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... On Television ...

CBS News Pins Oswald

The two and a half years since the Warren Report was issued have brought enough hysteria, bluster, accusation, soul-searching and speculation, half-baked and otherwise, to keep the average citizen totally bewildered. The report has been criticized by a variety of cranks, fanatics and opportunists, as well as by more rational doubters who felt there were still pieces left out of the puzzle.

Where there's that much smoke, people suspect a fire. Almost everyone has a theory about the assassination, ranging from domestic conspiracy to Russian plot to thought-control from flying saucers. Agreement with the Warren Report is the least popular view, as it's the least intriguing. Very few citizens have plodded through the one-volume condensation of the Report, much less the 26-volume edition. But nearly everyone has read Mark Lane or one of the other critics.



Bob MacKenzie

Judging by the first program, which examined the question "Did Oswald Shoot the President?", CBS will consider all the relevant questions one at a time, Examining the evidence and supplying new evidence where it's needed, and come to a conclusion about each question.

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Previous television shows on the subject have been superficial, usually consisting of face-to-face debates between critics and supporters of the Warren Commission. These always degenerated into endless wrangling. So television has contributed its share of the confusion. But this time CBS News is set on answers.

Starting from fundamentals, last night's program began with the obvious questions: Did Oswald own a

rifle? Did he take it to the Book Depository building? How many shots were fired? How fast could they have been fired?

An order coupon and a money order were shown as proof that Oswald bought the rifle. One of the important charges, that a photo of Oswald with the rifle was faked, was pretty well destroyed. A photo expert re-staged the shot and demonstrated the shadow angles were normal for the light conditions.

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A co-worker of Oswald's said he saw Oswald take a brown-paper package to work with him. The man's sister corroborated him. A check of Oswald's apartment showed he had no need for the curtain rods he claimed he was carrying.

Employees placed Oswald in the book building, probably on the sixth floor.

Dr. Joseph Nichol, a ballistic expert, said his investigation indicated the bullet fragments and the whole bullet came from Oswald's rifle.

CBS made a thoroughgoing attack on the most disputed question: could Oswald have fired three shots from the rifle in the required time, with two hits?

Using Abe Zapruder's film as the basis for the time estimation, CBS conducted its own tests, simulating the actual conditions for the first time (the FBI tests used stationary targets and a tower only half the height of Oswald's position). Firing the same make of rifle at a man-size target on a moving track, 11 marksmen averaged three shots in 5.6 seconds, many getting two hits. One expert scored three hits. The newsmen concluded that Oswald had time to get off three shots.

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The FBI has said the Zapruder's camera was shooting 18.3 frames a second, but a photo analyst named Wyckoff appeared on the program with results of a test of six cameras of the same make, showing that some shoot faster than others. Oswald may have had up to 8.3 seconds to shoot. He could have fired first when the President was first visible through a gap in the tree, and missed. This would accord with Gov. Connally's claim that he was not hit by the first shot.

The program finished each question with an answer, finally concluding: "Did Oswald shoot the President? He did."

Whether Oswald was alone will be examined tonight in an hour dealing with the question of a conspiracy. Tuesday's hour considers why the majority of Americans do not believe the Warren Report, and Wednesday's program will be a final wrap-up.