APRIL 6, 1941
- 2 LAYNEIGHA CHAPMAN NOVEMBER 28, 1921
- 3 MARJORIE PAULA DE VERGES JUNE 29, 1915
- 4 ANNE BOULEY FINSTAD SEPTEMBER 25, 1923
- 5 PAUL FRANKLIN FINSTAD JANUARY 16, 1923
- 6 ANNETESE MARIE FORD JANUARY 3, 1939
- 7 KEVIN ALAN ROBIN CALVIN YVONNE DOREEN EDWIN LAMAR FORREST APRIL 21, 1919
- 8 EVELYN LEWIS FORREST MARCH 2, 1918
- 9 HAZEL EDWARDS HAMPTON DECEMBER 22, 1898
- 10 JOHN WARD HAMPTON SEPTEMBER 11, 1891
- 11 DOROTHY MAY HARRISON NOVEMBER 2, 1925
- 12 MONARD MONROE HARRISON MAY 3, 1920
- 13 DONALD DA VAULT HOLT MARCH 5, 1938
- 14 SHERRI JAM JONES JUNE 9, 1946
- 15 HAN LOU PE CLURE NOVEMBER 15, 1919
- 16 TERRY ALLEN TIMOTHY FRANK
- 17 ANN JAMESON MILLER MARCH 21, 1923
- 18 CHARLES BROWN MORRISON AUGUST 23, 1890
- 19 HELEN VORIS
- 20 MAURICE GENE MORSHECK SEPTEMBER 12, 1923
- 21 ROBERT JOSEPH MULROY FEBRUARY 1, 1863
- 22 LEE HARVEY OSWALD OCTOBER 12, 1939 ✓
- 23 BARBARA BELL PACKER NOVEMBER 2, 1928
- 24 CAROLYN SUE PLUNK APRIL 9, 1938
- 25 JANEY REN SUSAN ROBINSON NOVEMBER 22, 1947
- 26 KIRBY LEE ROY OCTOBER 16, 1916
- 27 IRIS PAINE WEBRE AUGUST 26, 1913

END

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 28 19 4 19
PASSPORT OFFICE
MIDWAY
NO

Mr. Liebeler. That is a copy of your passport application, is it?

Mr. Pena. I believe so...

Mr. Liebeler. I have marked this "Orest Pena Exhibit No. 1," New Orleans, July 21, 1964, and I have placed my initials on it. Would you initial it below my initials just so we know we are talking about the same document.

Mr. Pena. Over here?

Mr. Liebeler. Yes, just put your initials on it.

Upon examination of Pena Ex. No. 1 Section I, which Liebeler is discussing, I HAVE NOT FOUND THE INITIALS OF THE TWO MEN.

Pena continues to be confused. From the report:

Mr. Liebeler. Now the application also has a part 2...Is it part of your application too, Mr. Pena?

Mr. Pena. I don't know, might be. Something wrong here. How—went to Mexico. I don't know exactly.

Mr. Liebeler. What's the problem?

Mr. Pena. I don't know. Says here I was in Mexico. I don't know when I went to Mexico. When I got my passport, I don't remember exactly. I believe I got my passport—when I went to Mexico? How come it says here I went to Mexico?

Mr. Liebeler. Now on the application, the original application that we have marked as "Exhibit No 1," which you signed it indicates, does it not, that you were going to Spain and that you planned to go to Spain for a vacation trip of approximately two weeks.

Mr. Pena. Yes.

Mr. Liebeler. Now in fact, you didn't go to Spain at that time, is that right?

Mr. Pena. Yes.

Mr. Liebeler. You went to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic?

Mr. Pena. Yes.

Mr. Liebeler. Do you recall that you did plan to go to Spain on vacation?

Mr. Pena. Yes sir. That's where I did take my passport. You also use a passport. [4]

The significance of all of this is not clear, but it has the appearance of possible government chicanery. Pena seems to be confused as to when he got his passport: "When I got my passport, I don't remember exactly." When Liebeler asks Pena if he recalls that he did plan to go to Spain, Pena answers, "That's where I did take my passport."

What purpose the government would have to put Pena in the passport office on the same day as Oswald and issue a passport to both men on the same day (the 25th) is worthy of consideration. It is possible that this information connects with other knowledge or facts that would, if united, compute a more relevant set of circumstances and reveal a purpose. As it presently stands, it suggests more cover-up. Why isn't Pena's name among the 25 applicants, along with Oswald's, on CE 952?

Notes.

1. Henry Hurt, Reasonable Doubt p. 228.
2. Sylvia Meagher, Accessories After the Fact, p. 337.
3. Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 11, p. 360.
4. Warren Commission Hearings and Exhibits, vol. 11, p. 360.

Form: PART II - TO BE COMPLETED BY A NATURALIZED CITIZEN. PART III - TO BE COMPLETED BY AN APPLICANT WHO BECAME A CITIZEN THROUGH HIS NATURALIZATION. PART IV - TO BE COMPLETED BY AN APPLICANT WHO BECAME A CITIZEN THROUGH HIS PARENTS. PART V - TO BE COMPLETED BY AN APPLICANT WHOSE NAME DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE LIST OF APPLICANTS FOR NATURALIZATION. PART VI - TO BE COMPLETED BY A MALE APPLICANT WHOSE NAME WAS PREVIOUSLY BARRED. PART VII - TO BE COMPLETED BY A FEMALE APPLICANT WHOSE HUSBAND IS BARRED.

Handwritten entries include: Cuba in 1959, Mexico in 1961, Oct. 1946, 1946, 1963, 7-6-1951, New York, N.Y., May 6 1958, New York, N.Y., Cuba, and various dates and locations.

Orest Pena Exhibit 1

PENA EXHIBIT No. 1—Continued

THE DEALEY PLAZA AMBUSH: APPEARANCE AND REALITY

by
Carleton Sterling

The July, 1997 issue of this journal includes an argument that the Dealey Plaza ambush was limited to two shots fired from behind at President John F. Kennedy and that the reports of shooting from the grassy knoll were confounded by a non-shooting diversionary demonstration. [1] Moyer and Gallagher's two-shot theory is a stretch, requiring transiting-richocheting-fragmenting bullets to inflict wounds to Kennedy's back and/or neck, throat, and head; and to penetrate Governor John Connally's chest, wrist and thigh; and also to bounce a missile from the carnage in the presidential limo to get down Elm Street to the Triple Underpass with sufficient residual force to kick pavement fragments into the face of witness James Tague.

The postulation of a non-shooting diversion on the grassy knoll raises another of those appearance and reality issues that bedevil the JFK assassination case. Nevertheless, the Dealey Plaza ambush may have included such a diversion, and the issue merits attention because a misleading "report" of gunfire could have confused the presidential party, the Secret Service escort, witnesses, investigators and assassination researchers.

I came to suspect a grassy knoll diversion while studying the Jim Towner photograph showing the charge up the knoll, as published with blowups in Robert Groden's picture book, *The Killing of the President*. [2] It appears in this picture that almost everyone in the initial charge up the grassy knoll is headed straight for the picket fence at its junction with the western abutment of the Triple Underpass.

The direction of the charge seen in the picture supports an inference by Harrison Edward Livingstone and others that a shooter was positioned behind the picket fence in a storm drain at the west end of the Triple Underpass. A gunman positioned there would have a clear shot at the front of Kennedy's head as his car came down Elm Street.

But the apparent concentration of the charge on this one position strikes me as too good. While a shot may have been fired from this position, it could not have been the only firing position, and echo effects would further have confounded locating a single source of shots. So maybe the charge was attracted by an extraordinary explosion.

As Moyer and Gallagher point out, many Dealey Plaza witnesses said that the first "shot" sounded like a "back-fire" or a "firecracker." I initially took such reports as suggesting different weapons or locations between the first and subsequent shots, and so it may be, but they are also consistent with ordnance making more of an impression than a simple gunshot. Some witnesses reported seeing a puff of smoke coming from behind the picket fence. Modern firearms typically do not create attention-grabbing smoke. Gerald Posner, we know, used the point about "smokeless ammunition" to suggest that the Dealey Plaza assassination witnesses who reported "smoke" were seeing "steam" from vents associated with the railway behind the picket fence. [3] But we have the statements of Lee Bowers, who manned the railyard control tower during the ambush, saying he saw "something out of the ordinary," whether a "flash" or "smoke," that persuaded him that the firing came from behind the picket fence; and his knowledge of the railyard makes it less likely that he was confused by innocent sources of smoke or steam. Also Senator Ralph Yarborough, Dem.-Texas and others smelled gunpowder on Elm Street. [4] A distinct smell of gunpowder is inconsistent with rifle fire from the book depository but is more credibly associated with the adjacent grassy knoll or nearby underpass and is also highly consistent with firecrackers, which are intentionally loud and flashy, whereas modern guns rely on sealed up explosions, infantry rifles are typically fitted with flash suppressors, and assassins might use silencers.

The inference of a non-shooting diversion lets Moyer and Gallagher explain the perception of gunfire from the grassy knoll while arguing that the actual shots all came from behind Kennedy. I don't accept their minimalist interpretation of the number and source of shots in Dealey Plaza, and I think that one or more "rounds" of shots were volleys of multiple shots from different positions. Nevertheless, there are reasons for the ambush to plan to open fire on the President from behind only. I can think of four strong reasons.

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1. Shots from behind would help frame the patsy. Lee Harvey Oswald was positioned at the Texas School Book Depository behind the President at the time of the ambush, and the news media was quickly supplied with incriminating "evidence" against him. Believing that Oswald was framed, I still have to ask: Why place Oswald in a compromising position in the book depository and then shoot Kennedy from the "wrong" direction?

2. Shooting from an upper-floor window is consistent with media-fed prior expectations. The summer before the JFK assassination, I recall seeing part of a movie on TV in which the Frank Sinatra character commandeered a family's apartment overlooking the President's motorcade route for a planned ambush. I thought the premise preposterous at the time and turned it off before seeing how the good guy triumphed in the end. But after the Dealey Plaza ambush, I "learned" from the news media that Kennedy was shot from an upper-floor window. Now the mass media pundits disparage any suggestion of other firing positions in Dealey Plaza.

3. Firing from a building facilitates coverup and the planting of phony evidence. An ambush team could block entry to restricted areas, do what they needed, and leave confounding "evidence." [5]

4. Firing down Elm Street avoids errant shots in the direction of the soon-to-be President. I doubt that an attack on Lyndon B. Johnson was in the game plan. Vice President Johnson's car was making the turn onto Elm Street in front of the book depository at the time of the ambush. Shots fired at Kennedy from the buildings behind him would pass well over the Vice President's head.

That the ambush had good reasons to shoot at Kennedy from behind only doesn't mean it worked out that way. Before Oswald was presented as the assassin in the media, major news services reported the medical inferences from Dallas' Parkland Hospital that Kennedy had sustained frontal wounds; and despite later hedgings and recantations, there is massive support in the assassination literature for believing that Kennedy was not struck from behind only. [6] If the Parkland medical personnel were mistaken in telling the media that Kennedy sustained frontal wounds, then the authorities would have moved with dispatch to release an autopsy report of the true nature of the wounds. Moyer and Gallagher over-

look all the shenanigans in the delayed, contradictory and corrupt federal handling of the autopsy documentation. More than three decades after the assassination, we still don't know for sure precisely where (within less than 5 inches) Kennedy's back "entry" wounds were located. If the simple two-shots-from-behind scenario were true, then political expediency would have led to the clarification, not the obfuscation, of the number, character and location of JFK's wounds.

My impression is that Moyer and Gallagher neglected the basic research strategy of a full survey of the relevant literature before drawing conclusions buttressed by some information but toppled by other information. Nevertheless, as a booted-out-of-academia professor of government, I don't want to be too judgmental about fellow researchers. It took me about twenty years to free my mind of the media manipulation that put my suspicions about the ambush to sleep as a fledging journalist in the 1963-64 coverup period, and I want to promote a steeper learning curve for current researchers.

Although I think Moyer and Gallagher's analysis got off track, they at least have made a start, and we are engaged in exploratory research to keep the case open. And they may have spotted spore that other assassination researchers missed. Not only does a plot to shoot Kennedy from behind make sense, but there are also reasons for the Dealey Plaza ambush to open with a diversion from the front. I can identify at least five reasons for such a diversion.

1. Impede the President's motorcade. We know that the driver of the President's car, Secret Service Agent William Greer, hit the brakes during the ambush, and the car was considerably slowed and possibly came to a full stop. [7] Some researchers suspect Greer of incompetence or worse. But the President's car may have been blocked by the local security car that led the procession in place of a "flying wedge" of motorcycle police who could have easily either sped up or parted as the President's car accelerated. Roy Kellerman, in charge of the Secret Service detail from his position beside Greer in the President's car, may have tried to speed the motorcade off, but his orders were likely foiled by the jamming of the police radio channel assigned the presidential party. That the President's car was hemmed in is indicated by Kellerman's order to Greer to "pull out of line." Greer explained the braking by saying he thought

the attack was from the front. [8] So a frontal diversion may have halted the motorcade or given an excuse to stop it. A common military strategy is: "First you cut them off, then you kill them."

2. Divert attention to unseeable positions. A frontal diversion would pull the attention of the President's security men away from the building(s) behind under the shoot-from-behind plan. It might also obscure what was going on in front of the diversion. If the diversion is behind the picket fence, the security men's view of what was going on would be blocked. They might hear an explosion and see smoke without seeing its source. And a futile attempt to see what was going on behind the fence from below it on Elm Street could divert the escort from suspicious figures in front of the fence, including "Black Dog Man," clearly visible behind the retaining wall in the Philip Willis photograph, and the odd behavior of some of the curbside "spectators." [9] My own "four-eyes" experience is that trying to focus on distant objects makes nearer objects less clear.

3. Deter the intervention of the President's security escort. Even if the Secret Servicemen were initially unconvinced of gunfire from the front, once they perceived that the President was being fired on from behind, they might quickly deduce that their position was enveloped by multiple hidden firing positions. This would make the task of protecting the President seem hopeless and possibly suicidal. Being surrounded and outgunned could deter even brave men. This would help explain why the Secret Servicemen seemed to freeze up under the attack and apparently failed to unlimber any weapons before fleeing Dealey Plaza. [10]

4. Misdirect any pursuit of the hitmen. This might suggest that hitmen were not on the grassy knoll. But a demonstration behind the picket fence would require some hostile presence thereabouts. Stipulate that there is even a hitman located behind the southern end of the picket fence at which the crowd charges. The charge slants across Elm Street nearly parallel to the picket fence. If the storm-drain hitman retreats back into the parking lot, he would be moving roughly toward the book depository in the opposite direction of the charge. Pursuers would have to make a U-turn after scaling the fence to pick up the chase. Other hostile forces along the picket fence would have shorter lines of retreat to the northwest. The picket fence would screen gunmen re-

treating northward while the pursuit moved southward.

5. "Disprove" gunfire from the grassy knoll. If those swarming toward the grassy knoll after the shooting had found evidence of a firecracker, then it would confound further pursuit or investigation. Even if there had been actual shooting from this position, disinformation agents could easily "find" evidence of an "innocent" firecracker. Such evidence was never found or didn't stay found, but I am discussing reasons for a frontal diversion—but necessarily what happened.

So there were ample reasons to plot a frontal diversion in the JFK assassination. The hypothesis of a non-shooting diversion from the grassy knoll, while consistent with a conspiracy, is a challenge to those of us who suspect gunfire from there. But the failure of the authorities to "find" physical evidence of such a diversion is also a challenge for Moyer and Gallagher. It is not just a matter of what was reported, we must consider what the coverup would want reported. The news media almost immediately reported that "three shots were fired" at the President's motorcade. Moyer and Gallagher assume that only two shots were actually fired and the diversion accounts for the third "report." While three shells were "found" on the sixth floor of the book depository, Moyer and Gallagher argue that one was planted because it was too bent, presumably from jamming, to have been fired. But if only two shots were actually fired, then planting a third shell strikes me as counter-productive for the coverup. Dallas radio reported the police and civilian charge up the grassy knoll before reporting a gunman at the book depository. I would think it more useful for the coverup to "find" that "naughty boys had set off a firecracker in front of the President's car." As Moyer and Gallagher note, the Warren Report's "echo effect" explanation accounts for the sound but neither the sight nor smell of an explosion on the grassy knoll. Adding in the steam-vents explanation still leaves the gunpowder smell unaccounted for. Why not find evidence of "innocent coincidence" of a firecracker?

The fact is that the authorities needed every one of the "three shots" reported in Dealey Plaza to come from the book depository for the frameup to have any credibility, and this precludes evidence of even "innocent" additional explosions. As it was, the Warren Report's assessment of the relation of wounds to ballistics was obliged to blame Kennedy's back/throat wounds and all of

Connally's wounds on a single "magic" bullet.

Still, Moyer and Gallagher confront us with an implicit puzzle: why fire shots from the grassy knoll when the patsy is located in the book depository? The answer is that, whatever the initial plan, the first volley(s) failed to kill President Kennedy, and the assassins had to go to "Plan B." The Dealey Plaza ambush involved a number of missed shots. Kennedy apparently was not killed in his first wounding, and Connally took a lot of presumably unintended wounds. Then there were the reported off-target strikes both in front of and behind the President's car.[11] I think the shooters were skilled gunmen, but this would have been the biggest game of their lives, and I've seen professionals fumble under pressure in Super Bowls.

Military strategy comprehends opening moves, countermoves and contingency plans. Extra round(s) of shooting is suggested by Robert Groden and others who think that the man with the umbrella positioned on the curb next to the President's car is pumping it as a signal that the kill has not been completed. [12] A forward observation post is consistent with my own theory of a military-style ambush. So it makes sense that, if the first volley failed, the forward observer would call for more shots. Shots from where? From behind, if the shooters are to support the plan for a patsy in the book depository. But there may have been overriding considerations.

After the initial round(s) of shooting failed to kill Kennedy, any gunmen positioned in the building(s) behind Kennedy could continue firing and hope to score eventually. Gunmen on the grassy knoll could finish the job, but they would have to wait for the car to get further down Elm Street to shoot Kennedy from behind. (If the target had gotten much further down Elm than the point the President was apparently hit with the fatal head shot, positions along the picket fence, starting at the pergola, would acquire lines of fire from the rear roughly on line with shots from the book depository.) So one set of gunmen had proven inaccurate, another set was in a good position to kill Kennedy but out-of-position for casting blame on the book depository, and time was running out. I infer that Agent Kellerman was trying to implement a get-away for the President's car by circumventing the car in front, and Agent Greer would surely respond eventually. If Greer stepped on the gas and bore left, this could place the hardtop lead car between

Kennedy and the grassy knoll positions. If the grassy knoll gunmen were to join in shooting Kennedy, they would need to fire before their firing lanes were blocked. Once the not-fatally wounded President is shielded, the gunmen would have to go to Plan Z, the least desirable alternative, and mob the car to finish the job despite the certain fearsome casualties and the fatal blow to the lone-nut leftist frameup. So grassy knoll gunmen had powerful reasons to fire at the President despite any plan to kill Kennedy from behind.

I know the key consideration from my political science training. During the power struggles of early 16th-century Italy, Machiavelli advised the Prince: "When you strike a king, be sure to kill him." If John F. Kennedy had survived the ambush, the Kennedys were savvy enough not to swallow the lone-nut leftist story, particularly with all the contrary information available to the authorities. So the king had to be killed, and the ambush had cause to call in its reserve firepower deployed on the grassy knoll. This created a PR problem for the incoming Johnson administration, but the boys on the firing line did their job. That at least one shot struck Kennedy from the front, inconsistent with the patsy's location, was a problem for the frameup. But the incoming administration orchestrated damage control to avoid suffering any recriminations.

I personally was aware of discrepancies in the news reports from Dallas immediately after the assassination, but I was too naive to understand the power of media manipulation and the willingness of news professionals (including my own media role models) to choke down the official line. Once the hook was set, the information elite internalized the official assassination mythology, and contradictory information was suppressed or discredited.

Notes

1. M.A. Moyer and R.F. Gallagher, "From Houston Street to the Overpass," *The Fourth Decade* July, 1997, pp. 15-24.
2. Robert J. Groden, *The Killing of a President: The Complete Photographic Record of the JFK Assassination, the Conspiracy and the Cover-up* (Viking Studio Books, 1993), pp. 51, 54-57.
3. Gerald Posner, *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK* (Random House, 1993), p. 256.

4. Mark Lane, Rush to Judgment (Thunders Mouth Press, 1992) (edition of 1966 book), p. 32. Except for specifically mentioning "flash" and "smoke" as possible sources of his visual impression, Bowers' statement to Lane is consistent with his Warren Commission testimony before it was cut short. See also Jim Marrs, Crossfire: The Plot that Killed Kennedy (Carroll and Graf, first paperback edition, 1990) on Bowers' observations, pp. 75-78; on the smell of smoke, pp. 56-58. I cite Crossfire because recent printings include an appendix, which converts the book into a useful secondary source reference.
5. Weston argues that rightists gained control of the book depository building weeks in advance of the assassination and controlled the personnel there. William Weston, "The Transplantation of the Texas School Book Depository," The Third Decade, September, 1993, pp. 23-31; and "411 Elm Street," The Fourth Decade, May, 1994, pp. 24-29.
6. On the medical evidence and its corruption, researchers must at least read David S. Lifton, Best Evidence (Carroll & Graf, 1988) and the works of Harrison E. Livingstone, particularly High Treason 2 (Carroll & Graf, 1992). Livingstone's subsequent books, Killing the Truth and Killing Kennedy, (Carroll & Graf, 1993 and 1995), are also must reading for any researcher who might mistake frames from available versions of the Zapruder film as trustworthy guides to the medical evidence or the timing of the firing sequence. I have not yet seen his forthcoming fifth book on the assassination coverup.
7. That the halting of the motorcade was a critical issue is evidenced by the Warren Report's attempt to skirt the issue, reporting the motorcade's "average" speed coming down Elm Street and dismissing testimony about its slowing as "speculation."
8. I first heard Greer's explanation secondhand on the November 1993 CBS News assassination retrospective, but he apparently told it to investigators immediately after the assassination. The Warren Report (p. 641), says that the "speculation" that Kennedy's car stopped is falsely taken as "evidence the driver had the impression that the first shot came from the front and therefore hesitated to drive closer to the overpass."
9. Groden Killing of the President, pp. 20, 24, 190-191.
10. Virtually all eyes and cameras would be focused on the President's car during its procession down Elm Street, and those behind would also easily see the security followup car, yet the photographic record shows the security men without visible weapons and virtually frozen in place during the firing sequence except for Clint Hill's eventual shift to the President's car.
11. Moore cites "five eyewitnesses" to a strike on the pavement behind the President's car for his theory that ricochet debris from this miss hit Kennedy from behind with sufficient force to cause him to double over enough so that a shot from the book depository could strike Kennedy in the back and travel down relative to the ground and up relative to the body and exit the throat consistent with the single-bullet theory. So even minimalist Oswald-did-it-alone theorists are aware of the multiple off-target strikes and cite them when it suits their purposes. Jim Moore, Conspiracy of One (Fort Worth: The Summit Group), p. 198.
12. Groden, Killing of the President, p. 24.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Editor's note. Making a virtue, perhaps, of necessity, with this issue I am inaugurating a change in policy with regard to Letters to the Editor. The previous policy was that, where a letter was critical of material published by another author in this journal, the critical letter would be submitted to the criticized author and his/her reply would be published alongside the critical letter. Various time and other constraints—see the Editorial, this issue—have made it impossible for me to implement this policy for this issue, and this has led me to rethink the policy itself. Among other things, it may give unfair advantage to the respondents, who receive the "last word" in a particular issue, as they did in the issue in which they originally published. For the future, authors will be responsible on their own to locate material critical of their writings and to submit a response, if desired, for a future issue of the journal. The only exception to this will concern criticisms of my own writings, which I hope to see with increasing frequency. Since my advancing senility has not yet advanced to the

stage that I am writing letters to myself, I may avail myself of an editorial privilege and comment in an "editor's note" where I feel a response is in order.

To the editor: I would like to offer several observations in response to William Weston's "Alice, Texas" article published in the September 1997 issue. Having published an article myself in another journal ("Oswald in Aliceland," *Kennedy Assassination Chronicles*, Spring, 1997) on Oswald sightings in and around Alice in early October, 1963, I am hopeful that we can draw on both pieces of research to begin to more fully flesh out the record.

1. Weston notes that Dr. Ben Parker, the owner of radio station KBOP in Pleasanton Texas, told the Corpus Christi paper that, while he did remember an early October phone call from a man seeking a job, he did not meet the applicant in person. But Parker had previously told the FBI on November 26 that the man, whose name he could not recall, did come into the station for a personal interview and that he thought it was possible that it could have been Oswald. (FBI records #124-10009-10236 and 124-10018-10240) Parker, perhaps growing weary of attention from the press, would later tell NBC yet another version—that he had not been contacted at all by the job-seeker. (FBI 124-10257-10473)

2. Weston also cites a New York Times story within which Alice station KOPY employee Mike Rios apparently places our Oswald doppelganger at the station for the first time on Thursday evening, October 3 at about 6:00 pm. He may be interested to learn that a waitress at a cafe in Freer Texas, located about 35 miles west of Alice, claims Oswald came in for pie and coffee sometime between 6:30 and 7:00 pm on the same evening. (FBI 124-10229-10425)

3. The working thesis Weston develops is that the Oswald seen in Alice on October 3 and 4, who was often spotted with a woman and child in tow, was the real Oswald and that Marina and June were there with him. He says that the testimony of Marina and Ruth Paine regarding Oswald's reappearance in Dallas on October 3-4 should not be considered trustworthy, and he speculates that, if Oswald got back in Dallas earlier in the day on the 3rd then had been reported, and had Marina and June been waiting in a borrowed car with their bags packed, the three of them could have made

it back down to Alice by 6 pm. He then postulates that the Oswald back in Dallas on October 3-4 staying at the YMCA, filing unemployment claims, and looking for a job could represent an impostor.

The first thing I would observe is that, by looking into the possibility of an Oswald impostor or a second Oswald, Mr. Weston's position regarding Oswald sightings appears to have evolved somewhat recently. My recollection is that, earlier this year, he wrote in a *Fourth Decade* letter to the editor that he had decided that many sighting reports were indicative of Oswald's actual presence rather than imposture (Weston believes Oswald's employment records at Reily Coffee and the TSBD were cooked.)

Secondly, if one plugs in a number of other early October Oswald "family" sightings in south Texas (of which Weston apparently was unaware), we can all but totally rule out this notion of Marina having been there. Keeping in mind that Rachel Oswald was born on October 20, none of the descriptions of the woman accompanying the Oswald look-alike mention that she appeared to be over eight months pregnant. A gas station attendant in Pleasanton who saw the woman sitting in a car did not say she was pregnant. (FBI 124-10257-10473) Another couple thought to be the Oswalds—possibly the same couple—also was spotted at a Corpus Christi shopping mall in early October, and nothing was said about the woman being pregnant. (FBI 124-10229-10424) Yet another "Oswald" is alleged to have shown up at the San Antonio Airport in October, saying he had been driving a friend's car but that he now wanted to rent one. He was with a foreign-looking woman carrying a baby somewhere between 4 and 11 months old (too young to be June) and she was described as 27 years old, 5'5" and 125 pounds without any mention of her being pregnant. (FBI 124-10178-10282) Moreover, if we look back to the October 3 evening sighting at the cafe in Freer, "Oswald" was accompanied by a woman with TWO children, one of them anywhere from 2-4 years old and one of them an infant estimated to be two weeks old. (FBI 124-10229-10425)

While it is certainly possible that these sightings did not all involve the same family, the description of the car as a dark-colored "old model" (1952 or 1953) sedan is relatively comparable between the sighting Weston

mentions at KOPY in Alice and the Corpus and Freer sightings. I should also mention that Weston himself has noted that a woman he thinks was Marina who appeared with an "Oswald" in Rhinelander, Wisconsin clear back in mid-July was pregnant enough at that point so as to not escape notice. ("Budreau's Music and Appliance Store," issue of July 1996)

Finally, the signature on the JOBCO employment application filed in Dallas on October 4 was in fact verified by the FBI lab as having been Oswald's (CD 107) (to the extent we think the FBI lab has any credibility whatsoever anymore.)

4. As usual, Weston should be commended for adding to the historical record by obtaining the information from George R. Wright's daughter about yet another Oswald sighting in Alice, and by tracking down Leo Sepulveda. (Just as he should get kudos for unearthing Margaret Budreau's claim that the FBI apparently had altered her testimony about the name the Wisconsin Oswald gave for warranty purposes.)

5. Another area sighting which may be related involves a farmer who swears he picked up Oswald on Loop 281 in southern San Antonio on Saturday morning, October 5, and drove him as far as Leming, Texas (FBI 124-10267-10387 and CD 71) This particular Oswald, traveling alone, told the farmer that he had recently traveled from Laredo to San Antonio but was now returning to Laredo.

6. So, like Weston, I have wondered who the devil was this dead ringer who was running around south Texas telling people he had just come from Mexico and using Oswald's name? But I lean toward the belief that, assuming imposture was involved, the Oswald in Aliceland was not the real McCoy. Chris W. Courtwright, 626 Osborn, Carbondale KS 66414.

To the editor: Some comments concerning Vince Palamara's article on the Secret Service in your September 1997 issue:

Shouldn't the comments and actions of Clint Hill be thrown into the mix for consideration? You can add him to the list of those who said JFK didn't want agents on the back of the car. In the same "Inside the Secret Service" video program Vince mentioned, Hill says that on the previous weekend (prior to Dallas), President Kennedy "had indicated that he didn't want the agents on the back of the car when he was in the car in a

motorcade situation, because he did not want it to appear that there by anything between him and the people."

Nevertheless, as he explained in another filmed interview a few years ago, he had to get up on the back of the limousine behind Mrs. Kennedy several times as it drove through crowded Dallas streets. Hill explained that due to the heavy crowds in some areas the driver, Bill Greer, drove closer to the left side of the street to keep more distance between the limousine and the crowds on the right side of the street. This made it difficult for the motorcycle officers on the left side of the car to do their job. Hill said this caused him to get "up and down from the car three or four times." (Hill can be seen crouched on the back of the limousine in several films of the motorcade, particularly so in a portion of the TV program, "The JFK Conspiracy," hosted by James Earl Jones and shown on independent stations in 1992. Almost full frontal views of Hill are shown as he kneels on the back of the limousine as it turns a corner in Dallas.) Hill then added that "when we finally arrived in the Dealey Plaza area, the crowds were very sparse, so I returned to the followup car."

Do I believe Hill's comment about what President Kennedy supposedly said the "previous weekend" about agents on the back of the car? Not necessarily. Many agents have to lied to cover for, or share the blame, with other agents, or to support a certain conclusion. Witness the number of agents and others who claimed responsibility for the bubbletop decision. Another example was pointed out by Vince in his presentation at the COPA Conference in October, 1996. After President Kennedy was shot in the head, "five different agents take responsibility for radioing Lawson in the lead car about getting to Parkland Hospital. There was only one channel. Four of them are lying." Richard Goad, 6324 S. Pickering St.#L, Whittier CA 90601

To the editor: In their article, "From Houston Street to the Overpass" (July 1997 issue), Moyer and Gallagher bring up some interesting arguments concerning the tragic events which occurred on that tiny, but most important piece of real estate. One of the more illuminating discussions was Governor Connally, the single bullet theory, and Dr. Cyril Wecht.

In his book Cause of Death, Dr. Wecht writes that the single bullet theory is absurd. One reason he believes

this to be so is that Governor Connally stated that he heard a shot, had time to turn and see the President slumped, and as he started to turn around, he himself was shot. Moyer and Gallagher stated that if Connally was able to do this then the single bullet theory is indeed absurd.

However, the authors questioned the validity of this statement attributed to Connally because Dr. Wecht did not provide source notes, and they have not been able to locate such a statement made by Connally. This proclamation of doubt had me scurrying to my video archives where I began my search for the elusive Connally quote.

I teach a course on the assassination here on Cape Cod, and use as much original material as my library will allow. I knew I had Connally on tape, but did I have the quote which was in question? My answer came very soon, as I watched a contemporary newsreel of the wounded Governor giving a press conference from his Parkland Hospital bed. He said, "We heard a shot. I turned to look in the back seat and the President was slumped."

Dr. Wecht is correct. Connally could not have been wounded by the same bullet which caused President Kennedy to slump, which the Governor had time to turn and witness, before he himself was shot. With the missile traveling at a speed of 2,300 feet per second, the reaction of Connally would have been simultaneous with that of JFK. I realize that Dr. Baden has stated that the Governor Connally could have experienced a delayed reaction to his wounds, but Dr. Shaw, one of the Parkland doctors who attended Connally, stated that the wounds he received would initiate an instant reaction by him.

I would like to add one more ingredient to this discussion. On July 3, 1997, the Cape Cod Times reported, via the Associated Press, that Gerald Ford admitted that the Warren Commission altered President Kennedy's back wound to a neck wound. He said that it wasn't done for any conspiratorial reasons, but simply "to be more precise." Dan Rather, Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw, where are you???

I for one am getting tired of listening to theorists villify people like Dr. Wecht. At the end of their article, Moyer and Gallagher, much to their credit, stated that they would alter their ideas if material presented contradicts

their present conclusions. I believe that the tape of Governor Connally stating that he turned and saw the President slump taxes their position severely, as they themselves admit it would in their article. Will Moyer and Gallagher alter their present ideas as they proclaimed they would? Will Dr. Wecht be afforded an apology, or will the authors simply revert to the old game of words, as Gerald Ford attempted to do last July 3rd? Bill Cheslock, History Department, Chatham Junior/Senior High Schools, Chatham, MA 02633.

To the editor: The article by Moyer and Gallagher, "From Houston Street to the Overpass" in the July issue left a few false impressions that need correcting.

1. Connally saw JFK react before he, Connally, was hit. The authors quote Governor Connally's first public statement, as it appears in a book by Dr. Cyril Wecht: Connally said he "turned and looked into the backseat and the President was slumped." The authors go on to say "This is a very important claim made by Wecht because, if true, the 'single bullet' theory is absurd..." They also said they were "unable to locate such a statement by Connally." But there are many sources. Martin Agronsky quoted from that same interview in the New York Times, 11/28/63, and Julian Read, Connally's aide, confirmed the Connally's version of events (AP 11/23/63): Connally saw Kennedy react before he himself was hit. (The taped and printed record of Connally's statement have been altered to eliminate the left turn, something that does not show on the Zapruder film, but was reported by—besides the Connally's—eyewitnesses, and the FBI describes a left turn at this time on the Z film.)

Connally changed his testimony completely, claiming he turned to the right, and saw nothing of interest. Should we trust him? Connally also radically revised his testimony in regard to the time interval between the first two shots. He told the Warren Commission that it "passed through my mind that there with either two or three people involved...or someone was shooting with an automatic rifle...because of the rapidity...of the first shot plus the blow that I took..." (4WCH133) Asked by the HSCA about that rapidity, Connally replied: "I guess 6,8 or 10 seconds, in that range..." (1HSCA53) Would that sound like "an automatic rifle" to anyone, let alone Connally, a man familiar with guns? Although Moyer and Gallagher cite Connally's changed testimony, they

do not mention Mrs. Connally's testimony. She also said Kennedy was hit before her husband. When, exactly Connally was hit is unclear, but Mrs. Connally saw Kennedy react well before she heard two more shots.

2. Connally's wrist. Dr. Wecht raised several objections to the claim Connally was hit as of frame 230 which Moyer and Gallagher list, including the absence of any sign of the "considerable amount of force imparted on the wrist by this bullet" and noted that "he sits there with absolutely no evidence of pain on his face, and with his hand firmly gripping his hat." The authors explain this by citing Connally's statement about being unaware of having shot in the wrist (and thigh). (p. 17) But the pain in Connally's chest wound was so unbearable, this is probably why he was unaware of the wrist wound. And where is the evidence of pain from the chest wound at this time on the film? And what about the "considerable amount of force" that had to have been imparted to the wrist?

3. "Overwhelming Evidence" of the SBT? The authors wrote, "Wecht, along with many others, argue that one bullet did not hit both Kennedy and Connally, but there is overwhelming evidence that is exactly what happened." (p. 17) Even the pushiest pushers of this theory have never pushed any "proof" other than the "lapel bulge" (the result of moving his right hand to retrieve his Stetson from his left hand? Two frames earlier, there is a smaller lapel bulge which disappears when he moves his right hand.)

Rather than proof of the SBT, its supporters have offered nothing but defensive statements showing how it could have happened. If Connally had been turned to the right...if Kennedy had been bent forward...Even Michael Baden admits Kennedy's back wound directly corresponded to the holes in his clothing, which would put the wound in the third thoracic vertebra—right where his own physician George Burkley said it was, and where it appears in the one photo of this wound. Since Kennedy's back wound was too low to be explained by a bullet from the 6th floor that allegedly exited the throat, Baden et al say Kennedy was bent forward when struck. But at the moment the lapel bulges, Kennedy was not bent forward at all; he was sitting upright and already reacting to a bullet—and Connally was not turned to the right when the lapel

moves.

Moyer and Gallagher wrote "those researchers that dispute the 'single bullet theory' base their arguments on the two men being at the same height in the car. Their argument is diminished if it can't be established that the president was sitting in a higher position from the ground than the Governor in the jumpseat."

It is difficult to believe that they have not heard of all other arguments, including the main one: (a) lack of any proof whatsoever for the SBT, (b) both Connally's disputed it, (c) other eyewitnesses disputed it; (d) two separate impacts of two separate bullets seen on film; (e) the problem of the lateral trajectory, which becomes very clear if you study a map or overhead photo—but not very clear if you study the deceptive computer reconstructions, (f) the upward trajectory through Kennedy's body, and (g) the vertical trajectory through the two men: to appreciate it, examine the lateral photos on level ground of the two men in the limousine. (And, contrary to the authors' assertions, Warren Commission exhibits of the limo show the jumpseat lower than the backseat, not that it matters.)

4. The front seat fragments as the magic bullet? "IF the two fragments in the car are pieces of the same projectile, it had to be either the bullet that hit Kennedy in the head and broke up in the car, or it was the bullet that went through the President and the Governor, and then broke up in the car." (p. 18)

The bullet went into Connally's thigh a short distance, then reversed its direction? Moving backwards, it carefully eased out of the thigh, without enlarging the hole in the skin, muscle or pants, then reversed its direction again in order to go forward and upward to strike the chrome in the front of the car?

5. The first report a diversionary firecracker? Moyer and Gallagher say that if any loud report came from behind the picket fence on the grassy knoll, it had to be (1) the first report, and (2) it was only a diversionary noise rather than a shot because "most witnesses" described it as a firecracker.

One apparent basis for the authors' belief the first shot missed was Bennett's statement that the second shot hit Kennedy in the back. But if one considers the timing of the second shot as reported by Bennett and many other witnesses—immediately before the head shot—it becomes clear that Bennett saw Kennedy hit in the back

when he had already been reacting to a shot fired several seconds earlier. If Bennett's statement is accurate about what he saw and when he saw it, separate bullets hit Kennedy in the back and throat.

The authors completely neglect other opposing testimony and evidence: Major Philip Willis' sworn statement that JFK reacted as if hit by the first shot, and JFK's reaction on the Zapruder film coincides with a photograph taken by Willis the moment of the first shot, and other patterns in the testimony—the first report was softer than the rest, that it was louder, that some did not hear it at all, that all were the same, that all sounded like firecrackers. Like many witnesses, Glenn Bennett characterized the second shot as "another firecracker noise," and reported no difference in sound between the first and second. In addition, the authors misrepresent Clint Hill's testimony in order to support their theory (p. 18) They quote Hill selectively: "It had a different sound...than the first sound I heard," omitting what came immediately after, Hill's explanation of why the sound was different, "as though someone was shooting a revolver into a hard object—it seemed to have some type of echo." (S.A. George Hickey also implied why the noise was different: "The last shot seemed to hit his head and cause a noise at the point of impact...") The authors also falsely paraphrase Clint Hill: "He said the second and third shots sounded alike." (p. 18) In fact, Clint Hill said he heard only two shots in all, the second of which was different because it hit something hard.

Finally, the authors omit mention of other explanations for the variation in sound: (a) location of witness in relation to marksman; (b) location of witness in relation to other noise-maker: e.g., motorcycle, (c) muffling of shots. Carol Hewett has documented the existence, in 1963, of silencers that significantly muffled the sound of a shot without compromising accuracy. (See Hewett, C., "Silencers, Sniper Rifles and the CIA, Probe 3 (1) 1995, and my article in that same issue, "The Magician's Tools.")

6. The head wound. The authors say "those who argue that frame 313 establishes proof of a shot from the front fail to offer an explanation as to why there is no evidence of a projectile exiting from the rear of the head in a later frame." [p. 20] The Nix film shows debris moving backward from the back of the head. And Chester Breneman, the surveyor who worked with Life

Magazine and the Secret Service to correlate the location of the limousine on Elm Street with Zapruder frames, said the Zapruder stills he was given showed "blobs" of material moving backward from the head at the moment of the head shot. Milicent Cranor 630 W. 246th St. #921, Riverdale NY 10471.

EDITORIAL: APOLOGY AND APPEAL

Since the last issue of this journal was mailed, I have suffered the agony of the most traumatic event of my life, the death of my wife Barbara from a coronary condition on September 29, 1997. Pursuant to what I know would be Barbara's wish, I have tried through the fog of grief and loneliness that still envelops me to maintain THE FOURTH DECADE with a minimum of delay or compromise of its quality. The apology part of this editorial is to the readers for any failure to fulfill that goal.

The appeal part relates to the enclosed flyer about Barbara's "legend." Knowing as I do how legends can be disinformational operations, I feel as well that the immortality of departed persons is based on the desire and the capacity of survivors to keep alive their memories. For that privileged few of you who ever met Barbara personally—for example, when she played the "gracious hostess" for our conference in Providence—you may have your own happy memories of her. For the rest, please know by the earnest testimony of this witness that Barbara's life was the major sustaining force in keeping me on whatever useful track I have tried to follow for THE FOURTH DECADE. As one of you said who knew Barbara slightly and intuited her influence on me, and who was generous enough to express appreciation for the importance of this enterprise, America may in her death have lost one of her "finer citizens."

It is with such thoughts in mind that I ask you in all humility (and a sense of unworthiness to ask such a thing) to consider making a contribution to the scholarship fund at Fredonia that will establish a permanent memorial to the life of someone who struggled and overcame and left behind an inspiration for those of us who, for yet a little while, must continue the struggle.