

A swirl of speculation and suspicion is growing around the assassination of President Kennedy.

Hints at more than three shots, at a possible second assassin, at accomplices for Oswald are gaining wide circulation.

Facts are known to set the record straight on many points. But until the Warren Commission reports, doubts may spread.

Rumors and alleged new facts are beginning to pile on top of new rumors and more supposed facts to throw a further air of mystery around the assassination of President Kennedy.

Was the President struck from in front as well as from the back? Were four shots fired, not three? Could there have been a second assassin? What accounts for the apparent bullet hole in the windshield of the late President's car? Was there a bullet hole in the floor of the car as well?

Did somebody pay Lee Harvey Oswald? Why was Oswald in Mexico seven weeks before the assassination? Was this killing an international plot related to Cuba, Red China and Russia?

And what of Jack Ruby? What inspired his slaying of Oswald?

Questions keep proliferating and theories keep growing and being printed, adding to the air of mystery.

In part, the spread of rumor stems from decisions by the Warren Commission appointed to investigate the crime. This Commission is headed by Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the U.S.

One decision was not to publish the findings and report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at this time. A second was to appoint a counsel and hire a full staff, including lawyers. A third move was to request of the FBI all the reports turned up by its agents that underlie the FBI's conclusions about the nature of the crime.

It now appears that weeks or even months can go by before the nation is given the findings of the Commission that the Chief Justice heads.

Delay by the Commission in publishing facts in the FBI report is a result of its determination to explore every angle of the crime, and to come up in the end with an independent judgment.

Explanations and answers can be given, however, to many of the questions being raised.

One of the latest reports to gain wide circulation is that four shots, not three, were fired.

This report is based on eyewitness accounts of what seemed to be a bullet hole in the windshield of the car in which President Kennedy was riding, suggesting that a fourth bullet was fired in addition to the two that struck the President and the one that hit Governor John Connally of Texas.

A report out of Detroit, where the presidential car was sent to be armor-plated, mentions also "what appears to be a bullet hole in the floor pan of the car."

Witnesses, and the FBI as well as the Secret Service, agree that only three shots were fired.

The first struck President Kennedy in the back, just below the collar bone, and lodged in his body.

The second shot struck Governor Connally and fragmented. Bullets hitting bone can splinter. A splinter from that bullet apparently hit the windshield of the car. Another splinter

could have penetrated the floor pan.

The third bullet struck President Kennedy in the back of the head, causing death. This bullet also fragmented somewhat.

It seems clear that the bullet splinters provided the basis for rumors of more than three shots.

A shot from the front? Here bobs up a second piece of misinformation, on which mystery around the assassination is being built.

Statements of doctors who attended the President in Dallas contributed to the rumors about a shot from the front.

Several said the President had an "entry wound" in his neck, under his chin. This, plus the hole in the windshield, set off a chain of speculation about a second assassin, firing from the railroad overpass that the President's car was approaching. Oswald was in the rear of the President, so he could not have hit him from the front.

Actually, an autopsy performed on the President's body at the Naval Hospital near Washington showed that the wound in his neck was caused by the exit of a splinter from the shot that struck the back of his head.

The autopsy report is one of the growing array of official documents bearing on the case that have not been made public. The Dallas surgeons have seen the report, however, and they have told newsmen they are satisfied that the front neck wound resulted from a bullet fragment coming out at that point.

These surgeons, it is noted, saw the President only while he was lying on his back. So they were unaware of his first wound in his upper shoulder, until they were given the autopsy report from Washington. That first wound, officials told "The Washington Post," was relatively superficial, and the President readily could have survived it - if he had not been struck a second time.

Shots too fast? This brings up a third point that has baffled many, including some rifle experts:

How could one man, firing a rifle of the type that Oswald owned, fire three times in the few seconds that elapsed between the first and last shots? Was Oswald expert enough to hit two moving targets and then swing back to hit his first target a second time?

News films of the shooting remove any doubt about the actual sequence of shots.

United Press International, on December 16, gave this account of what happened in and around the Kennedy car, based on a study of UPI news film:

"Here comes the shiny blue Lincoln, closely followed by the 'Queen Mary,' the limousine carrying Secret Service agents.

"The first shot. Mrs. Kennedy, smiling and waving in her bright pink suit and bright pink pillbox hat, abruptly leans toward her husband, seated on her right in the back seat.

"Another shot. Governor John B. Connally . . . is hit. He raises up and falls toward Mrs. Connally. She is facing the First Lady. Mrs. Connally leans toward the Governor.

"Clint Hill, a Secret Service man on the left running board of the 'Queen Mary,' sees it. He is running ahead. The 'Queen Mary' almost hits him as he cuts in front.

"The third shot. The President's head snaps to the left. His hair flies up. Mrs. Kennedy leans closer toward him. Her right arm swings protectively around him.

"Hill is at the rear of the car now, clutching. His groping left foot misses the foothold built into the rear of the limousine. He slips and is running behind the car, clinging to it. Four, five, six great steps, he hopes to keep up as the car picks up speed with a rush.

"Mrs. Kennedy wheels to her right.

"She sees Hill is not aboard. Mrs. Kennedy's arm lifts from around her husband. She spins up and out, onto the trunk. She is on all fours, right hand out to Hill.

"Their arms link. He is on the trunk now. The car is speeding off, pressing both of them back. He is on the trunk now and is pushing her back to the seat."

These and other films, plus FBI studies of bullet trajectories and other evidence, are conclusive on several basic points as far as officials are concerned.

The three shots came from one place and one rifle, regardless of skepticism about one man's ability to fire so many shots so fast.

The marksmanship involved was not uncanny. For a trained rifleman who had been practicing, the moving targets in the presidential car did not pose great difficulties, in the FBI's opinion.

Oswald got his basic training in the Marine Corps. After he left the Marines he continued target shooting with rifles. Witnesses have placed Oswald at a rifle range near Dallas where he was practicing shooting before the assassination.

The presidential car was moving slowly enough for one rifleman to keep it in his field of fire during the time involved. Much has been made of differing press accounts that put the speed of the car as high as 25 miles an hour and as low as 12 miles an hour.

Films show the car moving very slowly, until after the last shot. All the other circumstances indicate a slow-moving auto.

The motorcade had slowed for a turn just before the shooting began, and the occasion was similar to a political campaign parade, with maximum exposure of the President and Governor Connally to the public as a goal.

Who was target? One point not subject to conclusive proof, apparently, is whether the assassin intended to hit only the President, or Governor Connally, or whether he was aiming for both.

After seeing films, which clearly show Mr. Kennedy making only a clutching movement toward his throat when the first bullet struck him, some officials incline to the view that the assassin thought his first shot had missed Mr. Kennedy, and that he fired twice more, hitting Governor Connally by accident.

A final answer on this point died with Oswald, many believe.

The film makes clear why Mrs. Kennedy climbed out on the back of the car - to pull the Secret Service agent aboard. Mrs. Kennedy's movements had puzzled some people.

A second assassin? The basic doubts created by speculation over various unanswered questions are whether Oswald actually was the assassin, and whether he acted alone.

Fostering this line of speculation is the fact that other people in the Dallas area had talked threateningly about the forthcoming presidential visit.

On December 19, federal officials arrested Russell W. McLarry, a Texas college student, on charges that he had specifically threatened the life of the late President.

McLarry said his statements had been intended as a joke, and it was officially stated that no connection had been found between McLarry and Oswald, although all possibilities are being investigated.

Before this, however, there had been widely published accounts suggesting that Oswald's known movements in the Texas School Book Depository building, at the scene of the

assassination, raised the possibility that someone else was the actual rifleman who fired from the building.

The FBI is known to have concluded that Oswald is the only reasonable suspect, linked to the gun by fingerprints, photographs and other evidence; linked to the sniper's window by fingerprints and witnesses' testimony; linked to the assassination itself by a web of circumstances and evidence.

On the other hand, the FBI report found, there had been no evidence that Oswald was aided by others or joined, in any way, by one or more other people in the assassination itself.

A conspiracy? Still another element of mystery is found in Oswald's background, and his movements just before the President was shot.

Oswald was a known defector to Russia. He had married a Russian woman and had been allowed, with what seemed unusual speed, to leave Russia and return to the U.S.

Back in this country, he had floated around from job to job and seemed always without visible resources, and yet able to travel and get involved in such things as pro-Castro activities.

He showed up in Mexico seven weeks before the President's trip to Dallas, asking for visas to go to Cuba and to Russia. To some this seemed almost proof that Oswald was part of a Communist conspiracy. One theory was that the Red Chinese, working with Castro, plotted the murder as a way to discredit Soviet Russia's Khrushchev.

Officials insist there is not a shred of truth in this line of reasoning. Mexican police, co-operating fully with the U.S., went all out in their investigation of Oswald and found no connection between him and Cuban or Russian groups in their land.

The Soviet Government, in a rare move, turned over the files it had kept on Oswald. The files showed that the Russians considered him an unstable individual.

Investigation has convinced the FBI that Oswald was a lone wolf, whose background showed that he was inclined to nonviolence up to a point when his mind apparently snapped.

Connection with Ruby? One more theory that tends to clothe President Kennedy's assassination with mystery is the suggestion that Jack Ruby killed Oswald to silence him.

In this connection, published reports have dwelt on a supposition that Ruby's exact whereabouts during the period of time when the assassination occurred is open to question.

All the facts about Ruby's movements, as established by authorities, will not be known publicly until his trial.

The FBI has scoured the country for evidence that might link Ruby with Oswald before the former shot the latter in the Dallas jail, apparently to avenge the President's death. So far the search has yielded nothing, although final reports on this phase of the assassination story will not be forthcoming until Ruby's trial, which starts on February 3.

Ahead: waiting and rumors. Until that trial, the public is likely to hear more and more rumors and stories that tend to fog up the simple outlines of two crimes that occurred before more onlookers, probably, than any other crimes in history - if viewers of films and television are included.

The Warren Commission, before it is through, may go far beyond the actual facts of the two crimes, to delve, for example, into the roles of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Secret Service and other agencies in protecting the President.

At present only this much is sure: The Commission has not released a report; federal sleuths are still working on the case, and rumors are growing.

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