

Speculation and Findings: An Assault on Rumor

Following is a condensation of a section of the Warren Commission report on speculation that has cropped up about the Kennedy assassination:

Myths have traditionally surrounded the dramatic assassinations of history.

False or inaccurate speculations concerning the assassination and related events are set forth below together with brief summary statements of what the commission has found to be the true facts:

Identifying The Assassin

SPECULATION — Oswald could not have known the motorcade route before he arrived at work on November 22.

FINDING — The motorcade route was published in both Dallas papers on November 19 and was therefore available at least 72 hours before Oswald reported for work on November 22. It was not changed in any way thereafter.

SPECULATION — It is probable that the chicken lunch, remains of which were found on the sixth floor, was eaten by an accomplice of Oswald who had hidden on the sixth floor overnight.

FINDING — The chicken lunch had been eaten shortly after noon on November 22 by Bonnie Ray Williams, an employe of the Texas School Book Depository, who after eating his lunch went to the fifth floor where he was when the shots were fired. Oswald did not eat the chicken lunch, nor did he drink from the soft drink bottle found near the chicken lunch.

SPECULATION — A picture published widely in newspapers and magazines after the assassination showed Lee Harvey Oswald standing on the front steps of the Texas School Book Depository Building shortly before the President's motorcade passed by.

FINDING — The man on the front steps of the building, thought or alleged by some to be Lee Harvey Oswald, is actually Billy Lovelady, an employe of the Texas School Book Depository, who somewhat resembles Oswald. Lovelady has identified himself in the picture, and other employes of the Depository standing with him, as shown in the picture, have verified that he was the man in the picture and that Oswald was not there.

SPECULATION — The President's car was going at a speed estimated at from 12 to 20 miles per hour, thus presenting a target comparable to the most difficult that a soldier would encounter under battlefield conditions.

FINDING — During the period between the time that the first and second shots struck the President, the Presidential car was traveling at an average speed of approximately 11.2 miles per hour. Expert witnesses testified that the target is regarded as a favorable one because the car was going away from the marksman in a straight line.

SPECULATION — Oswald could not have fired three shots from the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle in 5½ seconds.

FINDING — According to expert witnesses, exacting tests conducted for the commission demonstrated that it was possible to fire three shots from the rifle within 5½ seconds. It should be noted that the first loaded shell was already in the chamber ready for firing; Oswald had only to pull the trigger to fire the first shot and to work the bolt twice in order to fire the second and third shots. They testified that if the second shot missed, Oswald had between 4.8 and 5.6 seconds to fire the three shots. If either the first or third shot missed, Oswald had in excess of 7 seconds to fire the three shots.

SPECULATION — Oswald did not have the marksmanship ability demonstrated by the rifleman who fired the shots.

FINDING — Oswald qualified as a sharpshooter and a marksman with the M-1 rifle in the Marine Corps. Marina Oswald testified that in New Orleans her husband practiced operating the bolt of the rifle. Moreover, experts stated that the scope was a substantial aid for rapid, accurate firing. The commission concluded that Oswald had the capability with a rifle to commit assassination.

SPECULATION — The rifle found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository was identified as a 7.65 Mauser by the man who found it, Deputy Constable Seymour Weitzman.

FINDING — Weitzman, the original source of the speculation that the rifle was a Mauser, and Deputy Sheriff Eugene Boone found the weapon. Weitzman did not handle the rifle and did not examine it at close

range. He had little more than a glimpse of it and thought it was a Mauser, a German bolt-type rifle similar in appearance to the Mannlicher-Carcano. Police laboratory technicians subsequently arrived and correctly identified the weapon as a 6.5 Italian rifle. The shots that struck President Kennedy and Gov. Connally came from the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository.

SPECULATION — It is possible that there was a second Mannlicher-Carcano rifle involved in the assassination. The Irving Sports Shop mounted a scope on a rifle 3 weeks before the assassination.

FINDING — Dial D. Ryder, an employee of the Irving Sports Shop, has stated that he found on his workbench on November 23 an undated work tag with the name "Oswald" on it, indicating that sometime during the first 2 weeks of November three holes had been bored in a rifle and a telescopic sight mounted on it and bore-sighted. However, Ryder and his employer, Charles W. Greener, had no recollection of Oswald, of his Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, of the transaction allegedly represented by the repair tag, or of any person for whom such a repair was supposedly made. The rifle found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository had two holes in it bored for the installation of a scope prior to shipment to Oswald in March 1963. The Commission concluded that it is doubtful whether the tag produced by Ryder was authentic. All of the evidence developed proves that Oswald owned only the one rifle—the Mannlicher-Carcano—and that he did not bring it or a second rifle to the Irving Sports Shop.

SPECULATION — Ammunition for the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository had not been manufactured since the end of World War II. The ammunition used by Oswald must, therefore, have been at least 20 years old, making it extremely unreliable.

FINDING — The ammunition used in the rifle was American ammunition recently made by the Western Cartridge Co., which manufactures such ammunition currently. In tests with the same kind of ammunition, experts fired Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano rifle more than 100 times without any misfires.

SPECULATION — The picture of Oswald taken by his wife in March or April 1963 and showing him with a rifle and a pistol was "doctored" when it appeared in magazines and newspapers in February 1964. The rifle held by Oswald in these pictures is not the same rifle that was found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building.

FINDING — Life magazine, Newsweek and the New York Times notified the commission that they had retouched this picture. In doing so, they inadvertently altered details of the configuration of the rifle. The original prints of this picture have been examined by the commission and by photographic experts who have identified the rifle as a Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5, the same kind as the one found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository. FBI experts testified that the picture was taken with Oswald's camera.

SPECULATION — The rifle picture of Oswald was a composite one with Oswald's face pasted on somebody else's body.

FINDING — Marina Oswald has testified that she took this picture with a camera owned by her husband and subsequently identified as Oswald's. She identified the man in the picture as her husband. Experts also state the picture was not a composite.

SPECULATION — After firing the shots, Oswald could not have disposed of the rifle and descended the stairs to the lunchroom in time to get a drink from a soft drink machine and be there when Patrolman Baker came in.

FINDING — A series of time tests made by investigators and by Roy S. Truly and Patrolman M. L. Baker at the request of the Commission, show that it was possible for Oswald to have placed the rifle behind a box and descended to the lunchroom on the second floor before Patrolman Baker and Truly got up there. Oswald did not have a soft drink bottle in his hand at the time he was confronted by Baker and he was not standing by the soft drink machine. He was just entering the lunchroom; Baker caught a glimpse of him through the glass panel in the door leading to the lunchroom vestibule.

SPECULATION — Oswald did not have time for all of the movements imputed to him between his departure from the Texas School Book Depository and his encounter with Tippit.

FINDING — Time tests of all of Oswald's movements establish that these movements could have been accomplished in the time available to him.

SPECULATION — The log of the cabdriver who took Oswald to North Beckley Ave., William W. Whaley, shows that Oswald entered his cab at 12:30 p.m. Since this occurred at some distance from the point of the President's assassination, Oswald could not have shot the President.

FINDING — Whaley's log does show 12:30 p.m., but he has testified that he was not accurate in logging the time that passengers entered his cab, that he usually logged them at 15-minute intervals, and that it was undoubtedly some time later than 12:30 when Oswald entered his cab. Sometimes he did not make entries in his logbook until three or four trips later. The bus transfer in Oswald's possession was issued after 12:36 p.m. The commission has determined that Oswald probably entered Whaley's cab at about 12:47 or 12:48 p.m.

The Murder Of Tippit

SPECULATION — Tippit could not have recognized Oswald from the description sent out over the police radio.

FINDING — There is no certain way of knowing whether Tippit recognized Oswald from the description put out by the police radio. The Dallas Police Department radio log shows that the police radio dispatcher at 1:29 p.m. noted a similarity between the broadcast descriptions of the President's assassin and Tippit's slayer. It is conceivable, even probable, that Tippit stopped Oswald because of the description broadcast by the police radio.

SPECULATION — Helen Markham said that the man she saw shooting Tippit was about 30, short, with bushy hair, and wearing a white coat. Since Oswald does not fit this description he could not be the killer.

FINDING — In evaluating Helen Markham's testimony the commission is aware of allegations that she described the killer of Patrolman Tippit as short, stocky, and with bushy hair, which would not be a correct description of Oswald. It has also been alleged that Mrs. Markham identified Oswald in the lineup because of his clothing rather than his appearance. When Oswald appeared in the lineup at which Mrs. Markham was present, he was not wearing the jacket which he wore at the time of the shooting, and Mrs. Markham has testified that

her identification was based "mostly from his face." Moreover, Mrs. Markham has denied that she ever described the man who killed Tippit as short, stocky, and with bushy hair. The commission reviewed the transcript of a telephone conversation in which Mrs. Markham was alleged to have made such a description. In the transcription Mrs. Markham reaffirmed her positive identification of Oswald and denied having described the killer as short, stocky, and bushy haired.

SPECULATION — Not a single one of the people in the Texas Theater at the time of Oswald's arrest has come forward or been brought forward to give an eyewitness account of the arrest.

FINDING — Johnny C. Brewer, a shoe store manager, and two patrons of the theater—John Gibson and George Jefferson Applin Jr. — were present in the theater and testified on the circumstances of Oswald's arrest at the theater. Only 6 or 7 people were seated on the main floor of the theater.

SPECULATION — A young private in the Marine Corps in the 1950s could not study Marxism, learn Russian, and read Soviet newspapers without any adverse repercussions in his unit.

FINDING — Although Oswald's interest in the Soviet Union was well known, his interest in Marxism was apparently known to only a few of his fellow Marines. While stationed in California, he studied Russian. In February 1959, while still in the Marines, he took an official test on his proficiency in Russian and was rated "Poor." The reactions of his fellow Marines who were aware of his interests in Marxism and the Soviet Union were apparently not antagonistic and did not deter him from pursuing these interests.

SPECULATION — Oswald was trained by the Russians in a special school for assassins at Minsk.

FINDING — Commission investigations revealed no evidence to support this claim or the existence of such a school in Minsk during the time Oswald was there. Oswald belonged to a hunting club near Minsk, but there is no evidence that this was other than an ordinary hunting club.

SPECULATION — It was most exceptional that Oswald was able to bring his wife and child out of the Soviet Union with him.

FINDING — There is no reason to believe that the Oswalds received unusually favorable treatment in being permitted or assisted to leave the Soviet Union together. Other American citizens have brought their Russian wives out of the Soviet Union, both before and after Oswald.

SPECULATION — Oswald never would have been permitted to return to the United States if Soviet intelligence had not planned to use him in some way against the United States.

FINDING — There is no evidence that Oswald had any working relationship with the Soviet government or Soviet intelligence. The Russians have permitted other American defectors to return to the United States.

Oswald's Trip To Mexico City

SPECULATION — Oswald could not have received an American passport in June 1963 within 24 hours without special intervention on his behalf.

FINDING — Oswald's passport application was processed routinely by the Department of State. No person or agency intervened specially on his behalf to speed the issuance of the passport. The passports of 24 other persons, on the same list sent to Washington from New Orleans, were authorized at the same time. The Passport Office of the Department of State had no instructions to delay issuance of or to deny a passport to Oswald.

SPECULATION — Oswald did not have money for his trip to Mexico in September 1963.

FINDING — An analysis of Oswald's finances by the commission indicates that he had sufficient money to make the trip to and from Mexico City. There is no evidence that he received any assistance in financing his trip to Mexico. The total cost of his 7-day trip has been reliably estimated at less than \$85.

SPECULATION — While in Mexico, Oswald made a clandestine flight to Havana and back.

FINDING — The commission has found no evidence that Oswald made any flight to Cuba while he was in Mexico. He never received permission from the Cuban government to enter Cuba nor from the Mexican government to leave Mexico bound for Cuba. A confidential check of the Cuban airline in Mexico City indicates that Oswald never appeared at its office there.

SPECULATION — Oswald came back from Mexico City with \$5,000.

FINDING — No evidence has ever been supplied or obtained to support this allegation. Oswald's actions in Mexico City and after his return to Dallas lend no support to this speculation.

Oswald, Agencies Of U. S. Government

SPECULATION—Oswald was an informant of either the FBI or the CIA. He was recruited by an agency of the U.S. government and sent to Russia in 1959.

FINDING—Mrs. Marguerite Oswald frequently expressed the opinion that her son was such an agent, but she stated before the commission that "I cannot prove Lee is an agent." The directors of the CIA and of the FBI testified before the commission that Oswald was never employed by either agency or used by either agency in any capacity. Investigation by the commission has revealed no evidence that Oswald was ever employed by either the FBI or CIA in any capacity.

SPECULATION — Oswald told Pauline Bates, a public stenographer in Fort Worth, Tex., in June 1962, that he had become a "secret agent" of the U. S. government and that he was soon going back to Russia "for Washington."

FINDING — Miss Bates denied a newspaper story reporting that Oswald had told her that he was working for the U. S. Department of State. She stated that she had assumed incorrectly that he was working with the Department of State when he told her that the State Department had told him in 1959 that he would be on his own while in the Soviet Union.

SPECULATION — The FBI tried to recruit Oswald. An FBI agent's name, telephone number, and automobile license number were found among Oswald's papers.

FINDING — FBI officials have testified that they had never tried to recruit Oswald to act on behalf of the FBI in any capacity. The commission's investigation corroborates this testimony. An FBI agent, James P. Hosty Jr., had given his name and telephone number to Mrs. Ruth Paine so that she could call and give him Oswald's address in Dallas when she learned it. (The FBI had been keeping track of Oswald since he attempted to defect and after his return from Russia.) Mrs. Paine and Marina Oswald have stated that Mrs. Paine gave Oswald a slip of paper with the agent's name and telephone number on it. Marina Oswald had taken down the license number of Hosty's car on one of the visits and given it to her husband.

SPECULATION — The FBI interviewed Oswald 10 days before the assassination.

FINDING — The last FBI interview with Oswald, before the assassination, took place in New Orleans in August 1963, when he asked to see an FBI agent after his arrest by police for disturbing the peace, the outcome of his distribution of Fair Play for Cuba handbills. Neither Special Agent Hosty nor any other FBI agent saw or talked with Oswald between his return to Dallas, on October 3, and November 22. Hosty did interview Mrs. Paine at her home about Oswald on November 1 and 5, 1963. He also saw Marina Oswald briefly on November 1 at Mrs. Paine's house, but he did not interview her.

Conspiratorial Relationships

SPECULATION — Since Oswald did not have the money to repay the \$435.61 he had received from the Department of State to cover part of the expenses of his return from Russia, he must have received help from some other source. Ruby lent Oswald money to pay back the loan and lent him small amounts of money thereafter.

FINDING — The commission has no credible evidence that Oswald received any money from Ruby or anyone else to repay his State Department loan, nor that he received small amounts of money from Ruby at any time. An exhaustive analysis of Oswald's income and expenditures, made for the commission by an Internal Revenue Service expert, reveals that Oswald had sufficient funds to make the State Department repayments from his earnings.

SPECULATION — Ruby's sister, Mrs. Eva Grant, said that Ruby and Tippit were, "like two brothers."

FINDING — Mrs. Grant has denied ever making this statement or any statement like it, saying it was untrue and without foundation. Ruby was acquainted with another Dallas policeman named Tippit, but this was G. M. Tippit of the special services bureau of the department, not the Tippit who was killed.

Other Rumors And Speculations

SPECULATION — Oswald was seen at shooting ranges in the Dallas area practicing firing with a rifle.

FINDING — Marina Oswald stated that on one occasion in March of April 1963, her husband told her that he was going to practice firing with the rifle. Witnesses have testified that they saw Oswald at shooting ranges in the Dallas area dur-

ing October and November 1963. Investigation has failed to confirm that the man seen by these witnesses was Oswald.

SPECULATION — Oswald received money by Western Union telegraph from time to time for several months before the assassination of President Kennedy.

FINDING — An employe in the Western Union main office in Dallas, C. A. Hamblen, made statements that he remembered seeing Oswald there on some occasions collecting money that had been telegraphed to him. In his testimony before the commission, Hamblen was unable to state whether or not the person he had seen was Lee Harvey Oswald. Western Union officials searched their records in Dallas and other cities for the period from June through November 1963 but found no money orders payable to Lee Oswald or to any of his known aliases. A Western Union official concluded that the allegation was "a figment of Mr. Hamblen's imagination." The commission has found no evidence to contradict this conclusion.

SPECULATION — A Negro janitor who was a witness to the shooting and was supposed to be able to identify Oswald as the killer was held in protective custody by the Dallas police until he could appear before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

FINDING — Investigation revealed that this story had no foundation in fact. No such witness was kept in protective custody by the Dallas police for appearance before the commission. The story had its origin in a newspaper account based on hearsay.

SPECULATION — Mrs. Marguerite Oswald was shown a photograph of Jack Ruby by an FBI agent the night before Ruby killed her son.

FINDING — On the night of November 23, 1963, Special Agent Bardwell D. Odum of the FBI showed Mrs. Marguerite Oswald a picture of a man to determine whether the man was known to her. Mrs. Oswald stated subsequently that the picture was of Jack Ruby. The Commission has examined a copy of the photograph and determined that it was not a picture of Jack Ruby.

SPECULATION — The headquarters detachment of the U.S. Army, under orders from (Secretary of Defense Robert S.) McNamara's office, began to rehearse for the funeral more than a week before the assassination.

FINDING — This assertion is based on an interview with U.S. Army Capt. Richard C. Cloy that appeared in the Jackson, Miss., Clarion-Ledger of February 21, 1964. The newspaper quotes Capt. Cloy, who was a member of the Army unit charged with conducting funeral ceremonies in honor of deceased Chiefs of State, as having said that "we were in a state of readiness and had just finished a funeral rehearsal because there was grave concern for President Hoover's health. But we never expected that our practice was preparing us for President Kennedy."