

Who Killed President Kennedy?

Who Was the Man in the Doorway?

By ALFRED ROBBINS

Six months ago today Lee Harvey Oswald fell mortally wounded on the cement floor in the basement of the Dallas, Texas, police headquarters.

The following day his body, in a cloth-covered wooden box, was lowered into a hastily dug grave at the windswept Rose Hill Cemetery in Fort Worth.

Interred with him were the secrets that will haunt mankind in decades to come.

Whatever Jack Ruby's motive in pumping a single bullet into Oswald's abdomen, he did the cause of justice a monumental disservice.

Justice, as we know it, decrees that a man is innocent until proven guilty beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt. Technically, therefore, we may refer to Oswald only as the "alleged assassin" of President John F. Kennedy.

And no matter how many millions are willing to accept the verdict rendered by Dallas authorities that Lee Harvey Oswald had indeed shot and killed John F. Kennedy, there will always be a few to proclaim his innocence.

There will always be a few to dispute the statement by Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade made 24 hours after Oswald's arrest:

"I would say without any doubt that he is the killer."

A RAGING CONTROVERSY

Like the eternal fire that burns before the late President's grave in Arlington National Cemetery, rumors and reports continue to flame up and cast shadows about the circumstances under which the assassination was achieved.

Mostly in Europe, but in some areas of the United States as well, the story persists that Oswald had been wrongfully accused.

The latest of these reports—which, ironically enough, gained wide circulation last Friday, the six-month anniversary of the President's death—involve a photograph taken just a few seconds after the first of two bullets stilled Mr. Kennedy's voice forever.

The photo shows a young man standing in the doorway of the Texas School Book Depository on Elm st., from the sixth floor of which the fatal shots were fired.

The man bears a striking resemblance to Oswald. And if it were Oswald standing in the doorway at the very moment the President is beginning to slump forward in his seat, then without doubt, Oswald had been brutally and wantonly framed.

But it is not Oswald.

"I know the picture you're talking about and the man in that photograph is Billy Lovelady, another one of my employees."

So said Roy S. Truly, manager of the Texas School Book Depository, in a telephone interview from Dallas yesterday.

"I first saw the picture a couple of days after the assassination," he continued.

"An FBI agent came to my house and showed it to me. I told the agent: 'That isn't Oswald, that's Billy Lovelady.'"

"A couple of days later the FBI took the picture out to where Billy lives and he told them it was him in the photograph. He told the agent he was standing in the doorway when the President drove by."

"The funny thing is," Mr. Truly related, "that Billy doesn't look much like Oswald close-up. He has a different hairline and a different type of face. Don't forget, that photograph was taken from a distance."

Mr. Truly and a police officer were the first persons to see Oswald face-to-face immediately after the assassination. They ran into the Depository building just as the Presidential car swerved out of the motorcade and started speeding towards Parkland Memorial Hospital.

"Oswald was in the lunchroom on the second floor," Mr. Truly recalled.

'HE WORKS HERE'

"The policeman was a few steps ahead of me and when I got inside the lunchroom the officer was covering Oswald with a gun. Oswald was the only person there."

"Is this boy all right?" the policeman asked me. "Yes, he's okay," I answered. "He works here."

"Then the officer and I ran up towards the roof," Mr. Truly continued. "There was one other employe on the second floor at the time, a switchboard operator working in an office across from the lunchroom."

"She saw Oswald walk in right after we left the lunchroom. He took a Coke from a vending machine and walked out of her office and down one flight of stairs to the street."

There have been claims that Oswald wouldn't have had enough time to walk to the second floor from the sixth floor before the arrival of Mr. Truly and the cop.

"Oh, he had enough time," Mr. Truly said. "At a fast walk he could have covered the four flights of stairs in one minute."

"Chances are he heard us running into the building when he reached the second floor and ducked into the lunchroom."

The photograph, then, has been seen by witnesses, and investigated by the FBI, and has been found to be without merit in the case for Oswald.

Yet, even without it, there are many arguments that can be advanced to support any or all of the following theories:

- Oswald was innocent.
- Oswald had an accomplice, or accomplices.
- Oswald was the key figure in an international plot, or even a national plot for that matter.

How valid is each of these theories?

THE CLAIM: It was never definitely established that Oswald fired the fatal shots. His fingerprints weren't found on the murder weapon—a 6.5 mm. Carcano carbine with a telescopic sight. Only Oswald's palm print showed up on the rifle.

TRACES OF GUNPOWDER

Paraffin tests after the assassination disclosed traces of gunpowder only on Oswald's hands, not his face, indicating that he had fired a revolver, but not a rifle.

THE FACT: The gun used to kill President Kennedy was traced to Oswald. He had received it March 20, 1963, from a Chicago mail order house. His wife, Marina, identified the weapon as Oswald's. There is a photograph of him holding the weapon. A neighbor who drove Oswald to work the morning of the assassination saw him carrying a long, gun-sized package.

Threads from Oswald's clothing were found among the cartons that the killer had propped his rifle against. Ballistics tests showed that the bullets recovered from the President's body had been fired from Oswald's rifle.



THE MAN in this picture is not Lee Harvey Oswald, though he bears a resemblance to President Kennedy's alleged assassin. The man standing in the doorway of the Texas School Book Depository at the moment the President has been shot is Billy Lovelady, like Oswald, an employe

of the firm. Roy S. Truly, manager of the Depository, told Journal-American writer Alfred Robbins that he identified Mr. Lovelady for the FBI. Mr. Truly says Mr. Lovelady himself told agents it was he in the doorway.

AP Photo

THE CLAIM: Other Depository employes had been working in the room from which the sniper fired. One, in fact, had eaten some chicken and drank a bottle of sodapop earlier that morning. Oswald wasn't alone long enough to take his rifle from its hiding place and set himself for the kill.

THE FACT: At the stroke of noon all employes on the sixth floor—except Oswald—left for lunch. Charles Givens, a co-worker, called to Oswald:

"Let's go down and watch the President go by."

The accused replied:

"Not now. Just send the elevator back up."

Oswald, then, had a half-hour alone, which was time

enough to retrieve the rifle and position himself at the sixth-floor window looking down onto Elm st.]

Finally, if Oswald did not assassinate the President, why did he flee from the building as soon as Mr. Truly and the officer left the second-floor lunchroom en route to the roof? Oswald was the only employe missing when police took a "head count" at 12:45.]

If Oswald was innocent, why did he shoot and kill Officer J. D. Tippit when the policeman tried to question him? Witnesses have identified Oswald as Officer Tippit's killer.

If Oswald did not murder the President, why did he put a revolver to his head while facing capture in the movie theatre and then pull the trigger only to have the weapon misfire?

Yet, 90 minutes after the shooting, as he was being led into Dallas police headquarters, Oswald snapped to reporters: "I didn't kill anybody."

All this is why Lee Oswald must be referred to as "the alleged assassin."

WERE OTHERS INVOLVED?

That the alleged assassin did not act alone has gained widespread acceptance in Europe, basicaly because of a book—"Who Killed Kennedy?"—written by Thomas Buchanan, an American and self-admitted former Communist now living in Paris.

Mr. Buchanan has been quoted as saying that he became an amateur investigator in the assassination initially because "I felt Oswald was innocent." But, he continues:

"As I accumulated evidence I was forced to abandon the possibility of Oswald's innocence and I no longer hold that opinion. I decided Oswald was involved in the shooting.

"I also am led to the conclusion that it is unlikely Oswald acted alone. I am convinced the official version is incorrect. My version is incorrect in portions but it is more probable and logical."

THE CLAIM: Oswald wouldn't have had time to fire three accurate shots in so short a period. Some witnesses have estimated that only five seconds elapsed between the firing of the first and third bullets. What's more, doctors who performed the autopsy said that one of the slugs passed through the President's throat. Since the Presidential car was moving away from the Depository at the time, someone else must have fired at least that shot from somewhere in front of Mr. Kennedy.

THE FACT: An 8mm film of the actual assassination was re-run frame by frame at the camera's known speed of 18 frames per second. There was a time lapse of 4.1 seconds between the firing of the first shot, which struck the President, and the second shot, which wounded Texas Gov. John Connally. Another 2.7 seconds elapsed between the second and third shot.

AN EXPERT MARKSMAN

Rifle experts firing the same type of weapon used to kill the Chief Executive have recorded three hits in 6.2 seconds against a moving target over distances approximating those covered by the assassin. The President's killer took 6.8 seconds to squeeze off his three rounds.

There is no doubt, moreover, that Oswald was an expert marksman. He had scored well on the rifle range while a

Marine. When Oswald returned from Russia in 1962 he told friends that he had "joined a rifle club" in the Soviet Union. Presumably he shot a great deal there. In the weeks prior to the assassination, Oswald was seen at a Dallas rifle range, practicing.

As for the bullet that passed through the President's throat, films also show that he had turned his body far around to the right to wave at someone in the crowd just as the first shot struck him. In that position, his throat was fully exposed to the sniper.

UNANSWERED: There is one deeply puzzling aspect to Oswald's behavior on the day of the assassination:

Again assuming he was the killer, he had shown remarkable poise from the moment he arose on the morning of the 22d until the moment he strolled from the Depository building at approximately 12:36 p.m. Once outside, however, his composure cracked.

He boarded a bus, though he could see that traffic on Elm st. was badly snarled, then left it after a few minutes. He took a cab to his rooming house, ran in, grabbed a jacket—and presumably the revolver—and raced out again. Less than a half-hour after he had brazened it out with the cop in the lunchroom he shot Officer Tippit on sight. Then he ran to the movie theatre, though he knew that a dozen or so witnesses had seen him and that police surely would be summoned immediately.

Why did he suddenly lose his nerve? Was it because someone was to have picked him up outside the Depository, but failed to appear?

Yet, if Oswald did have an accomplice, or accomplices, it is difficult to believe that authorities have found no trace of them after six months. And this gives rise to still another theory.

THE CLAIM: That Oswald acted in consort with Jack Ruby, and that Ruby shot the accused to silence him.

THE FACT: Ruby has steadfastly denied knowing Oswald. Dallas police and the FBI have stated that their investigations turned up no evidence of a relationship between the two men.

UNANSWERED: What is the significance of the statement by Bill DeMar, who was the master of ceremonies at Ruby's Carousel Club last November? He has said publicly that he saw Oswald in the Carousel the night before the assassination. He said he gave this information to the FBI.

KEY FIGURE IN PLOT?

There is much material with which to bolster this theory, and little material with which to refute it, for the simple reason that no national organization or international power is going to issue a statement denying any involvement unless the evidence weighs heavily against them.

In the hours immediately following the President's death, there was widespread speculation that he had been the victim of the right-wing lunatic fringe, some of whose members had roughed up Adlai Stevenson in Dallas a month earlier.

But when Oswald's espousal of Marxism and his connection with the leftist Fair Play for Cuba Committee became known, it seemed possible that Mr. Kennedy had fallen victim to the left-wing lunatic fringe.

But no evidence has been uncovered that ties either the ultra-right or ultra-left to any type of plot.

There is, of course, the possibility that Mr. Kennedy's death was mapped by agents of the Soviet Union, Red China, or Cuba. But this theory, too, suffers from a lack of evidence.

The best argument in support of this claim is the fact that Oswald spent the greater portion of his stay in Russia in the city of Minsk, where the GRU—the international arm of the Soviet Secret Police—runs a school for assassins. It has also been pointed out that the "sniping technique" of murder has been used extensively in South America by Castro agents.

On the other side of the ledger, however, is evidence that Oswald, again assuming that he is the assassin, acted alone and on the spur of the moment.

It was strictly chance, for example, that he was working in the Depository at all. A friend happened to mention casually that there was a job opening; Oswald applied and was accepted for the position.

That was in mid-October. The route of the Presidential motorcade through Dallas was not made public until Nov. 19. So Oswald had not put himself deliberately along the route Mr. Kennedy was to take.

The fact that Oswald had risked arrest in April, 1963, by shooting at Maj. Gen. Edwin Walker (and this Oswald admitted to his wife) makes it appear unlikely that he was holding himself in readiness for the specific purpose of assassinating the President.

WHY USE OF ALIAS?

And yet, one nagging doubt persists.

If Oswald was not part of a monstrous plot, if he acted alone and without accomplices, then why, in mid-October, did he move into a Dallas rooming house under the alias of O. H. Lee?

(It is interesting to note in choosing an alias, Oswald adhered to a familiar pattern—he stuck close to his given name. His first name became his last name. For initials he chose the first letters of his middle and last names.)

And when his wife disobeyed his instructions and called him at his rooming house, why did he become so angry with her?

Why, in fact, had Oswald left his family in the first place? Possibly because he believed he was being sought for the attack on Gen. Walker, it has been said.

Yet, he didn't hesitate to rejoin his family on weekends, even though the neighbors knew him as Lee Harvey Oswald.

And so it will go until sometime later this year, when the Warren Commission, named by President Johnson, will make public its report of an investigation into all aspects of the assassination.

It was Mr. Johnson's hope, and the hope of those serving on the Commission, that the report will avoid in future generations the type of debate that still rages over the assassination of President Lincoln.

Books written in the last five years theorize that Mr. Lincoln was not actually murdered by John Wilkes Booth, who, like Oswald, was slain before he could go to trial.

Some scholars and historians still theorize that the plot against Mr. Lincoln was hatched by some members of his Cabinet; and even the President's widow has been accused of participating in her husband's murder.

The absence of a full investigation of the Lincoln assassination has only served to throw more coals on the fires of controversy.

Thus, it is the aim of the Warren report to put to rest the theories now being circulated about the murder of President Kennedy.

But chances are that the speculation will only be muffled, not put to rest at all.

Why?

Because so many of us do not want to believe in our hearts that the life of a young, vigorous leader, husband and father was snuffed out on the whim of a deranged man who was as small as John F. Kennedy was big.

No one wants to believe in his heart that nothing more than chance put the President's assassin in the sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 1963.

That John F. Kennedy was the victim of one insane mind is a thought we rebel at.

But it is a thought we may have to live with for the rest of our lives.