

New Theory On Kennedy Assassination

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A new attack on the findings of the Warren Commission purports to show that three gunmen participated in the assassination of President Kennedy and that Lee Harvey Oswald probably was not one of them.

The Warren Commission said in its report, issued Sept. 24, 1964, that Oswald was the assassin and that he acted alone and unaided.

The new challenge to the Commission's conclusions is contained in "Six Seconds in Dallas" by Josiah Thompson, which appears in excerpted form in the current issue of the Saturday Evening Post. It will be published in book form on November 27.

LOGIC

The editor of the Post, William A. Emerson Jr., said: "With painstaking care and formidable logic, Thompson demolishes the Warren report by building a case for three assassins and at least four bullets."

Although the Warren report has been subjected to dozens of attacks in the last three years, Emerson's statement is the strongest thus far by the editor of a major American magazine.

Life and the Post a year ago found the Warren report's critics convincing enough to suggest an official reopening of the investigation of the President's murder.

But no major American magazine has suggested

ARGUMENT

In his book, Thompson, a 32-year-old philosophy teacher at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, argues that detailed analyses of still and motion pictures taken during the assassination, together with the testimony of certain witnesses, indicate that four shots were fired at Mr. Kennedy's car from three different locations.

The Warren Commission found that three shots were fired and that all originated from the southeast corner of the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository.

According to Thompson's

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"Reconstruction" of the assassination, one shot emanated from either the Dal-Tex building or the Dallas County Records Building at the east end of Dealey Plaza. That shot, Thompson asserts, struck Governor John B. Connally Jr. of Texas, who was seated in front of Mr. Kennedy.

SHOTS

Another bullet, Thompson says, originated from the depository and struck Mr. Kennedy in the back. Still another, also from the depository, struck him in the head, and a fourth shot — from behind a fence to the right and in front of the President — also hit him in the head, Thompson says.

"Three assassins fired four shots from three different locations," Thompson writes.

"The first and third shots were fired from the depository — most likely from the sixth floor, southeast corner

of Dealey Plaza — most likely from a building rooftop. The fourth and final shot was fired from a point near the corner of the stickade fence to the north of Elm street."

RIFLE

According to the commission, all the shots came from Oswald's 6.5mm. Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. The commission also said, on the basis of examinations conducted by ballistic experts, that the nearly whole bullet, two bullet fragments and three cartridge cases recovered after the assassination all came from Oswald's rifle "to the exclusion of all others."

Thompson does not account in his work for the failure of any investigative agency to discover bullets originating from a gun other than Oswald's.

In a telephone interview, he conceded that this was "a problem" but said he thought the solution might lie in the unidentifiable bullet fragments found in the Kennedy car and in the minute particles of metal discovered in the President's body and in Connally.

PHOTOS

Thompson relies heavily in his "reconstruction" on a study of photographs and movies taken by amateur photographers during the shooting in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

He contends that examination of frames 312 to 316 of the movie film made by Abraham Zapruder, one of these photographers, supports his contention that Mr. Kennedy was shot twice in the head, not once as the Warren Commission found.

Thompson says that frame 313, which is generally conceded to have been exposed at the moment the President was shot in the head, shows his head moving

slightly forward, as it would under the impact of a bullet coming from the book depository behind him.

Between frames 313 and 316, Thompson says, "there appeared to be a tremendous snap of the head backward and to the left," suggesting another impact from a point in front and to the right of the President.

EFFECTS

"What we see on the Zapruder film are the effects of a double transfer of momentum — one forward, the other backward," he says. "At 313 we witness the effect of a virtually simultaneous double impact on the president's head. One shot was fired from the rear, the other from the right front."

The Warren Commission concluded that Mr. Kennedy had been struck in the head at frame 313 of the Zapruder film, but found that the head wound was caused by a single bullet coming from above the behind him.

Thompson produces in his book a photograph taken by Mary Moorman, a bystander at the assassination, of the stockade fence to the right and in front of the motorcade.

GUNMAN

This picture, Thompson says, shows a gunman lurking behind the fence at precisely the point at which a

bullet would have originated if the theory about two head wounds was correct.

The picture, upon which Thompson places great emphasis, shows a dark patch of indiscernible shape which he contends is a man's head.

Thompson also says that other pictures contained in the book show two men at windows on the sixth floor of the depository at the time of the assassination. He asserts that these pictures, together with testimony about Oswald's whereabouts at the time of the shooting, suggest "that the question of Oswald's guilt must remain — nearly four years after the event — still unanswered."