

JFK Death: A 2nd Gunman?

"Myths have traditionally surrounded the dramatic assassinations of history. The rumors and theories about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln that are still being publicized were for the most part bruited within months of his death. Wherever there is any element of mystery in such dramatic events, misconceptions often result from sensational speculation," Warren Commission report, Sept. 24, 1964.

By JACK V. FOX

DALLAS, June 28 (UPI)—The automobiles go whizzing down the slope of Elm Street in Dealey Plaza and every few minutes one car will come to a near halt, the driver will turn and point back and up at a sixth floor window of a square building and say:

"This is where Kennedy was and that's where Oswald fired the shots."

Almost every visitor to Dallas can count on being taken by friends (or going by taxi) within hours of arrival to that spot and the wonder is there haven't been a spate of auto accident injuries at the site of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963.

The initial reaction of many first-time visitors is that Dealey Plaza is much more compact, much smaller, than visualized from still and TV pictures and that the Texas School Book Depository building looms so prominently over Elm Street that the marksmanship of a rifleman from the building is not so remarkable.

Yet, more than two and one-half years after the tragic assassination, the doubts recur and the rumors multiply that the full story has never been told — and particularly that a second gunman other than Lee Harvey Oswald fired that day.

The Warren Commission foresaw that incredulity would greet its finding that an obscure figure, with no apparent motive and denying guilt to the end, could alone bring off such a fantastic crime, then be mortally wounded himself literally in the hands of the police. It published an appendix to its findings knocking down most of the wilder rumors and gossip.

"SECOND GUNMAN

But there are eyewitnesses who are still convinced there was a second gunman. There are photographs, blown-up many times, which — like making out an elephant in a cloud formation — seem to show a rifleman atop a grassy knoll. There is the undisputed fact that most of the bystanders that day looked not at the depository building when the shots rang out but in a different direction altogether.

I went to Dallas reasonably satisfied that the Warren Report was substantially correct and its main findings sound. After a week of talking with witnesses, scouring the report and studying the challenges, I was personally still satisfied. But there are many people who are not.

S. M. Holland, a small man in his late 50s or early 60s, sits in the living room of a modest home in suburban Irving, Tex. He has worked for the Union Terminal Co. for 28 years, rising to the job of railroad signal supervisor.

Holland is certain that a separate shot came from beneath trees on a grassy knoll north and west of the Depository building. At the time, he was standing on a railroad viaduct under which Elm Street passes. Looking straight ahead and

down, he had one of the best views of any eyewitness.

Holland says there were four separate shots. (The Warren report concludes there were three.) He says the first came from the book building and hit the President. The second came from the same place and hit Gov. Johnson. Connelly riding in the same car.

"The third shot came from behind the picket fence to the north of Elm Street. There was a puff of smoke under the trees like someone had thrown out a Chinese firecracker and a report of a gun entirely different from the one which fired from the book building. I don't know whether it hit anything."

Holland said the fourth shot from the depository struck the President in the

head, blowing away a large portion of his skull.

Holland says he, a Dallas policeman and several other railroad employes rushed to a parking area behind the picket fence. They found no one there and no signs of empty cartridges.

Backed up against the fence, says Holland, were a station wagon and a sedan. The ground was muddy and, according to the railroad man, there were two muddy marks on the bumper of the station wagon as if someone had stood there to look over the fence. The footprints led to the sedan and ended.

"I have often wondered," says Holland, "if a man could have climbed into the trunk of that car and pulled the lid shut on him, then someone else have driven it away later."

Roy Truly, a soft-spoken, middle-aged man, stands in the front hall of the book depository building near the stairs where Oswald passed after the shooting. Truly is building superintendent and it was he who hired Oswald.

"I feel partly responsible for what happened," Truly says. "But I feel the greater blame lies in that I was not told of Oswald's background."

Truly that day stood with a small group of spectators in the street directly below the sixth floor window and he acknowledges that when gunfire was heard not only he, but the people and police around him, looked not back but ahead and in the direction of the knoll which has an ornamental white cement colonnade at the top.

Lee J. Bowers Jr., now sells lots in a land development tract in Dallas. He was employed by the Union Terminal Co. in 1963 and was in a signal tower to the northwest of the book depository building and about 50 yards behind the colonnade and the picket fence. He had a clear view of the parking area there.

He observed two men in the area between the fence and the colonnade before the shooting but did not notice them later. Had an automobile been wedged into that area, he could not have missed it.

Bowers says he saw a "flash" or "some kind of disturbance" under the trees atop the knoll right at the time of the shooting. He saw no individual firing or anyone rushing from the scene but he thinks there is "at least a 50-50 chance that something happened there" and it could have been a second gunman.

Mrs. Jean Hill, a school teacher, is the only eyewitness who thought she saw an assassin suspect outside the book building. She was so convinced it was a man in a brown coat running along the knoll that she started in chase but he disappeared.

In her report to the Warren Commission, Mrs. Hill acknowledged that she also thought she saw a white dog in the car between the President and Mrs. Kennedy. She later discovered it must have been the flowers Mrs. Kennedy was holding.

Rifle
Aug 9, 1966
"Auto
accident"

Capt. J. W. (Will) Fritz, chief of the homicide division of the Dallas police department, sits in his third floor office wearing a straw hat. He is the most reluctant man in Dallas to talk of the affair. He was the one who interrogated Oswald. Oswald was in his custody when he was killed.

Fritz refuses to discuss the case mainly on the grounds that litigation in-

volving Jack Ruby is still in the courts.

NO COMMENT

I asked Fritz whether people still brought in new evidence or stories. He declined to say. I asked whether his department would investigate significant new evidence. He said the question was theoretical and hypothetical.

I asked him whether he considered the Oswald-Kennedy case closed. In his only positive answer, he said:

"No case is ever closed."

The one person who saw Oswald standing in the window actually aiming a



LEE HARVEY OSWALD

shot was Howard L. Brennan, a 45-year-old steamfitter who was standing below across from the building.

His identification led to Oswald's capture.

Another spectator, Arnold L. Rowland, then 18, who worked in a pizza cafe, testified he saw Oswald in the window with a rifle 15 minutes before the motor-

cade arrived but thought he was a secret service security guard and said nothing to a Dallas policeman standing 12 feet away.

Had Rowland tapped the officer on the shoulder and asked, "who is that in the window with the rifle?" The entire course of history might have been changed.

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When Gov. Connally appeared before the commission, he was asked:

"What is the best estimate that you have as to the time span between the sound of the first shot and the feeling of someone hitting you in the back which you just described?"

Connally replied:

"A very, very brief span of time . . . I immediately thought that this — that I had been shot. I knew it when I just looked down and I was covered with blood and the thought immediately passed through my mind that there were either two or three people involved or more in this or

someone was shooting with an automatic rifle. These were just thoughts that went through my mind because of the rapidity of these two, of the first shot plus the blow that I took."

After the Warren Report was issued, Connally said again that he did not think he was hit by the same bullet which wounded President Kennedy.

The Warren Report dealt with Connally's impression in three ways: 1. The first shot may have missed both men. 2. Connally may have been wounded but there was a "delayed reaction between the time the bullet struck and the time he realized that he was hit." 3. The "single bullet" theory is the most logical but it is not necessary to finding that only one gunman was involved.

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Human nature being what it is, the rumors about the assassination of John F. Kennedy no doubt will endure as long as have those about Abraham Lincoln.